



STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*
NOVEMBER 2012



* This document presents a summary of the main orientations of our Strategic Plan. More details are available in the full version of the document, available in French.

Opening message from the Country Director



Dear Colleagues and Partners,

In the past few years, the shift to a program approach by CARE International has strengthened our work, making it more result-oriented and providing more impact in the lives of those we serve. Analyzing the causes of poverty and social injustice in Benin and Togo, we have been able to define three coherent and context-adapted programs, further developing our Country Office (CO) between 2009-2011.

From July 2010, it was decided to separate CARE Gulf of Guinea into two separate Country Offices: CARE Ghana and CARE Benin-Togo. We took numerous actions to strengthen our CO and reinforce our programs. At the same time, on a global level, deep reflections were taking place throughout CARE International to review the role and relevance of the organization. These reflections have contributed to CARE's Vision 2020.

Taking these changes into account, we decided to develop a Strategic Plan that would build on our experience, adapt to these new trends and define the main objectives of our new CO for the next five years in Benin and Togo.

That is what we achieved during the year 2012, as a result of meetings, workshops and reflections in which most CARE staff members and partners at different levels actively participated. Let me once again thank them for their much appreciated and highly valuable contributions.

At the start of the process, I asked participants to constantly ask themselves the following four questions:

1. What is the value added and contribution of an international NGO like CARE within the Beninese and Togolese context?
2. How has the environment evolved in these two countries over recent years, and what impact will this have on our work?
3. How can we best address the underlying causes of poverty and social injustice in an efficient way with the maximum possible impact?
4. How are we anticipating new emerging issues such as climate change, emergencies, and natural disasters?

At the end of the strategic planning process, participants felt that we had fully addressed these questions and provided coherent answers, which are presented in the following document.

My wish is for all of us (CARE, partners, communities, local authorities, Government, donors, etc.) to join forces so that we can make a difference, improve in a sustainable manner the quality of life of the most vulnerable and allow them to fully express their potential. This really is possible!

Sincerely,

Rotimiy Djossaya
Country Director

Introduction

CARE is a non-political and non-religious independent international NGO that fights against poverty by focusing on women and girls through programs that provide sustainable and long-lasting changes in the lives of the most vulnerable groups of the population and their communities.

Created in 1946, CARE has become a leading force and a partner of choice within a worldwide movement dedicated to ending poverty and social injustice. In 2011, CARE worked in 84 countries around the world, supporting 1,015 poverty-fighting projects to reach more than 122 million people.

CARE International was first established in Togo in 1988, and then in Benin in September 1999. Under the supervision of CARE Gulf of Guinea (GoG), CARE conducted interventions in a number of sectors, including education, health, hygiene and sanitation, environment, microfinance, agriculture, water, women and children's rights and emergency relief.

The previous Strategic Plan (2007-2012) applied to all three countries that were under the CARE GoG structure; Benin, Togo and Ghana. Since then, major changes have taken place both internally and externally, including;

- Evolving national priorities in the fight against poverty in Benin and Togo
- Organizational changes within the global CARE network
- The shift from a project to a program approach, and its implementation in Benin with the definition of three program priorities (women's empowerment, maternal health and food security)
- The creation of a new CARE Benin-Togo Country Office in July 2010, resulting from the division of the former CARE GoG CO into 2 distinct COs (Ghana and Benin-Togo)

These changes generated the need for a new Strategic Framework that would be aligned with CARE International's priorities whilst remaining relevant within the context of both countries



WE WANT A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK THAT "WOULD BE ALIGNED WITH CARE INTERNATIONAL'S PRIORITIES AND ADAPTED TO THE SPECIFIC CONTEXT OF EACH OF THE TWO COUNTRIES. TO COHERENTLY BRING TOGETHER OUR PROGRAM STRATEGIES, DEVELOPING AN OPERATIONAL MODEL WHICH WOULD HELP US OPTIMIZE OUR FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE."



The Strategic Planning Process

CARE Benin-Togo's Strategic Plan was developed between February and June 2012.

A Strategic Planning Steering Committee was set-up to ensure that the process was representative of CARE's staff. A series of 2 to 3 day workshops were organized to bring CARE staff and key partners together, which led to the production of this document.

OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

Our Vision

We seek a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security. CARE International will be a global force and a partner of choice within a worldwide movement dedicated to ending poverty. We will be known everywhere for our unshakeable commitment to the dignity of people.

Our Mission

CARE's mission is to serve individuals and families in the poorest communities in the world. Drawing strength from our global diversity, resources and experience, we promote innovative solutions and are advocates for global responsibility. We facilitate lasting change by:

- Strengthening capacity for self-help
- Providing economic opportunity
- Delivering relief in emergencies
- Influencing policy decisions at all levels
- Addressing discrimination in all its forms

Guided by the aspirations of local communities, we pursue our mission with both excellence and compassion because the people whom we serve deserve nothing less.

Our Programming Principles

1. Promote empowerment
2. Work with partners
3. Ensure accountability and promote responsibility
4. Address discrimination
5. Promote the non-violent resolution of conflicts
6. Seek sustainable results



Our Core Values

Respect

We affirm the dignity, potential and contribution of participants, donors, partners and staff.

Integrity

We act consistently with CARE's mission, being honest and transparent in what we do and say, and accept responsibility for our collective and individual actions.

Commitment

We work together effectively to serve the larger community.

Excellence

We constantly challenge ourselves to be the highest level of learning and performance to achieve greater impact.

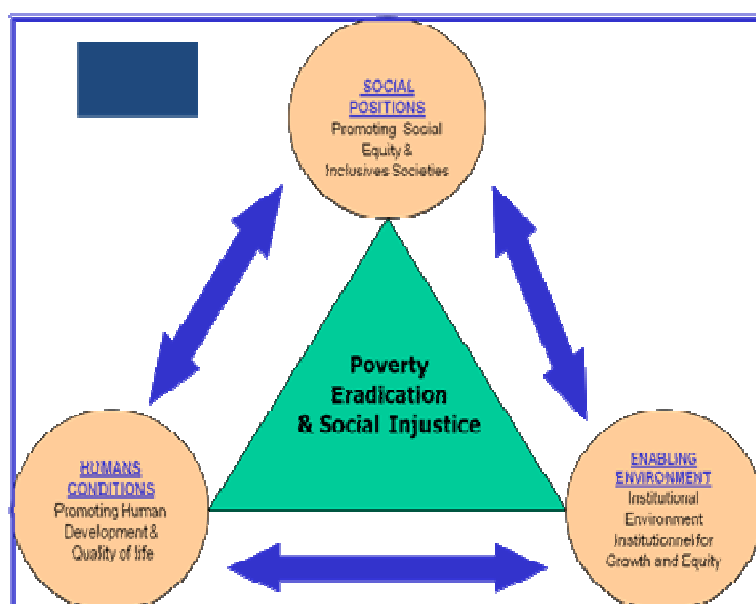
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

External environment

The main development indicators in both countries show that people most affected by poverty and social injustice live in **rural and peri-urban areas**. In these areas, **women and children** are among the **most vulnerable**.

An analysis of the underlying causes of poverty was conducted by CARE for each of its identified programs.

A FEW FIGURES	BENIN	TOGO
Population (in millions)	9.1	6.1
Human Development Index (rank among 181 countries)	167	162
Monetary poverty (population living with less than 1.25\$/day)	47.3%	38.7%
Maternal mortality rate (number of death per100,000 live births)	410	350
Gender Inequality Index	0.634	0.602
2010, source: World Bank and UNDP data bank		



This analysis aims at showing direct causes explaining poverty in terms of access to goods and services, as well as deeper causes such as power relations, socio-cultural, political, and legal environments that prevent the most vulnerable to find their way out of poverty. We based our analysis and process on CARE's Unified Framework of Underlying Causes of Poverty.

This allowed us to better understand the basis of inequalities between men and women in terms of socio-economic and legal status in Benin and Togo. Traditional role repartition, patriarchal culture, education, gender-specific education practices, habits and customs, amongst others, are the deep causes analyzed and the founding elements of our theories of change.



Internal Environment

An analysis of CARE's previous interventions in Benin and Togo over the past ten years highlighted the valuable experience and understanding of the themes related to women and girls' empowerment (fight against Gender Based Violence, Microfinance, Girls' Leadership, Women's Rights).

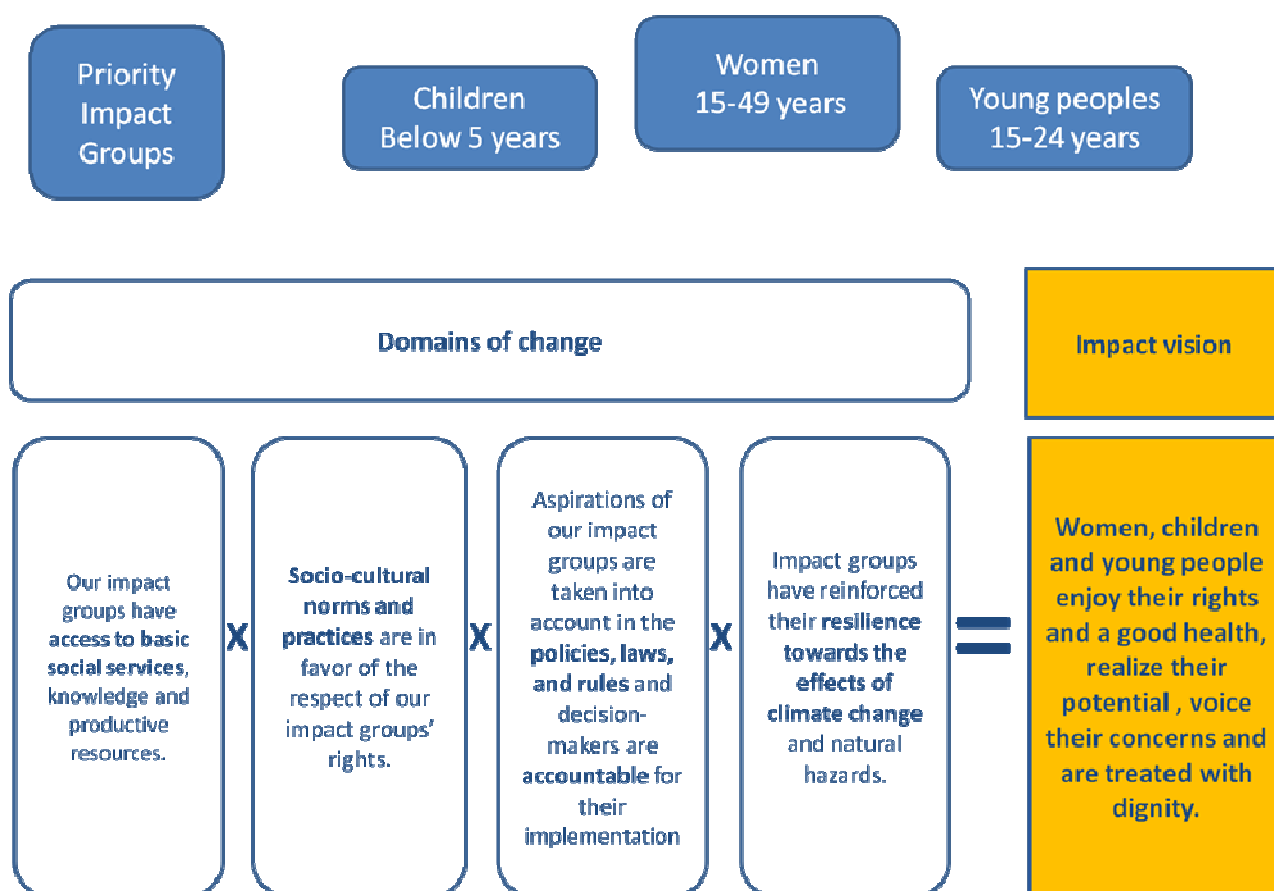
This analysis also showed our rather strong dependency towards institutional donors, notably USAID and the European Union, which financed 63% of our interventions in these two countries over the last ten years.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Our Vision of Impact

Women, children and young people enjoy their rights and good health, realize their potential, voice their concerns and are treated with dignity.

Our Theory of Change



Assumptions on which our Theory of Change is built

- Access to basic social services (water, education and health), knowledge (e.g training and dissemination of key information) and to productive resources (e.g. financial services, access to land) are necessary conditions to allow women, young people and children to enjoy their rights and realize their potential.
- A positive socio-cultural environment helps women, young people and children enjoy their rights. However, if their legal rights are in conflict with mainstream social norms they may not be able to fully enjoy these rights.
- Taking into consideration the aspirations of women, young people and children, within the legal and regulatory framework and promoting accountability towards them among decision-makers, creates an enabling environment in favor of their self-fulfillment.
- Vulnerability to the shocks and effects of climate change could hinder the improvement of livelihoods for the poor and vulnerable population.

OUR PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITIES



In Benin and in Togo, our analyses showed that the main obstacles to the fulfillment of the potential of women, children and young people are:

- lack of access to maternal, infant and reproductive health services
- lack of social, political and economic autonomy
- food insecurity and malnutrition
- damages caused by disasters and climate change

This is why CARE Benin-Togo decided to focus on three main programmatic areas.

Emergency preparedness and response will be a cross-cutting aspect of all programs, in coherence with CARE International's humanitarian mandate.

Women's and girls' empowerment

Maternal, infant and reproductive health

Food and nutritional security and adaptation to climate change

Emergencies

For each of these programs a Theory of Change has been developed. Each theory states that by taking certain actions in the identified domains of change, we will be able to reach our programmatic goals for the specific impact groups of the program.

By working with key partners at all levels we identified major breakthroughs for each programmatic area, for example new pathways and indicators for measuring sustainable change.

OUR STRATEGIES

It is as important to define how we intend to operationalize our Strategic Plan as it is to define what we want to achieve. Thus, based on the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of CARE, we have defined four main operational priorities where we want to channel our resources and strengthen our capacities, in order to deliver quality programs with maximized impact.

Partnership Strategy

Our Vision

CARE is a leading partner, has a good reputation and has demonstrated expertise in the fight against poverty and social injustice through diverse networks and dynamic local partners. In all its interventions, CARE explores alliances that help to reach more people and have a more significant impact on the lives of the most vulnerable people.

Our partners: Operational (either local or thematic), institutional and strategic.

Principles that guide our partnership strategy;

- Build a sustainability tool for our interventions
- Acknowledge interdependence between partners
- Build trust
- Find shared objectives, values and interests
- Sharing of resources between partners
- Generate a culture of mutual support and respect for differences
- Find opportunities for a creative synergy
- Address relationship difficulties as they occur
- See partnering as a continuous learning process

Advocacy and Communications Strategy

Our Vision

Advocacy: We establish advocacy actions with clear and measurable objectives and indicators, in order to influence policies that acknowledge the aspirations and specific needs of our impact groups.

Communication: We produce quality documents (brochures, leaflets, case studies, audiovisual documents, etc.) that reflect the mission, vision and values of CARE. We are better recognized by people living in our intervention areas, our main donors and governments.

Principles of our advocacy actions:

Our advocacy actions will be based on evidence collected from our field experience, led in partnership, result oriented, captured and capitalized.

Our main advocacy targets:

- State institutions decision-makers;
- Local institutions decision-makers;
- Community leaders and traditional authorities;
- Donors.

Our main advocacy themes for 2013-2017:

- Implementation of the Gender-Based Violence related laws;
- Women's access to land and property;
- Infant and maternal health;
- Resource allocation (get the State to focus more resources on relevant domains to support the most vulnerable) and promote accountability of decision-makers at all levels.

Impact Measurement and Accountability Strategy

Our Vision:

CARE's programs will achieve lasting impact at a broad scale with specific groups through addressing underlying causes of poverty, gender inequality and social injustice through a set of coherent interventions. Programs are managed efficiently and effectively to produce the agreed quality of outcomes. Programs are accountable to all stakeholders and are monitored and evaluated periodically during implementation and at completion.

Impact Measurement Levels:

Level 1: Initiatives (outputs of our initiatives that contribute to the final impact)

Level 2: Programs (outcomes accomplished by domain of change of our programs that contribute to the final impact)

Level 3: Mission (ultimate global impact of our interventions)

Sentinel sites:

We have identified 12 municipalities where CARE concentrates its work and in which we are planning to measure the changes that occurred in the lives of our priority impact groups, by comparing them to other baseline sites where CARE does not intervene much or at all. This work will be done in partnership with National Institution of Statistics (INSAE).

Accountability for CARE

It is important that our stakeholders are able to hold us accountable for our decisions, actions and impacts. We will establish an Accountability Framework in order to ensure this aspect of our Strategic Plan is fully realised.

Innovation and Learning Strategy

Our Vision

CARE initiates innovative approaches to better contribute to our Theory of Change, and to use lessons learned (positive or negative) from our experiences to constantly improve quality and the relevance of its interventions.

Priority innovation themes for 2013-2017:

- Use of Communication and Information Technologies (CITs) to improve access to basic services of our impact groups;
- Sanitation of lakeside areas;
- Development of innovative relations between our community solidarity groups and other private actors.

Main work orientations for 2013-2017

- Develop a methodology for our interventions;
- Identify key partners and create learning groups;
- Set up an innovation fund to stimulate efforts on innovations;
- Make better use of learning opportunities from the CARE network;
- Set up groups for exchange and sharing of best practices;
- Increase active participation in online thematic platforms;
- Promote operational research.

RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

This last chapter will analyze what these strategic choices imply for CARE Benin-Togo's resources (human and financial) and its operational model.

Human Resources: Talent and Skills Management

Our Vision:

CARE has a competent, motivated, committed and united workforce that is conscious of its responsibilities in the generation of sustainable positive changes for the most vulnerable communities.

The key skills expected from our staff:

- Respect of CARE values;
- Strong leadership and management skills;
- Technical expertise and transversal operational abilities (advocacy, partnership impact measurement etc.);
- Ability to facilitate change;
- Critical and analytical thinking;
- Ability to work well in a team;
- Good communications skills;
- Eagerness to learn.

Main work areas for 2013-2017:

- Strengthen team spirit and cohesion (staff integration, team-building activities, etc.)
- Talent and skills management (accountability, managing in and out, "Catalyst program")
- Create a stimulating work environment (attractive conditions, development opportunities)
- Improve staff members' skills (technical, transversal, English fluency, etc.)

Operational Model

Principles that guided our operational model choice:

- Flexibility
- Partnership
- Accountability
- Long-term commitment to communities
- Efficiency & competitiveness

Governance:

- The National Program Consultative Council, comprising of well-respected Beninese individuals, plays a role in advising and guiding CARE Benin—Togo's actions. Its role will be enforced in the coming years.
- CARE will strive to maintain integration of its partners in Country Office governance through their regular participation in strategic thinking and intervention preparation activities (workshops, etc.).

An analysis of the relevance of the operational model chosen will be regularly conducted during the Strategic Plan.

Geographical organization:

Headquarters in Cotonou, without regional sub-offices

Physical positioning of staff:

Either in CARE HQ or in partners' structures (NGO or institutions) according to the relevance of the actions to be undertaken.

Share of actions between Benin and Togo:

The initial focus will be on Benin, but gradually seeking trans-border actions when possible;

In the first period, no intervention will be implemented uniquely in Togo.

An analysis of the relevance of the operational model chosen will be regularly conducted during the Strategic Plan

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY

Our Vision:

CARE has different public and private financial partners from which it mobilizes the financial resources needed to realize its programs, while allowing the organization to keep its independence and coherence with its mandate.

Main targets for resource mobilization:

- CARE International members;
- Institutional donors;
- Private and firm foundations.

Area of focus to improve resource mobilization;

- Enforce our expertise;
- Measure our impact and capitalize our experiences;
- Maintain our programmatic coherence;
- Activate our networks;
- Look out for local opportunities;
- Invest in resource mobilization.

Our resources mobilization objectives for 2013-2017

Taking into consideration resource mobilization opportunities, operational priorities and the capacity of our Country Office, we have forecast realistic resource mobilization objectives for the next five years.

We are planning to mobilize about 50 million USD to implement our programs between July 2012 and June 2017. These funds will be shared between our three main programmatic areas as follows:

- **Women's and Girls' Empowerment Program: 18 million USD**
- **Maternal, infant and reproductive health Program: 20 million USD**
- **Food and nutritional security and adaptation to Climate change: 12 million USD**





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**Defending Dignity
Fighting Poverty**

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