



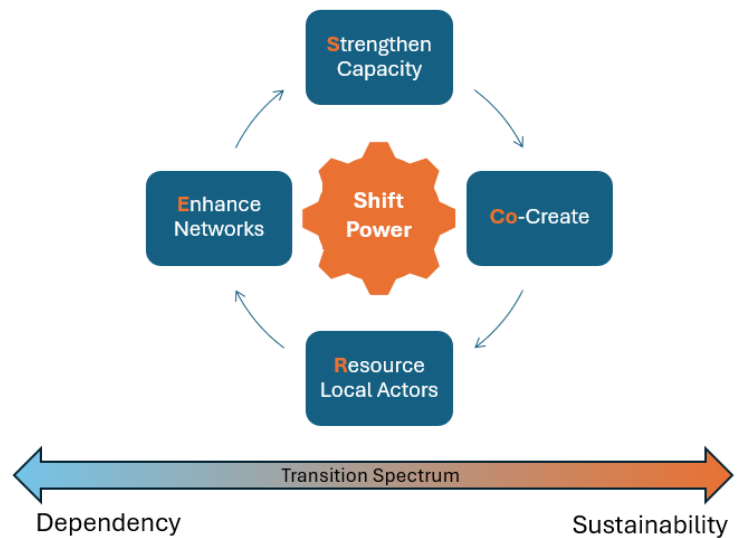
© Sankalpa Acharya / CARE



Localization at CARE

CARE seeks to contribute to the sustainable transition of leadership and ownership of development and humanitarian assistance to a range of public, private, and civil society partners. CARE's Localization efforts support diverse local actors in over 100 countries to define priorities, design solutions, drive implementation, and sustain efforts tailored to their unique development and/or humanitarian context. CARE does this while aiming to maximize impact across six priorities – Gender Equality, Humanitarian Response, Food Security, Water and Nutrition, Economic Justice for Women, Right to Health, and Climate Justice.

In line with CARE's **SCoRE Framework for Localization**, CARE fosters conditions and approaches that **shift power** to local actors by:



The SCoRE Framework for Localization

Strengthening Capacity: Enhancing the systems and capacity of local partners to implement and sustain programs and the change they enable, while supporting local leaders, amplifying marginalized voices, facilitating capacity sharing, and ensuring effective, inclusive, and accountable governance with and for their communities;

Co-creating: Bringing together the perspectives, needs, local knowledge and thought leadership of local partners, communities, impact populations, and other stakeholders to ensure that development and humanitarian responses are fit for the local context, demand-driven, and tailored to the unique needs of diverse communities, engaging them in design and throughout the project cycle we support;

Resourcing Local Actors: Channelling resources and strengthening systems to sustain and scale community level work, supporting local partners to absorb, grow, diversify, leverage, and manage their resource base; supporting the transition of key partners to direct donor funding and;

Enhancing Networks: Developing, strengthening and amplifying local networks that enable coordination, inclusive programming, capacity sharing, and collective action.

CARE's Theory of Change

CARE understands that in order to more sustainably meet needs in the countries we support and communities we serve, localization must shift power and grow capacity for local organizations to carry out their own mandates in response to local priorities. This requires new roles for organizations like CARE. Our Theory of Change thus hypothesizes that:

- **IF** we support local partners to identify their own needs with stakeholders and constituents and drive capacity strengthening addressing prioritized technical, operational, and organizational needs, while elevating their leadership, AND
- **IF** we apply a range of co-creation methodologies to regularly channel the perspectives, needs, and knowledge and leadership of local actors and communities into programming decisions, designs, delivery and documentation (monitoring, evaluation, learning), AND
- **IF** we support the channelling, leveraging, and diversifying of resources to build absorptive capacity of local systems actors that are critical to the sustainability of programs, services, and results across key sectors, AND
- **IF** we foster a robust and diverse network of local partners that are inclusive, accountable, responsive, and strive for broader engagement of marginalized / underrepresented populations to build effective, equitable, and mutually reinforcing relationships,

THEN, the actors and systems we support will be better equipped to lead the planning and delivery of quality results in an efficient, effective, and equitable inclusive way to achieve impact at scale, in response to demand-driven priorities set by local communities and partners. Consequently, leadership and funding for development, humanitarian, and nexus assistance will be successfully transitioned to local actors and systems for more sustainable impact beyond the life of the programs we support.

Strengthening Capacity

CARE approaches capacity strengthening as Capacity Sharing, Mutual Exchange, and Accompaniment based on locally-driven priorities, recognizing that local knowledge and capacity are often well established and beyond our own. Our many years of field presence and cultivation of deeply trusting relationships enables CARE to meet our partners where they are. To tailor for the needs of our diverse partners, CARE has been shifting to a more facilitative role for capacity enhancement across **technical**, **operational**, and **organizational** domains, to help them move along pathways toward growth, and greater sustainability for programs and services. Capacity strengthening is based on joint-assessment, self-assessment and development of capacity strengthening plans based on priorities that are mutually determined.

Key Tools and Methodologies- Strengthening Capacity

Participatory Capacity Assessment (PCA)- A process based on USAID-supported **Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tools**, focusing on domains of leadership, governance, strategic management, financial management, service delivery, advocacy and sustainability.

Guide to Participatory Outcomes Focused Monitoring- A guide used by CARE to help local partners grow their ability to design and implement qualitative monitoring using Most Significant Change (MSC), Outcome Harvesting (OH), or Outcome Mapping (OM), which are participatory, outcome-focused qualitative methods.

USAID Non-US Organization Pre-Award Survey (NUPAS)- An assessment tool to help a local organization determine if it is ready to work with USAID

In Cameroon, CARE applied a **mentorship model under a USAID transition award** to transfer leadership of USAID’s **Continuum of Prevention, Care and Treatment of HIV/AIDS with Most At-risk Populations (CHAMP)** Activity to a strong local prime partner, while continuing support to local CBOs for greater sustainability. The phased transition process aimed to prepare a local prime for management, financial oversight, and reporting responsibilities, based on selection among national NGO applicants. Due Diligence, Institutional Development and Organization Strengthening (IDOS), and NUPAS Pre-Award Survey assessments were conducted with each partner, and tailored organizational capacity strengthening plans were co-designed and then co-managed. Capacity support included virtual and onsite training, joint implementation, quality assurance, and coaching throughout the phased handover. Working closely with USAID, CARE supported the prime through a successful NUPAS plus remediation plan. **By 2022, CARE had successfully transitioned 100% of project leadership and funding.**



CARE’s Cambodia’s **Feminists in Action** project works with six local partners to amplify their agenda by providing skill-building and other technical capacity strengthening support requested by the partners. This ranges from gender-transformative programming to training on financial accounting and safeguarding measures within their organizations. In addition, the French government funded project supports opportunities for networking between feminist organizations and the creation of alliances to promote learning, enhance knowledge, and carry out advocacy. Partners activities focus on different areas of gender and development—preventing and intervening in gender-based violence, reducing gender injustice and discrimination in the community, delivering the foundation of financial literacy, business strategy plans for urban women’s street vendors, and engaging men, boys, and duty bearers. **Each project fosters inclusivity and diversity, such as migrant women, women farmers, people with disability, LGBTQI+, and indigenous and ethnic minority groups across the country.**

Co-Creating

Co-Creation is in our DNA as thought leaders in the development, testing and evidence building of methodologies that give voice, build agency, and grow coalitions between communities, local actors, and the systems that serve them. Aiming to transfer power while increasing sustainability, CARE systematically engages local partners in co-creation from pre-award design, throughout the project cycle and beyond the life of the project.

CARE's [partnership standards](#) guide our actions and behaviours in relationships with other actors, and hold us accountable to nurturing truly 'equitable partnerships' – collaborative relationships which systematically address power imbalances, which are grounded in mutual understanding and respect. The 5 Standards are (i) reciprocal; (ii) welcoming and respecting of our differences; (iii) seeking to reduce unnecessary burdens; (iv) respecting organisational autonomy; and (v) promoting good stewardship of the resources we are entrusted with. Our Standards inform conversations from the early stages of every partnership and become an essential tool for regular partnership reviews.

Key Tools and Methodologies- Co-Creation

Social Analysis and Action (SAA)- A facilitated reflective process, adapted for use across sectors to bring community members together to solve challenges, facilitate social and behavior change, and improve governance and accountability, while building shared responsibility and leveraging local resources to co-design development solutions.

Co-Creation: an Interactive Guide- A USAID guide to undertaking transformational co-creation processes

Community Score Card (CSC)- A participatory process that enables community engagement with service providers to track progress on priority challenges and solutions using citizen collected data.

Rapid Gender Analysis Toolkit-A five-step process with links to tools to examine gender roles, responsibilities, capacities and vulnerabilities, which is used for program design and later for problem solving.

Constituent Voice – A methodology for getting community groups involved in planning projects and defining success, giving and getting feedback for performance improvement, as basis for adaptive management.



CARE now supports USAID's [Bangladesh Integrated Youth Activity](#) (USAID Bijoyee) – a five-year, \$35M initiative grounded in *Positive Youth Development* (PYD) that aims to contribute to more effective, inclusive, locally-led development by and with Bangladeshi youth by enhancing the capacity of local youth-led organizations while preparing them to directly receive funds. Rooted in power shifting and power sharing, Bijoyee aims to model localization, youth leadership, empowerment, and inclusion in its management structure, with CARE initially leading, while strengthening

capacity of youth-led organization partners to take over the consortium leadership in the 3rd year. **Bijoyee prioritizes inclusive youth participation in design, staffing, management, monitoring, and research, fostering internal and external transformation in power relationships and gender and social norms.**

In Southern Zambia, together with partners, CARE co-developed and piloted an approach to **Locally-led Climate Adaptation (2022-2024)** for communities facing greater climate vulnerability due to droughts, floods, and erratic rainfall. The phased process includes climate vulnerability and capacity analysis, local adaptation planning, learning events and policy advocacy, and ongoing monitoring and learning. Key lessons highlighted the importance of devolving resources and decision-making resource community priorities based on local planning and budgeting, ensuring meaningful participation of women and girls who bear a disproportionate impact of climate change, and multisectoral engagement and buy-in.



Resourcing Local Actors

Based on decades of experience with our donors and [systematic input from our local partners](#), CARE has been updating our own systems to be more flexible and responsive to local needs. Our **Due Diligence** processes are tailored by the type of partnership as well as the level, complexity, and flexibility of funding sources, with an adapted approach for emerging and institutionally young partners. In response to a global survey of local partner perceptions of critical ‘pain points,’ and another focused on learning from successes (as defined by local partners), CARE has been systematically updating its **systems and procedures** to improve simplicity, efficiency and equitability in its sub-grants management, reshaping our approaches to enable more rapid fund transfer, particularly in [humanitarian aid context](#). To be responsive to demand-driven capacity needs of our local partners who aim to avoid dependence on a single donor and seek to diversify their resource base, we support them to develop resource mobilization strategies and/or action plans. This may include cost recovery for services, working with private sector partners, and pursuing funds from other donors. Within networks this would also include capacity and resource sharing and pooling of funds.

Key Tools and Methodologies- Resourcing Local Actors

CARE Partner Funding Agreement and Due Diligence Toolkit- An Internal toolkit with due diligence tools and program eligibility assessments that helps right-size local partnerships based on the capacity of the partner.

USAID Modality Decision Tool- Tools to help local actors to be better prepared for rapid response and expedite resource transfer in emergencies



CARE has been supporting USAID in the Philippines through the **Humanitarian Partnership Platform** (HPP) initiated in 2015, together with a network of local NGOs, cooperatives, private companies, faith-based groups, and women’s organizations from across the country. Humanitarian responses present significant localization challenges, with a remarkably low % of humanitarian response funding reaching local partners (1.2% in 2022) which is consequently a barrier to rapid response. This platform sought to address this and other challenges, resulting in ground-breaking improvements in resource transfer, with **76% of humanitarian funding reaching local**

partners, enabling better coverage of the response.

Under USAID’s **Women’s Voice and Leadership in Humanitarian Settings** program, CARE works to advance locally-led capacity strengthening with local partners in Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Nepal. One local partner serves as the lead in each country, supporting a cohort of 15 grassroots women-led organizations (WLOs). Each country has a separate local learning partner that implements the project’s monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning plan. While set in humanitarian contexts, the approaches, model for local leadership, and resulting capacity gains provide highly relevant learning for women-led organizations, networks, and those serving marginalized groups in development contexts.



Enhancing Networks

CARE aspires to be the most dynamic, diverse, and largest network of organizations and individuals fighting poverty and standing with those in crisis and has worked for over 77 years to establish, nurture and engage local networks to unleash the creativity and collective action of a locally-led, globally connected network of social enterprises, country office platforms, local organizations, civic participants, and private sector partners operating in more than 100 countries. Through network formation, CARE works to facilitate space for marginalized groups to find their collective voice and pursue collective advocacy toward greater quality and social justice, ensuring local leadership as the network matures. CARE uses its role as convener to bring longstanding partners together in robust networks and social movements, while creating platforms for those seeking to work collectively but lacking formal institutions to bring them together. Recognizing the diverse range of networks already established, CARE also plays roles of ally and resource partner in order to effectively support locally defined movements, and through its global platform CARE works as amplifier to help accelerate and propel the stories of grassroots movements forward to be heard by global audiences.

Key Tools and Methodologies- Enhancing Networks

Advocacy Influencing Impact Reporting (AIIR) Tool- A CARE tool that local networks can use to document and measure the impact of their advocacy efforts.

Network Field Guide- A set of tools for designing and implementing networks



CARE strengthens local systems and networks and leverages our global influence to connect local changemakers to global movements. For example, since 2010, CARE has worked with **organizations of domestic workers in Latin America – particularly women’s domestic workers** – to promote their right to dignified work, and to connect these organizations to networks, governments, social movements, international organizations, and the private sector at national, regional, and global levels so that, collectively, the agenda of domestic workers’ movement in the region is supported. Under Equal Value, Equal Rights, CARE has established partnerships in Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico, Colombia, and Honduras to engage in research, exchange of experiences, communications strategic planning, coalition building, and networking and

capacity building, with the goal of influencing public policies, organizational strengthening, and improving the lives of more than 10 million domestic workers across the region. CARE has also leveraged its global role to help convene a regional alliance for domestic workers' rights, connecting global and regional organizations with regional domestic workers' movements. Through alliances with women's associations at national and regional levels, and the strengthening of a regional network focused on domestic workers, CARE has helped press for important changes in national legislation and contributed to the **ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 189 (protecting the rights of domestic workers) in Ecuador and Bolivia, as well as the ratification of the ILO Convention 190 (violence-free workplace).**

CARE's **Women Respond Initiative** builds on CARE's Rapid Gender Analysis work, needs assessments, and our longstanding relationships with women leaders all over the world to better understand the unique situation COVID-19 has presented and to use that data to adapt our programming and advocacy efforts to meet those challenges. It puts women's voices and experiences at the center of CARE's global COVID-19 response, and provides unique insights into women's experiences leading responses to COVID-19, the evolving challenges they face, and the support they advocate for from leaders at local and global levels. Based on findings from this research, CARE released the She Told Us So report in 2020 and the follow-on She Told Us So Again study in 2022. These reports found that 55% of women reported gaps in their livelihoods in 2020, and 71% reported gaps in 2022; 41% and 66% reported food security issues in 2020 and 2022 respectively; and, in 2022, 63% of women said that their greatest need is mental health support. Based on feedback from this Initiative, CARE has advocated globally for greater equity in programming, a renewed focus on the needs and priorities of women and girls as identified in the study (including livelihoods, food, mental health, and gender-based violence services), investment in women leaders, and better data quality.

Measuring Results

CARE's internal global systems track relevant outcomes for our localization and sustainability efforts, and aim to answer questions that reflect power shifting, the nature of the partnership, partner roles in a project, what portion of projects have a learning agenda that was defined and implemented with local partners, and local feedback and accountability mechanisms involving local stakeholders in design and feedback. CARE is currently undertaking efforts to begin measuring and reporting on the following indicators:

- % of CARE's projects ensuring local partners are engaged or leading in each aspect of collaboration with CARE noted above
- % of project funds reaching local partners
- % of projects which have local partners providing technical leadership in one or more areas
- % of projects with locally defined learning agendas

In FY 2024 alone, CARE:

- Worked with over 1,274 local partners
- Carried out 47% of its activities with and through local partners, with 32% of activities including at least one partner that was a local women's rights and/or women-led organization
- Channeled 22.6% of program funds through local partners (\$198 million).

For more information on CARE's Localization work, contact Emily Usher Shrair at Emily.Shrair@care.org