As Vietnam emerges as a middle-income country, CARE International in Vietnam is focusing on ensuring long-term positive change for marginalised groups, particularly women, by tackling the underlying causes of poverty, vulnerability and social injustice. CARE in Vietnam focuses on empowering remote ethnic minority women and socially marginalised people in urban settings, so that they are able to benefit equitably from development.

Remote Ethnic Minority Women

Despite rapid socio-economic development in Vietnam, pockets of entrenched poverty and isolation remain in remote rural areas, which are home to many different ethnic groups. Within these groups, women especially lack access to land and resources. Traditional gender roles often mean that they are excluded from decision-making at the household, community and local authority level. There are also strong indicators that remote ethnic minority women are often subject to gender-based violence. Discrimination and social isolation as a result of the combination of ethnicity and gender further reduces their access to legal representations or protection.

CARE in Vietnam supports women of many different ethnicities to have a legitimate and respected voice in their households, communities, with authorities and in the value chains they take part in. CARE enables remote ethnic minority women to gain the knowledge, confidence and skills necessary to claim and advocate for their rights, and to access new and improved opportunities. As a result, they are able to improve livelihood security, increase incomes, have more equal benefits from development and are resilient to changing circumstances.

Socially Marginalised People

Vietnam’s development has resulted in increased migration, urbanisation, and changing social dynamics, which can exacerbate structural and social inequalities. Growing populations of marginalised people in urban areas, particularly women, are increasingly excluded from the benefits of change.

CARE has identified female migrants, sex workers, and people of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, as amongst those most at risk from exclusion. They often live and work in unsafe environments, and are subject to stigma, discrimination, exploitation and abuse. Many are effectively ‘hidden’ populations, lacking in representation and protection as a result of social conventions and stereotypes, or because of punitive legal and policy frameworks.

CARE in Vietnam works with these groups to promote their equitable access to decent work; legal identity; adequate protections; and health services, to ensure that socially marginalised people are able to benefit equitably from the positive impacts of development.

Country Snapshot

Population: 96.89 million
Life expectancy at birth: 76.3 yrs
Adult literacy rate: 94.5%
Access to improved water source: 94%
Under five mortality rate: 23 per 1,000 children
Maternal mortality rate: 58 per 100,000 live births
HIV prevalence among 15-49 year old: 0.3%


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Integrating Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction

Climate change and natural disasters are a major challenge to Vietnam’s development; each year Vietnam experiences increasingly erratic weather conditions and climate changes, causing challenges to rural livelihoods. Environmental threats are experienced differently by women and men, e.g. women typically lack access to information services, making it difficult for them to prepare for and manage risks from natural hazards.

Developing resilience to climate shocks and natural disasters is essential for community development, women’s empowerment and gender equality. CARE in Vietnam is committed to integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and to prioritising gender-responsive adaptation to, and mitigation of, environmental hazards.

Developing partnerships

CARE in Vietnam recognises that our work alone will not achieve our impact goals. We therefore work in partnership with local civil society, the government and the private sector. Each has a critical and complementary role to play in finding long-term solutions to poverty, social injustice and gender inequality in Vietnam. CARE focuses on bringing together partners engaged in similar initiatives, working together to develop a responsive policy environment and strengthening the capacity of partners to deliver development programmes.

Engaging men and boys in gender equality

Gender equality is essential if we are to achieve sustainable poverty reduction and social justice. CARE places particular emphasis on strengthening the voice of women and girls and enabling them to effectively participate in and influence the decisions that affect their lives. However, if gender equality is to be genuine and sustainable it is not enough to focus solely on women and girls; CARE in Vietnam therefore engages with men and boys to transform unequal power relations at all levels.

Major Donors

CARE International members currently supporting CARE in Vietnam include CARE Australia, CARE Denmark, CARE Germany, CARE UK and CARE US. Major donors include the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the European Commission, the Irish Aid and private sector.