

## WHY WOMEN'S VOICE AND LEADERSHIP?

Women's Voice and Leadership is a new priority in CARE's 2030 Gender Equality Strategy and impact area. In line with SDG 5.5, we seek to ensure **women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life**. The over-representation of men in decision-making and leadership at all levels of society and government perpetuates gender injustice and is a **root cause of gender injustice**. CARE is well positioned to meaningfully support women and girls to have more say and influence over decisions that affect their lives, through our development and humanitarian programming and advocacy.

CARE's aim is to support **11 million women and girls** to have more voice and leadership in public life and decision-making by 2030. We will achieve this through both stand-alone programming and by integrating women's voice and leadership activities and outcomes across all of CARE's impact areas and sector programmes.



Photo credit: Tana4 Media (CARE Sudan)

## WHAT DO WE AIM TO ACHIEVE?



### Mid-term objectives:

- **Public and political institutions** are more **inclusive** of, and **responsive** and **accountable** to, all people, regardless of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability or citizenship status.
- Women have **actual influence** within decision-making processes at all levels and **in all aspects of political, economic and public life**.
- **Strong and independent women-led organisations** act to transform unequal and unjust power structures and advance the rights of all genders.
- **Male leaders champion gender equality** and women's rights.

### Long-term objectives:

- **Equitable societies and political systems** work for the benefit of all people and people of all genders are equally committed to and responsible for promoting justice and equality.
- **Equitable and inclusive organisations** promote transformative forms of leadership, which advance human rights and social justice by challenging and transforming unjust social or political orders.
- Elected representatives, public officials and community **leaders actually represent and are accountable to all** and, in particular, people that are or have been oppressed or marginalised.

Based on CARE's tested and proven **Gender Equality Framework** (GEF), changes in Agency, Relations and Structures are necessary to ensure women's meaningful participation in decision-making in all aspects of political, economic and public life.

At **Agency** Level: We work to strengthen women's individual and collective agency by improving their self-esteem, access to information, education and knowledge and control of material and economic resources;

At **Relations** Level: We facilitate equitable relationships and collective action by challenging barriers at family level and engaging men and boys to end gender-based violence; supporting women and girls' participation in solidarity groups and their collective efficacy, and improving women's access to decision making spaces and their engagement with power-holders;

At **Structures** Level: We aim to transform unequal structures and social norms to ensure more inclusive institutions and services that demand and accept women power.

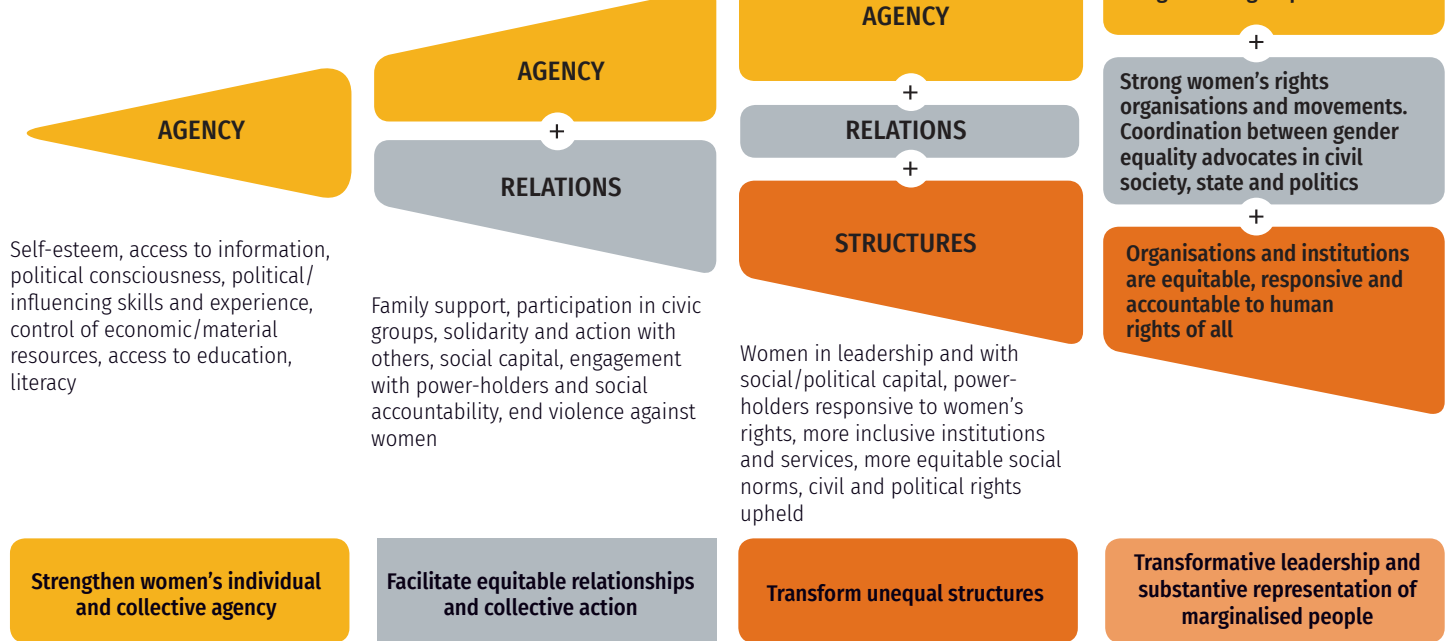
## THEORY OF CHANGE:



## CARE's continuum of changes for women's equal voice and leadership

### Continuum of changes for women's equal voice and leadership

Figure 1: High-level Theory of Change



**Note:** The continuum is not linear in practice; each step is necessary but not sufficient, changes in different dimensions often do not happen in parallel or at the same speed, and regression/backlash is common.

## WHAT ARE THE TOOLS WE USE TO ENHANCE WVL?

- **Social Analysis and Action** is a community-led social change process through which individuals and communities explore and challenge social norms, beliefs and practices around gender and sexuality.
- **Women Lead in Emergencies** promotes women's leadership in humanitarian settings to ensure humanitarian response reduces gender inequalities.
- **Village Savings & Loans Associations**, particularly those that are women led, provide opportunities for achieving transformational change in many ways.
- **Engaging Men and Boys** is crucial for achieving gender equality, particularly for transforming inequitable power relations.
- **Community Score Card** is a citizen-driven accountability measure for the assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation of service delivery.

## HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

CARE measures our success through our **global impact reporting system**. We measure indicators such as:

- **Global Indicator 1:** % of women and girls who report confidence in their own negotiation and communication skills
- **Global Indicator 14 WVL:** # and % of women and girls who have actively participated in formal (government-led) and informal (civil society-led, private sector-led) decision-making spaces.
- **Global Indicator 17 WVL:** # of new, amended or better implemented policies, legislation, multilateral agreements, programs, and/or budgets influenced by the voices of or actions taken by women and girls.

## KEY RESOURCES:

For more information about CARE's approach to Women's Voice and Leadership, see:

- **Transforming Leadership, Challenging Injustice: CARE's approach to achieving women's equal voice and leadership in public life and decision-making**

## NEED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

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