

The following provides a summary of CARE’s long term strategy in Pakistan.



**CARE’s vision** in Pakistan reflects CARE’s global vision: “Hope, tolerance, and social justice, where poverty has been overcome, and people live in dignity and security. CARE will be a force and a partner of choice in a movement dedicated to ending poverty. We will be known for our unshakable commitment to the dignity of people in Pakistan.”

CARE will achieve this vision by: “**Empowering marginalized women** to address power imbalances at the household, community and institutional levels. CARE will engage with partners to promote self-help and influence public opinion and practice by bringing together wisdom based on sound analysis and field practices.”

The **overall goal** of CARE’s 15-year (2011–2026) strategy in Pakistan is that **28 million marginalized women will be making choices that reduce vulnerability and impact their lives positively**. These women will have control over assets and exercise their rights in decision-making processes at all levels.

The goal target of 28 million reflects a shift towards facilitating positive change and addressing poverty not just at the community level but at a national level, and with the ambition of **driving macro level change**.

Globally, CARE recognizes that **women and girls suffer disproportionately** from poverty. CARE therefore places special emphasis on working with women and girls to create social change. Empowered with the proper resources, women are instrumental in overcoming poverty. While CARE will work with all sectors of society, including men, its primary measure of success will come from **sustainable positive changes in the lives of marginalized women and girls**.

Established in 2005 to address root causes of poverty in Pakistan through partnerships, capacity building and advocacy on governance and gender issues, CARE has however focused mainly on emergencies since the Kashmir earthquake in October 2005.

Building on a long-term impact goal, the revised strategy considers the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the Pakistan and how these are impacting the most marginalized segments of society – particularly women and girls. The underlying causes of poverty, the political and rights situation, governance issues, health, education and economic empowerment sectors, and cultural/ religious aspects were the focus of this strategy development process.

**Poverty in Pakistan has a ‘woman’s face’** as women are politically and socially excluded from decision-making, and have restricted access to basic services, economic opportunities and livelihood choices. Women in Pakistan suffer tremendously from gender-based violence and a higher vulnerability in disasters.

**Poverty in Pakistan has an ‘institutional core’** characterized by economic and political power imbalances at all levels, as well as sectarian and religious movements that exploit the deprivation and exclusion of the poor. Corruption is institutionalized and concentrates power and wealth within a small elite group.

**Poverty in Pakistan has a ‘deepening trend.’** Political uncertainty, the deteriorating economic situation, high inflation, unstable law and order, and the lack of good governance has deepened the level of poverty and drained resources for development in Pakistan. Pakistan lags behind in the MDGs, and behind the South Asia region in human development index trends.

Overall, Pakistan ranks 125 out of 169 on the UN Human Development Index. Frequent natural and man-made disasters increase vulnerability, internal tensions and political instability. Growing religious extremism destabilizes institutions, promotes intolerance and fosters militancy. Pakistan’s population is expected to reach over 300 million by 2050, thus increasing urban and rural poverty.

However defined, **poverty in Pakistan has a greater impact on women and girls**. The 15-year timeframe and ambition of CARE’s goal in Pakistan, illustrates a commitment to facilitating sustainable change but also recognizes the profound contextual challenges.

CARE’s programming will be based on five **strategic approaches**.

- 1) Using a **Unifying Framework** to integrate and link outcomes on human conditions, social position, and enabling environment. Programming will respond to emergencies and improve access to social services (human conditions) with a focus on promoting women’s rights (social positions) and supporting advocacy to ensure that institutions are responsive, inclusive, and foster a just and equitable society (enabling environment).
- 2) Developing and strengthening **Strategic Partnerships** with civil society, government and the private sector to facilitate social movements and leverage impact.
- 3) **Targeting impact** based on a sound and evidence based analysis of how change happens, and how to make change happen in Pakistan.
- 4) **Learning and Innovating** to become a respected and valued international women’s empowerment organization in Pakistan.
- 5) **Mainstreaming** gender equity, advocacy, governance, capacity building and disaster risk reduction through programming.

CARE’s strategy aims to **facilitate change** in three specific programming areas, namely: **health, education, and economic empowerment**. Thus CARE will help women and girls in Pakistan **‘Live, Learn and Earn’**. In each area CARE will focus on specific objectives (*domains of change*) and target key breakthroughs (*sustainable changes*) through specific interventions (*pathways of change*).



Key **objectives under health** are:

- 1) To improve women’s and girls’ access to reproductive health services by overcoming discrimination from customary laws and practices;
- 2) To improve the availability of quality health service delivery for poor women.

CARE will work on enhancing the knowledge and capacity amongst women to improve and maintain holistic health and nutritional practices by advocating for health education up to secondary level and actively engaging political parties to promote women’s health issues. Initiatives to work with religious clergy and traditional elders/leaders to promote a positive interpretation of women’s reproductive health rights, as well as gender sensitive customary practices will be developed. Partnering with civil society, government and academia, evidence-based advocacy will be used to increase collaboration among health service providers, increase budgeting for women’s health, strengthen accountability to MNCH (Maternal, Newborn & Child health) goal indicators, and reduce malpractice tolerance. CARE will increasingly engage in and support networks using social mobilization and media to lobby for improved health services for women, focusing on adequately resourced quality MNCH services at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Ensuring adequate reproductive health care and promoting gender sensitive health and hygiene interventions during disasters will be a priority in CARE’s future emergency responses. In addition, CARE will work with the private sector and government to promote insurance for poor women as a means of reducing their vulnerability to disasters.

**Key breakthroughs** will be when religious clergy positively support women’s reproductive health rights through maddrassa reforms, curriculum redesign and formal and informal teachings, and political parties include women’s health issues as key priorities in party manifestoes, with the introduction and enforcement of laws banning pre-birth sex selection, harmful customary practices and deliveries by unskilled birth attendants.

To ensure it is on the right pathway during its programming in health, CARE will **monitor milestones** associated with: deliveries conducted by skilled birth attendants; family planning decision-making by both men and women; understanding of nutritional food value by women; level of reporting and auditing of infant and maternal mortality; national health budget expenditures; implementation of HMIS; availability of quality MNCH health services; legislation favoring women’s health issues; policies reducing vulnerability to disasters; and application of civil law against gender-based health discrimination and victimization.

Key **objectives under education** are:

- 1) To overcome discriminatory attitudes and practices towards girls and women’s education;
- 2) To improve the quality and standards of education service delivery to the poor.



CARE will work with media to highlights gaps in female education, and with women leaders in society to strengthen participation in and lobbying of parliament for pro-girls education polices. Influential voices will be engaged to create support amongst religious groups to address discriminatory practices constraining girls’ education, and also to promote peacebuilding to counter the influence of militancy. Projects with local civil society and government will provide the evidence for advocacy and awareness raising at all levels to create more favorable environments for female participation in education by promoting greater acceptance of women’s and girls’ mobility, gender-sensitive curriculum, re-entry of drop-outs, and female teacher recruitment.

Work at the community level with local bodies will inform and create demand for improved national governance of the education system, as well as strengthen local accountability for standards in girls’ education. Coalitions, social networks and political allies will be facilitated to advocate for strengthening regulatory control with respect to quality and standards, and improving transparency and planning in terms of expenditure and recruitment in education. Ensuring that government and community plans consider and reduce the impact of disasters on education infrastructure and provision (formal & informal) will form part of CARE’s practice-based advocacy. CARE will enhance its private sector partnerships to provide women’s vocational training as well as help build capacity within the education system aimed at improving quality.

**Key breakthroughs** will be achieved when government increases spending on education to 7%,

and gender-sensitive education policies and plans are implemented.

CARE’s education work will be **monitored against indicators** associated with: girls primary and secondary school enrolment and dropout rates; the influence of customary practices (i.e. early marriages), mobility, and domestic labor on girls participating in schooling; education budget implementation; EMIS implementation; application of standards and legal enforcement across education service providers (private, religious, public); female teacher training and recruitment levels; gender-sensitive education policy processes; girls literacy levels; resilience of education provision to disasters; and changes in women’s workforce participation.

Key **objectives under economic empowerment** are:

- 1) To enhance life-skills and vocational training opportunities for women;
- 2) To improve legal and regulatory protection of resources, workplace wage equity, and domestic worker rights;
- 3) To promote gender sensitive land rights and tenancy act reform.

This programming area will build on the work in health and education, which is critical to ensuring women have the capacity to be economically active. CARE will engage the public and private sector in providing and increasing the availability of demand-driven life-skills and vocational training, and the introduction of related curricula in secondary schools. Media, academia and civil society networks/coalitions will be facilitated and coordinated to raise awareness, generate research, build capacity and advocate for policy reform to remove discriminatory barriers/practices, and to enhance the rights of domestic workers and increase opportunities for women to enter the workforce with equitable rights as men.



Social movements will be supported to enhance and protect women’s right to productive assets and access to financial services. CARE’s projects will facilitate advocacy on land rights for the marginalized; strengthen women’s decision-making on household and local productive assets; and encourage and build capacity in public/private partnerships on the delivery of women-friendly financial services. Practice and research will strengthen the understanding of the impact of disasters on vulnerable women’s economic rights and actively promote the appropriate institutional responses to mitigate the impact of disasters on women’s livelihoods and to support their recovery.

**Initial breakthroughs** will be achieved when political parties adopt strong positions protecting access to productive assets and encourage equitable economic activity for women. Policies promoting land rights, vocational training, workforce equity and domestic worker rights for the marginalized will be critical.

Monitoring **milestones towards economic empowerment** objectives will target gender-sensitive workforce policy processes; skills training and gaining related employment; access to financial services, microenterprise, asset and agriculture insurance; decision-making over productive resources; land ownership; women-friendly workplace improvements; domestic work income; changes in customary practices; and social mobilization activity on women’s economic empowerment.

**Key Stakeholders:** While strategic partnerships with civil society, government and the private sector will be central, the increased focus on social positions and an enabling environment will impact a broader set of stakeholders at all levels, including ‘allies’ and ‘blockers’ amongst actors that have influence on policy and practice in Pakistan. Increasingly men, religious leaders, landlords, industrialists, media, and politicians will be impacted and influenced by, but also impact and influence CARE’s work.

Although this strategy calls for greater focus on key influencing stakeholders (and particularly men), **marginalized women and girls remain the basis for judging the success of CARE’s work in Pakistan.**

**Geographic Focus:** While CARE’s existing projects cover four provinces and reflects the history of responding to disasters. Future programming will not be restricted in geographical focus, but will be determined by criteria that support breakthroughs along the change process, geographic relevance and

potential to leverage macro level change through strong advocacy and partnerships.

**Risks and Assumptions:** With the increased focus on influencing the enabling environment and social positions that underpin the causes of poverty, key assumptions are the strong existence of allies, and the political will and social movements behind the issues in health, education and economic empowerment. Despite the existing state fragility, sufficient social, political and economic stability is assumed to allow positive milestones to be built upon. Key risks to stability are natural disasters and militancy and religious extremism, which will fuel political turmoil, cause resistance to change, fragment society, and drain economic resources.



**Achieving the Strategy:** To deliver this strategy CARE in Pakistan will change so as to be able to engage with a more diverse range of partners and with an increased commitment to research, advocacy, and policy and power analysis. Flexibility, risk management and trust building will be keys to developing and maintaining strategic partnerships. Clearly understanding advocacy (and security) risks will become integral to programming. Translating learning into practice and innovation will require investments that support organizational growth.

A detailed program document articulating projects, activities and plans to achieve the objectives under health, education and economic empowerment will support this strategy. Supporting strategies on cross-cutting issues, resource mobilization and strategic approaches will strengthen consistency of the way CARE will work throughout delivery of the strategy.

While remaining focused on the key objectives the strategy is intended as a **‘living’ and iterative strategy** subject to regular review and revision during its 15-year timeframe to ensure the identified pathways of change remain relevant.