



WOMEN'S VOICE

IMPROVING LITERACY, NUMERACY + LEARNING

Founded in 1945, CARE's programming extends around the globe—working to save lives, defeat poverty, and achieve social justice. One of the largest poverty-fighting organizations in the world, CARE works in over 100 countries, directly reaching more than 69 million people (73% women and girls) annually. Globally, CARE has more than 160 education projects reaching more than 10 million people.

WOMEN'S VOICE IN TIMOR-LESTE

Since Timor-Leste gained independence in 2002, gender equality has been an important national development goal. Considerable progress has already been made in addressing inequalities through legislation, policy development, institutional mechanisms, and increased public awareness.

Women have played an active role in the struggle for independence, peace building, and politics. Timor-Leste has one of the highest proportions of female parliamentarians in the world and the highest in Asia and the Pacific with a 38% share of parliamentary seats.

But participation is severely lacking at the local level where women have almost no voice and males hold 98% of the chief positions at both the suco (village) and aldeia (hamlet) level. Progress in equality in the public sector has been slow with the number of women holding civil service jobs only increasing 3% in 12 years to just 29% in 2013, at a time when public sector jobs tripled.

Women have limited involvement in decision making at home and in the community and with limited government representation, women's needs are not well represented. Gender based violence is widespread, maternal mortality remains high and significant gender gaps continue across the job sector and local governance.

CARE International in Timor-Leste

CARE has been operating in Timor-Leste since 1994. CARE works in all 13 municipalities and reaches 47% of Timorese households – 102,000 people – with our nationwide disaster preparedness and assistance, education, sexual, reproductive and maternal health and rights, and rural livelihoods programming.

In Timor Leste, CARE's goal is to improve the wellbeing and voice of women and girls in rural disadvantaged areas as we know they are the most disadvantaged members of society. We achieve this through our thematic priority areas of sexual reproductive and maternal health and rights, education, women's economic empowerment and women's voice.

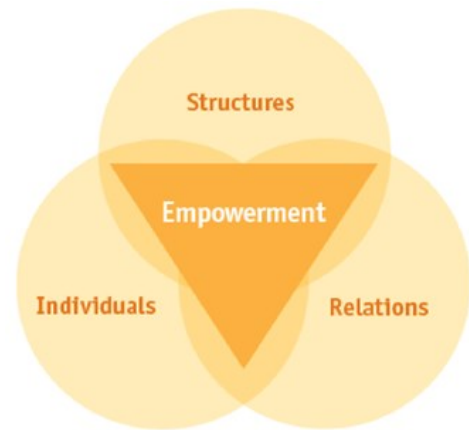


CARE'S WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK

CARE defines women's empowerment as the combined effect of changes in:

- **Agency:** a woman's own knowledge, skills and abilities
- **Relations:** the power relationships through which she negotiates her path
- **Structures:** the societal norms, customs, institutions and policies that shape her choices in life.

CARE's Women's Empowerment Framework requires holistic changes across these three areas in order to achieve sustainable improvements in Women's Voice.



CARE'S APPROACH

Women and Girls in Rural Disadvantaged Areas are the Impact Group for CARE's long term program strategy, which aims to bring about a significant and lasting improvement in their wellbeing and voice. This strategy focuses on:

AGENCY

Building leadership, decision making and technical skills, knowledge and confidence of women through:

- Improving women's awareness, knowledge, access and influence in governance issues, rights, laws policies and systems
- Building the capacity of government gender focal points and key network members at local levels.

RELATIONS

Working with key relationship groups to break down barriers to women's empowerment through:

- Working with men and boys, families, community and government leaders to promote support for women and girls' engagement in leadership and decision-making
- Training, Social Analysis and Action and awareness raising to build support for gender equality and women's empowerment
- Working with key groups to reduce gender-based violence.

STRUCTURE

Working with community leaders to address social norms that hold women back through:

- Supporting opportunities for women and girls to engage in leadership and decision-making roles
- Advocating for the development and implementation of laws, policy and practice addressing gender equity, women's participation, women's empowerment and gender-based violence
- Building the capacity of Civil Society Organisations to influence service providers, government and communities at local levels
- Working with local CSOs, government, service providers, police, suco councils and others to reduce gender-based violence.

PROGRAMS SUPPORTING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

HAMORIS PROJECT

The HAMORIS project aims to contribute to lasting reductions in maternal mortality and morbidity by increasing the number of women accessing Sexual, Reproductive and Maternal Health and Rights services. In mothers' and fathers' support groups, awareness is raised about issues like family planning and gender equality. The midterm study found 59% of support group members report joint household decision making. It also reported 76% women were making their own decisions on sexual relations.

WATER FOR WOMEN

This project works to increase the agency of women, girls and other at-risk groups in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) context, including those who may be particularly disadvantaged, such as women with disabilities, to enact their own choices. Activities include facilitating Women in Leadership training in communities, and supporting women to take on leadership roles in WASH committees and other areas.

LAFAEK

The Komunitade magazine of the Lafaek project publishes articles encouraging and advocating for women to share their experiences or raise awareness on issues, promote active participation and stand for elections at the suco government level. The magazines also target students at the primary level encourages girl students to engage more and promotes girls' leadership in the school and in the classrooms. The magazine also provides information on professional careers with a focus on girls in STEM and challenges social norms exclude women pursuing careers or social lives.

