



**Water+ is linking water to other interventions to make the biggest impact possible. It is about sanitation and hygiene, but also about water for agriculture, for livelihoods, for nutrition, for keeping girls in schools, for helping women to be leaders and more.**

### Why Water+?

Lack of access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and related services too often is considered solely an engineering and infrastructure problem — solved by digging wells, laying pipes and building latrines. But getting the infrastructure or technology in place is relatively straightforward. The more complicated aspects of WASH involve developing and implementing policies to support sustainable water+ access for large numbers of people; ensuring that water access is equitable and properly managed; ensuring that there is financing not only for initial investment in infrastructure, but also for long-term maintenance; and fostering inclusive and environmentally sound management of water through conservation and water smart agriculture (WaSA). Through the concept of water+,<sup>1</sup> CARE embraces this complexity with a clear goal of improving the lives of poor women and school-age girls through better access to the basic necessities of water, sanitation and hygiene.

### Why Women and Girls?

We focus on women and girls because in most households around the world they are responsible for collecting water for domestic use and for hygiene and sanitation, but have limited control over the productive benefits generated from water resources. WASH can improve the lives of women and girls in a larger way than for men and boys. Sustainable WASH can increase the time girls can spend in school, since

they are spending less time collecting water, and for women improvements can increase time and water availability for productive activities or better child nutrition.

### Our Theory of Change

With more than 660 million people lacking access to safe water and about 2.4 billion lacking access to adequate sanitation, CARE's theory of change helps us think about large-scale, holistic solutions to the crisis. The theory identifies the multiple dimensions and various levels at which we must act to contribute to change:

1. Strengthening governance of water+ services.
2. Addressing social, gender and power dynamics.
3. Implementing integrated solutions to water+.

Through our theory of change, we call attention to the inequities faced by those who lack access to water+, while also challenging the political and societal structures and beliefs that perpetuate these injustices. Because water+ affects so many areas of human welfare — including livelihoods, education and health — we work closely with other sectors and partner with governments and other institutions.

### Programming Areas

#### WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

CARE has decades of experience in addressing community water supply through installing boreholes, hand-dug wells,

1. Water+ is CARE's term for an approach that encompasses our traditional work with drinking water provision, sanitation and hygiene along with productive uses of water and ecologically sustainable water-resource management.

spring catchments and gravity or pumped distribution systems. We work with governments, private partners and communities to ensure that these water systems are set up, managed and financed in a sustainable way that is accessible to all, and not a cause of potential conflict. CARE has significant experience integrating WASH in schools (including menstrual hygiene management) into existing systems and advocating for increased budgets and monitoring. For sanitation, CARE promotes simple technologies based on local materials and encourages communities to move toward progressively more preferred options, often through sanitation marketing. Hygiene promotion also is one of the pillars of our work, using interactive methodologies that focus on the priorities and traditions of local communities. We integrate handwashing messages into village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), grandmother groups, school hygiene clubs or other groups that share core values. Though our target communities have been primarily rural, we have experience providing services and working with urban and peri-urban communities, particularly informal settlements.

#### **WATER SMART AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

CARE's water smart agriculture (WaSA) program works with small-holder farmers, primarily women, to pilot and adopt methods to increase yield in times of unreliable rainfall. We work with communities on rehabilitation and maintenance of watersheds for sustainable water use, water quality and erosion control. We empower vulnerable populations to conserve their environment and ensure its long-term benefit.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Establishing systems to ensure lasting service delivery is crucial. CARE has broad experience in implementing tools and approaches to support community-led governance and partnerships with local and national governments. Increasingly, CARE is recognized for its policy analysis, for its ability to influence at national levels to ensure water+ access for underserved populations, and for holistic water resources management. We work closely with governments to foster sound planning and to ensure that programs are fully integrated into the existing system and community or country strategies, and not seen simply as a CARE initiative. We work with multiple partners, including other non-profit organizations, the government and the private sector, to

increase communication, efficiency and overall sustainability and effectiveness.

#### **WATER+ IN EMERGENCIES**

In accordance with our Humanitarian WASH Strategy 2013-2020, CARE's Emergency WASH team supports CARE country offices and their implementing partners in maintaining "the right of disaster-affected populations to timely and effective emergency WASH interventions which afford dignity and protection, while contributing to the empowerment of women and long-term poverty and vulnerability reduction." Based on an assessment of immediate needs, emergency WASH staff provide support within hours of a crisis. In addition to immediate assistance staff provide technical support to local and regional networks through needs assessments, monitoring visits, proposal development and more.

## **Global Initiatives**

#### **ADVOCACY**

Through advocacy we leverage lessons learned at the community level for more effective policies and governance. As a leading advocate in the U.S. for foreign assistance related to water, sanitation and hygiene, CARE helped bring about the passage of the 2014 renewed Water for the Poor Act that increased U.S. funding for WASH.

#### **PARTNERSHIPS**

Water+ at CARE is rooted in strong partnerships, which increases impact, scale and program quality. CARE has played a strong, and often founding, role in several partnerships, including the Howard G. Buffett Foundation's Global Water Initiative, the Millennium Water Alliance, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's SWASH+ Project, and USAID's Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor, and Global Water for Sustainability.

#### **LEARNING**

In learning about successes and failures, CARE is open and eager to do our work even better. We have experience in monitoring and evaluation, knowledge-sharing and conducting research with universities. We participate in and coordinate large research projects, like SWASH+, as well as smaller studies of water governance, scheme functionality and spare parts, women's experience with WASH, and women's empowerment due to WASH.

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