Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere with the 2013 Human Development Index placing it 161 of 186 countries. As both cause and consequence to this poverty, Haiti is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, ranking the highest among 200 countries on vulnerability to climate change in terms of potential floods and mudslides. With a long history of political turmoil, violent and contentious regime changes, lack of State intervention and under-investment in social services, Haiti is often classified as a fragile and/or failed state.

Since its origins as the first black republic in the new world, the result of the only successful slave revolt, Haiti has been plagued with political and economic strife, concentrating power and resources at the top of the social strata and instigating an exodus of intellectuals and professionals during the Duvalier (father and son) regime and then Aristide Presidency. During the 1990s an international trade embargo greatly affected the economic sector and further reduced public and private investment. A near total lack of urban planning and/or zoning control, increasing extreme poverty, combined with high urban migration has resulted in hundreds of thousands of people living in densely populated make-shift slums – mostly built along ravines or flood plains – with no access to social services. The 2010 earthquake not only contributed to these challenges, but also demonstrated their devastating consequences in the country’s level of destruction and subsequent slow recovery.

CARE first opened an office in Haiti in 1954 to provide emergency response assistance in the aftermath of Hurricane Hazel. Today, almost 60 years later, CARE Haiti remains one of the key Non-Governmental Organizations committed to both emergency response and development programming. CARE’s development strategy is targeted at addressing the underlying causes of poverty: gender inequity, a lack of social cohesion and poor governance. CARE aims to bring real and sustainable improvements to the quality of life of Haitians and has made significant strides in improving health and food security, education, economic development, water and sanitation, and since the 2010 earthquake, shelter and urban development. As emergencies must be considered part of long term development, CARE integrates Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into all its programs. As another cross-cutting issue, CARE incorporates good governance into all projects, helping to create a voice for the most vulnerable.
CARE contributes to Haiti’s National Development Plan through:

- Building partnerships with public institutions, Haitian civil society and the private sector to develop replicable models of local development and decentralization
- Providing technical and financial assistance to community initiatives
- Supporting local actions to reduce poverty and social injustice
- Supporting local advocacy efforts and actions to reduce poverty and social injustice

**Food Security and Nutrition**

CARE addresses food security and asset protection for poor households in support of a Haitian Government food safety net program. CARE has created an innovative electronic voucher system that can be scaled up in response to future emergencies as well as contribute to longer term development programs. Vouchers provide monthly food credits to vulnerable families while creating demand for local food producers thus supporting more sustainable results.

**Community Driven Development**

CARE works to build a base for reconstruction and recovery founded on existing building capital, social links and local capacity which allow communities to organise themselves and make decisions on their environment. CARE works to empower Community Based Organizations, legitimize informal neighbourhoods and reinforce links with public institutions, create community development plans, improve living conditions and reduce risks for entire neighbourhoods and support the most vulnerable by giving them a voice in their communities. Community driven approach helps instil accountability and beneficiary responsibility.

**Education**

CARE supports the Haitian Ministry of Education to improve access to and quality of education for boys and girls in primary schools in Haiti. It specifically targets “out of school” children developing programs to encourage the enrollment of over-age children, street children and children engaged in domestic servitude.

**Economic Development**

CARE also helps communities boost value-chains and marketing capabilities. Projects focus on soil conservation, improved agricultural practices, water management, social enterprise and savings-led microfinance. Via its highly successful Village Savings and Loan Associations project, CARE Haiti promotes the empowerment of men and women to achieve greater economic independence and access to financial products.

**Protection**

CARE works to strengthen the protection of vulnerable groups and address discrimination supporting Haitian Government efforts, Non-Governmental and community organizations to prevent abuses while strengthening their ability to address these needs more effectively.

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**CARE Programming Principles:**

- Promote empowerment
- Work in partnership with others
- Promote the non-violent resolution of conflicts
- Seek sustainable results
- Address discrimination
- Ensure accountability & promote responsibility

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