

CARE's Water Team Contributing to Transformational Change

Following a recent survey within CARE and with our key partners, the Water Team reviewed its approaches, priorities and structure. This brief summarizes the feedback we heard and how we propose to change, to increase further the impact of CARE's work on Water+¹, as well as our contributions to broader organizational priorities.

The feedback we heard

We welcomed the response from a third of CARE Country Offices (24) and many different CARE member teams, as well as some key external partners. Under half of respondents know our work well (45%), so we need to reach out more effectively beyond this group in the future. Our most valued services and areas of support were on knowledge management, design of new programs and proposals, and linking to global or regional advocacy. These areas would continue to be important in future years, with greater importance put on advocacy. Support was valued and needed across a broad range of technical areas (sustainable WASH access and strengthening government capacities, WASH & gender, WASH in schools, WASH & nutrition, water for agriculture, and water resource management). However, we were urged by our partners to focus more narrowly on specific priorities where CARE can most add value, and engage actively in partnerships and advocacy around these.

Work on water in the future will be a high priority for half of respondents (55%). Many teams identified specific areas where they can most add value on Water+ over the next few years, mostly aligning with the two focus priority areas of sustainable services and Water Smart Agriculture. CARE's work on Water+ was considered particularly important to the CARE 2020 Program Strategy Outcomes on Food & nutrition security & climate change, but also relevant to the other Outcomes. Nearly all respondents felt the Water Team was needed into the future, adapting to ensure greater connections with teams working on other priorities within the organization.

How we are changing

Based on the feedback, our own analysis of where we can best add value, to the sector as well as the CARE 2020 Program Strategy, the team selected two key areas as the primary focus of our work for the following two-three years:

- District-Wide Sustainable WASH Services – working with Government, private sector, NGOs and communities to ensure sustainable and increased investment and capacities to expand coverage, and maintain existing services, for communities and institutions (such as schools or health facilities). CARE's tools focused on governance & functionality, water point mapping, and life-cycle costs, as well as our work on public-private partnerships, and specific



CARE's Water Team promotes innovation, learning and advocacy across the organization, in line with the CARE International 2020 Program Strategy.

We focus on two key priorities:

- **District-Wide Sustainable WASH Services**
- **Water Smart Agriculture (WaSA)**

Our core approaches reflect those of the CARE Program Strategy, and the Water+ Theory of Change:

- **Sustainability:** financial, institutional, social, technical and environmental
- **Gender**
- **Governance**

CARE promotes innovative approaches, with evidence of impact (Role 2, below), and multiplies our impact (Role 3) through:

- Learning, together with partners and local actors
- Advocacy to scale up & increase financing & sustainability
- Global advocacy, learning and partnerships

technical innovations (e.g. in Community Led Total Sanitation), will be widely shared and promoted.

- **Water Smart Agriculture (WaSA)** – CARE is leading the development, with partners in East Africa, of this new concept, building on our work with women and men champion farmers, testing techniques such as improved soil management, and small-scale water-harvesting and irrigation that enable smallholder farmers to produce more food, even in prolonged dry spells. Working on local action research and national and regional policy, the model is strengthening the link between water and food production at both the policy and practice levels, increasing attention to and investment in both rain-fed (green) water and irrigation (blue) water, highlighting the role of smallholder farmers, and women in particular, as key actors in addressing the food security challenge.

We will continue to be located around the globe, with particular but not exclusive focus on the East Africa and West Africa regions, funded by a mixture of foundation, corporate and institutional donors aligned with our focus areas, and the core approaches of sustainability, governance and gender that make up our Theory of Change (Figure 1). We will strengthen further our coordination with the CARE International Emergency WASH team, hosted by CARE Australia, which leads on CARE’s work on water

and sanitation in Humanitarian Assistance. In particular, we will focus on strengthening links between CARE’s emergency WASH work and our promotion of sustainable WASH services, to ensure greater disaster preparedness and resilience.



Alignment with the CARE 2020 Program Strategy

Beyond the clear alignment of core **approaches** (sustainability, governance and gender), CARE’s work on Water + contributes strongly to the Roles and the Outcomes of the CARE International 2020 Program Strategy. One approach to learning and innovation, **Learning Practice Alliances**, is proving a particularly powerful way of multiplying our impact (**Role 2**). By involving Government officials and academics together with Champion Farmers learning around Water Smart Agriculture, defining their

own learning agenda and priorities, greater political buy-in and support for the WaSA concept has been generated than is often seen from externally-driven, even if more technically rigorous, research methods. Beyond emergencies, water and sanitation are also critical for the priority **outcomes** (see Figure 2). We are seeing more sustainable results from our practical approaches for addressing **gender** in water, such as gender mainstreaming in West

Africa, the Impact of WASH on Women Tool (IWWT), or the adaptation to Water+ of CARE approaches such as VSLA and Social Analysis and Action. The Water Team will work closely in and with the teams leading CARE’s approaches and outcomes, to ensure our innovations, learning and advocacy contribute to the implementation plans for the CI Strategy.

Find out more

Reports, tools and highlights of CARE’s work on Water+, in development & humanitarian contexts, are available on <http://water.care2share.wikispaces.net/>. Contact us at mcheneycoker@care.org, sogden@care.org or lochery@care.org to share your innovations and ideas for collaboration.

Figure 2: Water+ contributions to CI Outcomes

CI Program Goals	Contributions of CARE’s work on Water+
Food and Nutrition Security & Climate Change Resilience	- Water smart agriculture increases the productive potential of smallholder farmers which contribute to household food security and dietary diversity. - Increasing household water and sanitation access, and promoting hygiene behavior change, decreases infant risk of diarrhea and environmental enteropathy, two significant pathways of malnutrition and stunting. Access to safe water (20%) and improved sanitation (15%) explains over a third of the variation in stunting rates across countries and time periods.
Women’s Economic Empowerment	- Sustainable water services contribute to time savings among women and girls allowing them to attend school, to work, and encourage their daughters to do the same. - Women’s involvement in water for agriculture and VSLAs are opportunities for women’s wealth generation.
Rights to Sexual, Reproductive & Maternal Health and a life free from violence	- Ensuring women’s access to safe household water and sanitation facilities reduces women’s vulnerability to rape, and sexual assault – all common when women must travel far from home to fetch water or defecate in the privacy of night. - Increased availability of menstrual hygiene management products and ensuring access to safe, appropriate and private water and sanitation facilities at schools, helps girls overcome barriers to education, and reduce health risks during pregnancy and childbirth. Studies show that households with poor sanitation or unsafe water have greater odds of maternal mortality.

ⁱ Water+ is our term for an approach that encompasses our traditional work with drinking water provision, sanitation and hygiene along with productive uses of water (such as irrigation), and ecologically sustainable water resource management.