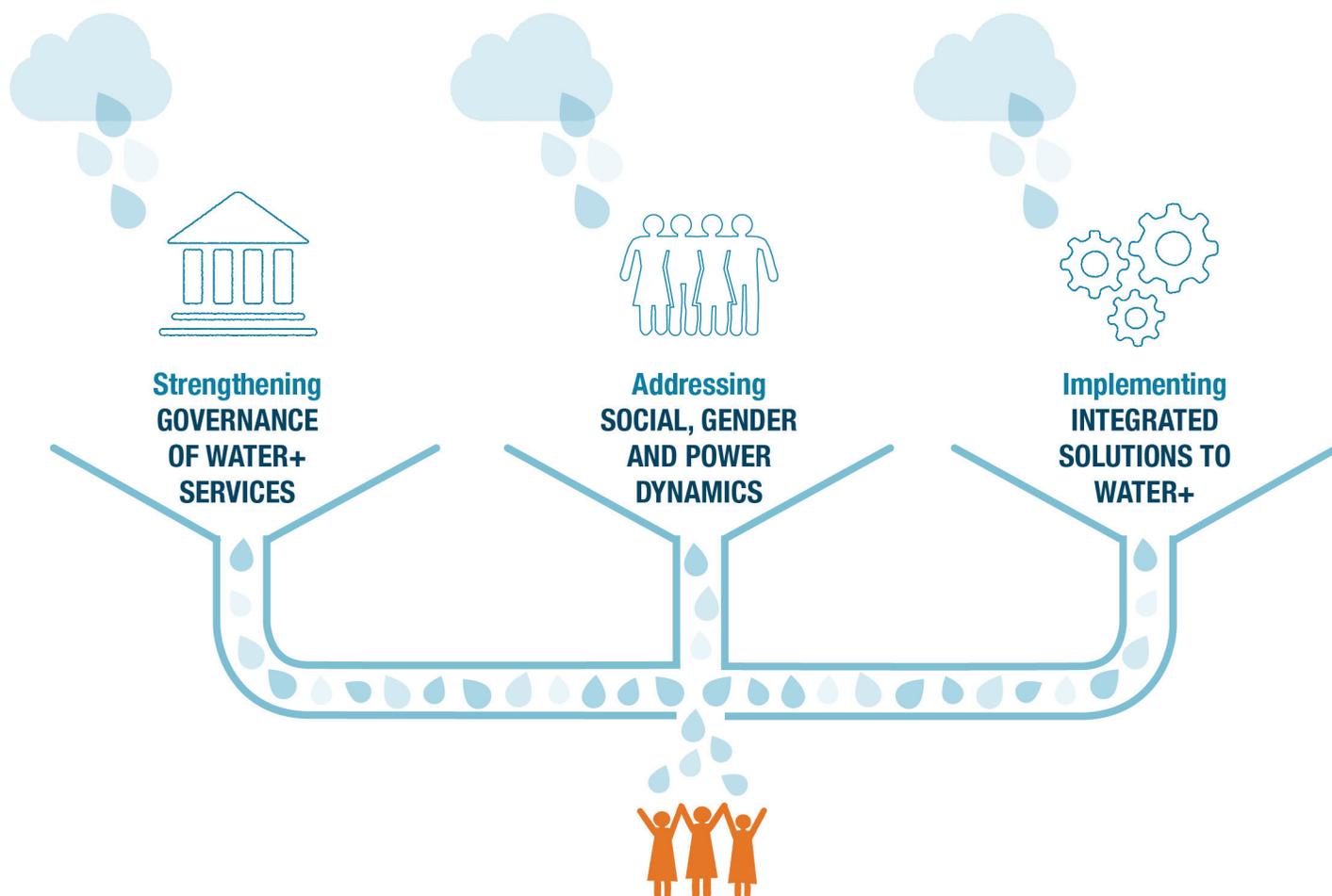




water + Theory of Change



Poor women and school-aged girls improve their lives

About the Theory of Change

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene is one of the most fundamental pillars of socio-economic development and can have knock-on effects within many areas in the lives of the poor. For this reason, CARE has a goal of improving the lives of poor women and school-aged girls through our work in water+¹, and our theory of change spells out the general process by which we expect the improvements to take place. We do not expect the process to be entirely predictable, nor do we believe that this is the only way change can happen but we do believe that the elements presented here are key ingredients in our unique approach to change.

¹ Water+ is about linking water to other interventions so that we can 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. Water+ helps us achieve more with less and respond to the complex inter-related needs of the people we work with.



Strengthening **GOVERNANCE OF WATER+ SERVICES**

Governments are the ultimate duty-bearers regarding the poor's access to water+ services. Our job is to help them do their job – regulate and incentivize private-sector service provision, set standards of quality, ensure equitable access and make sure the poorest and most vulnerable are reached. Our work entails advocacy to government on effective interventions, appropriate resource prioritization and policy changes. We also aim to support government at all levels in managing water services. We focus in particular on sustainable, district-wide water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) coverage to help ensure that we and other development actors are looking systemically at the challenge of service provision and striving for large-scale impact and reach. When necessary, and when local government capacity is weak, we also strengthen community-level governance of water+ resources and services.



Addressing **SOCIAL, GENDER AND POWER DYNAMICS**

Because water is a scarce resource, (but also because its collection is primarily considered to be women's work) its use, access and management are inherently social and political. The poorest communities and households and women and girls are typically disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of water+ access. Its collection is also primarily considered to be women's (and girls' work) and this often unfair delegation of responsibility can hinder them from pursuing educational and income-generating opportunities. Increasing evidence shows that addressing these social and political factors can pay off in terms of project effectiveness and sustainability. For example, CARE research (2013-2015) suggests that addressing gender equity and women's empowerment leads to better functioning waterpoints and latrines. Therefore we work with communities, local organizations and government to highlight and address areas of inequity and social injustice, strengthen water governance and empower the most disenfranchised to have a say in the use and management of water+ services.



Implementing **INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS TO WATER+**

CARE is committed to change that transcends access to water+ services; change so far-reaching that it requires us to work with partners beyond the WASH sector. This means that we do not stop at WASH access but rather seek integrated programs such as WASH and nutrition, and water-smart agriculture and food security, that allow water+ programming to improve lives in a multitude of ways. These include decreases in stunting from the combination of better nutrition and access to sanitation, better educational outcomes through WASH facilities that help girls get educated rather than married young, and increased food production through wise water management coupled with food security and livelihood interventions.



Conclusion

This theory of change is meant to inspire, provoke debate and guide. When we work with partners, it helps us clarify our assumptions and intentions and ensure there is common purpose. It also provides us with a framework within which to measure our progress. However, it is a flexible guide; the relative priority of each of the elements and the sequence in which they are addressed will depend on the context. Poor women and school-aged girls face a range of injustices relating to water+ services. But they also have tremendous will and resourcefulness in overcoming these injustices. We believe that the actions blue-printed in this theory of change will make us their allies in this journey.