Supporting women’s social movements and collective actions

A CIGN POSITION PAPER AND A GUIDANCE NOTE FOR CARE

CARE INTERNATIONAL GENDER NETWORK (CIGN) 2019
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Domestic Workers Organizing group. Guatemala, 2018 (Photo: ©Nancy Farese/CARE)

Cover picture: #March4Women, London, 2017; Photo © Julie Edwards/CARE
Executive Summary

CARE is committed to tackling the underlying causes of poverty and social injustice to bring lasting change to the world’s most vulnerable. This requires supporting and engaging with change agents. Research shows that major social change only occurs when those who have been excluded from power organize collectively in the form of social movements to challenge existing systems and their impact. In addition, there is growing evidence globally that feminist social movements are driving gender justice.

Working with social movement actors requires surmounting scepticism and hesitation from activists about partnering with International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs). Funding for feminist and other social movements is limited. Reports show that, despite global commitment of funds for gender equality work, the funds that reach feminist movements organizing in the global South are minimal. The fact that funds are not invested in social movements results in the dilution of the inherently political and transformative nature of work that movements do.

This is the context in which CARE is seeking to increase its support to and accompaniment of social movements.

This document covers CARE’s definition of what a social movement is; why CARE should partner more intentionally with social movements; what roles CARE should play in support of social movements; what type of social movements CARE will partner with; how CARE works with social movements and proposes implications and recommendations for CARE.

CARE understands a movement as “an organized set of people vested in making a change in their situation by pursuing a common political agenda through collective action”, as defined by the women’s rights advocate and academic, Srilatha Batliwala.

CARE works with social movements because history shows that change happens with collective action; both NGOs and movements want a lasting and transformative change and are sometimes even aligned; investing in collective action increases the sustainability of the impact; to achieve gender justice requires community-based solutions and globally civic space is shrinking.

CARE should play four critical roles in its support of social movements, they are:

- **Convener**: CARE links movement actors together for peer learning and mentoring; provides support to ensure that movement voices are heard and connected to key decision-makers/stakeholders; provides support to ensure participation of movement actors at key events/moments to advance their movement agendas and goals.

- **Ally**: CARE aligns its own agenda with those of social movements to provide more people power and organizational influence on the issues being advocated for. CARE aligns its internal systems such that it can be an effective support/ally to these agendas.
CARE leverages resources for movement actors; listens to movements and provides the resources that they identify as necessary and gives up some of its own resources when necessary to strengthen movements.

**Resource Partner**

CARE uses its online presence and access to key decision-making spaces to amplify the narratives of grassroots movement actors; CARE commits to representing but not replacing social movements; by using its platform to propel the stories of grassroots movements, CARE accelerates the pace at which movements are recognized at a global scale.

In choosing who to work with, it is important for CARE to understand the anatomy of social movements and their various intersectionalities to support the efforts of activists appropriately and to prioritize a feminist perspective in its engagement. A feminist perspective recognizes that the problem of gender inequality is grounded in unequal power relations perpetuated through patriarchal systems and norms, taking feminist approach means working to address these inequalities at individual and collective level and dismantle systems of patriarchal power in political, economic and social spheres, that keep these inequalities in place.

In engaging with social movements, CARE should adhere to **five core principles**, they are:

### Start by listening
Listening to the needs of the movement and taking directions from their leaders sets the tone for the relationship

### Recognize power dynamics
Understanding & acknowledging the power imbalance when an organization of its size & positioning works with a movement.

### Accompaniment not partnership
Supporting, resourcing & promoting the agenda of movement actors. Decentralising the role of CARE & centralising of activists.

### Movement building starts internally
Committing to anti-oppression work within its own organization to strengthen its knowledge and orientation within movements.

### Tackling gender inequality through activism
CARE understands that movement building and activism are an inherent expression of collective action and are required in the advancement of gender justice.

CARE recognises that this work requires an internal organizational shift this will include reframing its narrative - from one that centralizes CARE as the sole proprietor of impact to a new one that positions it as a supporting actor in a larger movement. This will affect the kind of stories that are told in CARE’s fundraising efforts and in communications with partners. CARE needs to review its
internal systems, reduce bureaucracy and develop a specific partnership approach and support mechanisms adapted to work with social movements, informal collective initiatives and women’s organizations. CARE needs to rethink its partnership approach to enable it to develop thoughtful and equitable relationships with formal and informal groups that promote mutual accountability. Finally, CARE will need to define the principles that underscore its approach to working on gender-equality, because this will in turn influence which partnerships and which social movements it prioritizes working with to achieve a social justice agenda. More detailed recommendations can be found in the full report.
Background

CARE is committed to tackling the underlying causes of poverty and social injustice to bring lasting change to the world’s most vulnerable. This requires supporting and engaging with change agents. Research shows that major social change only occurs when those who have been excluded from power organize collectively in the form of social movements to challenge existing systems and their impact. In addition, there is growing evidence globally that feminist social movements are driving gender justice. This is an important consideration for CARE because CARE places gender justice at the heart of its work.

The presence of large INGOs can stifle the ability of smaller grassroots groups to raise sufficient funding, acquire new donors, and be given an audience with key stakeholders. Activists are concerned that large INGOs and non-profits favour the priorities of funders and government bodies and dictate agendas. Activists critique NGOs for working on behalf of and remaining accountable to those with money or power rather than those who are most marginalized.

Working with social movement actors requires surmounting scepticism and hesitation from activists about partnering with International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs).

Funding for feminist and other social movements is limited. Reports show that, despite global commitment of funds for gender equality work, the funds that reach feminist movements organizing in the global South are minimal. Funding is increasingly being displaced to mainstream development and humanitarian organizations from donor countries, with the latest available figures from 2016-2017 showing that just 1% of all gender-focused aid went to women’s organizations leading their own solutions. There are several international donors and organizations working to advance women’s rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at local, national, regional and global levels with financial and capacity-building assistance. However, until the recent announcement of the Equality Fund in Canada, there was no single-window entity or global funding platform which pooled and leveraged funds to fill the funding gap and ensure long-term sustainable, predictable and flexible to women’s organizations and movements working to advance women’s rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in developing countries. In addition, no country is on track to achieving gender equality targets as set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The fact that funds are not invested in social movements results in the dilution of the inherently political and transformative nature of work that movements do, limiting efforts to short-term project-based work that only allows for specific quantifiable metrics that donors want, as opposed to deep structural change that challenges prevailing power structures and can take time.

This is the context in which CARE is seeking to increase its support to and accompaniment of social movements, learning from and building on relatively limited experiences which indicate that the practices and perceptions discussed above make it difficult for CARE to approach social movements with ease.
Khaing is the Trade Union Leader and President of the Women’s Committee within the Confederation of Trade Unions in Myanmar. Myanmar, 2018 (Photo: © John Hewat/CARE)
Supporting social movements and collective actions – CIGN position paper & CARE Guidance Note

Introduction

This position paper builds on CARE’s commitment to ‘form partnerships with women’s rights and/or LGBTIQ organisations and movements to collaborate in the achievement of shared goals and elevate the voice of marginalised people’ (CARE International Gender Equality Policy, commitment 5) and is intended to position CARE to engage with social movements in a more thoughtful and deliberate way; it provides guidance on how CARE will build trust with social movements and cultivate sustainable relationships that will achieve shared goals of poverty alleviation and social justice. It also surfaces key implications for CARE and outlines some recommendations that CARE should consider.

The document is structured as follows:

- What a social movement is
- Why CARE should partner more intentionally with social movements
- What roles CARE should play in support of social movements
- What type of social movements CARE will partner with
- How CARE works with social movements – principles
- Implications and recommendations
What is a social movement?

CARE understands a movement as “an organized set of people vested in making a change in their situation by pursuing a common political agenda through collective action”, as defined by the women’s rights advocate and academic, Srilatha Batliwala.

In many ways, drawing a definition around movements is counterintuitive to how movements actually function: as porous, nimble and dynamic networks where actors are constantly joining and leaving, leadership is ever shifting, and demands are continuously evolving. The way in which a movement presents itself also changes based on the political landscape within which it lives. Still, however imperfect, a definition gives some necessary boundaries so that CARE can, in practice, identify movement partners and be aligned with its peers.

It should be noted that CARE prioritises gender justice and works directly with marginalized women and their allies to tackle systems of oppression. This means that CARE interfaces frequently with feminist movement actors. As UN Women acknowledges, activists often have “the greatest understanding of the deficiencies that women and girls face and essential knowledge of how to advance their rights”. Research by the Global Fund for Women which CARE also played a part in developing outlines seven critical features of a movement:

1. A strong and sustained grassroots base
2. Diverse leadership that includes next generation leaders
3. Strong sense of collaboration among social justice groups
4. A shared collective political agenda
5. The use of multiple strategies that are reinforcing
6. A strong support infrastructure that includes strong anchor organizations and effective decision-making structures and communication systems
7. Strong collective capacities of human rights defenders and their organizations to ensure their safety and security

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2 The definition used here is also used by among others AWID and the Global Fund for Women
Why should CARE work with social movements?

In 2017, CARE conducted research on the impact of building a connection between movements and the development agenda. The findings revealed five critical reasons for CARE to support social movements.

**History shows that change happens with collective action.** Beyond shifting laws and policies, movements have a track record of success in challenging existing cultural norms (e.g., gender norms) as well as promoting alternative norms (e.g., reducing the acceptability of gender-based violence (GBV)).

**Both NGOs and movements want a lasting and transformative change** and are sometimes even aligned. On the global stage, NGOs and social movements are considered the “third force” in international relations, next to states and corporations. What is rarely talked about is mutual reliance of these two entities on one other. Activists often need the structure of formal NGOs to create convening spaces or secure resources. In return, NGOs require people power and mass mobilization to maximize the impact of their work.

**Investing in collective action increases the sustainability of the impact.** As development organizations strive to meet indicators outlined by the SDGs, the effectiveness of traditional development models has been called into question for many years. The historical development paradigm of assisting the oppressed rather than tackling what perpetuates oppression remains popular, despite ample proof that shifting institutional structures and assisting the collective is more impactful. As CARE’s research outlines, “models that target individuals or even individual organizations as our prime beneficiaries miss the historically persuasive argument that we could be supporting them as a collective collaboration between organizations and between movements to provide impetus and leverage for sustainable change”.

**Gender justice requires community-based solutions.** Gender justice requires reframing empowerment as following the power that women on the ground are already demonstrating. Research across the women’s rights field has shown that rather than investing in new programming, organizations should be doubling down on current solutions by women’s rights activists because they are more effective in the long term and provide solutions that are rooted within the lived experiences of communities. Historically, development agendas have fallen for the trap of “poverty as a spectacle”. Poverty as a spectacle means poverty is talked about in terms of racialized and gendered subjects (“poor brown and black women and girls”) in relation to the benevolent powers that come to their rescue. It means issues of oppression and injustice are depoliticized and discussed in new terms such as innovation or impact. This narrative is deeply damaging to the work of women’s rights activists. “Women’s movements are political
movements. They are about power relations, political positions and goals, engaging in politics beyond mere representation rather as conscious constituencies that have clear aims and tools for resistance and are dedicated to the values of solidarity.”

💡 **Civic space is shrinking.** In recent years, the rise of fascism, nationalism and xenophobia has spread across the globe. In response, communities in every corner of the world have risen and organized to protect their people from these forces. With increased action has come increased risk. The heightened tension between those in power and those on the ground has threatened the space for civil and social activism. One report revealed that a startling “3% of people live in countries where space for civic activism – or civic space – is truly open.” In other words, 97% of people face “serious threats when organizing, speaking out or taking peaceful action to improve their society”. While civic space is protected by international human rights frameworks, the threat to civil and political rights remains ubiquitous. INGOs cannot continue to “emphasize projects over movements thereby mobilizing people to protest at the margins but not to struggle against structural conditions that shape everyday life”. It is impossible for development agencies to continue their work without acknowledging and addressing the stifling forces at play.
What roles should CARE play in support of social movements?

While the types of activism that CARE engages with may differ across the federation, CARE’s role in social movements should remain consistent. This role can be defined in four terms: *convener, ally, resource partner,* and *amplifier.*

**Convener:** CARE uses its wide network and deep connections with civil society actors around the globe to connect movements to one another. As a convener, CARE *links* movement actors together for peer learning and mentoring; provides *support* to ensure that movement voices are heard and that they are connected to key decision-makers/stakeholders such as funders, legislators, advocates; provides *support to ensure participation* of movement actors at key events/moments in national and international spaces to advance their movement agendas and goals. This may mean giving up CARE’s seat at the table in some instances.

*Examples of how CARE has been a Convener:* Oral history workshop with domestic workers movement which gathered activists from nine countries in LAC; piloting the Collective Action Lab in West Africa with activists from 5 countries and its twin concept of Activists in Residence which stemmed from a prototype on partnering with domestic Food Justice movement; “Activists on the Line” podcast, and CARE’s “Failing Forward” podcast.

**Ally:** CARE’s role as an ally (or accomplice) to social movements requires that it builds its internal understanding of how movements work and the issues which movement actors are addressing. CARE *aligns its own agenda with those of social movements* in order to provide more people power and organizational influence on the issues being advocated for. CARE *aligns its internal systems* such that it is able to be an effective support/ally to these agendas.

Allyship actions include but are not limited to making CARE’s own processes, particularly in terms of funding and partnerships, more accessible and equitable for smaller informal organizations or consortia; internal seminars on movements for CARE staff; bringing a movement lens to conversations with peer organizations and policymakers; encouraging more critical internal conversations about CARE’s role in movements.

*Examples of how CARE has been an Ally:* this position paper, the related reports and tools and Community of Practice contribute to building CARE’s internal capacities, as did the Movements Lab (led by Rhize and the Innovation team); the Embark initiative is also a tool to increase flexible support to movements on their own premises.
Resource Partner: CARE leverages necessary resources - donors, equipment, office space and more – for movement actors in the countries where we work. It listens to movements and provides the resources that they identify as necessary. It willingly gives up some of its own resources when necessary to strengthen movements.

These resources include but are not limited to financial support, communications and media trainings, immediate needs (office space, vehicles, etc.), and leadership capacity tools.

Examples of how CARE has been a resource partner: CARE has supported Mata Masu Dubara (MMD) movement in Niger over the past 25 years, which has required the sustained commitment of at least one donor (Norad). Reviews of this work show that trust between CARE and movement actors was critical, as was knowing what CARE could/could not deliver and the movement’s expectations of them in turn. Helping the movement seize windows of opportunity such as with the 2004 election was pivotal, as was the availability of financial and technical support. CARE’s decision to support the MMD as informal structures by building the capacity of local NGOs to support them rather than convert the MMD groups into a formal institution or NGO, further enabled the spontaneous replication of MMD groups and evolution towards collective action.

Amplifier: CARE uses its online presence and access to key decision-making spaces to amplify the narratives of grassroots movement actors, where relevant and as requested by local movement actors. While amplifying, CARE commits to representing but not replacing social movements (i.e., only amplifying when social movements actors are not in the space themselves and cannot speak on their own behalf). By using its platform to propel the stories of grassroots movements, CARE accelerates the pace at which movements are recognized at a global scale. Amplification actions include but are not limited to retweeting grassroots campaigns, sharing petitions from movement actors to our followers, bringing a legislative ask from movement partners to legislators.

Examples of how CARE has been an amplifier: We saw this with the Women’s March and during the campaign towards ILO Convention 190 on ending violence and harassment at work. During this global campaign, CARE liaised with trade unions and workers movements to align positions. This led
to supporting and obtaining the inclusion of all categories of vulnerable women workers, to include a very broad definition of the workplace, to include protections for third parties entering the workplace (such as parents of pupils) and to establish the right to work in an environment free of violence. These claims came from the workers themselves and CARE contributed to amplify them.
What type of social movements should CARE partner with?

CARE recognizes that “issues of gender inequality intersect with other forms of oppression based on unequal power relations such as ableism, racism, caste and ethnic discrimination, ageism, sexual orientation and homophobia, religious discrimination, classism, and colonial history among others”. As CARE’s own research shows, organizations that are trusted allies of social movements are ones that have a deep understanding of the contexts from which social movements arise including the nuances of intersectionalities. This means that rather than identifying as a “women’s movement,” women participating in movements around the world may choose to primarily identify as a member of an ethnic or social group, or as subject to the particular form of exclusion they are facing; these might include sex workers, disabled women, or domestic workers. Although feminist analysis is common to many, the identity many have chosen to rally behind is not only of women per se. Therefore, it is difficult and limiting to focus CARE’s approach strictly on women’s rights movements. It is important for CARE to understand the anatomy of social movements and their various intersectionalities to support the efforts of activists appropriately and to prioritize a feminist perspective in its engagement with the movements it chooses to partner with.

A feminist perspective recognizes that the problem of gender inequality including Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is grounded in gender hierarchies and gender inequalities - that is, unequal power relations perpetuated through patriarchal systems and norms. Therefore, to take a feminist approach is to work to address these inequalities at individual and collective level and dismantle systems of patriarchal power in political, economic and social spheres, that keep these inequalities in place. A feminist perspective also centres on the human rights, voice, and agency of groups that are marginalized, and takes an intersectional approach, recognising that marginalized groups may also face multiple oppressions. For example, a movement that upholds the rights of women to make decisions about their own bodies and their own sexual and reproductive rights, would be taking a feminist approach, versus a movement that aims to restrict women’s movement, access over their bodies and to limit women’s decision making.

When considering social movements to partner with, actively consider whether they are adopting a feminist approach that challenges power hierarchies and centres on human rights of the marginalized people they are working with and for. If you would like to learn more about taking a feminist approach – click here
How CARE works with social movements, core principles

Based on the experience CARE has had so far, the organization has learned that working with social movements requires a clear and principled approach. It should be noted that CARE’s current understanding of how to work with movements is based on a limited number of documented experiences, most extensively in Latin America and in West Africa. As CARE does this work more deliberately, it will be important for lessons to be clearly documented and shared within the organization. Those learnings will help evolve and strengthen these principles and approaches.

Start by listening

CARE understands that active listening is the most important factor to building a relationship of trust. Listening to the needs of the movement and taking directions from their leaders sets the tone for the entire relationship.

Example: During an oral history workshop in Quito in 2017, activists within the domestic workers movement in Latin America praised CARE’s commitment to listening to the movement actors. They stated that CARE showed up as an equal partner, which was evident by the tone, language, and body language of CARE staff that demonstrated respect and understanding. Movement partners noted that CARE staff listened and stayed for the long-haul, waiting until movement leaders made their decisions before setting agendas.

Recognise power dynamics

CARE understands and acknowledges the power imbalance and inequity when an organization of its size and positioning works with a movement. The long-running problems of power and domination are incredibly harmful in the context of aid and movements. It considers the power dynamics before it starts engaging with activists. It takes the concerns of movement actors about their work being compromised seriously. The organization considers moments in which its engagement in a movement – even if beneficial to CARE’s mission and work – should not occur because it would jeopardize the health and autonomy of the movement.

Example: In 2017, CARE USA leadership asked staff to prototype ten “big ideas” and one of those ideas explored engaging with a U.S. movement. Team members from the Policy and Advocacy Department and the Innovation team chose to engage with the food justice movement in Atlanta. During the first gathering of fifteen activists and five CARE staff members, the tension between the actors was immediately palpable. The movement actors were undoubtedly hesitant and unsure about working with CARE, with questions/concerns about who we take money from, CARE’s political alliances with groups they see as opposed to the values and goals of the movement. Movement actors wanted to be certain that their reputation wouldn’t get muddied because of public statements/alliances that CARE would make publicly with corporations and politicians who the food justice movement in Atlanta is fighting against. It was only once the CARE staff explicitly acknowledged the power imbalance and noted that CARE would take a “do no harm” approach to
their engagement that the tension started to dissipate. The simple acknowledgement of power and imbalances in power allows movement actors to trust CARE more readily and to move forward with the conversation.

**Accompaniment not partnership**

Rather than adhering to traditional partnership models - where movement actors are frequently brought onto a program or project as a subgrantee or implementing partner - CARE works with movements through the *accompaniment framework*. This envisions CARE as supporting, resourcing, and promoting the agenda and vision of the movement actors. It decentralizes the role of CARE and centralizes the role and voices of the grassroots activists.

**Example:** The rapid growth of the VSLA community in Niger, known as Matu Masa Dubara (MMD), is often attributed to the way in which CARE accompanied, rather than led, the development of a movement. The VSLA structures remained self-organized and non-formal. From the beginning, the groups of women worked together and they iterated to create systems that promoted diverse and new forms of rotational leadership. CARE found ways to assist while still centering the local grassroots leadership, such as by convening meetings between MMD groups and community authorities, supporting local leaders to facilitate their own internal systems such as election of representatives to MMD structures. This accompaniment has contributed to the success of an MMD movement that works with half a million women in Niger.

**Movement building starts internally**

CARE has learned that the only way to support movements authentically is to understand the systems that they are working against. CARE has committed to anti-oppression work within its own organization in order to strengthen its knowledge and orientation within movements.

**Example:** As domestic workers in Latin America pointed out, by bolstering CARE’s commitment to an anti-oppressive practice and culture internally and across all levels of the organization, CARE is ensuring the continuity, sustainability and integrity of CARE’s movement commitments. Ultimately, this will allow CARE to more effectively accompany movements in these same struggles. The activists were encouraged by internal discussions at CARE on recognizing systemic oppressions that they may be unaware of, which in turn indicated to activists that CARE was genuinely interested in understanding their experiences.

**Tackling gender inequality through activism**

CARE recognizes the importance of working with women as a collective for structural change (i.e., both policy change and norms change) and of amplifying the voice of women and girls to influence decisions that affect their lives. CARE understands that movement building and activism are an inherent expression of collective action and are required in the advancement of gender justice.
Example: From working with land rights activists in Southern Africa to CARE’s engagement with the Women’s March around the globe, the intersection of gender justice and civic activism is the one that CARE has the most experience with. CARE’s engagement with domestic workers in Latin America arose from a commitment to support some of the most vulnerable women in the region, which it identified as domestic workers. CARE recognized women already organizing for their rights and supported their efforts to advocate for the adoption of the ILO Convention 189 (2011) on Domestic Workers. This decision allowed CARE to further engage with a gender justice movement which saw the adoption of the ILO Convention 190 on harassment in the world of work in June 2019.

SafeWork4Women campaign in Cambodia conducted in 12 garment factories. Cambodia, 2019 (Photo: © CARE Cambodia)
Implications and Recommendations

This work requires an **internal organizational shift** for CARE as its current operating system is designed for an implementation model that replicates CARE’s own organization (subcontracting NGOs) rather than facilitating roles and support for informal groups, activists, and social movements. First, **CARE needs to reframe its narrative** - from one that centralizes CARE as the sole proprietor of impact to a new one that positions it as a supporting actor in a larger movement. This will affect the kind of stories that are told in CARE’s fundraising efforts and in communications with partners. Second, **CARE needs to review its internal systems**, reduce bureaucracy and develop a specific partnership approach and support mechanisms adapted to work with social movements, informal collective initiatives and women’s organizations. Third, **CARE needs to rethink its partnership approach** to enable it to develop thoughtful and equitable relationships with formal and informal groups that promote mutual accountability. Finally, **CARE will need to define the principles that underscore its approach to working on gender-equality**, because this will in turn influence which partnerships and which social movements it prioritizes working with to achieve a social justice agenda.

All in all, forging relationships with activists will require a new and more thoughtful approach from CARE in how it operates internally and externally. This does not represent a complete overhaul but rather adjustments to create more adaptable systems, structures and ways of working.

Here are some recommendations to different parts of CARE about what needs to change to enable us to achieve objective to support local, national and global feminist social movements to lead and be at the forefront of efforts for social justice and human rights, such that positive changes in our social contexts will be deep in deep and transformative.

**CARE member partners and Regional Management Units** – particularly those responsible for programming – can support the implementation and socialisation of this position paper through promoting partnership with social movements and activists in programming and resourcing further learning in this regard. They can further support specialized global women’s organisations such as [AWID](https://www.awid.org), [FRIDA](https://frida.global), [Leading from the South](https://www.leadingfromthesouth.org) or [Urgent Action Fund](https://www.urgentactionfund.org) which provide flexible, long-term core funding to feminist organizations.

**Country Office staff** can use this position paper (particularly the roles and principles outlined above to) identify, have conversations with and build relationships with feminist social movements in their local contexts; exploring their needs, their goals, their priorities and exploring whether they would like CARE’s formal or informal support to further the goals of their movement. This can then inform the design of proposals in support of feminist social movements and lead to sustained relationships and mutual learning.
The CARE International Gender Network can establish a global and inclusive Social Movements Community of that will facilitate learning, dialogue and knowledge management around CARE’s engagement with social movements.

External relations and communications staff can review and track CARE’s marketing, fundraising and communications policies and practice to ensure that CARE respects and upholds its commitment to social justice and gender equality including being respectful, using inclusive and positive language and images and avoiding stereotypes with particular attention to those based on gender and ethnicity in particular taking into account how movements wish to be represented.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning staff can continue in their efforts to capture transformative change, this could learn from existing measurement and other frameworks modelled on feminist methodologies and put in place processes that go beyond numbers and capture the transformative changes occurring in the lives of women and girls. This could form part of CARE’s planning process for 2030.

Finance, legal, human resource and procurement staff can support changes to internal systems. Under the leadership of the Programme Quality and Impact Strategic Leadership Team a cross functional team comprising of finance, procurement, HR, Legal can identify required changes in CARE’s internal systems to support partnerships that are non-hierarchical, allow for mutual accountability and a certain amount of flexibility that can accommodate the dynamic nature of movements; identify the resources required to make changes; implement the changes.

Fundraising staff can experiment and explore possibilities to provide core, flexible, long-term funding to social movements which offers flexibility and agility, allowing organizations to define their own priorities and political agendas.
Conclusion

This position paper lays out CARE’s understanding of social movements, why it wishes to work with them and CARE’s priorities, approach, and roles should be when working with social movements. As an organization committed to ending injustices, CARE is often already in community with movements on the ground. This paper builds on learning from these experiences and intends to ensure that CARE carves out a meaningful and principled role for itself in these relationships. The paper recognises that to do this, CARE will need to change, from aligning its agenda with funders and governments to working alongside marginalized peoples’ movements and activists to undo intricate systems of oppression. CARE will have to give up space and power, from funding streams to decision making opportunities, to carve out room for movement actors. While the way forward will not be uniform for all of CARE because of the diversity of local, national and regional context across the federation, it should always be rooted in the principles listed above. This will require commitment over the long-term. It is also clear that this will enhance CARE’s ability to achieve its mission and vision of saving lives, defeating poverty and advancing social justice.

If you are interested in following and contributing to CARE’s conversation about supporting social movements and collective action, please contact socialmovements@careinternational.org