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CARE Danmark Programme Policy



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1. Introduction

CARE Danmark's programme policy defines the objectives, priorities and implementation approaches of CARE Danmark-funded activities. We will fight poverty by **making people who are poor and vulnerable and who depend on natural resources able to exercise their rights**. We will do so by **building the capacity of strategic civil society partners** to voice the concerns of rights holders and to influence and hold duty-bearers accountable so that the rights of poor natural resource users are respected.

This policy applies to all CARE Danmark programmes. It is rooted primarily in our framework agreement with Danida but also aligns with the European Union policy on civil society.¹ Partnerships with the private sector and private foundations are described in section 9.

The immediate **target group** for this document is our colleagues in CARE International Country Offices who are involved in implementing CARE Danmark-funded activities. We hope that the policy document will also help inform strategic civil society partners, donors, CARE International, peer organisations, and other stakeholders about our approach.

The programme policy was developed by the CARE Danmark programme team in consultation with other CARE Danmark stakeholders and CARE International Country Offices. Key messages have already been communicated in a Think Piece and earlier drafts of the policy document. We thus expect that the programme policy is generally implemented in all country programmes funded by CARE Danmark before the end of 2013.

2. Background and rationale

The world around us is changing rapidly, and so is development aid. Many of the countries we work in are experiencing economic growth, but in many cases also growing inequality, deepening poverty, and continuing food insecurity for substantial groups of people. A number of 'mega-trends' influence CARE's work.

Firstly, inequality and poverty are increasingly recognized as products of **international and global processes**. The food crises of 2007-2008 and 2011-2012 resulted in millions of new people being thrown into poverty across the world. Among the causes of food crises are the emergence and demands of new economies, demand for biofuels in the global North, land grabs by foreign and domestic investors, financial speculation in food prices, etc. Likewise, climate change caused by emissions in developed countries is threatening to push millions of people into poverty. **Policy areas such as trade, agriculture, energy and development are increasingly connected** across traditional sectorial boundaries, as shown by these examples. Comprehensive and global political solutions are needed and NGOs need to contribute to them.

The **emerging economies** of China, Brazil and India, as well as Arab and other nations are making their mark through investments in developing countries, trade agreements, and increasingly also as aid donors. They are driven by different agendas and follow other principles

¹ Danida, *Strategy for Danish support to civil society in developing countries*, December 2008; Council of the European Union, *Council conclusions on the roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations*, October 2012.

than the traditional investor and donor countries. New ways are needed to engage them – also for NGOs.

Ownership is increasingly recognised for its centrality for development at all levels, from communities to national and regional entities. This is expressed clearly in the aid/development effectiveness agenda in statements from international meetings in Paris, Accra, and Busan. In the countries we work in, national civil society organisations and networks have emerged with their own visions and agendas. International NGOs like CARE must support such expressions of ownership and take care not to out-compete local organisations.

The development effectiveness agenda also informs us that international civil society organisations must **align** their work with the visions and goals of national civil society actors. We must **harmonize** our systems and processes with those of the organisations we support to avoid too many different donor requirements. Development effectiveness also compels us to **document the results** of our work better, which raises new challenges as we move into more intangible development activities like advocacy and capacity building.

Danida, CARE Danmark's primary donor, continues to earmark funds for Danish NGOs, but we generally see a clear trend towards **decentralisation of funding for civil society**. Increasing resources are invested directly in civil society organisations in the global South by, for instance, European Union delegations through decentralised calls for proposals and by civil society grant mechanisms and common pools targeting Southern NGOs.

Climate change is compounding existing challenges and multiplying threats faced by poor users of natural resources, threatening to undermine development gains and to make overcoming poverty even more difficult. The lack of decisive political action against climate change threats by governments point to the need for pressure and action by civil society at local and global levels.

These international trends all point to the need to reconsider the way we work. Several recent reviews and evaluations of CARE Danmark's programmes have underlined the message that we need to change – or risk becoming irrelevant.

3. Programme objectives

The long-term development objective of CARE Danmark's programmes is that:

People who are poor and vulnerable and dependent
on natural resources are able to realize their rights

To realise this objective, our programmes will focus on this immediate objective:

Civil society organisations representing people who are vulnerable and dependent on natural resources build and use evidence on gradual rights realization in policy, planning and implementation, acting as credible, legitimate and accountable change agents

Aiming for this objective, we intend to contribute to a fairer and more sustainable world in which our impact groups enjoy social and environmental and climate justice. We will use a rights-based approach to empower poor people as citizens and rights holders, strengthen their ability to

organise in civil society organisations in order to influence decision makers and duty bearers to respect, protect and fulfil their rights.²

Our programmes help realise **CARE Danmark's vision** to 'be recognized for creating permanent results through help to self-help for poor and vulnerable people in the developing countries, as it provides the best value for money. This way CARE Danmark will remain the development organisation that most Danes support when they think of long-term assistance'.³

As a member partner of **CARE International**, CARE Danmark adheres to the CARE International vision statement, our common programming principles, the Underlying Causes of Poverty framework, and other programming guidelines.⁴ We are encouraged in our own transition by the **CARE International Vision 2020** and its ambition to form stronger partnerships with civil society actors and social movements, and to play CARE's strength in 'local-to-global' advocacy thus making CARE more relevant as a partner to local development actors.⁵

4. Priority themes

CARE Danmark-funded country programmes must address these two themes:

- **Violations of the right to food and inequitable access to natural resources** – e.g. food insecurity, insecure access and tenure to land, exclusion from forest resources, non-delivery of extension and other services to rural areas, harmful investment practices (such as 'land grabbing' for large-scale farming, biofuels, and extractive industries), unfair global trade patterns and protection regimes;
- **Climate change threats** – low levels of community resilience, lacking or slow finance flows for adaptation, ineffective disaster risk reduction, lack of global mitigation efforts, absence of low-carbon development options;

These broad themes will guide our selection of strategic partners and give us a framework for discussions with partners. A fundamental principle for our support to civil society is that specific programme issues and activities must be aligned with the **strategic plans** or interests expressed by our strategic country-level civil society partners and must be genuinely driven forward by civil society actors, not CARE.

Within the two themes, country programmes will focus one or more issues which gather civil society interest and energy, which are policy-relevant and concern important human rights issues, all depending on the national context. CARE Danmark expects that the two thematic headings will create the basis for a more cohesive 'global' programme across the country programmes and will allow aggregation of results at the global programme level for accountability purposes.

² See also CARE Danmark, Right-based approach guidelines, draft, April 2009.

³ CARE Danmark Vision 2020, March 2013.

⁴ The CARE International vision statement is: *We seek a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security. CARE will be a global force and partner of choice within a worldwide movement dedicated to ending poverty. We will be known everywhere for our unshakeable commitment to the dignity of people.*

⁵ *CARE International Vision 2020*, approved by the CI Board, July 2012.

5. Impact group

The global impact group for CARE Danmark's programming is **people who are poor and vulnerable and dependent on natural resources**. The world's urban populations are growing, but the majority of people who are poor still live in rural areas and depend largely on exploitation of natural resources such as soil, water, grazing areas and trees for their livelihoods.

The majority of those who are poor are women. Women and girls are particularly exposed to rights abuses and vulnerability; therefore gender equality must be addressed by all country programmes.

Country programmes will define more specific impact groups. The impact group is the core group for which CARE would like to see lasting, positive change. Changes in the conditions and positions of the impact group are the ultimate indicators of impact. To achieve lasting change for the impact group, CARE Danmark country programmes will need to work with a broader scope of stakeholders and actors, who will be the immediate target groups, including staff, volunteers and members of civil society organisations, the media, researchers, private sector entities, central and local government authorities, etc.

6. Civil society theory of change

CARE Danmark's programmes are based on a **civil society theory of change**.⁶ The change theory presents three distinct domains in which change needs to happen if our long-term objective of rights realization for the impact group is to happen. Our theory of change describes a chain through which empowered individuals become able to organise and voice their concerns, where civil society organisations represent poor and vulnerable constituencies, and in which civil society organisations influence policies and other framework conditions that ultimately secure that people who are poor and vulnerable can exercise their rights.⁷

The distinction between three domains of change is influenced by Outcome Mapping thinking. In the first area, activities, inputs and outputs are under more or less direct **control** by CARE. In the intermediary sphere, CARE's programme can **directly influence** partners and other stakeholders (boundary partners) to achieve certain results or outcomes. The third area represents impact in the form of changes that are only **indirectly influenced** by CARE and the programme.⁸

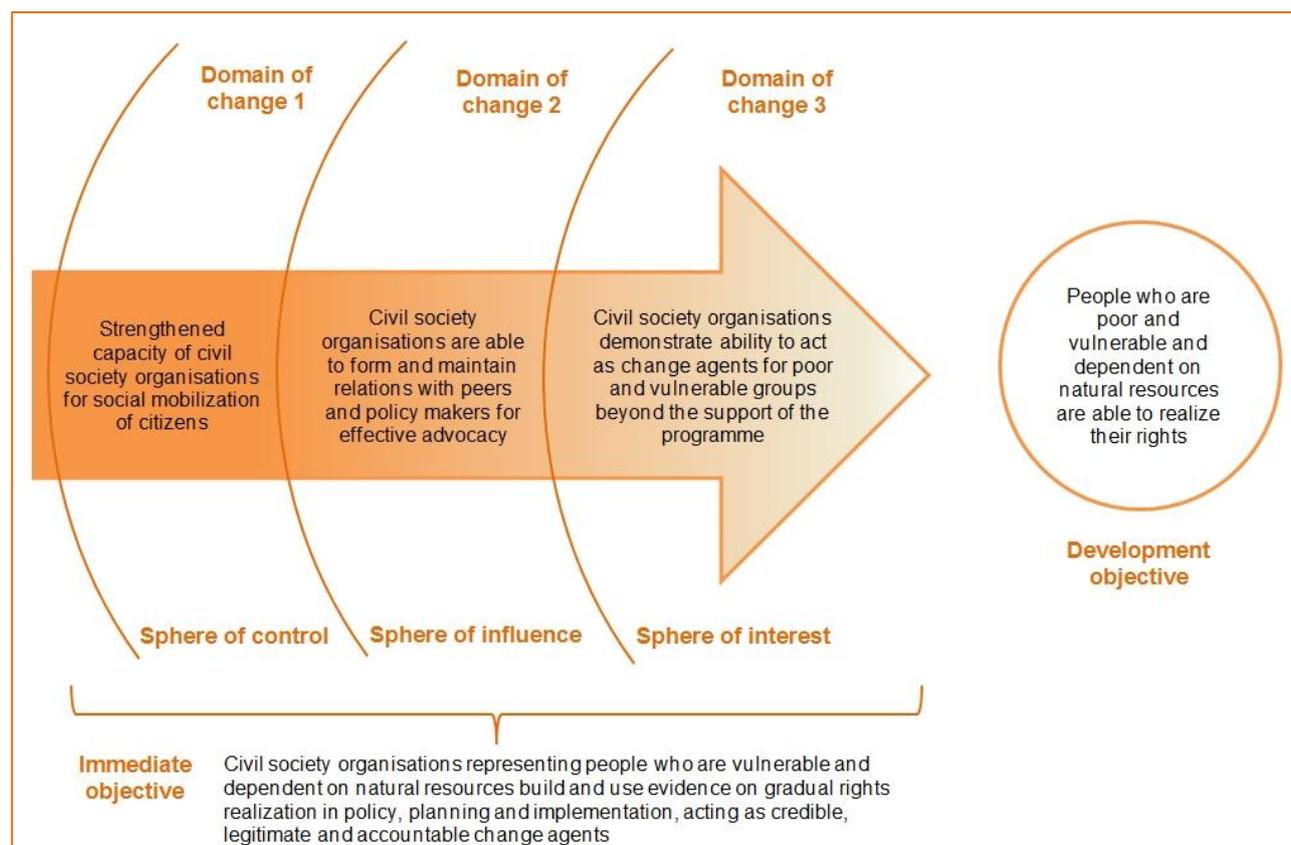
The civil society theory of change is presented in a figure below, followed by a discussion of each of the three domains of change.

⁶ For description of the concept of Theory of Change, see CARE USA, 2008, 'Brief #1: What is a program approach?'

⁷ The civil society theory of change complements the CARE International Governance Framework, which works on the relation between individual citizens and governments, but which is relatively silent on civil society activism as an important mechanism for exchange between them.

⁸ Refer to the monitoring and reporting guidelines for CARE Danmark-funded programmes (in development).

The civil society theory of change



Domain of change 1: Strengthened capacity of civil society organisations for social mobilization of citizens

CARE Danmark will support strategic civil society partners in building their capacity for mobilizing citizens' groups around policy issues that affect their rights fulfilment. The long-term results of activities in this domain of change are economic and social empowerment of individuals and groups at the community level.⁹

Activities should normally be implemented by our strategic partners. In the Outcome Mapping terminology, CARE still retains considerable control over outputs in this domain of change through our funding and joint planning of activities. Increased capacity for mobilization of citizens is the change that we would 'expect to see'.

The underlying notion is that individuals must be **aware of their rights as citizens** and the ways in which they can exercise them and that they organise in groups, networks, formal organisations or looser movements. This is a precondition for effective collective action by civil society.

Mobilisation and awareness-raising can take its starting point in **addressing immediate livelihood concerns** of the participants, but must aim to organize people around wider issues. Building community awareness that their livelihood depends on the enforcement of their rights and the knowledge about sustainable ways of access and use of natural resources is a first step towards

⁹ In the context of CARE International's Unifying Framework, domain of change 1 refers to both human condition and social position.

socioeconomic empowerment and citizens' demands for responsive policies and accountability from the duty-bearers.

One proven strategy is to support the formation of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA's), particularly for women. VSLA's have, in some places, formed networks and regional associations that increase their strength and influence beyond the community level. Working with the dominant gender norms among men and women at the group and community levels contribute to **change socio-cultural norms** that typically hold back the development potential of women.

Agricultural interest groups based for instance on Farmer Field Schools can have the same mobilising effects, provided that they go beyond agricultural extension and also embrace rights issues such as land rights, legal aid, complaints mechanisms, etc. Working with existing Community-Based Organisations (CBO's) is often more effective than forming new ones.

CARE Danmark stresses that the services provided to community-level groups and individuals must be **'strategic'** in the sense that they have a rights or policy-related purpose or perspective beyond the immediate service. 'Pilot' activities must be clearly designed for replication or up-scaling by other actors. See also section 7.

Community groups and organisations can benefit from **horizontal** linkages to others in associations and networks. **Vertical** linkages between CBO's and strategic partners can be valuable to both. Citizens can be involved in gathering monitoring data on duty-bearers' rights fulfilment ('watchdog' function) and help setting priorities for policy agendas of our strategic partners.

Domain of change 2: Civil society organisations are able to form and maintain relations with peers and policy makers for effective advocacy

CARE Danmark will support strategic civil society partners in becoming effective advocates on behalf of poor and vulnerable people by working together and by engaging with decision-makers with timely and relevant proposals and rights claims.¹⁰

In Outcome Mapping terms, CARE has limited control over activities in this domain of change, but still plenty of influence via relationships and interactions with boundary actors. Effective advocacy is the change that we would 'like to see'.

Advocacy is generally much more effective when done in **platforms, alliances, networks or coalitions** with other civil society organisations. CARE Danmark will support networking processes as well as joint research, documentation and advocacy activities of networks. Networking is relevant at many levels, from community-level associations to the global level.

Within the selected themes and issues, our strategic civil society partner organisations will receive support to address relevant parts of the **policy cycle**.¹¹ They will build capacity to analyse policies and rights questions, accessing relevant sources of information, and planning for advocacy campaigns, lobbying, and other activities in collaboration with peer organisations. It is important to

¹⁰ In CARE International's Unifying Framework, domain of change 2 refers to improving the social position of poor and vulnerable people through stronger organisation as well as addressing the enabling environment to be more inclusive.

¹¹ The policy cycle has at least four steps: identifying and gaining recognition of a problem, preparing and formulating policies, policy implementation, and monitoring of policy implementation.

secure downwards linkages to citizens' groups and formal constituencies (e.g., membership) both for effective advocacy and accountability.

Advocacy is not narrowly about policy change but can also be aimed at protecting rights, struggling for one's own identity and recognition, securing equal access to government services, changing attitudes of decision-makers or the public, or ensuring adequate space for civil society as a checks and balances mechanism vis-à-vis the state.

CARE Denmark also wants to support that country programmes and partners engage in **multi-stakeholder platforms** and other forms of collaboration with private sector enterprises, the media, researchers, and other actors for broader alliances and greater influence. In each country, it is important that CARE coordinates with other international NGOs who support domestic civil society and often the same national partners which CARE works with.

A focus on investments that may be harmful to poor natural resources users will require that country programmes engage critically with **private sector** actors, particularly foreign investors, with stakes in agricultural projects or extractive industries. However, private enterprises are not only advocacy targets for demonstrating corporate social responsibility but can in some cases be powerful allies.

Domain of change 3: Civil society organisations demonstrate ability to act as change agents for poor and vulnerable groups beyond the support of the programme

CARE Denmark will support strategic partners in becoming credible, legitimate, transparent and accountable change agents across their day-to-day operations in processes that go beyond activities supported by the programme. This ability will be an indicator of long-term impact and sustainability of our support.¹²

In the Outcome Mapping perspective, CARE has very limited control over outcomes in this domain of change and may only contribute indirectly here. Still, there is potential for far-reaching social and political change if and when partners go beyond the programme and apply their skills and capacity to other issues and areas. This is the change we would 'love to see'.

While the initiative in this sphere by definition belongs to our strategic partners, CARE can still support them in various ways. Programmes may offer support to institutional development and organisational strengthening processes with clear organisational benchmarks. Strengthening of strategic and advocacy plans and their monitoring also support general organisational effectiveness. Participatory decision-making and priority-setting by members or beneficiaries helps build legitimacy and relevance. Financial sustainability and general administrative capacity helps the partner organisations stay in business and maintain integrity.

Civil society pressure for changes risks being useless unless governments and their local departments are open to engaging with civil society actors. If and when relevant, our support should contribute to **making governance more inclusive**, securing the participation of poor and vulnerable groups. Constructive debate between civil society organisations and government

¹² In relation to the CARE International Unifying Framework, domain of change 3 corresponds to improving the enabling environment.

agencies is often more effective than a confrontational approach which alienates government officials from engaging civil society in open debates.

Many policy issues extend beyond borders or originate outside the country and are therefore more effectively addressed at **regional, international or global levels**. The underlying causes of local problems may be rooted in policies adopted by the EU or other international institutions. CARE Danmark programmes will support strategic partners in connecting with and participating in international networks and events that are relevant to their policy goals.¹³

7. Implementation approaches

This section describes some cross-cutting approaches and concerns for all CARE Danmark programmes.

We will apply a **human rights-based approach**. Human rights are powerful tools and reference points for civil society organisations in their campaigns to hold their own government accountable as signatories to international agreements. Human rights work offer a direct link to the international level via the United Nations human rights mechanisms. CARE Danmark will strengthen organisations in applying a global human rights perspective.

Our programmes must observe the four human rights principles of non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, transparency, and accountability. Most important, programmes must address inequalities caused by violation of the rights of minorities, indigenous peoples and women and girls. Gender-based discrimination must be analysed and addressed in the context of the many intersecting forms of diversity and inequality, including age, economic and social status, ethnicity, race, religion and sexuality.

Each CARE Danmark-funded programme must work with between two and five **strategic civil society partners**. Only civil society organisations are accepted as 'partners' in CARE Danmark programmes. Because strategic partners are of crucial importance to our programme, CARE Danmark wants to be directly involved in selection processes of and interaction with strategic partners. Programmes should support the implementation of our partners' own strategic plans.

Strategic partners can be civil society organisations that already use policy advocacy and monitoring to achieve structural changes – or at least be genuinely interested in developing their advocacy skills and activities. They must be willing to address thorny issues and hold duty-bearers accountable. They must be able to claim space for dialogue with duty-bearers and not just accept invited spaces.¹⁴ Country programmes will need to analyse risks and how they may be abated.

Strategic partners must further work for goals that overlap with our high-level programme goals and generally subscribe to the same values as CARE. They should be accountable to constituencies among our impact groups. Many civil society organisations (development NGOs) work *for* poor and vulnerable people, but we prefer partners who work *on behalf of* poor and vulnerable people as credible, transparent and legitimate change agents with participatory internal governance. Female participation in the leadership is an important indicator.

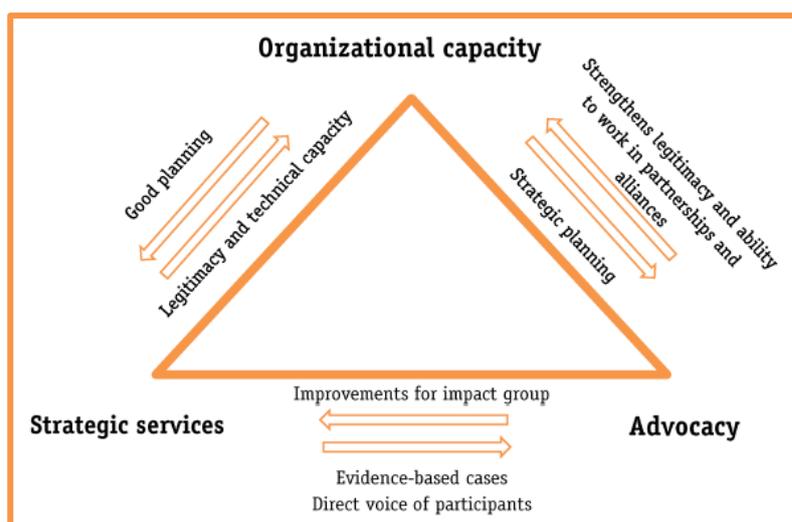
¹³ See also section 8.

¹⁴ 'Invited space' refers to dialogues initiated and often controlled by governments, often at the request of donors.

Many civil society organisations will not meet all of these standards. They face fundamental challenges to organising effectively, achieving economic sustainability, and relating to their constituencies in a democratic way. It is the role of CARE Danmark-funded programmes to help build the capacity of our partners in these areas and as requested by the partners.

Strategic services are services delivered at community level by partners which are truly relevant for programme advocacy goals. Services must not become ends in themselves. Performance indicators purely based on reaching a specific number of people should be avoided.

The Change Triangle (see figure) shows how services become strategic by being linked to the two other cornerstones in civil society strengthening, that is, organisational capacity building and advocacy.



Strategic services are justified in terms of their contribution to learning, documentation and evidence-gathering for advocacy purposes. CARE Danmark will support action research on new

innovative techniques for securing livelihoods and benefitting marginalized communities. Service activities that demonstrate or pilot new approaches or models of livelihood improvements must have strategies in place for how they may be replicated and scaled up by civil society partners, local government or other actors, while CARE must have a clear exit plan.

CARE Danmark will align its programmes with the **programme approach** implemented by CARE Country Offices. We welcome integration of our efforts in wider programmes. Country programmes funded by CARE Danmark may take the form of a sub-programme focusing on civil society strengthening within a larger program.¹⁵ The key condition for integration and joint funding is that CARE Danmark-supported initiatives are in line with this policy.

CARE Danmark supports activities and approaches that implement **development effectiveness** principles of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for development results and mutual accountability and will implement them in our programmes. CARE must strive to ensure full partner ownership and seek to harmonise our requirements and procedures with those of our partners. This is particularly true if we want to build and maintain strategic partnerships. We will work for greater flexibility in relation to existing CARE regulation of sub-grants to partners.

CARE Danmark has developed or adopted guidelines for a number of issues. For integration of **climate change** and disaster risk reduction in programmes, please refer to the Toolkit for

¹⁵ The 'country programmes' referred to in this policy may thus be integral parts of P-Shift programmes of the Country Offices.

Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Projects.¹⁶ For specific community-based adaptation interventions, activities should align with the CBA Project Standards in the Community-Based Adaptation Toolkit.¹⁷ **Gender equality** is an important cross-cutting concern in all CARE Danmark programmes. Detailed minimum requirements for programmes are found in CARE International Gender Policy and CARE Danmark's more detailed gender guidelines.¹⁸ Programmes must take care not to aggravate **HIV/AIDS** problems and/or inadvertently increase the risk of spreading infection, contribute to stigmatisation, or otherwise do harm, by adhering to the safeguards in CARE Danmark's guidelines for HIV/AIDS.¹⁹ Programmes that work with **ethnic minorities and/or indigenous peoples** must be aware of the draft guideline document from CARE Danmark.²⁰

8. CARE Danmark advocacy and added value

In Denmark and beyond, CARE Danmark is recognized for our long-term engagement and specialisation in the fields of natural resources and climate change. We focus our work on a limited number of programme countries, currently including Ghana, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda, and Vietnam. By virtue of our framework agreement with Danida, CARE Danmark provides **predictable funding for long-term programmes** and contributes positively to realising the programme approach of CARE Country Offices. We source funding from various other institutional sources as well and add substantial privately fundraised means.

In the coming years CARE Danmark's primary added value will be our ability to link the concerns of country strategic partners to the global level in evidence-based advocacy for the rights of poor natural resources users. We will seek to establish **local-to-global advocacy linkages** between country-level partners and international events, campaigns, and networks. Specific activities will include facilitating partners' participation in international advocacy, direct advocacy work by CARE Danmark in Denmark and beyond, as well as support to CARE International advocacy. CARE Danmark is a legitimate civil society organisation in Denmark, where we have a growing constituency of individual members and donors who support CARE's long-term and 'preventive' approach to development.²¹ CARE Danmark is a member of various NGO networks and engages in dialogues with government ministers and other stakeholders.

Advocacy messages will be aimed at decision-makers at the national level, in the European Union, global level forums (such as climate change negotiations) based on an analysis of where critical decisions are made. For climate change advocacy in particular, we benefit from guidance and support from the **Poverty, Environment and Climate Change Network (PECCN)**. CARE Danmark's attaches great importance to its role as host and manager of PECCN. This network of experts and practitioners is CARE International's first Centre of Expertise and a leading model for

¹⁶ Available at <http://www.careclimatechange.org/tk/integration/en/>.

¹⁷ <http://www.careclimatechange.org/tk/cba/en>.

¹⁸ CARE International Gender Policy, February 2009; CARE Danmark, *Guidelines for gender equality as a crosscutting issue*, June 2007.

¹⁹ CARE Danmark, *Guidelines for HIV/AIDS as a crosscutting issue*, March 2007.

²⁰ CARE Danmark, *Guideline for support to indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities*, draft version, September 2010.

²¹ CARE Danmark only provides emergency assistance in exceptional cases.

learning and sharing of knowledge, building programming quality and capacity in the field of climate change. PECCN has enabled CARE International and CARE Danmark to become recognised partners and advocates in global climate change politics and knowledge sharing. CARE Danmark will also seek to grow CARE's programming in community-based adaptation to climate change, which was spearheaded by PECCN.

9. Working with the private sector and foundations

Civil society programming is the largest and most important part of CARE Danmark's portfolio. We believe that the civil society theory of change is the most effective long-term response to development challenges from an international NGO like CARE. Still, donors with other preferences and funding priorities than Danida and the EU offer opportunities for projects that pilot new approaches, allow us to engage strategically with private sector entities, or implement free-standing development interventions.

The **private sector** is increasingly engaging in development issues and has important contributions to make. Just as a responsible and accountable private sector can be a driver for poverty reduction, irresponsible business practices can trap poor people in poverty. CARE Danmark increasingly engages with private sector entities with the purpose of enhancing corporate social responsibility (CSR), fostering innovative partnerships for new and unconventional solutions to poverty problems, developing value chains for the benefit of our impact group, while sourcing responsible funding for CARE's development activities.

CARE Danmark has long-standing relationships with a number of Danish **private foundations**, which have funding preferences for activities with very tangible benefits for impact groups. Foundations have funded support to vulnerable children, education, clean drinking water and sanitation, and care for people affected by HIV/AIDS. CARE Danmark also runs a small gift-giving programme which funds donations of husbandry animals, seeds, tools, and others small items to the poorest and most vulnerable people in our existing programming areas.

10. Implementation of the programme policy

CARE Danmark expects that the sharpened objectives and approaches described in this programme policy will be largely implemented in all country programmes before the end of 2013. The introduction of the programme policy has coincided with the conclusion of phases and design of new phases in all country programmes supported by CARE Danmark. CARE Danmark has supported – and will continue to support for a reasonable time – the necessary analyses, partner identification processes, formulation and other changes required here.

The implementation of the programme policy is closely linked to a renewal of CARE Danmark's monitoring and evaluation system for country programmes. The revised system focuses on result areas and indicators relating to strengthening strategic civil society partner capacity for advocacy on behalf of poor and vulnerable groups. The new M&E system also seeks to aggregate results better across country programmes thus demonstrating linkages and connections in CARE Danmark's programme. It will also help CARE Danmark comply with Danida's steadily increasing demands for accountability for results of Danish NGO's and thus support us in maintaining our strong relationship with Danida.