



CARE CAMBODIA ANNUAL REPORT

2023



Gender equality is not a destination, but a Journey



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Message from the Country Director

From fieldwork to the boardroom, this is the year of transformation and stories of change.

It is my honor to share with you CARE Cambodia's achievements and impact of 2023 through our collective actions and partnerships.

I want to acknowledge our partners and generous donors without whose contributions our projects and their impacts would not have happened. Partnerships are at the heart of our programs that put women and girls at the center of all our work. This year CARE Cambodia has been increasingly recognized in its role as a convener and technical advisor and moving towards a niche organization that is locally led and globally connected. CARE believes in shifting power to local actors, such as communities, social movements, local NGOs and governments. Rather than directly implementing projects, we amplify the vision of local communities, local NGOs and the government.

CARE Cambodia continues to advocate for women and girls to have access to dignified work and social services that meet their needs. In particular women and girls from marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, and ethnic and sexual minorities.

On behalf of CARE Cambodia, I would like to thank you for your partnership, collaboration, support, and the belief you have in us.

"In our pursuit of progress for development, let us remember that equality is not just a women's issue, it's a human issue. It affects us all. Our collective strength lies in our diversity and our unified vision for a world where everyone, regardless of gender, has the opportunity to thrive and contribute their best. Gender equality is not a destination, but a journey that we are committed to, every step of the way".

NEOU Sovattha
Country Director



CARE works globally to save lives, defeat poverty, and achieve social justice.

OUR MISSION

CARE is among the global leaders dedicated to ending poverty worldwide for more than 75 years. We are known for our commitment to the dignity of people everywhere. CARE puts women and girls at the heart of our work to bring sustainable changes to their communities.

CARE Cambodia is one of many Country Offices over the world implementing in-country programs harnessing local knowledge to address social injustice and poverty with support from CARE's global network. With decades of works in the humanitarian assistance and development sector, CARE Cambodia began in 1973 as an implementor of projects. Today we have made significant progress in our new roles as a **convenor** and **technical advisor**.

With our main office in Phnom Penh, CARE's primary geographical focus is the Northeast, Phnom Penh, and surrounding provinces where our impact is reached through collaboration with our local partners.

OUR VISSION

We seek a world of hope, tolerance, and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and all people live with dignity and security.



OUR FOCUS

We put women and girls at the center because we know that we cannot overcome poverty until all people have equal rights and opportunities.

CARE's approaches are illustrated by strengthening gender equality and women's voices by improving their agency and capacity, promoting inclusive governance, and increasing resilience to strengthen women and girls' capacity. With this in mind, CARE's programs address **four priorities with three approaches**



Strengthening Gender Equality and Women's Voice

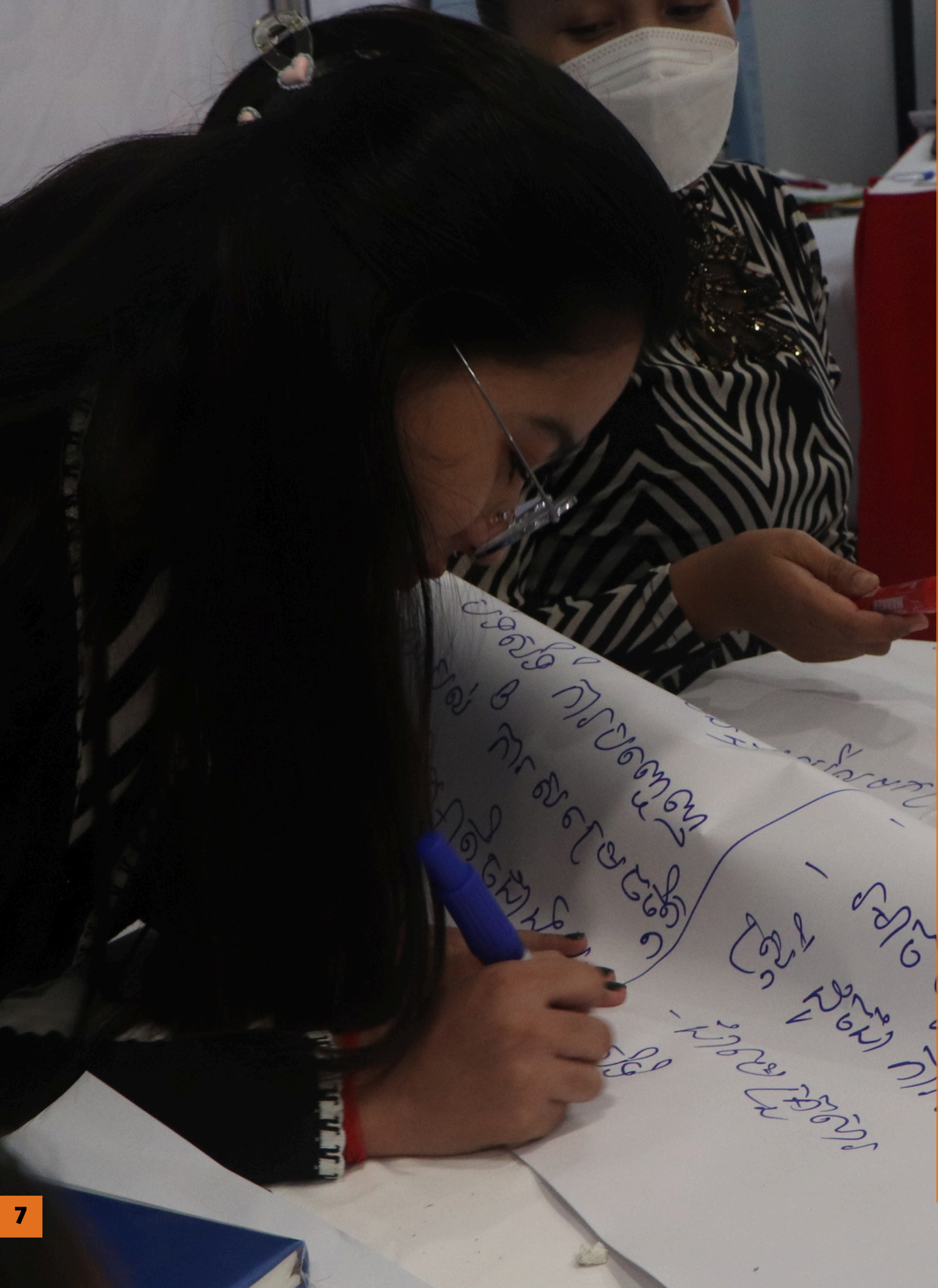
Informed by **CARE's Gender Equality Framework**, we work to improve women's agency and capacity, the personal and power relations within which women live their lives, and the structures that surround and condition their choices.

Increasing Resilience

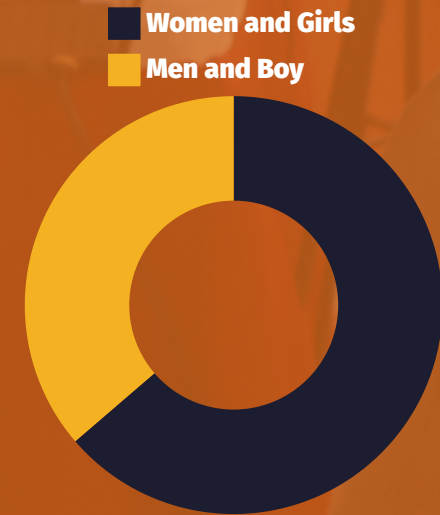
CARE works to strengthen women and girls' **capacities to respond** to the effects of climate change and disasters and ensure risks and underlying causes of vulnerabilities are managed across all humanitarian and development interventions.

Inclusive Governance

Guided by **CARE's Governance Programming Framework**, we promote inclusive governance through strengthening civil society to represent women and girls, and advocate for inclusion of their interests and priorities in the development and implementation of policies, laws and service delivery.



OUR 2023 IN A GLANCE



Total reached 67,958
(63.7% were women)

 **21,700**

Under Inclusive Governance ,
we reached 21,700 of the
population

 **54,447**

In 20223, though our focus on
gender equality, CARE has reached
about 54,447 of the population

In CARE 's Women Economics
Justice, we have made total
reach of 10,631

10,631 

 **9,381**

Under Women Voice & Leadership,
we reached 9,381 directly to women

Women's Economic Justice



CARE places women and girls at the heart of our work. We work with the private sector, governments, and local partners to develop and implement sustainable projects in factories focusing on health, economic resilience, ethical supply chains, labor rights and the elimination of gender-based violence. CARE has worked in the garment sector for over 20 years.

The **Strengthening Economic Resilience of Female Garment Workers** project aims to empower women in the garment industry to better cope with the economic impact caused by the COVID pandemic. The project provides skills and knowledge of workers' rights that are essential to navigate the post pandemic impact. CARE and its partner Collective Union of Movement of Workers (CUMW) provided training to garment workers on the prevention of gender-based violence and sexual harassment, social protection schemes and financial literacy. The project successfully impacted on workers' welfare, the reduction of absenteeism, improvement in ethical working environments and the increase in confidence and leadership of the factory teams.

With other private funding in the industry, the **Sewing for a Brighter Future (SBF)** project to increase knowledge, skills, and access to alternative livelihood opportunities. The project provided unconditional cash assistance and financial training, prioritizing groups such as pregnant women, women with disabilities, single mothers, and workers with large families. The support enabled participants to meet their immediate needs and make informed financial decisions. Aiming to enhance economic resilience, the SBF project trained participants on social protection, financial management and information on career opportunities and information.



For decades CARE's expertise in the garment industry has contributed significantly to sustainable and adaptable engagement models. With private sector partners and brands, our programs have improved labor rights and increased women leadership.

IN HIGHLIGHT: FEMINISTS IN ACTION PROJECT

Feminist movements have made much progress globally in the last decades, making a positive impact on policies, social norms, and representation. With the support from the **French government through AFD**, CARE was able to partner with women-led and feminist organizations to equip them with adequate financial, human, material, and organizational resources to amplify their vision to advance gender equality and social development in Cambodia. Our partner organizations focus on different aspects of gender transformation in their programs, including prevention and intervention in gender-based violence, gender injustice and discrimination in the community, financial literacy and business strategies for women. Each project fosters inclusivity and diversity including migrant women, women farmers, persons with disabilities, the LGBTQIA+ community, and Indigenous groups across the country.



IN STORY:

CARE and Lady Saving Group Unite for Impact

Cambodia has long faced challenges related to gender inequality and economic disparity. Where women's empowerment is crucially needed, local partnerships are proving to be a beacon of hope. CARE has formed a transformative and equitable partnership with Lady Saving Group.

[Lady Savings Group](#) is one of six local women's rights organizations participating in the **Feminists in Action initiative**. This initiative encourages local organizations to take the lead and ownership of the work they are doing at community level, with support from CARE to enhance their financial, technical, and organizational capacity.

Ms. Virak Bonnarath, the Co-founder and Program Manager of Lady Saving Group, is at the forefront of this partnership. She oversees the development of Lady Saving Group's strategic plans, fundraising efforts, and project management. Bonnarath envisions Lady Saving Group as a catalyst for women's economic progress, explaining, "We aim to promote women's economic status by coordinating a mutual saving, credit, and a learning platform where members can access financial resources to support their education, family, and businesses and build capacity on leadership and entrepreneurship."



Ms. Virak Bonnarath, in white shirt during LSG's Annual General Assembly

 [Read the full story here](#)

"By giving women knowledge, financial resources, networks, and a safe space to speak up, they will be empowered to fully own their lives with dignity," Bonnarath shared.

Where ambition, community and business unite

With the support of Feminists in Action, the Lady Saving Group has been able to extend their reach and impact. Bonnarath explained, "Initially we had 267 women members from diverse backgrounds, all saving money in the group and receiving regular training and resources on health, self-development, and business management." Since joining the Feminists in Action initiative, the Lady saving group have scaled up their efforts, this year providing an additional 100 women entrepreneurs with financial resources and educational opportunities.

This platform empowers women to voice their opinions on topics related to gender norms, breaking down barriers that hinder their development and overall well-being.

Life-changing circle of support

Rasin is a dedicated Lady Saving Group member since 2012, the membership has been a life changing experience. As a mother of two, Rasin is a hard working member striving for a good quality of life for her family. **"Lady Saving Group is my second family," she said.** The Lady Saving Group community supported her to find a better balance in her professional life and her family's happiness.

The Lady Saving Group offers a range of training sessions for all members to join free of charge, including sessions on work life balance, financial literacy, entrepreneurial leadership as well as mentoring and coaching programs. Rasin's journey with Lady Saving Group has not only enhanced her business skills but has also boosted her confidence and social connections,



Ms Rasin (third from the right) with other Lady Saving Group Members

Education and Work



The Education and Work program aims to provide equal access and quality education for all, promotes empowerment and improved employment opportunities. CARE's focus is on education in remote and underserved areas and marginalized students. Through our long-term partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), we have improved educational opportunities for especially Indigenous communities and students with disabilities and training the next generation of education leaders with 21st century skills in the northeastern provinces.

The Building Critical Thinking in Emerging Leaders in Cambodia project, under the Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative successfully built a cohort of 23 emerging education leaders equipped with 21st century skills – focused on collaborative, critical and creative thinking. At six schools in Ratanak Kiri and Mondul Kiri, MoEYS and CARE implemented Action Learning Leadership Programs and Professional Development Plans that further enhanced skills needed for the next generation of education leaders. At school level, the learning positively impacted on the teaching of Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

CARE has been at the forefront of **Multilingual education (MLE)** for over two decades. Over the years CARE's role shifted to technical advisor to the Ministry. In a close partnership with UNICEF, CSO partners and MoEYS, CARE continuously supports the implementation and development of multilingual education to ensure inclusive education for Indigenous communities, supports at-risk and dropout children in Indigenous communities, and encourages their return to school. By including teaching in the mother tongue in the early years of schooling before transitioning to the Khmer language, Indigenous students have better access to culturally appropriate schools and are more successful in completing basic education and beyond.



Multilingual education is bridging Indigenous children to the formal education system while maintaining their connections to traditions and culture.



IN STORY: The first ever schoolbooks in Jarai language

Surrounding by green rolling hills, about 70 kilometers away from Banlung Town in Ratanak Kiri province sits a Peak Primary School. On the red soil of Ou Ya Dav District, this four-classrooms primary school is an education hub for over one hundred Jarai students – one of the major Indigenous communities in this Northeast province.

Ratanak Kiri is home to Cambodia's many Indigenous communities. These Indigenous communities have unique social and cultural norms and practices and speak a variety of languages, which is their home language and the language they use in their communities. Children of these communities grow up speaking their mother tongue and are only exposed to the national language Khmer at school or outside their communities. The Government has decided to implement multilingual education, using both the mother tongue and Khmer language in the curriculum, recognizing the significance of linguistic and cultural diversity within the nation.

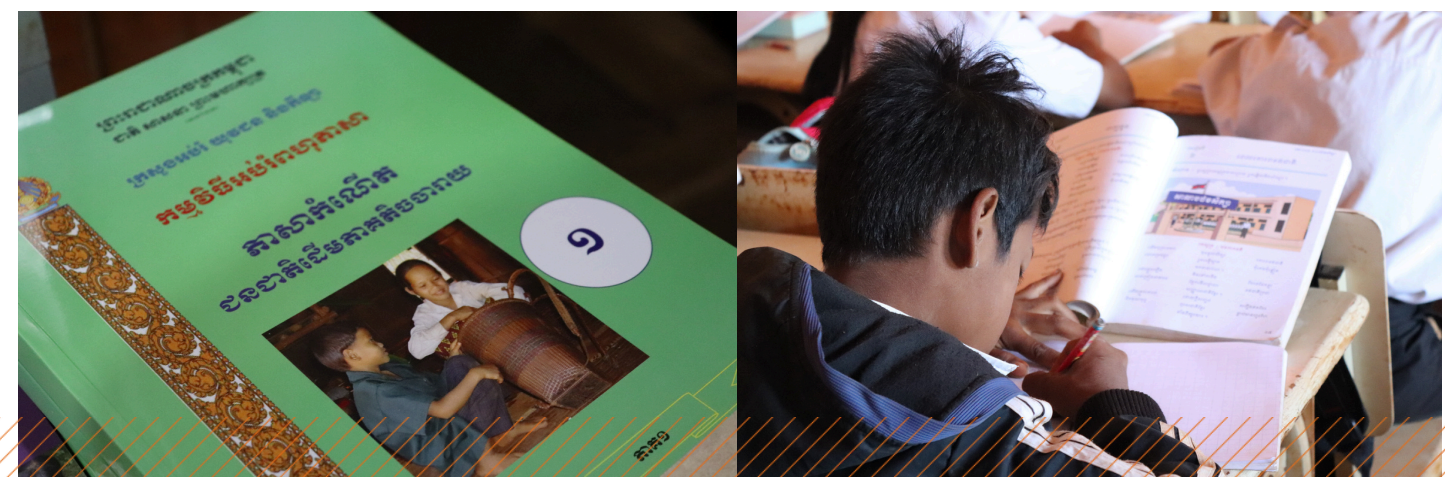
Language encompasses their uniqueness, reflects rights to inclusive education and culturally relevance

The piloting of the first **Jarai language textbooks** in Grade 1 is a significant milestone in the development of Multilingual Education in Cambodia. A green colored Jarai textbook sits open on top of their desks as children at Peak Primary School wander around excitedly.

The piloting of the Jarai language of instruction and books started a month earlier. Exciting about this initiative, the school teachers discussed their practices, challenges, and teaching of multilingual education in their schools .

“Using multilingual education in the classroom is like a bridge for students. It connects their mother tongue to the Khmer language and makes their learning easier” Sev Hout, the school director said. According to the School Management Committee, consisting of surrounding community members, 90% of the students at Peak Primary School have the Jarai ethnicity. The previous practice at this school was that the teacher provided oral translation of the Khmer textbooks in the Jarai language while teaching. This was a difficult process, and it didn't do justice to the rich linguistic cultural environment of the learners.

“Using the book contributes to the protection of cultural identity, customs and traditions of the Jarai community because the textbook illustrates the cultural practices relevant to the Jarai community.”, says Keo Phirum, an education officer dedicated to multilingual education at the Provincial Office of Education. Phirum was involved in the training on the methodology and evaluation on the draft of the pilot textbooks. He adds **“Multilingual education encourages better communication between students and teachers, and it is easier for the teachers to teach in the language of the students and the community. It encourages students to come back to school.**



 [Read the full story here](#)

Inclusive Governance



CARE is supporting citizens to provide constructive feedback on the social services provided by the government in a structured dialogue and develop action plans with local authorities to continually improve services in education, health and the administrative services of the commune and district offices.

As part of the implementation of the **Social Accountability Framework Phase II (ISAF-II)** through the European Union funded **Supporting Meaningful Civic Engagement for Improved Accountability by Leveraging Digital Technologies project**, CARE, API and Kawsang with 14 local NGO partners promoted inclusive governance through enhancing the skills of Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs) who play a key role in improving the social services in their communes and districts.

A distinct contribution of CARE and our partners to the ISAF program has been the introduction of the Digital Community Scorecard (DCSC) that enables citizens to monitor social accountability and provides feedback to policymakers. The DCSC dashboard encourages citizens access to public information, increases transparency and citizens participation in social accountability.



Volunteering for Change: From a volunteer to a commune worker



Cheatra's journey into community service began as a volunteer for various CARE projects, most recently as a Community Accountability Facilitator. The ISAF (Implementation of Social Accountability Framework) project, where she took on the opportunity as a Community Accountability Facilitator, aims to empower citizens and improve local service delivery by leveraging community involvement and accountability.

In the Community Accountability Facilitator role, Cheatra was able to gain a deep understanding of how to work with the local community, which helped her become more aware of local issues and needs. The experience prepared her for her role as a commune councilor. As a result of her dedication, she has been recognised as an instrumental member of the Joint Accountability Action Plan Committee in Phnhi Meas commune.



Read the full story [here](#)



By understanding the needs of the community and involving them in the decision-making through the Joint Accountability Action Plan, we have brought about positive and lasting changes. I believe that the sustained collaboration and community engagement are the keys to a better future for all.” Cheatra said.

Climate Justice



Climate change is a global phenomenon posing significant challenges to sustainable development. Cambodia is particularly vulnerable to impacts from extreme weather, causing flooding, droughts, and rapid decline in biodiversity. As the country prioritizes net zero emissions of greenhouse gases, a comprehensive approach to climate change is crucial.

Climate Justice refers to the fair and equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation, considering historical responsibility, vulnerability, and human rights. CARE Cambodia is bringing CARE International's expertise on Climate Justice to Cambodia, integrating environmental sustainability, gender equality, and social inclusion.

Climate change doesn't stop at the borders of any country, and therefore a regional and global approach is needed. In the Lower Mekong, the CARE Country Offices have developed a regional strategy, identifying the areas CARE wants to address, including smart agriculture and mitigation of the impact on the environment by manufacturing.

Our staff capacity strengthening has included Climate Justice training and identifying the niche CARE Cambodia can contribute to. This is in particular the intersectionality of social inclusion, gender equality and locally led programming.

Humanitarian Aid

Building on CARE's humanitarian response mandate, CARE Cambodia actively participated in the Humanitarian Response Forum (HRF) and the collaboration with the National Committee for Disaster Management.

In June 2023 CARE conducted a three-day capacity strengthening workshop for government officials and 10 local partners to strengthen a locally led approach to humanitarian aid. During the workshop we collectively developed an updated Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) that reflects the local needs in the anticipated flooding, storms, droughts, and epidemics. The workshop also reviewed and consolidated the roles and responsibilities of each member of our Emergency Response team (ERT).

As CARE puts women and girls at the heart of all the work we do, we pay special attention to the application of a Rapid Gender Analysis to ensure our humanitarian work meets the different needs of women and girls and provides equal opportunities during any disasters.



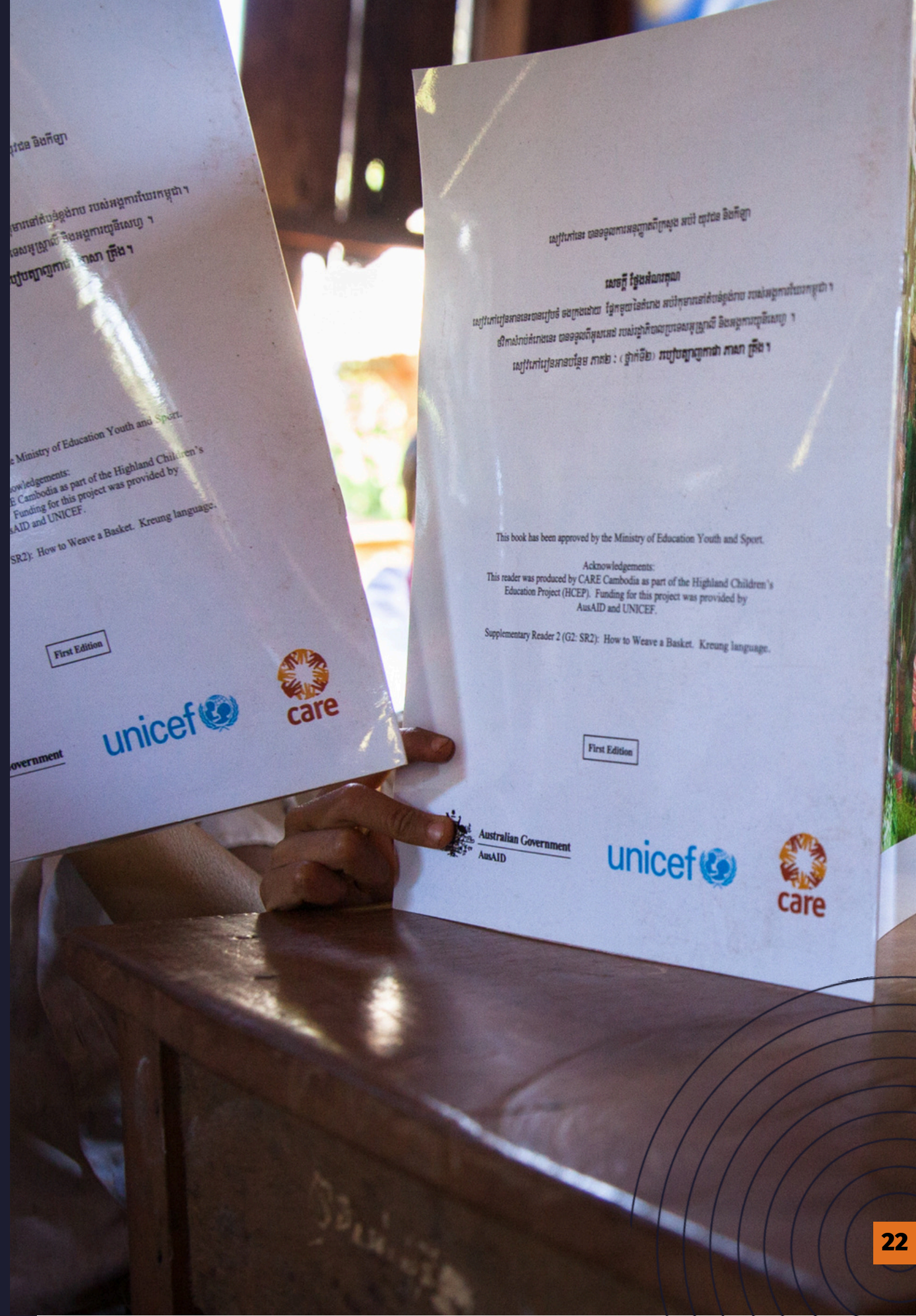
“**LOCALLY LED, GLOBALLY CONNECTED**”

“Locally Led, but Globally Connected” is CARE’s global approach. CARE believes that local actors can make the best decisions to improve their lives. CARE can tap into CARE’s rich global experiences and resources to amplify the voice of local communities.

CARE Cambodia advocacy has focused on two areas in 2023.

CARE is a co-lead of the ILO Convention 190 Technical Working Group (TWG) and contributes to leverage joint advocacy through technical support and coordinate key events and campaigns. CARE co-led the campaign on “Unite to combat GBV in the world of work” with the Technical Working group urging the government to ratify this convention ensuring effective response to GBV and harassment in the world of work.

In education, through decades of work on multilingual education CARE has become the trusted partner of MoEYS to provide technical advice on the implementation of the Multilingual Education Action Plan (MEAP). In the past year CARE provided technical support on the development of the Professional Certificate on Multilingual Education at the Teacher Training College in Stung Treng and develop textbooks in the Jarai language.



OUR PARTNERS

OUR DONORS

- Agence Française de Développement (AFD)
- CARE Enterprise INC (CEI) with Bamboo
- CowaterSogema
- European Union (EU Global)
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
- Levi Strauss Foundation
- Lululemon USA Inc
- Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative (PCTFI)
- Primark
- UNICEF
- VF Corporation

LOCAL PARTNERS

- Action for Health Development (AHEAD)
- Advocacy and Policy Institute (API)
- Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT)
- Banteay Srei (BS)
- Building Community Voices (BCV)
- Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)
- Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPD)
- Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC)
- Collective Union of Movement of Workers (CUMW)
- Community Development Center (CDC)
- Conserve Indigenous People Languages Organization (CIPL)
- Innovative Support To Emergencies Diseases and Disasters (InSTEDD)
- Kampuchea Women Welfare Action (KWWA)
- Khmer Association for Development of Countryside (KAFDOC)
- Lady Saving Group (LSG)
- Legal Support for Children and Women (LSCW)
- Micro Rainbow Cambodia (MRC)
- My Village International (MVI)
- Nak Akphivath Sahakum (NAS)
- Partners for Development in Action (PFDA)
- Promvihearthor (PVT)
- Save Vulnerable Cambodians (SVC)
- Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO)
- Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC)
- ROCK Cambodia

OUR PARTNERS

CARE MEMBER PARTNERS

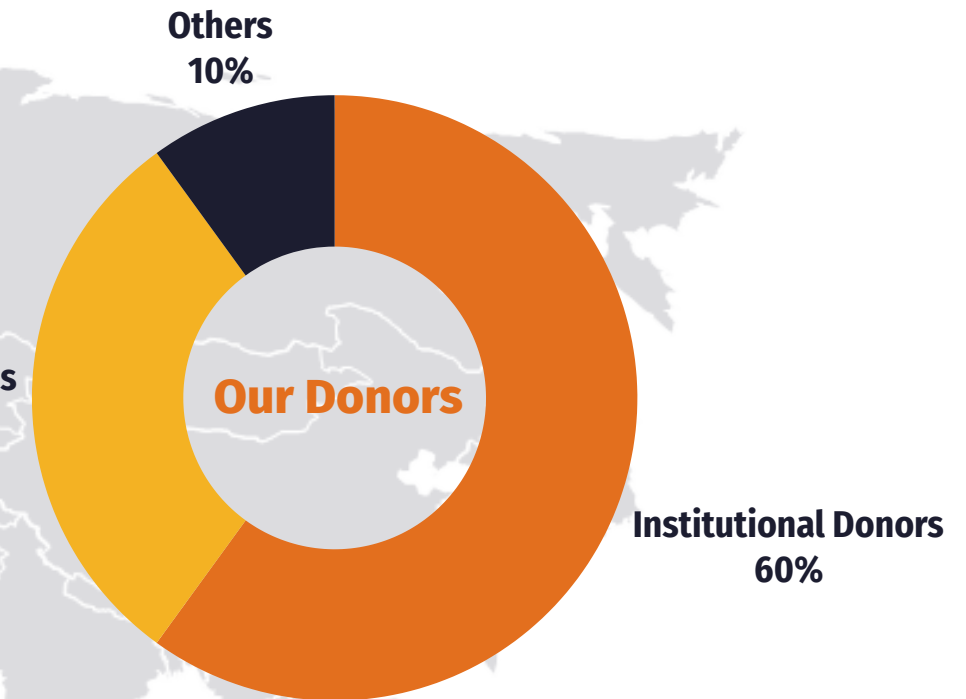
- CARE Australia
- CARE Deutschland
- CARE France
- CARE UK
- CARE USA
- Raks Thai Foundation

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

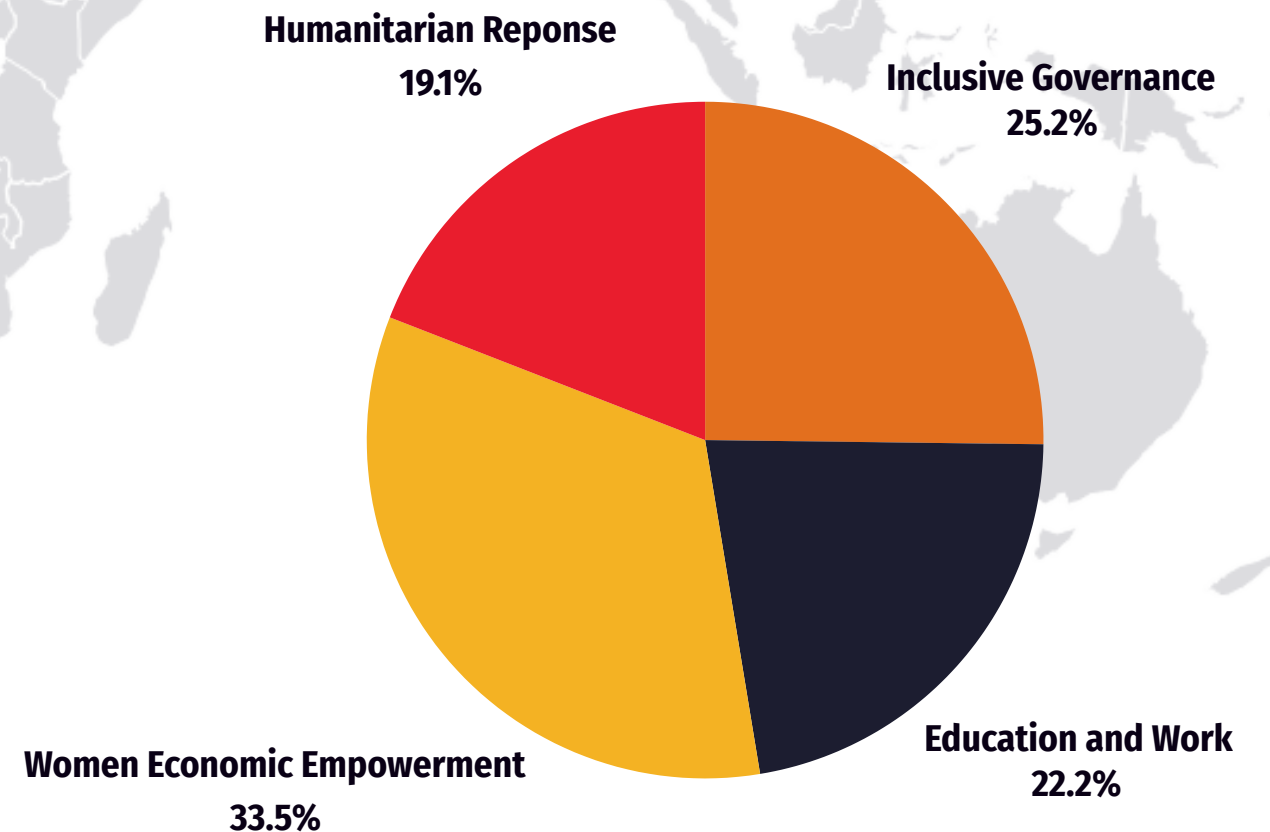
- The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS)
- The Ministry of Health (MoH)
- The Ministry of Interior (Mol)
- The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT)
- The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA)

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Private Donors and Foundations
30%



Our fund by program areas



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

At CARE, we recognize our responsibility to promote human dignity and social justice. At the heart of CARE's efforts to impact poverty and social justice is our engagement with marginalised communities.

We believe all people have a right to safety and to live their lives free from harm and any form of abuse, including **sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and child abuse.**

- CARE has **zero-tolerance** approach to all forms of abuse.
- CARE has **a survivor-centred approach** to its safeguarding.
- CARE will make every effort to promote, create and maintain a safe organizational culture for programme participants, the communities where we work, our staff, related personnel and our partners.

Feedback and Accountability Mechanism (FAM)



CARE has Zero Tolerance toward all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and child abuse.



Together for a **workplace free** from

- Sexual harassment
- Sexual exploitation and abuse
- Child exploitation and abuse.

All staff have a duty to report sexual misconduct.



Call to Action

As Cambodia recovers from the impact of the COVID pandemic and economic growth is steadily picking up, CARE calls on all our partners to collaborate ensuring that no one is left behind by providing equal opportunities for everyone, and no students are left behind because of their identities or different abilities.

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