CARE’s 2018 Advocacy Agenda

For decades, CARE has complemented our work in the field with advocacy efforts that contribute to global poverty alleviation and empower those in greatest need. Our advocacy work draws from our experience in more than 90 countries to promote U.S. policy reforms that foster strong, resilient communities and respond to humanitarian needs. These policy reforms ensure that current and future generations will benefit from the achievements and progress made today.

As a leader in the fight against global poverty and extreme vulnerability, CARE knows that any lasting solution must address the underlying cause of poverty: the lack of access to resources and opportunities. In all of our work, we address the inequalities that lead to poverty so individuals and communities are empowered to be self-sufficient. In addition, our experience has proven that women and girls, when given the proper resources and tools, have the power to lift their entire families and communities out of poverty. We also engage men and boys throughout this process because they are an integral part of long-term change.

CARE’s advocacy supports the efforts of poor women and families by promoting policy reforms that advance U.S. foreign assistance programs and improve their daily lives. Our recommendations seek to make U.S. assistance to developing countries more effective, timely, sustainable and efficient.

In 2018, CARE’s advocacy efforts will focus on the Foreign Assistance Budget, Food and Nutrition Security, Maternal and Child Health, Gender and Women’s Empowerment and Humanitarian Assistance and Response.

Foreign Assistance
The foreign assistance budget is the U.S. Government’s primary funding source for international programs for emergency response and long-term development. Although the foreign assistance budget is roughly 1 percent of the overall U.S. budget, it is routinely targeted in budget cuts.

The foreign assistance budget contains multiple accounts that support CARE’s fight against global poverty and injustice. Proposals that suggest drastic cuts to the foreign assistance budget would cost countless lives and signal a relinquishment of American leadership. In recognition of the critical role that U.S. foreign assistance plays in improving lives, CARE believes that this funding must be protected, and that there should be no disproportionate budget cuts. Such funding is critical in achieving success in the places where CARE works. CARE also continues to advocate for greater accountability and transparency of these funds.

- CARE seeks to maintain funding for the International Affairs Budget at no less than FY17 levels, and CARE seeks to protect poverty-focused and humanitarian accounts.

Food and Nutrition Security
CARE’s history is deeply rooted in supporting food and nutrition security. As a partner in the fight against hunger, CARE advocates for U.S. Government support and funding for comprehensive food and nutrition security policies and programs that feed more people in a more sustainable, equitable and flexible way. CARE also advocates for sustainable resource management, because the livelihoods of small-scale food producers, most of whom are women, are directly dependent on healthy, natural resources.
CARE supports the implementation and reauthorization of the Global Food Security Act, comprehensive food and nutrition security legislation that improves and codifies Feed the Future, the U.S. Government-wide initiative that ensures sustainable programs that build resilience and address the underlying drivers of vulnerability.

Maternal and Child Health
CARE recognizes that access to maternal and reproductive health services, including the healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies, is a key component of preventing maternal and child mortality. CARE advocates for the U.S. Government’s adoption of a comprehensive approach to maternal health through policies that increase the quality, access and availability of reproductive and maternal health services.

- CARE supports robust funding for international family planning and maternal and child health, including funding for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) programs in the foreign assistance budget.
- CARE supports the Reach Every Mother and Child Act, bipartisan legislation that strengthens the U.S. commitment to ending preventable maternal and child deaths through support for proven health interventions.
- CARE encourages U.S. policy and resources to target barriers to accessing health services, including inequitable gender and social norms, poor governance and a lack of local resources.

Gender and Women’s Empowerment
CARE advocates for the integration of gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment throughout U.S. foreign assistance programs. As part of this effort, CARE supports efforts that incorporate strong policies and robust resources to prevent and address gender-based violence, promote women’s economic empowerment and combat child marriage.

- CARE supports the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA), which builds on existing efforts to integrate a coordinated strategy for responding to gender-based violence throughout all development and foreign policy initiatives and advocates for implementation of the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally.
- CARE advocates for the implementation of the U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls, which will address challenges, including child marriage, barriers to education and other forms of gender-based violence against adolescent girls. CARE calls on Congress to adequately fund programs under this strategy.
- CARE advocates for continued support to the U.S. Government structures that develop and coordinate U.S. foreign policy and programs related to gender empowerment, namely the State Department’s Office of Global Women’s Issues and the USAID Senior Coordinator for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality.

Humanitarian Assistance and Response
CARE advocates for the United States to robustly respond to humanitarian crises, through both funding and diplomatic engagement. The U.S. remains the single largest humanitarian donor, and when we step up, other countries follow. To ensure that humanitarian assistance targets the most vulnerable populations through sustainable engagement, CARE advocates for policies that:

- Uphold commitments made by the U.S. to respond to humanitarian emergencies, specifically addressing the unique needs of women and girls, and to protecting civilians in emergency settings.
- Incorporate the protection of women and children in global emergency responses, building linkages between short-term emergency response and long-term development and ensuring humanitarian access to vulnerable communities.
- Ensure robust funding for emergency response, including building resilience and linkages between short-term emergency response and long-term development.