# Promoting inclusive governance and gender equality in Papua New Guinea

CARE's focus on improved governance and gender equality in Papua New Guinea is transforming women's lives and their communities.

CARE believes that one of the most effective ways for remote communities to thrive is to ensure governance systems function well at a local level and include the voices of all members of a community, particularly women. Our experience has shown that it is a slow but worthwhile process to support inclusive governance and gender equality within households, communities, and all levels of government in Papua New Guinea.

How does CARE promote inclusive governance in Papua New Guinea?

Working with both government officials and community members, CARE builds skills, improves accountability and seeks to increase the role played by women at different levels. As a trusted partner, CARE plays a role in forging links and strengthening gender equality.
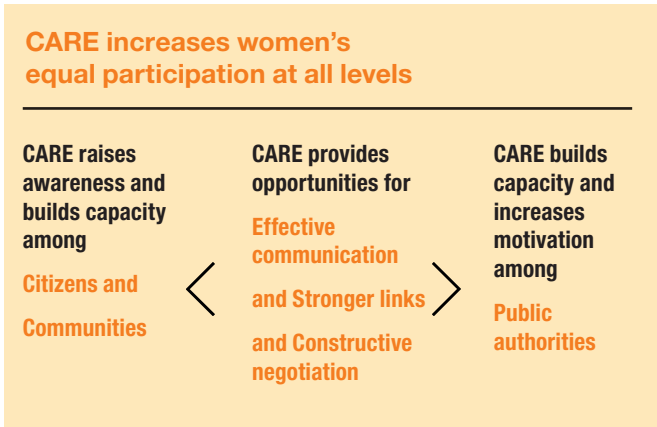
Within households and communities, CARE has enabled subtle and incremental changes in the social contract between men and women. CARE's engagement with authorities has strengthened the relationships between communities and government, bridging the distance between these to improve mutual accountability.

By acting as a positive disruptor of practices which negatively affect both community members and government officials, CARE helps build systems which are promoting gender equality and effectively addressing the needs of all members of a community.

CARE increases women's equal participation at all levels

CARE raises awareness and builds capacity among	CARE provides opportunities for	CARE builds capacity and increases motivation among
Citizens and Communities	**Effective communication and Stronger links and Constructive negotiation**	**Public authorities**

CARE in Papua New Guinea

1989: Started working in Papua New Guinea

2007: Increased focus on promoting gender equality

2010: Increased focus on governance

2017: Worked directly with over 372,000 people.

CARE focuses on remote and disadvantaged communities in the PNG Highlands and Bougainville.

CARE's gender approach

To achieve gender transformative change, CARE works with individuals, communities and government stakeholders to:

- build women's agency
- change relations
- transform structures.

CARE's governance approach

CARE believes that sustainable development for women and girls requires:

- empowered citizens
- effective spaces for negotiation
- accountable and effective power-holders.

*Refer to Appendix for CARE's Inclusive Governance Diagram.

> "Previously we didn't have meetings, and didn't include women at all. Now we continue to have women's representatives."
>
> - Community member, Paraba

What has CARE achieved in PNG?

A recent report found that CARE's programs in Papua New Guinea have had a significant impact on communities, how they are governed, and women's participation.

Government services are reaching more remote areas

This means: More women and girls can access better education, health and justice.

Example: CARE's work with local governments and communities to enable better access to education resulted in new local schools and additional grades in existing schools. More than 7,500 children are now enrolled in education they could not previously access.

Local planning processes and structures are more inclusive of women

This means: Government plans and investments are more likely to positively affect women as well as men.

Example: CARE helped establish more than 160 Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and ensured that at least two women were active members of each.

In one district, the community secured support for the construction of footbridges, which has improved women's access to markets and basic services.

More women are taking on leadership roles in their communities

This means: Women's involvement in earning income, managing finances and governing their communities becomes normalised, paving the way for more involvement of women in the future.

Example: Following CARE's engagement, 96 Village Court magistrates were trained, including nine women sworn in as new magistrates. Community members are now better able to settle law and order issues, with women actively accessing this service and 30 per cent of cases brought to the courts by women.

Gender norms at household level are shifting

This means: Women are more equal within their families, so have better access to income and greater control over their futures.

Example: Challenging men's attitudes and cultural norms has led to more equal divisions of labour and income within families. Women report less money is spent on gambling and alcohol, and more investment in their children's education.

Effective approaches

CARE's work in Papua New Guinea has identified effective approaches to sustainable development through inclusive governance and gender equality.

Investing in relationships with communities

- The diversity of communities in Papua New Guinea requires adapting to the realities, languages, values, and histories of specific communities.
- Investing time in understanding communities' evolving needs builds trust and leads to better community ownership.

Building on existing local processes

- Starting with existing systems and working locally to strengthen these is an effective entry point for engaging with local government and community partners.
- Developing guidelines and training materials for approval and uptake by other stakeholders helps recognise and embed good practice.

Building trust between communities and institutions

- Providing opportunities for government officers to form connections with individuals in remote areas creates a sense of social obligation and responsibility, building on Papua New Guinea's wantok system, which encourages mutual accountability and improved service delivery.
- Supporting improved understanding of the needs of rural communities and providing opportunities for government representatives to take action leads to improved job satisfaction and engagement.

Increasing gender equality

- Addressing social norms such as women's roles in decision making increases gender equality within households. This contributes to creating environments where women have the confidence to speak up and men value their input.
- When establishing formal and informal forums, making it standard practice for women to speak as well as men and deliberately seeking the voice of women helps to break down gender barriers.

"Village decision making has changed tremendously over the past years... nowadays chiefs take the lead but allow others in the community to talk, voice their concerns and issues and participate."

- Farmer, Lower Unggai

How will CARE build on this?

CARE is promoting gender equality and inclusive governance across its programs in Papua New Guinea.

We will:

- Continue to reinforce existing and mandated governance processes and systems, aiming to influence these to be more inclusive and increase participation.
- Support and strengthen existing women's groups and social networks, while exploring additional barriers to gender equality and inclusive governance, and how new mechanisms might enhance these.

Appendix

Promoting gender equality in Papua New Guinea

CARE's approach to ensuring women's meaningful participation within governance structures in communities in the Eastern Highlands.

CARE recognises that improved governance cannot be achieved without including women in meaningful ways. CARE's work in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea addresses all aspects of a woman's life to ensure that women are able to effectively participate in governance processes.

Gender sensitive training
Ensures timing and location enable women to attend training and that materials are appropriate for people with low literacy.

Leadership coaching
Ensures female representatives on committees and assemblies are supported to actively participate.

Skills building
Improves women's self-confidence.

Leads to greater social licence for women to participate in decision making.

Inclusive school planning and review
Empowers women to have greater voice and opportunities to practice leadership skills.

Creates space for women and girls to have their voices heard.

Normalises both women and men being offered opportunities to speak.

Socialisation of gender equality
Promotes social recognition of women's role in local governance.

Ensures men repeatedly hear of the tangible benefits of equal participation of women in all aspects of their lives.

Agency
Her own aspirations and capabilities

Gender equality and women's empowerment

Relations
The power relations through which she negotiates her path

Structures
The environment that surrounds and conditions her choices

Advocating for female representation
Supports local representation of women on school boards, Village Courts, and local government structures.

Male role models
Provide public support for women and girls in education and leadership roles.

Inclusive guidance materials
Promote equally balanced membership of Ward Development Committees.

Shifting household norms
Promotes positive relationships, shared workloads and equal decision making at the household level.

Equal attendance
Leads to shared understanding and prevents jealousy.

Normalises women's attendance at trainings and community events.

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It starts with equal