



In the world of emergency relief and international development, there are a handful of organizations that have transcended their inter-war or post-war roots and built a global reputation for effectiveness despite a broadening mandate. Without doubt, CARE International fits within this category. Originally formed in 1945 as a symbol of American empathy for the exhausted populations of war-torn Europe (hence, “care packages”), the organization has grown into a diverse confederation of 12 national members working in 84 countries to the benefit of 122 million people. Still a first responder in the event of natural disasters or conflict, CARE International has also shifted its mission to embody a holistic approach to fighting global poverty and enhancing human dignity, with a special focus on female empowerment.

In part, CARE International is able to deliver large-scale impact based purely on its size and reach. To see this as the full story, however, would be to discount the true scope of the organization’s activities. With a long-term presence in many of the world’s most vulnerable countries, CARE International is well placed to implement a comprehensive approach, involving pre-emergency resilience and preparedness projects, immediate relief operations and longer-term recovery and community rehabilitation. The organization has also been a sectoral leader in its commitment to international standards of accountability and institutional learning.

Looking to the future, CARE International is likely to become an increasingly vocal presence in high-level international debates around strategies to address enduring challenges like maternal health, hunger, gender equality and climate change mitigation and adaptation. This change-focused advocacy represents an important complement to the on-the-ground work of the organization, particularly in a global environment where financial crisis has exacerbated flagging interest in the Millennium Development Goals.

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