

Success – CARE UK advocacy on UK policy integrating gender and women’s participation and leadership in humanitarian action

What is the advocacy or influencing win? Include details such as:

- A description of the win, and how it was achieved
- start date and end date
- any incremental wins that happened along the way
- the main decision makers that CARE influenced to achieve this win

DFID launches a new Strategic Vision on Gender Equality (March 2018), which reflects detailed input from CARE International UK on women’s political empowerment (WPE) and gender in emergencies (GiE):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/689939/Strategic-vision-gender-equality.pdf

Specific wording in the Strategic Vision, which CARE advocated for includes reference to “meaningful and representative participation and leadership of women” in humanitarian action. For example, the framing introductory ‘Call To Action’ section of the Strategic Vision includes the following call: *“Protect and empower girls and women in conflict, protracted crises and humanitarian emergencies, to rebuild their lives and societies, by listening to their needs and by increasing the meaningful and representative participation and leadership of women.”* (p3)

Later in the document, the Strategic Vision makes the same argument that CARE has consistently made in its advocacy both on the Vision and wider UK humanitarian policy: *“Although girls and women suffer disproportionately in crisis situations, they also have an important active role that we must support them to play in mediation and reconstruction, peace-building and humanitarian response – a role which is too often overlooked.”* (p9)

“Protect and empower girls and women in conflict, protracted crises and humanitarian emergencies. Building on the strong work the UK is doing through the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018 - 2022, the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit commitments, and the DFID-hosted 2018 Safeguarding Summit commitments, we will step up our work to reduce all forms of violence against girls and women, and to reduce the number of girls and women affected by trafficking and modern slavery. We will support girls and women to access basic services and rights; and to be empowered and equipped to play a vital role in rebuilding their lives, and in building peace, reconciliation and their societies.” (p14)

Linked to this Strategic Vision, DFID has also developed additional new or revised humanitarian policy frameworks which translate the Vision’s commitments into more practical guidance and tools for DFID staff and operational agencies funded by DFID. To be specific, this has included:

- DFID and FCO have developed a new policy paper titled "A Shared UK Government Approach to Gender in Syria" (March 2018) which identifies GiE and Women, Peace and Security priorities for the UK’s involvement in the Syrian crisis response:¹ [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/685426/Shared DFID FCO Approach to Gender in Syria.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/685426/Shared_DFID_FCO_Approach_to_Gender_in_Syria.pdf)

¹ Three specific commitments in the paper are:

1. We will use UK programming in Syria to: contribute to wider gender equality; empower women and girls to have a voice and choice; and ensure women and girls are safe. We will adopt a set of Minimum Programme Standards on Gender applicable to all programming to achieve this.
2. We will use our influencing levers to advocate for change for Syrian women and girls, taking opportunities to: - advocate for an end to sexual and gender based violence; - support women’s political participation in peace discussions; - advocate

- DFID has issued a new set of ‘Minimum Standards on Gender and Safeguarding’ in humanitarian action (May 2018), and it has so far asked all agencies it funds in the Syrian crisis response to report on these. Key standards included in the framework (in line with CARE advocacy on GiE) accompanied by specific guidance on expected quality of response by agencies involved in reporting include:
 - *“Completion of a full gender analysis of the context/s in which the programme is operating”*
 - *“The programme ensures that women and girls are able to participate meaningfully in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the programme”*
 - *“The programme considers women and girls’ empowerment in its design and implementation; ensuring that the programme design and approach contributes to gender equality and women and girls’ longer term empowerment socially, economically and politically.”*
 - *“The programme has considered and has a strategy for developing the capacity of downstream partners to deliver our shared gender objectives.”*
 - *“The logframe includes: i) at least 1 specific gender outcome or output indicator, ii) the majority of the logframe includes gender targets within indicators iii) the majority of the logframe requires data to be disaggregated by sex.”*
- DFID has revised its Technical Guidance Note on Violence Against Women and Girls in Emergencies to include new specific guidance points on support to empowering local women’s organisations and women’s empowerment as a key strategy in GBV prevention and response.
- DFID has entered into dialogue with the GADN (Gender and Development Network) humanitarian working-group (co-chaired by CARE UK) on hosting an event involving DFID and UK-based INGO humanitarian directors to discuss next steps on implementation of new IASC gender and GBV guidelines.

Why is this advocacy or influencing win significant? What was the reality prior to the advocacy/influencing win that the win aims to address?

Advocacy on this process started in 2017, and built on prior advocacy stretching back over the past five years to encourage DFID to adopt these priorities.

In terms of GiE, CARE has played a leading role in inter-agency advocacy with peer INGOs and local civil society partners from countries affected by conflict to encourage DFID to shift beyond its previous narrow focus on violence against women and girls in emergencies to adopt a wider agenda on gender, and to prioritise commitments on women’s leadership and participation in humanitarian assistance and protection as part of this. Our advocacy on the revision of the DFID Strategic Vision built on previous advocacy on this issue around the World Humanitarian Summit, towards which DFID did adopt a wider ‘Women and Girls’ agenda (not just narrow VAWG) and became a champion donor in support of the WHS’s ‘Core Commitments on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment’. The DFID Strategic Vision on Gender Equality and its commitments on women’s participation and leadership in humanitarian action therefore represents a key step in translating those global WHS commitments into DFID bilateral policy and funding.

If this win is part of a larger advocacy or long-term program goal, please describe the larger advocacy/influencing goal?

for women and girls’ needs to be fully addressed across the humanitarian effort and promote women’s meaningful participation and leadership within the humanitarian effort;
 3. We will support the inclusion of women in the peace process at all levels. We will raise gender equality, women’s participation and sexual and gender based violence

Advocacy on the DFID Strategic Vision and its humanitarian components link to our CI GiE Advocacy Strategy, in particular:

- Objective 1: Women’s leadership in emergencies. Strengthened leadership and effective participation by women in crisis-affected communities in decision-making, project implementation and accountability efforts across humanitarian assistance and protection, disaster risk reduction and peacebuilding.
- Objective 3: Robust accountability for gender in emergencies. Strengthened accountability for gender across humanitarian policy, funding and coordination.²The specific wording of this refers to: “Four agenda-setting bilateral donors adopt robust accountability requirements on agencies they fund to promote best practices on GiE (including women's participation, SRHRiE and GBViE), and resource the capacity to deliver on this.”

Contribution:

On a scale from high, medium, or low, how would you rate CARE’s contribution to the advocacy/influencing win? (please refer to the scale below the table)

Medium (/High)

Describe CARE’s contribution, specify CARE’s unique role as well as the role of other main actors including partner organizations and coalitions.

CARE UK played the lead role in the GADN humanitarian working-group, as well as within the wider UK humanitarian sector, in advocating on women’s leadership and participation in humanitarian action in the context of DFID deliberations on its Strategic Vision. Specifically, CARE UK instigated, facilitated consultations with peer agencies on and drafted the sections of formal inter-agency policy submissions by both the GAPS network (Gender Action on Peace and Security) and GADN (through our role in its Humanitarian Working Group) to DFID on the Strategic Vision. This was in the course of both advocacy specifically targeting the Strategic Vision process, and officials involved in this, as well as through wider advocacy into wider processes – in particular using policy dialogue on the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, and its section on ‘relief and recovery’ to highlight the importance of these issues and policy change in the Strategic Vision.

What evidence is there that supports our claim to have contributed to this win?

On the GiE components of the Strategic Vision, we know directly from engagement (feedback) with policy makers, that our advocacy was quite critical and time sensitive in the process

Potential Impact/Reach:

What is the impact population that is expected to benefit from the advocacy/influencing win? Describe how the win will translate into a better life for these participants?

² Gender understood in a comprehensive manner to address gender equality, women’s participation, GBV, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. See also Life Free from Violence/GBV Advocacy Goal 1/Objective 2: Governments and international humanitarian agencies – in collaboration with women and women-led CSOs – meet the commitments in the humanitarian call to action and relating to UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 to prevent and mitigate GBV in emergency settings.

The potential impact population is the number of women and girls who will be reached through DFID humanitarian response.

Globally, the United Nations estimates that in 2018 some 136 million people in 25 countries will be in need of humanitarian assistance. Through policy influence on the UN, as well as the UK being a major donor to the UN pooled funds which are distributed globally, the DFID Strategic Vision and follow-up on it (if implemented fully) could impact on this number.

If the change we have influenced is fully implemented, can you quantify the number of lives that could potentially be reached by this advocacy win? Please explain how you calculated this number.

DFID's Strategic Vision is currently slated to run from 2018 to 2030 and this change is intended to improve the quality of DFID programming, though what this actually means in practice is currently unclear. The potential impact population of this change to conditions on DFID work includes all women who are reached by DFID either through policy influence or through funding of humanitarian response. Given that DFID documentation states that it reached 17 million people affected by crisis with humanitarian assistance between 2015 to 2017 (7.3 million of these were women and girls)³ the potential impact population sits in the millions if the strategic vision is meaningfully implemented. DFID currently is planning to fund £130m for projects in Syria in 2018/19 and £110m in 2019/2020. The depth of that impact, however remains unclear.

Actual Impact/Reach:

Do we have any evidence to date that these expected outcomes have been achieved? If so, please describe how the win has translated into a better life for the impact population.

More time is needed before the impact population experiences the full benefits of this change. However, we are seeing the beginnings of implementation in the context of the Syria crisis. In line with this policy change INGOs have been asked by DFID to report on implementation of gender and safeguarding efforts in line with these Minimum Standards in their DFID-funded Syrian regional response programmes. This has forced those agencies to assess their efforts to date and to outline steps on how they will address these priorities going forward. Whether and how DFID implements follow-up to this exercise and holds those agencies accountable for these remains unclear at this stage however.

Can you quantify the number of lives that have been improved? Please explain how you calculated this number.

In July 2018, DFID reported that its assistance (since 2012), across Syria and the region, has provided over 27 million food rations, over 12 million medical consultations, over 10 million relief packages, and over 10 million vaccines. Over 5 million Syrians have benefited from this assistance (5 million over 5 years).

We can assume that given that the Strategic Vision is set to run for more time that it will reach more people however to maintain a realistic (conservative) estimate in line with current steps being taken towards implementation we would project that the impact population will remain the same, that

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625460/Results-by-Sector-Humanitarian.pdf

50% of this (2.5m) are women and girls and therefore likely to see the most impact from the roll-out of the Minimum Standards on Gender and Safeguarding.⁴

Reflection and Learning:

What were the main challenges you faced, and were they overcome? If so, how?

Despite DFID having convened a number of consultation meetings with civil society on the revision process, these tended to be rather large gatherings and not conducive to a really strategic dialogue.

What influencing tactics were particularly effective/ineffective?

Direct engagement with key officials – eg the lead official responsible for policy on gender in emergencies – was key to making a difference.

Adopting a facilitating/convening role within the GAPS and GADN networks to help pull together joint positions on GiE issues to be fed into policy dialogue with Government, and thereby getting CARE's messages endorsed and disseminated by a wider set of agencies (with formal sign-off of the GADN and GAPS networks).

Also important was persistence – within the GADN network, it is a competitive space in terms of having lots of different members each promoting their priority topic and profile within policy processes. So it is only through persistent efforts to find ways to feed in the GiE, and to seek opportunities as CARE to build relationships with the key officials, that we were able to have some influence.

What would you do differently next time?

Much of our CARE UK GiE advocacy effort is focused on supporting wider CARE global coordination on GiE advocacy, which has helped to secure wins on GiE issues in the G7, Global Compact on Refugees and on Type 4 crises like Syria. CARE UK's Senior Policy Advisor has invested significant time in making high-level events happen at global level (eg in Brussels, Geneva & NYC) featuring other bilateral donors. Looking forward, it would be useful to reflect on how to engage more with DFID in this effort and convene events in London too. Follow-up to the DFID Strategic Vision, and its links to global processes (eg impending roll-out of the IASC Gender Accountability Framework and Gender Handbook) could offer opportunities for this.

What are the next steps or follow-up actions for this advocacy/influencing win?

The DFID Strategic Vision offers considerable scope for follow-up advocacy with DFID (ie plugging in CARE expertise to inform the development of 'Minimum Programme Standards on Gender applicable to all programming').

But this could also be interesting for advocacy by other CARE Member Partners to other donors too. Given concerns over how some donors are currently framing new policies and expectations on NGOs regarding PSEA, then perhaps this DFID Strategic Vision, as well as the DFID Minimum Standards on Gender and Safeguarding, might offer an alternative more holistic approach to advocate for.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706234/UK_Syria_Crisis_Response_Summary__2018.05.10_.pdf

A key question now is what will DFID do with information gathered through the reporting on the DFID Minimum Standards on Gender and Safeguarding? How will DFID address any issues raised, and will it roll out the process in other crises too? Through GADN, we plan for DFID/humanitarian directors roundtable in Autumn to discuss this and move things on, linked to roll-out of a new IASC Gender Handbook.

There is also scope to follow-up on links to global processes (eg impending roll-out of the IASC Gender Accountability Framework and Gender Handbook), and the up-coming launches of new CARE research on localisation and protection/GBViE offer opportunities to convene policy dialogue with DFID on this.

We heard that additional DFID country teams might also develop gender equality strategies including humanitarian programming (similar to the Syria example) - which could be a great opportunity for us to follow-up and make suggestions on a country-specific basis (including in terms of NGO funding).