

Shifting the power

An update from Peter Walton, Chief Executive Officer, CARE Australia

Video transcript

Like many people, I've spent most of the last year working from home — on the land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. I pay my respects, and those of CARE Australia, to Elders past and present. In paying my respects, I'm also mindful that for so many people around the world, working from home during a global pandemic has not been an option.

For so many, COVID-19 is another compounding challenge, adding to existing inequalities: more than 85 per cent of countries have at least one law that restricts women's economic opportunities; in the Asia-Pacific, women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die or be injured in a disaster and its aftermath; and one in three of the world's women have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence — a problem that's being amplified by COVID-19. In fact, decades of progress in the reduction of extreme poverty and building gains in hard-fought rights have been pushed into sharp reverse by a combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing climate crisis. I start, therefore, by acknowledging the women and communities working so hard to survive during this incredibly challenging period in history.

The waves of disruption have been relentless. At times, for so many, I am sure it has been hard to muster hope.

But despite the challenges of COVID, conflict, disaster and climate change, and the erosion of women's rights in so many countries, the women we work with inspire others to strive for a better future. We stand with them to support their aspiration. Together they bring communities with them on their journey. We highlight their achievements in solidarity with their struggle and their success. I encourage you to read Arifa and Roslyn's stories on our website.

Whether we're talking about the right to fair, decent and safe work, or the right to survive the climate crisis, CARE Australia's new strategy is all about working alongside our local partners to positively tip the scales and rebuild or improve the system so that women, vulnerable communities, and other marginalised groups can achieve justice and equality.

We will be as local as possible and led by those most impacted. Our work and our resources will be used to enable local experts, leaders and responders as they overcome issues of poverty and injustice. No one knows a place and its people like a local does, so we seek equitable partnerships that best support their needs — whether this is the impacts of climate change or dealing with economic shocks and challenges that especially disadvantage women. We will help them in building more just systems that represent the needs of all.

Our experience and our capacity combined with our commitment to humanitarian principles mean we can respond quickly and in complementary ways for extended periods in both rapid and protracted crises. As we increasingly deal with global challenges — from climate-related disasters to global pandemics, from growing gender inequality, to a degradation of basic human rights — more than ever we need to be locally-led, but globally connected.

To do this, we seek to work alongside communities to support their efforts and help them overcome the barriers that prevent women from accessing leadership positions, and opportunities to participate in, and direct, the very decisions that affect their lives.

We are working to ensure resources and decision-making is genuinely led by those most impacted: local and national communities and civil society organisations.

Inequality is what drives poverty, and it cannot be defeated when power and resources continue to be controlled by the few, often for the few.

So it's time for a big change.

The disruption of the last year reminds us all to be brave, and to be humble enough to learn, to grow and to adapt the way we work with women, their communities and our local partners.

Our commitment to them, and to you, is that while we and our partners may not immediately have all of the answers but we will always seek them, so that together, we can create the solutions to build a more fair, just, and sustainable future.

[Click here to view CARE Australia's Strategic Ambition 2021-2025](#)



Supporting women.
Defeating poverty.