

CAPACITY STATEMENT ON CLEAN ENERGY



FEBRUARY 2026



WHAT IS CLEAN ENERGY?

Clean energy refers to energy that is produced and used in ways that avoid or significantly reduce greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions, harmful pollution, and environmental degradation, while fostering social and economic benefits.¹ For CARE International, this includes renewable sources such as solar and biofuels, as well as energy-efficiency measures that minimize waste and emissions such as improved cookstoves.

For CARE International, clean energy means solutions that not only reduce emissions and contribute to climate change mitigation, but also empower women and girls and marginalized communities to build their resilience and expand economic opportunities. It is about ensuring that households, communities, and essential services—such as schools, health clinics, and water systems—can access safe, affordable, and sustainable energy. Clean energy must also be inclusive and locally led, enabling communities to participate in decision-making and benefit from the transition.

Clean energy is the cornerstone of a just transition: powering climate action while upholding human rights, addressing inequalities, and creating resilient futures for people and planet.



WHY CLEAN ENERGY MATTERS IN DEVELOPMENT, HUMANITARIAN, AND CONSERVATION CONTEXTS

Clean energy is a cross-cutting enabler for climate adaptation and mitigation, gender equality, livelihoods, and humanitarian assistance. For CARE International, clean energy solutions—especially solar, biofuels, and improved cookstoves—are central to building more equitable and resilient communities. Below are key benefits and examples of how clean energy delivers impact on these dimensions.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- **Livelihood Resilience**

Clean energy supports climate-smart livelihoods and creates new income opportunities, such as solar-powered services and improved cookstove production, that are less vulnerable to climate shocks. It also strengthens food systems by enabling irrigation, cold storage, and food processing, helping food system value chain actors adapt to droughts, rainfall variability, and rising temperatures. In Kenya, CARE converted diesel-run boreholes into solar-powered pumping systems, cutting fuel use and emissions while ensuring reliable water for livestock, improving animal health and productivity. Investing in solar technology and supporting women entrepreneurs through training, credit, and mentorship expands energy access and strengthens sustainable businesses. In Tanzania, the Go Green initiative built a clean energy value chain linking business groups, suppliers, trainers, and banks. In Sierra Leone, the Solar Harnessed Entrepreneurs (SHE) project empowered women in solar mini-grid communities to expand their livelihoods. By 2022, it had supported over 7,000 women across nine districts, boosting enterprise activity by 90% and strengthening women's role in household decisions.

- **Reduced dependence on imported fuels**

Fossil fuel imports often become costlier or face disruptions during climate crises. In contrast, local renewable energy sources strengthen energy independence and stability. In Jordan, where

¹ See also "Renewables on the rise" - United Nations Environment Programme. Available at [Renewable energy, I. UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)
Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, United Nations Environment Programme. Available at [Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)

around 90% of energy is imported, CARE Jordan's project "Building Climate Resilience in Karak Governorate through Women and Community Empowerment in Clean Energy and Adaptation Solutions" is helping change this dynamic. By installing solar panels and promoting women's employment in the renewable energy sector, the project contributes directly to Jordan's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) target under the Paris Agreement to increase the share of electricity generated from renewable sources.

- **Less deforestation and forest degradation due to reduced demand for fuelwood**
In refugee settlements in Uganda like Kyangwali, CARE International has established community solar kitchens. By replacing wood/charcoal-burning stoves, these kitchens reduce fuelwood demand, thereby reducing deforestation and forest degradation.
- **Reduced GHG emissions and contribution to NDCs**
CARE projects such as the rollout of improved cookstoves and solar lighting across Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda have reduced reliance on polluting biomass, thus lowering emissions and helping these countries move toward their NDC objectives.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- **Improved health outcomes**
By reducing smoke exposure through clean cooking technologies, CARE International helps lower the incidence of respiratory illnesses, eye irritation, and other smoke-related health problems, particularly among women and children. CARE's "[wPOWER](#)" project, implemented in Bangladesh, Kenya, and Rwanda, promotes the use of improved cookstoves and solar lamps in remote villages, helping to reduce both indoor air pollution and fuel consumption.
- **Gender Equality**
Clean energy interventions significantly reduce the time burdens placed on women and girls. For example, in the [solar kitchen project in Uganda](#), women no longer have to walk long distances to collect firewood – a task that also exposed them to safety risks, including violence against women and girls.

In Jordan, the project provides capacity-building support for women through vocational training on solar panel installation, operation, and maintenance, as well as core business skills. Private stakeholders are also being engaged to strengthen their awareness of the value of employing women, challenging harmful social norms, and promoting women's participation in what has traditionally been a male-dominated sector.

- **Lower and more stable household energy costs**
Users of CARE International's [solar kitchens in Uganda](#) reported dramatic reductions in fuel, charcoal, or firewood expenses. One case cited monthly costs dropping from UGX 35,000 to around UGX 2,000 (from USD 9,99 to USD 0,57). By shifting to solar energy, households are not only spending less but are also less affected by fluctuations in fuel prices, making their energy supply more reliable and affordable over time.
- **Additional income opportunities**
Clean energy initiatives can generate new sources of income and employment while advancing climate goals. Carbon finance from improved cookstoves provides financial returns for reducing emissions, enabling communities and local enterprises to reinvest in adaptation solutions. The growth of the clean energy sector also creates new employment opportunities, particularly for youth and women, in areas such as installation, maintenance, and distribution of solar and biogas technologies. Moreover, social enterprise models that promote biodigesters are helping to build vibrant local markets—empowering entrepreneurs to earn income through sales, servicing, and awareness campaigns, while delivering cleaner energy and improved environmental outcomes.

In Uganda's Kyangwali refugee settlement, CARE International and partners in Uganda piloted the use of biogas digesters to turn household waste into both clean energy and a source of income through the creation of a circular business model that converts bioslurry by-products into marketable organic fertilizer. Through the innovative offtake-based loan scheme where households repay in bioslurry instead of cash, CARE International enabled inclusive participation in a profitable green value chain.

HUMANITARIAN BENEFITS

- **Powering essential services and avoiding disruption**

Clean energy powers critical infrastructure—from health clinics and schools to water supply systems—ensuring they can function reliably. Solar lighting and clean cooking solutions reduce dependence on unstable fuel supplies and improve service continuity, particularly in remote or crisis-affected areas. Off-grid renewable systems also provide essential backup power when disasters disrupt central grids. In Sudan, for instance, solar and hybrid water pumping systems have enabled remote communities to maintain access to water and sustain essential services even amid escalating conflict.

- **Energy access in displacement contexts**

In refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) settlements, access to clean energy enhances safety through lighting, improves cooking systems, and supports communication and information—for example, by enabling mobile phone charging.

CARE International's CAMP+ initiative, piloted in Uganda's Kyangwali refugee camp, demonstrates how clean and renewable energy can meet humanitarian needs. The project introduced solar-powered communal kitchens that reduce reliance on non-renewable fuels. Complemented by plastic recycling plants that promote low-waste practices and create new livelihood opportunities, CAMP+ shows that refugee camps can become more sustainable while addressing the immediate needs of their communities.

- **Powering humanitarian operations**

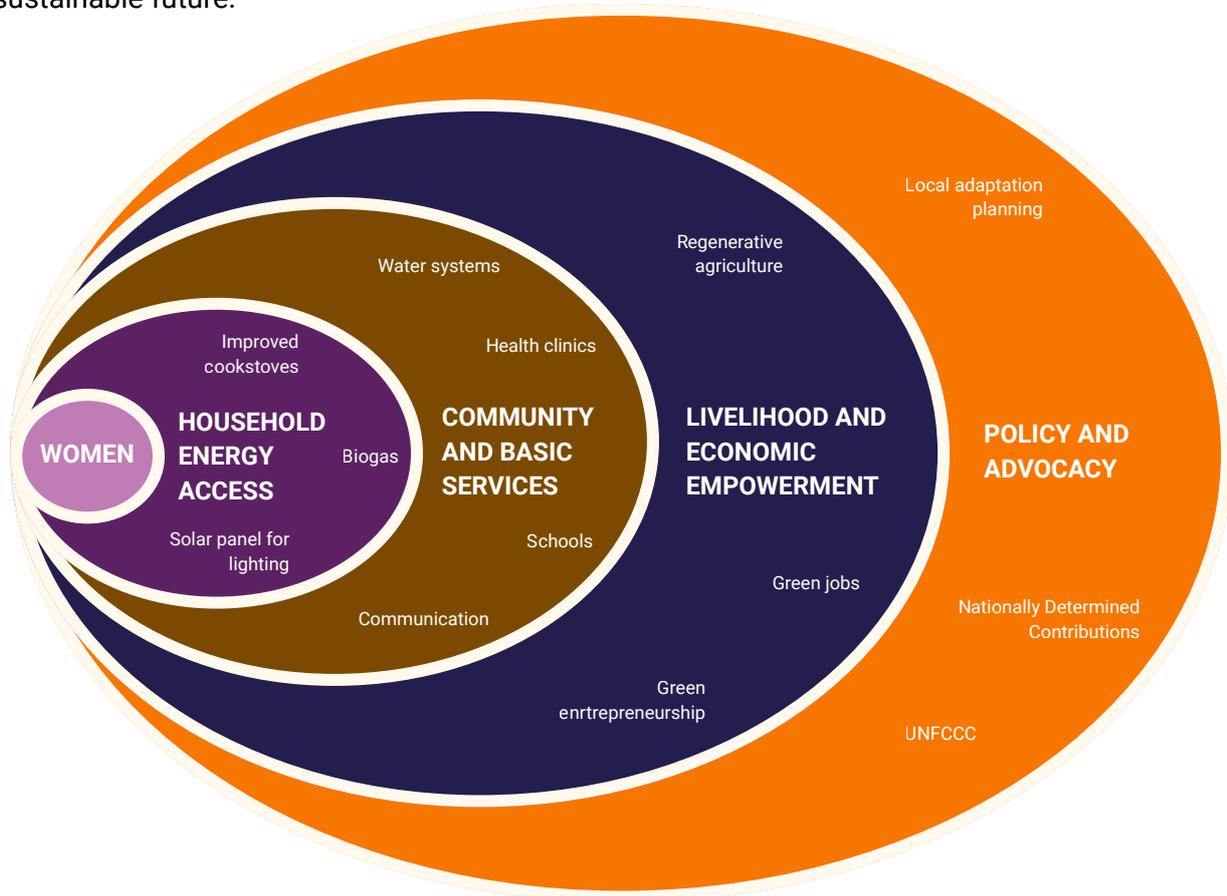
Clean energy is vital for humanitarian operations—keeping health facilities, water systems, logistics, and emergency communications running reliably while reducing dependence on costly, polluting diesel. In Sudan, Syria, and Palestine, for example, CARE International has installed solar panels for health facilities and water supply systems, including desalination units to enhance potable water capacity for IDP centers. By cutting emissions, lowering costs, and improving efficiency, renewable energy strengthens the sustainability and resilience of humanitarian assistance in fragile, climate-stressed contexts.



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APPROACHES ACROSS LEVELS OF IMPACTS

CARE International takes a holistic approach to clean energy, linking household access, community services, livelihoods, and policy advocacy—always placing women and girls at the center. From safer cooking solutions and solar-powered services to women-led energy businesses and support for policies that place women and girls at the center, this approach ensures that access to clean energy reduces inequalities, strengthens resilience, and drives women's leadership in the transition to a sustainable future.



TOOLS

CARE International applies its Gender Equality Framework to guide the design of clean energy programs that drive transformative change towards gender equality and the participation of the most vulnerable people. Through this approach, CARE International seeks to build the agency of people of all genders and life stages, foster equitable relationships, and transform the social and institutional structures that influence access to and control over clean energy resources.

Farmer Field and Business Schools (FFBS)

FFBS training empowers women farmers by equipping them with the skills and knowledge to be more sustainable, productive, and profitable in agricultural markets. Regenerative agriculture practices such as solar-powered irrigation and solar-powered food processing are integrated with other regenerative practices in the FFBS curriculum.

Market-Based Approaches (MBA) for Women's Economic Empowerment

CARE International's MBAs create economic opportunities through entrepreneurship, market access, and financial inclusion. These approaches are crucial for empowering women, who often face greater economic barriers. CARE International supports interventions in the clean energy sector, including:

- **Financial Inclusion and Women-led Businesses:** Providing capital for women to start and expand businesses, and supporting market access and training.
- **Skill Development and Vocational Training:** Offering training in sustainable agriculture, handicrafts, and digital literacy to enhance employability and entrepreneurial potential.

SHE Schools: CARE International developed the Sustainable Household Energy (SHE) model – a participatory approach that promotes clean energy adoption while strengthening women’s leadership and entrepreneurship.

Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs): VSLAs empower women financially, addressing challenges related to income, food security, and healthcare. VSLA schemes provide financial support to incentivise the use of clean energy for income generating activities.

SHE SCHOOLS: EMPOWERING CHANGE, ONE HOUSEHOLD AT A TIME



In many communities, cooking a daily meal can come at a high cost—to health, time, forests, and even safety. Recognising this, CARE International developed the Sustainable Household Energy (SHE) Schools, a participatory model that helps communities transition from traditional cooking practices to cleaner, safer, and more sustainable energy solutions.

First piloted in India, SHE Schools bring women and men together to co-design practical, community-led solutions. What begins as a discussion about smoke-filled kitchens and long hours spent collecting firewood often grow into a movement for health, dignity, and climate action.

By replacing inefficient stoves with cleaner technologies and fuels, the initiative eases women’s daily burdens while advancing environmental goals—cutting emissions, reducing deforestation, and protecting biodiversity.

The benefits ripple across households and landscapes:

- More time: Women and girls save time for education, income generation, or rest.
- Greater safety: Less wood collection reduces risks of accidents or violence.
- Healthier homes: Cleaner stoves cut smoke, respiratory illness, and home fires.
- Greener environments: Lower fuel demand preserves forests and reduces emissions.
- Stronger economies: Producing and maintaining improved stoves and biodigesters creates local jobs.
- Smarter resource use: Turning agricultural waste into pellets reduces waste and energy costs.

At its core, the SHE Schools model drives transformation—of energy systems, livelihoods, and lives. Supporting communities to lead their shift to sustainable energy proves that cleaner cooking is not just a technical fix, but a path to women and girls' empowerment.

The SHE Schools model has been implemented in India under the Bachat II programme, delivered by Fair Climate Fund India. Through the distribution of 14,026 high-efficiency cookstoves and the establishment of 699 SHE Schools benefiting 14,942 people, the project generates substantial environmental and social outcomes, particularly among scheduled tribes—the most marginalized communities in India. The Bachat II Program produces carbon credits generated by the adoption of Improved Cookstoves, with a proportion of the generated revenue returned to communities through community structures for local adaptation initiatives. This arrangement reflects a functioning carbon finance model wherein verified carbon revenues and user contributions together sustain both clean energy investment and related community-level interventions.

CARE International is increasingly exploring how clean energy and nature-based livelihood models can connect marginalized communities to emerging carbon market opportunities. This work focuses on developing fair, transparent, and gender-responsive mechanisms that ensure communities retain value, strengthen local ownership, and support long-term climate-resilient development. By linking local action to global carbon finance, these efforts can generate new income, attract private investment, and incentivize wider adoption of clean energy solutions.

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CARE'S ADDED VALUE IN CLEAN ENERGY

CARE International brings a unique combination of experience, principles, and partnerships that ensure clean energy solutions deliver real and lasting impact for people and the planet. Our work goes beyond technology deployment, focusing instead on how energy access can transform lives, build resilience, and empower communities.

- **Transforming social norms**

CARE International ensures that women and girls are not just beneficiaries but leaders in clean energy transitions. Initiatives such as the DESFERS project in Senegal, Mali, and Niger tackle restrictive social and cultural norms by strengthening women's role in Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), institutionalizing women's entrepreneurship, and creating jobs in the renewable energy sector. By providing marginalized women with solar-powered equipment for their businesses, it enhances their social status, expands economic opportunities, and promotes a gender-just transition to a low-carbon economy.

- **Locally led, participatory solutions**

CARE International champions community ownership. Using approaches such as the VSLA, CARE International integrates energy solutions into existing social networks, ensuring that women and marginalized groups drive decision-making, financing, and long-term management of clean energy services. This participatory approach builds accountability and sustainability.

- **Integration with climate and environment**

CARE International positions clean energy as both an adaptation and mitigation strategy. Solar mini-grids power irrigation pumps that reduce vulnerability to erratic rainfall, while improved cookstoves reduce emissions and indoor pollution. Clean energy thus strengthens livelihoods, food security, and resilience to climate shocks.

- **Partnerships for scale**

CARE International works with governments, private sector actors, and global alliances to expand reach and sustainability. For example, through partnerships with the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP) and the private sector, CARE International leverages investment and expertise to ensure that proven models are replicated and scaled.

- **Sustainability and affordability**

CARE International designs clean energy interventions that are accessible and affordable for low-income households and communities, ensuring long-term viability. From market-based cookstove initiatives in East Africa to solar kitchens in refugee settlements in Uganda, CARE International emphasizes solutions that reduce costs for users while protecting ecosystems.

CARE International's added value lies in linking clean energy to sustainable solutions, while delivering environmental, social and economic benefits that last.





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WHAT CARE INTERNATIONAL OFFERS ON CLEAN ENERGY

CARE International is a trusted partner for governments, civil society, and the private sector seeking to design and implement people-centered clean energy solutions. Building on our Vision 2030, CARE International offers:

- **Strategic advisory and co-design:** Support to integrate clean energy into climate, gender equality, food and water systems, economic growth, and humanitarian strategies, including contributions to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).
- **Program design and implementation:** Co-creation and delivery of clean energy programs that combine technical solutions (solar, biodigesters, improved cookstoves, energy efficiency) with approaches that support women and girls, market-based models, and locally led governance.
- **Capacity building and learning:** Tailored training and coaching for practitioners, partners, and community leaders through the CARE Climate & Resilience Academy, including the [Green Shift Series](#) and dedicated clean energy learning offers.
- **Evidence and accountability:** Robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning on gender, climate, and energy outcomes, combined with advocacy and social accountability tools to ensure that policies, finance, and markets work for women, girls, and marginalized communities.
- **Scaling proven models:** Expansion and adaptation of proven CARE International models, such as VSLAs, SHE Schools, Farmer Field and Business Schools, and women-led energy enterprises, to new contexts and partners, ensuring sustainability and impact at scale.

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CARE INTERNATIONAL CLEAN ENERGY PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD

CARE International brings a unique combination of experience, principles, and partnerships that ensure clean energy solutions deliver real and lasting impact for people and the planet. Our work goes beyond technology deployment, focusing instead on how energy access can transform lives, build resilience, and empower communities.

LEGEND:



Solar Energy



Biodigesters



Improved Cookstoves



7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Read more on CARE International's Climate Justice Center (CJC) website:
www.careclimatechange.org

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The CARE Climate Justice Center is an initiative powered by CARE Denmark, CARE France, CARE Germany, CARE Netherlands, and CARE International UK.