



SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

CARE protects women in emergencies with vital sexual and reproductive health services

OVERVIEW CARE works in four core sectors to mitigate the risks that arise before, during and after an emergency. These four sectors are Food Security; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; Sexual and Reproductive Health; and Shelter. As part of an emergency response, CARE addresses these sector-specific needs throughout the phases of an emergency, from preparation and response all the way through to recovery. Our efforts save lives, reduce suffering, and protect assets and livelihoods, while contributing to the empowerment of women and enhancing community resilience.

The Sexual & Reproductive Health Sector

During natural disasters and conflict-related emergencies, the lack of basic sexual and reproductive health services contributes to an increase in mortality and morbidity among women and girls as they are subjected to a higher risk of sexual violence, unwanted pregnancies, and decreased access to health facilities for safe deliveries. Women are disproportionately affected by emergencies due to lack of available life-saving reproductive health services for women and girls. Countries in conflict tend to have the highest maternal mortality rate, and the poorest reproductive health indicators.

Over the last 20 years, evidence shows that women and girls experience an acute increase in violence, particularly during conflicts where rape is used as a weapon of war and sexual exploitation becomes rampant. Additionally, maternal and newborn mortality rates increase dramatically as populations become mobile and access to health facilities and providers is harder to come by.

How We Do What We Do

Emergencies are complex, but fortunately we have a set of simple lifesaving interventions that can be delivered even in the most challenging circumstances: the Minimum Initial Service Package for SRH, or "MISP". When responding to SRH needs in emergencies, CARE's response covers a range of activities including the following:

- Distribution of medicines and supplies for safer pregnancies, deliveries and family planning.
- Support for provision of services for normal and complicated deliveries, newborn care, family planning and care following unsafe abortions.
- Condom distribution and treatment of sexually transmitted infections.
- Protection of women and girls from sexual violence and provision of clinical care for survivors of sexual violence.

“Women and children account for more than 75 percent of the refugees and displaced persons at risk from war, famine, persecution and natural disaster. Women of reproductive age comprise a quarter of the at-risk population.”

IN THEIR WORDS:

“Now that I can control my pregnancies, I can be sure that my children go to school. I never had the time to finish my studies, but they will. I will see a better life through my children.”

— Anifa, contraceptive user, DRC

GENDER FOCUSED

Women and girls shoulder an unfair burden of problems related to SRH issues during peace, but even more so during crisis. Responding to women’s sexual and reproductive health needs within these contexts is crucial. As an organization dedicated to gender equality, social justice and women’s empowerment, CARE is committed to tackling these complex problems and helping women and their partners achieve the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health, especially in the challenging environment that emergencies create. Women care for their children, household, farms and businesses, but often lack the autonomy to make important decisions revolving around reproductive health and family planning. CARE recognizes that men and boys play a very important role in realizing women’s potential for equal decision-making in the household, especially with regards to their own sexual and reproductive health needs. CARE engages with males in order to work towards changing the social norms that exist around patriarchal decision-making, as well as the importance of women’s reproductive health and its affect on the whole family.

OUR PARTNERS AND OUR REACH

Through a robust global portfolio, CARE works with partners to deliver high-quality programs focused on improving health outcomes for women and their families, and reducing maternal and newborn mortality through improvements in the coverage, quality and equity of health services. CARE has been a part of the global leadership dedicated to raising awareness and response to the issues of gender and reproductive health in emergencies since the mid-1990’s and is a founding member of the Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium and Interagency Working Group for Reproductive Health in Emergencies. Our experts assist with rapid assessments, project

design and specific SRH interventions, implementations and indicators. Our diverse and knowledgeable staff provides technical guidance on adhering to related national and international policy and protocols during emergencies.

CARE works closely with government and local partners to build organizational structures and processes that integrate sexual and reproductive health strategies and best practices in all our humanitarian responses with the aim of strengthening clinical services and the health systems that support them in crisis-affected countries. We also strive to mobilize and support communities to decrease barriers and improve access to sexual and reproductive health services.



BEYOND RESPONSE

After the immediate dangers of the emergency have passed, CARE’s technical staff continues to work closely with the community and implementing partners to develop more comprehensive SRH interventions, building upon services provided during the acute phase. These include additional capacity building and training, further community awareness on the benefits of accessing SRH services, and increased provision of SRH commodities. CARE ensures that the MISP, which addresses family planning, gender based violence, maternal and newborn care, and sexually transmitted disease prevention and treatment, is implemented as part of our emergency response activities and beyond.

CARE USA

151 Ellis Street NE
Atlanta, GA 30303
USA
404-681-2552

CARE International

Chemin de Balxert 7-9
1219 Chatelaine (Geneva)
Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 795 10 20
cisecretariat@careinternational.org

