

# Care international in south sudan

[History](#)



CARE International Vision 2020 advocates for working with and through alliances to ensure a more efficient allocation and use of national resources for the vulnerable. It also recommended working with governments, the private sector and civil society to generate evidence of successful strategies and to bring them to scale. The ECSA region road map has a pillar called “Transforming How We Engage’ that seeks to transform the way CARE has worked in the region – to allow for more partnerships and collaborations. As a result, CARE’s presence has gradually evolved towards a lighter footprint – examples of countries like Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda and Tanzania, where a considerable amount of intervention is done through partners.

CARE started operations in South Sudan in 1993, in the former states of Unity, Jonglei and Upper Nile. CARE initial interventions were primarily in the health, WASH and livelihoods sectors. The management office was then based in Nairobi, and was run together with the Somalia operations. The office in Juba was opened in 2006 after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2006 that ended the conflict that had prevailed for 21 years – the South Sudan operation was separated from the Somalia one and was run independently from then on. Currently, CARE in South Sudan operates in the former states of Unity, Jonglei and Unity carrying out interventions in Health, Nutrition, Protection and Gender based violence, Food security and Livelihoods and also empowerment of local actors in the spirit of localization of the aid flows.

Even with the external pressures (Drivers of partnerships) mentioned earlier and the internal emphasis on partnership and collaboration, CARE International in South Sudan has not been able to improve its ability to

partner as well as build any meaningful collaborations across the various sectors. CARE in South Sudan has had a limited experience of working with partners. In the past three years, CARE has worked with 4 local partners - 3 in the implementation of 2 projects funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs and 1 in a project funded by the DEC UK. In all the 3 projects, the decision to partner was not driven by a strategic need to partner from CARE but by donor requirements at the proposal stage that 'forced' the Country office to seek out a partner. The partnerships were at the delivery level, whereby the 4 partners implemented activities and delivered services on our behalf. Three of the partnerships have since ended, with the end of the projects - there has not been any engagements with the said partners since the project ended.

CARE international in South Sudan grants portfolio has not grown substantially in the past 3 years, with the portfolio of donors remaining almost the same over the same period. The geographical scope has also shrunk, with the closure of projects, it means that CARE has to exit an area in case we cannot raise an additional grant to intervene in the same area. In order to continue having an impact in South Sudan, CARE needs to embrace partnerships and collaborations - not just with the international and national NGOs but also with educational institutions - both local and international, corporates operating in and out of South Sudan and also bilateral and multilateral donors. What needs to be done

1. Have in place a partnership strategy. CARE South Sudan needs to develop a cohesive and contextualized partnership strategy imbedded into our country strategy (2018-2020) to define and guide our value

add, selection, engagement and close out journey with existing, past and potential partners if we are to scale our impact.

2. Investing in local capacity: There is a need to leverage CARE's investment in local partners and their capacity. CARE Needs to make investments in the capacity strengthening of relevant national and local NGOs, farmers' organizations and other community-based organizations to help communities lead and sustain their own fight.
3. Transforming Organizational Mindset: Partnership requires giving up on your autonomy. It's no longer you calling all the shots, and it's no longer all about what you are going to get out of it. True partnerships are built on equity, transparency, joint decision-making and mutual accountability, with partners acting in the interest of the partnership as a whole, as well as the individual organization's own interest. Partnerships require a humility that you may not have all the answers, being open to new ideas, new approaches and an appreciation that with diversity comes greater understanding and the potential for real innovation.
4. Understanding Our Capacities: To partner well with organizations from other sectors requires appreciating their differences: understanding how they work, how they think, their strengths as well as the capacity, organizational and legal constraints in which they operate. The ' clash of cultures' we often come across, for example between business and UN agencies, is absolutely real, and is something that needs to be explicitly acknowledged, ' owned' as a joint problem and worked through together rather than being allowed to become a blockage to progress.

5. Technical knowledge: A partnership will go through a range of stages during its lifecycle: scoping of a potential collaboration; engaging partners; developing a partnership agreement; mobilizing resources and setting up the operational structure; implementing and managing the partnership; reviewing and revising; and finally transforming, scaling or closing down. All of these stages require technical skills and knowledge of good practice, including, for example, being able to assess when partnering is appropriate and when it isn't; what to look out for in a good partner; how to structure partnering agreements; how to assess if a partnership is set up for success or, later down the line, is functioning effectively and delivering results.
6. Finally, the people and relationship skills. While often called the 'soft' skills, these are just as real, as challenging, and as essential as any of the 'hard' skills such as finance or project management. In the end, what will make a partnership work is the ability to build up the trust and manage the relationship between the partners – the essential 'glue' that ensures commitment and allows a partnership to function efficiently, address problems and get through difficult times.  
Particularly in the early stages of a partnership, being open and transparent, communicating with excellence, and always delivering on your commitments, however small, can help to build up trust. And techniques such as interest-based negotiation (an approach which explicitly sets out to find solutions that give value to all parties) can define the objectives of a partnership while simultaneously strengthening the relationship.

7. To reap maximum benefits off partnerships the Country Office requires a dedicated Person to manage the whole partnerships process. The partnership management process is an intensive process that requires dedicated resources, which currently part of sits with the grants management team. However, in practice its more of a ticked check list compliance exercise with little or no follow up activities to determine the health of the partnership.
8. CARE Sudan needs to embed a partnership function into every staff JDs to varying degrees and go further to evaluate and recognize outstanding performers in this respect.
9. The emergency nature of our projects (6-12 months) limits opportunities for longer term and value added partnerships. The management should consider the CEG partnerships coordinator for continuous capacity building in Partnerships in Emergencies.

## **Conclusion**

The biggest challenges that face the world are not going to be solved by one organization or one group of people in just one country. They will be overcome by an interdisciplinary group of people working across industries, countries, and cultures. The humanitarian needs will not decrease - on the contrary, we should expect them to increase. The amount of resources towards addressing these needs - we should expect this to shrink with every passing year, just as it has done for the last 3 years. Donors are requiring a greater value for money with a shrinking pot, with greater impact. CARE International has been in South Sudan for 25 years now, for it to continue being of value and relevant to the people of South Sudan, we need to re-

think how we operate, with the need to partner and collaborate being primary to our thinking.