

Name of the approach/ tool/project

Power Within: Learning to Lead

Description (methodology, techniques and strategies used)

CARE seeks to address the root causes of poverty that deny children their right to a quality basic education. With more than 40 million girls not in primary school, addressing gender disparities is central to CARE's education efforts. CARE is working with communities, civil society and government to remove barriers to education for girls, vital to the success of all development efforts.

With education for girls the single highest return on investment in the developing world¹, CARE launched the Power Within: Learning to Lead program (PW) in 2008 which enables girls around the world to complete their primary education and develop leadership skills that will empower girls to work with their families, communities and countries to overcome poverty. In the context of Power Within, a girl leader is an active learner who believes that she can make a difference in her world, and acts individually and with others to bring about positive change.

The program's three key objectives address some of the most fundamental challenges to girls' education and provide vulnerable and marginalized girls with the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential:

1. Increase the number of girls completing primary school

Access to the intellectual and social benefits of basic education ensures the protection and fulfillment of the rights of girls and increases the range of life choices available to them as women.² For CARE, ensuring marginalized girls have equal educational opportunities is also one of the most important and powerful steps towards challenging gender discrimination. In addition to removing barriers to education, CARE's programs seek to improve the quality of learning.

2. Build girls' leadership skills

Girls need a foundation of knowledge, skills and experiences to gain control over their lives. Providing adequate education opportunities and resources, combined with leadership development, can help girls to better articulate their needs, protect their personal assets, participate in decision-making, and, overall, shape their futures. Leadership skills will equip girls to increase their participation in decisions affecting development processes.

3. Advocate for the rights of girls

Increasing access to education for girls and helping them to exercise leadership skills requires creating an enabling environment within households, communities and countries. CARE will work in with parents, teachers, community leaders, government and civil society to advocate for the rights of girls. Schools are an excellent place for working with communities to address gender inequality and promote rights. Power Within will also involve education advocacy in the US focused on Education for All (EFA) goals, quality education, and marginalized populations (especially girls).

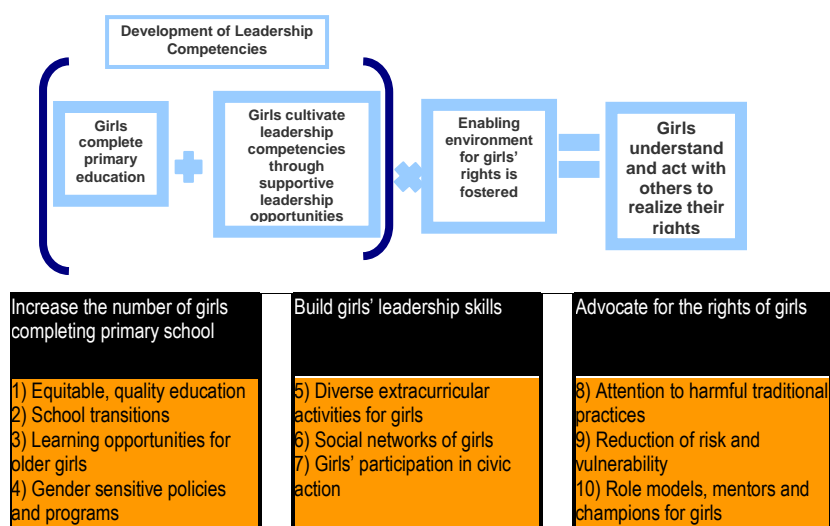
It is important to note that CARE's efforts to educate and empower girls do not come at the expense of boys. Boys are also members of the vulnerable communities PW assists, and they will benefit from improved education quality and more equitable gender relations. Recognizing the position of power and influence men hold in most societies, PW includes men (and boys) as agents of community change.

Implementation methodologies

Using a programmatic framework that includes the theory of change and 10 pathways provided below, PW guides education and youth programming in 20 countries throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

¹ Research by both the World Bank and the United Nations has found that the rate of return on dollars invested in basic education is greater than any other investment made in the developing world. (Lewis, Maureen and Marlaire Lockheed. *Inexcusable Absence: Why 60 Million Girls Still Aren't In School and What to do About It*. Center for Global Development, 2006.)

² *State of the World's Children*, UNICEF, 2007



What is innovative about this approach/tool/project

The PW conceptual framework proposes that access to quality education helps girls develop leadership skills.³ However, the development of leadership skills requires more than equal access to quality education for girls. There must also be an environment that is conducive to leadership development, along with the central role of community figures as mentors and advocates for change. In essence, girls must have an enabling environment, supportive attitudes from others and ample opportunity to be engaged in civic life. Underlying this framework is the notion that PW must address the social barriers, norms and obstacles that impede access to quality education and prevent the equitable participation of women and girls in development processes. PW provides a holistic approach to girls' education by: removing barriers and improve the quality of education; providing opportunities for extracurricular activities, social networks and civic action; building coalitions, improve legal frameworks and influence public policies and policy reform; enhancing the capacity of governments and civil society to deliver quality education and protect the rights of all children; and improving community practices around gender norms and attitudes.

Evidence of results and impact

Projections show that with current trends the goal of eliminating gender disparities at both primary and secondary levels will be missed in 2015 in over 90 out of 172 countries.⁴ From CARE's own experience, intensive teacher training, curriculum support and community mobilization can raise student enrollment and completion rates, and even show notable improvements in learner achievement and self-confidence. However, these accomplishments can not be attained without changing the gaps that exist between the status of boys and girls. Through PW's reflective learning and piloting of a holistic approach to girls' education with a focus on the specific needs of girls, PW seeks to change the power dynamics inside and outside the classroom, challenging prevailing gender norms and attitudes to contribute to gender discrimination. CARE hopes Power Within will begin to show impact and results in 2015.

Costs associated with the development and implementation of the activity

Approximately \$70,416,936 million in 20 countries annually.

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³ Quality education implies that education content, processes and environment are friendly, relevant and appropriate to a girl's cultural and developmental status. In addition, it implies that the physical, emotional and cognitive status and other biases that the learner brings to the classroom are adequately considered and accounted for in the education plan. A quality education for girls also supposes that her education experience will help her develop critical-thinking and other skills, and be more productive and more engaged in her community. CARE uses the UNICEF definition of education quality. Quality encompasses: education environment, content, processes and outcomes, as well as systems that effectively recognize the special needs that learners bring to the classroom. For more information see: www.unicef.at/fileadmin/medien/pdf/qualityeducation-eng.pdf

⁴ Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008: Will We Make It?, UNESCO, 2007