CARE Gender Marker

Concept Note

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The CARE Gender Marker is a simple, easy-to-use tool that grades, on a 0-4 scale, whether or not CARE's humanitarian and development work is prepared for, designed, and implemented in a way that ensures women, men, boys and girls benefit equally; and if it will contribute to increasing gender equality. The grading scale places work directly along the CARE Gender Continuum.

The purpose of this concept note is to document the design and rollout process of the CARE Gender Marker. This aims not only to serve as a record of how the tool was created, but will also provide a clear outline of the resources available to learn about the Gender Marker throughout the roll-out process.

Objectives of the CARE Gender Marker

The CARE Gender Marker has now been included into CARE's Project and Program Information and Impact Reporting System (PIIRS), which institutionalises the tool as a mandatory annual process for every CARE project and programme to report against. Additionally, the tool is recommended for use outside of PIIRS by both COs and CMPs, to help foster learning, reflection, and accountability; and ultimately to adapt and improve programming for better outcomes for beneficiaries.

1. Accountability

The CARE Gender Marker is an internal accountability tool to ensure CARE delivers on its commitments to gender equality and women's voice by integrating these commitments into programming. These commitments are outlined in the Minimum Standards in the CARE Gender Equality and Women's Voice Guidance.

Every CARE project and programme, humanitarian and development, will use the Gender Marker through PIIRS. This annual activity ensures that every project, no matter what stage it is at, will have reflected on the integration of gender in the past years' work.

Use of the Gender Marker as a part of the annual PIIRS data collection offers CARE a unique opportunity to assess to what extent they are meeting their gender commitments at an aggregate level. However, use of the Gender Marker is not restrictive. CARE's Gender Marker is a tool that can be used in a number of different ways, and at a variety of different moments in the project cycle to improve and reflect on an intervention.

2. Feedback and Learning

The CARE Gender Marker is designed to be a learning tool, and includes inbuilt feedback mechanisms. The value of the Gender Marker goes beyond assigning a grade. Learning, promoting awareness, and encouraging engagement with how a strong gender approach can improve

programming is one of the primary strengths of the Gender Marker tool. This has proven to be one of the greatest benefits of the IASC Gender Marker.[1]

This feedback plays a significant role. Any grading effort should not act in isolation from the work of the Country Office, who is ultimately responsible for the design and implementation of the programme.

If marking is taking place at the CMP level, once those responsible for Gender Marking the process have done so, they should provide feedback on the grade to the Country Office before finalising the grade. This process will begin the discussions that are vital to encouraging change and learning. By ensuring that the process is dynamic, it will allow the organisation to strive towards its gender goals. The Gender Marker is not intended only as a static reflection of CARE's work, but as a chance to progress and to track this progress.

Design Limitations

As with any design, some limitations exist. Some notable limitations, many observed within the pilot phase, are maintained:

- The Gender Marker as a tool can appear far more complicated than it is, potentially creating wariness about using it;
- Introducing another tool into the already complex process of conducting emergency and development work could be perceived as tiresome. With the recent introduction of a number of other tools and indicators into the PIIRS system in particular, another tool may be considered unnecessary and engender fatigue;
- There is very limited budget for the Gender Marker rollout. This design relies on use of existing resources;
- Grading with the Gender Marker is based on self-assessment. Research into the IASC Gender Marker has shown that self-evaluation can lead to an inflation of scores received when compared to independent evaluation;
- Grading with the Gender Marker requires some level of understanding of the complex nature of gender issues. One risk is the lack of the necessary skills and knowledge to properly grapple these issues;
- It is important to ensure that CARE staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to achieve success in ensuring gender is included throughout their work. Without this, you run the risk of grading responses on issues that were not even known to be problematic.

However, despite these numerous challenges, an overwhelming level of support, engagement, and excitement has been generated and maintained around the development and use of CARE's Gender Marker. The spontaneous spread of use of the tool outside of the pilot has resulted in many innovative uses of the Gender Marker, and has encouraged further interest in the tool. This extensive level of support was one of the key reasons the external evaluation recommended the scale-up and integration of the tool throughout the Organisation.

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[1] Foran, S., A. Swaine & K. Burns. (2012). 'Improving the effectiveness of humanitarian action: progress in implementing the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Marker'. Gender & Development. Vol. 20, Issue 2, pp. 233-247; IASC (2013) 2013 IASC Gender Marker: Analysis of Result and Lessons Learned. IASC. p. 16

Humanitarian Piloting of the CARE Gender Marker

The CARE Gender Marker was originally piloted for use in humanitarian programming. CARE drew on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Marker, and expanded its application throughout the entire project cycle of humanitarian relief, from preparedness to planning and proposals, and into the response.

The humanitarian pilot of this tool began in 2014 in Syria, West Africa, and the Philippines. An external evaluation of the pilot took place in 2015. The external evaluation[2] recommended scaling-up the Gender Marker and integrating it into CARE's systems.

Revising the CARE Gender Marker

In 2015, the Gender Marker Reference Group prepared a plan to institutionalise the Gender Marker into CARE's humanitarian work. However, the development of the Gender Equality and Women's Voice (GEWV) Guidance for the CARE Programme Strategy took the CARE Gender Marker in a new direction.

The GEWV Guidance outlined using the Gender Marker for both humanitarian and development projects for two purposes: 1) as a tool to identify where projects stood on the CARE Gender Continuum; 2) as a measurement tool for systems monitoring of the GEWV Minimum Standards. This change in direction required a re-design of the CARE Gender Marker tool, supported by engaging stakeholders from CARE's humanitarian and development work.

1. **Dedicated expertise:** CARE Australia used institutional funding to support a long-term consultancy to work on the development of a revised CARE Gender Marker. This consultancy reported to the CARE Emergency Group's Gender in Emergencies Advisor from February to August 2016.

2. **Experts Consultation:** CARE International convened an experts group to meet in Geneva to develop a revised CARE Gender Marker tool in March 2016. This group included humanitarian and development experts from M&E, Gender, and Governance. The group reviewed the concept and the content of using the CARE Gender Marker for both humanitarian and development work. An initial design of the tools was shared with the group for comment and feedback.

3. **Gender Consultation:** the second draft of the Gender Marker tools were tested at the CARE International Gender Network meeting in April 2016. Participants tested the tool, and their feedback was crucial for the design of the final draft of the tools.

4. **Country Office Consultation:** CIGN formed a working group dedicated to rolling-out the Gender Marker. This was called the Gender Marker Superstars, who committed to providing feedback on the tool design, testing the training, and rolling the tool out to others.

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[2] The external evaluation can be found at:
http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/CARE%20Gender%20Marker%20Pilot%20Report%20April%202015.pdf/590185590/CARE%20Gender%20Marker%20Pilot%20Report%20April%202015.pdf

5. **External Consultation:** GenCap's Delphine Le Brun and Merrin Waterhouse provided feedback on the CARE Gender Marker tool.

6. **Gender Marker Tool:** the revised Gender Marker tool was approved by the CARE International Programme Team.

The re-design process was based on continuous consultation and feedback. This process generated a lot of insightful feedback that informed the design, ensuring it was not only reflective of the needs and ideas of CARE globally, but grounded in the experience and realities of CARE's work – with the aim of creating a tool that was useful, practical, and enjoyed the buy-in of CARE globally. A continued level of excitement and interest in the Gender Marker aided this review process, inciting key players to remain engaged in the design and with the tool itself. The final drafts of the tool addressed the challenges and issues noted throughout the review.

Rolling out the revised Gender Marker

To ensure the Gender Marker is put to use around CARE, a swift and comprehensive rollout is required. Given the expansive possible uses of the tool by numerous different actors, this rollout is occurring simultaneously at a number of different levels.

Firstly, the revised CARE Gender Marker is included within this years' global PIIRS data collection, with every project expected to be graded against the tool. Outside of PIIRS, the tool is encouraged for use by both CMPs and COs at multiple stages throughout the project cycle, to enable the highest level of reflection, learning, and improvement. Trainings to support the understanding of both the application of the tool, and the potential uses of it are being offered by the CIGN Superstars, and also through the development and disbursement of a number of self-training resources.

1. Developing a revised CARE Gender Marker

To accompany this rollout at all consecutive levels, a set of supporting documents have been produced. By providing a comprehensive set of communications, the aim is to ensure that the messaging received is not only consistent across the different levels, but that it offers all interested users the opportunity to engage completely with the tool, with minimal support.

The documents available include:
- **Gender Marker Vetting Form**: the tool to be used for grading;
- **Gender Marker Guidance:** instruction sheet on how to use the Vetting Form;
- **Gender Marker FAQ:** list and responses to commonly asked questions regarding the Gender Marker;
- **Gender Marker Guidance for Emergencies:** specific guidance on how to use the Gender Marker for humanitarian programming, including detailed examples on how to use the Gender Marker at different moments in the humanitarian project cycle, and what questions may be relevant to ask;
- **Training Session plans and PowerPoint presentations:** a number of session plans and associated PowerPoint presentations for Gender Marker trainings have been developed to support COs or CMPs to conduct training sessions with their teams or partners. This includes examples of graded proposals with commentary to use in practical trainings;

- **External Communications Document:** document developed to communicate with donors, partners, and the broader sector on what the CARE Gender Marker is, how it works, and its purpose;
- **Recorded Training:** recorded training to enable individuals to partake in a one hour practical training of the Gender Marker;
- **"Introducing the Gender Marker" videos:** a set of short videos to help showcase the Gender Marker, explain its role, function, and purpose, and showcase a number of uses of the tool so far around the organisation.

2. Institutionalizing the Gender Marker into PIIRS

As of 2016, the PIIRS data collection includes the Gender Marker, a tool designed to reflect and document evidence on how gender is integrated in key aspects of our programmatic actions. The annual data collection process facilitated by PIIRS is accompanied by a set of resources that guide in the understanding of the questions on the PIIRS forms, both for projects and initiatives worldwide.

For all actions implemented in FY16, CARE offices will be requested to submit the information on their projects and initiatives up until October 2016. All CARE staff who lead projects and initiatives in any CARE country are required to use the Gender Marker at least once a year with their teams, in order to assess the ways gender is integrated in their work, and take improvement actions when necessary. Each year, the results documented in the Vetting Forms will be part of the information reported to PIIRS at the end of each fiscal year.

The information collected will then pass through a quality control process. This offers a chance for a quality control process of the Gender Marker grades to be undertaken before the database is closed. The quality control process will be performed by the Senior Gender Empowerment and Impact Measurement Advisor in CARE USA, with the support of Isadora Quay (Gender in Emergencies Advisor) and Ximena Echeverría (PIIRS Manager), looking into a sample of the Gender Marker grades to assess how well the Gender Marker is being applied, and whether there are any outstanding issues in terms of application of the tool across the database.

After November 2016, the full PIIRS database for FY16 will be available to all CARE staff. It is expected that the Gender Marker, along with the other data collected in PIIRS, will be used for subsequent analysis, learning and improvement in different areas of our work.

3. Training: Gender Marker Superstar Snowball

The proposed training rollout relies on existing resources and uses a snowball method: an original core group is trained on the Gender Marker, who subsequently commit to training not only their own teams, but other Country Offices or Member Partners.

The **CARE International Gender Network (CIGN) Gender Marker Superstars** are the CIGN Working Group leading the training rollout for the Gender Marker. This original group of eleven Superstars are ready and committed to training others throughout the CARE federation at Country Office and CARE Member Partner level. Those that they train will similarly commit to the training of others, resulting in a network of trained staff who feel capable and empowered to use the Gender Marker, and who are a dedicated resource available for others interested in learning about the tool. This training structure will only be available for one year, and will be supported by the CIGN Superstar Co-chair, who will help facilitate the organisation of the paired trainings.
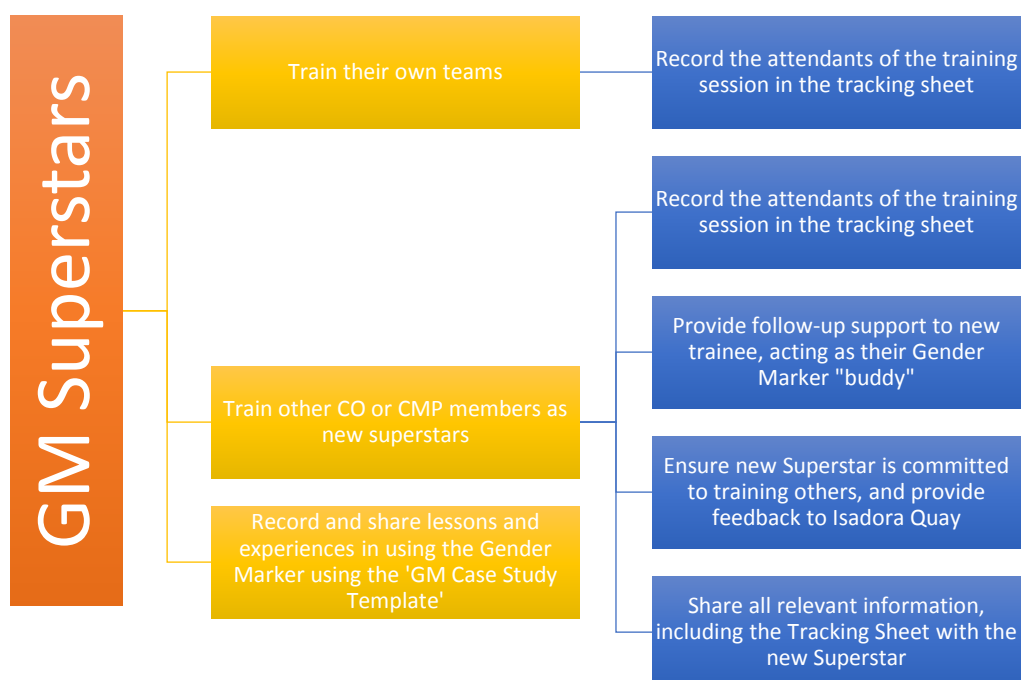
The value of this method, beyond budgetary concerns, is that it engages individuals at a level that offers them the chance to take responsibility and ownership over use of the Gender Marker. This

hopes to help sustain the enthusiasm around the tool, and ensure it spreads organically around CARE globally.

The Superstars are responsible for not only explaining the snowball methodology to those that they have trained, (to ensure the commitment and burden is spread amongst a growing network of people), but for providing ongoing support to this person. In effect, they will act as their Gender Marker Buddy – someone available to support and discuss use of the Gender Marker.

Once a Superstar has trained someone, and are comfortable in that trainee's understanding of the tool, they are responsible for a number of simple steps that helps to keep the process running smoothly, as seen in Figure 1 below.

GM Superstars

- Train their own teams
  - Record the attendants of the training session in the tracking sheet

- Train other CO or CMP members as new superstars
  - Record the attendants of the training session in the tracking sheet
  - Provide follow-up support to new trainee, acting as their Gender Marker "buddy"
  - Ensure new Superstar is committed to training others, and provide feedback to Isadora Quay
  - Share all relevant information, including the Tracking Sheet with the new Superstar

- Record and share lessons and experiences in using the Gender Marker using the 'GM Case Study Template'

Additionally, a number of session plans for training on the Gender Marker have been developed and are available resources for those looking to conduct their own trainings.

A recorded, online version of the training wi-ll also be available for those who are interested. Furthermore, there are plans to integrate the Gender Marker training session into other training sessions, such as the M&E package of trainings.

Accessing the training: Anyone interested in being trained by one of the Gender Marker Superstars can express their interest and organize a training session by emailing the CIGN Superstar Co-chair, Isadora Quay at Isadora.quay@care.org.au.

4. Building in checks and balances: CARE Member Partners

The CARE Gender Marker is designed for use by generalists, allowing anyone to engage with the concepts of gender sensitive programming. It also provides a tangible means to measure and grade

how well CARE is meeting its gender standards. While these features are some of the tool's great strengths, it also engenders a certain challenge. As noted by a UNICEF report in an evaluation of their own Gender Equality Marker, self-assessment (by non-specialists in particular) can lead to the inflation of grades, largely due to a lack of staff members' understanding of what gender issues constitute.[3]

As such, a pivotal part of this process is to institute proper checks and balances that can provide the verification, oversight, feedback, and learning process that will ensure grading is properly reflecting the reality of CARE's programming. This process also ensures that the learning process so crucial to using the Gender Marker is routinely applied – building the capacity of staff along the way.

At the CARE Member Partner level, the Gender Marker can be used in numerous different ways to build in this process of feedback and verification. For example, project officers to review and provide feedback on proposals before submitting to donors; as a checklist for field monitoring visits; as part of their review of EPP processes and reports; and as part of the After-Action Review process. As this demonstrates, the tool is not necessarily a tool for use by gender teams, but rather is a simple and practical tool for many different users.

A number of CMPs are already using the Gender Marker. CARE Australia's HERU team has integrated the Gender Marker as a mandatory part of their proposal review process – at two different stages - to allow for this verification and feedback process, and to ensure the design is adapted to best integrate gender into the approach. CARE France also uses the Gender Marker to grade proposals, and the grades are reported back to National Directors. A number of other CMPs are reporting the Gender Marker grades to their boards.

As of today however, monitoring the use of the Gender Marker by CMPs is a challenge given the lack of a coordinated location for storing grades, or a common understanding of use of the Gender Marker across CMPs. An issue that requires resolution is a means to store and present Gender Marker grades for CMPs. Currently, each CMP is individually responsible for the storage of these grades. A centralized, common system could ease this burden, and provide an interesting opportunity for verification and grade evaluation to be done at a meta-level.

5. Monitoring and Evaluating the Roll-out

Tracking the rollout of the trainings and capturing lessons learned whilst using the tool will be done through two separate mechanisms: performance indicators and case studies.

A commonly accessible tracking sheet will be shared with the Superstars, who will be responsible for inputting all relevant information on the trainings they have given.

Secondarily, a Gender Marker Case Study Template is available. It is encouraged that lessons learned while using the tool, interesting case studies around trainings, and other stories be shared using this short template. Once completed, this tool can be shared with the CIGN Superstar Co-chair: isadora.quay@care.org.au.

A small number of indicators for success of the rollout have been developed as a means to measure the success of the rollout, as seen below. Isadora Quay will measure the performance to these indicators in July 2017.

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[3] When reviewed by an independent IASC Gender Advisor, the 70% of results coded as contributing significantly or principally to equality dropped to 36%. UNICEF, (2013) *Report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF,* UNICEF Executive Board Annual Session 2013 paper, E/ICEF/2013/12, p. 14

Indicator	Goal
# of people trained on the Gender Marker	**M**: 25 **F:** 25
# of superstars who trained at least one other CO on the Gender Marker	5
% of PIIRS sample using the Gender Marker	75
% of CMPs reportedly using the Gender Marker routinely as a part of their work	50

Annex

Index of key Gender Marker documents and actions

To access the Gender Marker Vetting form and all associated support documents	➔	http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/
To request a training from one of the Superstars	➔	Email: Isadora.quay@care.org.au
To access information on the number of trainings, or to track trainings done	➔	Consult the Gender Marker Training Tracking Sheet: Gender Marker Tracking Sheet
To share lessons learned using the Gender Marker	➔	Fill in the Gender Marker Case Study Template, available from Isadora.quay@care.org.au
To access session plans for training on the Gender Marker for orientation, tool training, and for After Action Reviews.	➔	Email: Isadora.quay@care.org.au, and fill in the Training Tracking Sheet once trainings have been done
To watch a short set of introductory videos on the Gender Marker	➔	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLooTPTlkkX1cXCQx-mYCk9NcWGifSZZBE

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About CARE

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Our long-term aid programs provide food, clean water,basic healthcare and education and create opportunities for people to build a better future for themselves.

We also deliver emergency aid to survivors of natural disasters and conflict, and help people rebuild their lives.

We have 70 years' experience in successfully fighting poverty, and last year we helped change the lives of 72 million people around the world.

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