Emergency Response Meta Evaluation

(2017 - 2019)

November 2020

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Evaluations of our emergency responses are carried out to achieve two key outcomes:

- Accountability, which is the process by which we should take responsibility for the intervention and reporting on it to different stakeholders, including the beneficiaries of the intervention, those who financed it, and other humanitarian agencies
- Learning, which is the process through which the experience of the intervention is captured and leads to change and improvement in addressing future emergencies

Evaluations of emergency responses differ from other forms of evaluations in that the operating environment can be incredibly challenging due to chaos on the ground in the aftermath of a disaster; the level of urgency required to assess, plan, design and implement interventions quickly - which often results in a lack of detailed baseline data; the reality that there might also be a lack of such data available (especially if the response agency has no prior presence in the area); security and access constraints; and the loss of institutional memory resulting from the short-cycle deployments of international staff and the high turnover of national staff that often characterise the larger responses.

To monitor its performance in emergency responses, Concern has periodically carried out meta-evaluations of major emergency operations going back to 1990. This report is the continuation of a process of organisational learning from Concern's emergency responses that has seen five meta-evaluations carried out:

1. April 2001, covering the period 1990 to 2000
2. April 2005, covering the period 2000 to 2004
3. July 2009, covering the period 2005 to 2008
4. August 2013, covering the period 2009 to 2012
5. March 2018, covering the period 2013 to 2016

Unlike the previous meta evaluations, this one covers a three-year period, 2017 to 2019, to better fit in with the reporting cycle to Concern's Board. The aim remains the same though - to identify good practice, areas where our practice could improve, and to meet the requirement for sectoral reports to be submitted to the M&E sub-committee and the Board every three years. It also aims to provide an update on progress made on the findings and recommendations of previous meta-evaluations.

The overall purpose of the meta-evaluation is, therefore, to critically review Concern's practice in responding to emergencies, including the nature of our responses, the quality of implementation, and the results achieved against objectives of the programmes or projects evaluated.

In total, 34 evaluation from 19 countries were considered[1]. Ten of these countries were in Africa, four in Asia, and five in the Middle East.

The evaluations broadly break down into the following categories and types:

---

[1] It is important to note that other evaluations may have been completed in these countries over this time, and that the 34 evaluations considered here relate only to interventions that were deemed to be emergency responses by these country programmes.

- 29 were carried out or commissioned by Concern on behalf of donors, and specifically looked at Concern's emergency projects and programmes.
  - 16 of these evaluations were carried out by Concern and include:
    - 8 HPP country evaluations
    - 2 wash-ups
  - 13 were commissioned by Concern to external consultants and include:
    - 1 HPP meta-evaluation
- 5 were carried out on behalf of the member agencies' (including Concern) emergency response in a number of consortia including the DEC and Alliance2015

Evaluations were reviewed from programmes delivered in the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, CAR, DRC, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Yemen, and Zambia. Overall, this represents a better number and spread of evaluations – in terms of the countries that conducted evaluations over this time - than was evident in the previous meta evaluation:
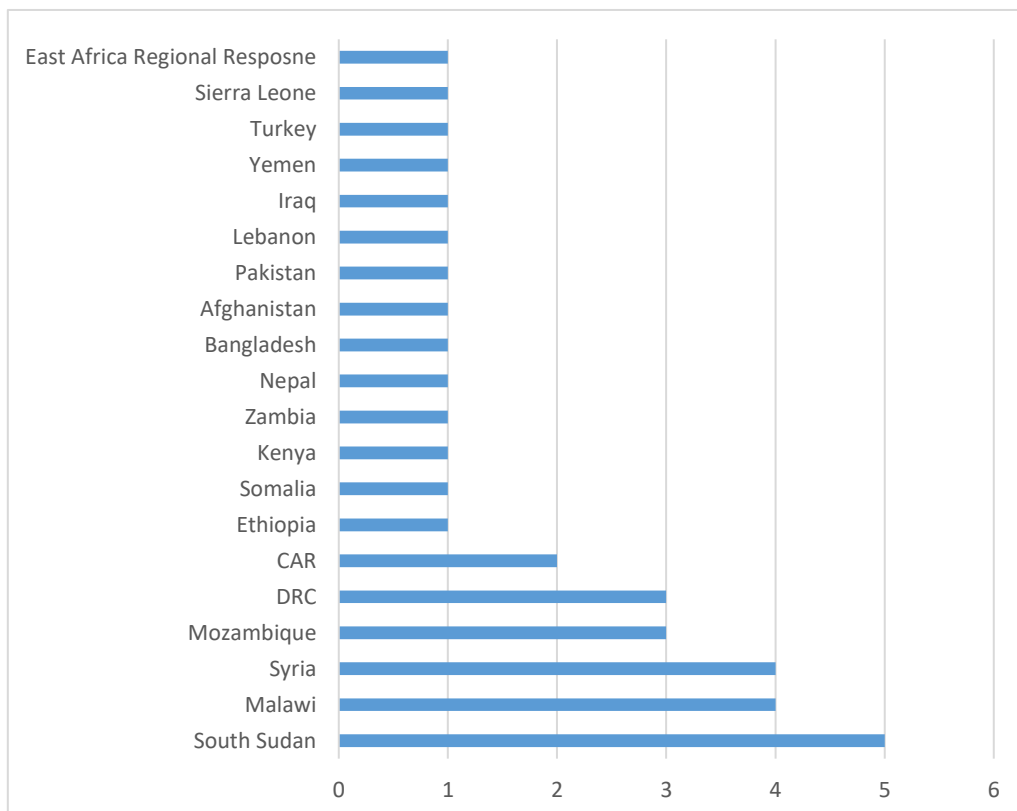

Figure 1: Evaluations per country

1.1. Objectives of the meta evaluation

The overall objective of this meta-evaluation is to provide a review and consolidation of the findings of these evaluations of Concern's humanitarian responses.

The specific objectives can be summarised as being to:

- Consider the overall quality of Concern's responses in the emergency interventions that have been evaluated
- Identify key learning and make appropriate recommendations to inform future emergency responses based on the assessment of Concern's humanitarian response performance
- Assess the progress made on the findings and recommendations of the previous meta-evaluations
- Review the evaluation process of emergency responses
- Advise on how to improve future practice and evaluations

1.2. Methodology

The meta-evaluation looks at the wider context of Concern's emergency responses over the last three years, and examines the approach taken, the quality of the responses, and the outcomes achieved in Concern's emergency interventions evaluated in the years from 2017 to 2019.

The meta-evaluation examines what have been considered the emergency responses' main successes and challenges in the review period, and any positive or negative trends or patterns that have emerged. This was done through an analysis of the evaluation reports received (a full list of these is available in Annexe I) against the extended Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria[2] of Relevance/Appropriateness, Coherence, Coverage, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Connectedness. The cross cutting issues of equality, protection, HIV and AIDS, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and partnership are also included in the analysis of the evaluations.

A checklist (Annexe 2) was used to analyse each evaluation to identify common themes and trends emerging from the lessons to be learned and recommendations. This meta-evaluation checklist is based on the assessment on the research questions developed as per each of the extended standard DAC criteria. Each criterion is scored using the following grading scale:

4	Highly satisfactory
3	Satisfactory
2	Acceptable, but with reservations
1	Unsatisfactory

Two evaluations used half scores, such as 3.5. In these cases the number was rounded down – i.e. a score of 3.5 is rounded down to 3. The two evaluations in questions are the evaluation of the HPP programme in Syria/Iraq, which used 3.5 for all scores, and the evaluation of the HPP programme in CAR, that used 2.5 for two criteria.

---

[2] In 1991, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD set out broad principles for the evaluation process for DAC members. These principles were refined into five criteria that have been widely used in the evaluation of development initiatives – efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and relevance (OECD-DAC, 2000). The criteria were subsequently adapted for evaluation of complex emergencies (OECD-DAC, 1999), becoming a set of seven criteria: relevance/appropriateness, connectedness, coherence, coverage, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact.

To bring all of this together, and ensure the opportunity for learning on a strategic level, the meta-evaluation includes a full report and an executive summary, including main findings against the set scoring system, a conclusion vis-à-vis previous meta-evaluations, and final recommendations for future emergency responses.

Limitations:

- The greatest limitation relates to the lack of scores on many evaluations, and the inconsistency of the scoring systems when these were applied. The majority of the evaluations scored against the DAC criteria used a scale of 1 to 4. Because this was the most commonly used scoring system, it is the one that has been used in this report. It should be noted however that this four-score scale limits the understanding of the nature of the reservations included in the evaluations as it forces us to conflate major and minor reservations about the programmes evaluated.
- The *Evaluating Concern's Emergency Response*[3] document, introduced in 2018, recommends the use of a scoring system that goes from 0 to 4 and it is recommended that this system is adopted going forward to ensure consistency across evaluations. Other evaluations have used different scoring systems. For results to be comparable, these systems have been converted into the grading scale referred to in the methodology sections. These include:
  - Evaluation 10 used a scoring system assessing each criterion on five grades. If we take Relevance as an example, the grades would be Very Relevant, Relevant, Averagely Relevant, Below Average Relevant, Not Relevant. In this case Very Relevant was converted into the score 4, Relevant into the score 3, Averagely Relevant the score 2, and Below Average Relevant and Not Relevant the score 1.
  - Evaluation 16 used a traffic light scoring system, in this case Green was converted into the score 4, the Green-Yellow was converted into the score 3, Yellow-Red into the score 2 and Red into the score 1.
  - Evaluation 18 used a scoring systems of 1 to 5 (Excellent=5; Very Good=4; Good=3; Satisfactory=2; Poor=1). In this case 5 and 4 have been converted into 4.
  - Evaluation 20 also used a colour based system, in this case Green has been converted into the score 4, Light Green into the score 3, Yellow into the score 2, Orange and Red into the score 1.
  - Evaluations 23 and 24 used a scoring system that of 4 to 0 (4 = outstanding performance, 3 = performance in line with what would be expected of a well-functioning organisation, 2 = generally acceptable performance, but with some clear, and documented, shortcomings, 1 = barely acceptable performance with some major shortcomings and reservations, 0 = totally unacceptable performance or insufficient data to make an assessment). In this case, 0 and 1 have been converted into 1.

- The evaluations have not consistently applied the extended DAC criteria. More positively, the majority of the evaluations conducted by Concern have done so and are in line with the guidelines in the *Evaluating Concern's Emergency Responses* document. The evaluations carried out by

---

[3]https://concern2com.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/Emergency/Core%20Documents/Emergency%20evaluations%20and%20meta-evaluations/Evaluating%20Concern%27s%20Emergency%20Responses%20-%20March%202019%20.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=rv6VnP

external consultants, however, have predominantly used the five DAC criteria in the original OECD DAC guidance on evaluating humanitarian assistance[4].

2. Response Environment

In 2020, nearly 168 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection. This represents one in about 45 people in the world, and is the highest figure in decades. In January 2020, projections show that more than 200 million people could be in need of assistance by 2022[5]. However, considering the current COVID-19 pandemic, numbers could be much higher, as at the same time as fighting the direct health impact of COVID-19, the world must address the growing secondary impacts of the pandemic. The effect on food security and malnutrition is expected to be especially severe, with the number of people on the brink of starvation potentially doubling from 135 million to 265 million according to WFP[6].

Most countries requiring international assistance are affected by multiple crises, with many conflict-affected countries also hosting refugees or experiencing disasters associated with natural hazards[7]. The current COVID-19 pandemic has confronted the world with a global health crisis unlike any in the 75-year history of the United Nations — one that is spreading human suffering, crippling the global economy and upending people's lives. In those countries in which community and individual health are already severely challenged by the impact of poverty, conflict, displacement, concurrent disease outbreaks and frequent natural disasters, the added burden of COVID-19 is expected to be profound. In addition to this, infectious diseases are becoming more prevalent and harder to control, because of conflict, weak health systems, poor water and sanitation, and lack of access to vaccinations. Despite the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 2286 in May 2016, the deliberate targeting of health facilities and health workers in most current conflicts has continued unabated.

A recent example of the speed with which infectious diseases can sweep through communities weakened by decades of conflict can be seen in the **Kivu Ebola epidemic** which began on 1st August 2018, when four cases of Ebola virus disease were confirmed in the eastern region of Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). By November, the outbreak had become the biggest Ebola outbreak in the DRC's history, and by November, it had become the second-largest Ebola outbreak on record, behind only the 2013–2016 Western Africa epidemic. Disease outbreaks, including COVID-19, are deepening humanitarian needs in some of the world's most dire emergencies, demanding more resources and making responses more complex.

The last five years have witnessed the continuance of a phenomenal surge in **forced migration**, driven by conflict and the increasingly severe effects of climate change. In recent years, forced migration has grown much faster than voluntary migration[8]. By the end of 2019, there were an estimated 79.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide (roughly 26m refugees, 45.7 million IDPs, and 4.2 million asylum seekers). With 13.6 million people newly displaced during the course of the year, there was an

---

[4] OED DAC Guidance: https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2667294.pdf
[5] UN News, A record number of people will need help worldwide during 2020: UN Humanitarian Overview, 2019
[6] https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GHRP%20Progress%20Report%20First%20Edition%20June%202020.pdf
[7] UN OCHA, Global Humanitarian Overview 2020
[8] UNDESA, 'International migrants numbered 272 million in 2019, continuing an upward trend in all major world regions', 2019

average of 37,000 new displacements every day, with the majority remaining displaced within their country's own border[9].

High rates of **internal and regional displacement from conflicts** continue to be greatly underreported. In the past decade, internal displacement surged to levels never before seen, and the total IDP population is now the highest it has ever been. In 2005, when the cluster approach and other aspects of the humanitarian reform process were introduced, UNHCR was working in 15 countries with IDPs. By 2010, the number of countries hosting IDPs had increased to 26, and it now stands at 33. In 2005, UNHCR reported working with 6.6 million IDPs, a number that grew to about 15 million by 2010 and stood at more than 43.5 million at the end of 2019 – representing an almost seven-fold increase in only 15 years. At the end of 2019, Colombia continued to report the highest number of internally displaced people, with close to eight million according to government statistics. The escalation of the conflict in Syria meant that the number of IDPs has remained high, with an estimated total of more than six million people displaced there at the end of 2019. The intensifying conflict led to almost half a million people being newly displaced during the year. Widespread conflict and violence in the DRC led to five million people being internally displaced by the end of the year, the highest number reported by UNHCR to date. Other countries with major IDP populations at the end of 2019 were Yemen (3.6 million), Somalia (2.6 million), Afghanistan (2.6 million), and Nigeria (2.2 million)[10].

Consistent with these trends, Concern is significantly scaling up its focus on **conflict**. This focus has gained further relevance over the last five years as almost every major conflict has continued, while conflict has worsened considerably in contexts such as Afghanistan, Yemen and across the Sahel.

Despite the modest decline in the number of conflicts at a global level having decreased from 385 in 2017 to 358 in 2019, 2019 was marked by the continuation of many highly violent conflicts. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Maghreb region, and the Americas, 15 conflicts were fought on a 'war' level. These include two intrastate conflicts - the DRC's North-East provinces and drug trafficking conflict in Brazil – and the level of conflict spurred by Islamist groups in the Sahel zone[11]. In 2018, wars in four countries - Yemen, Syria, Somalia, and Afghanistan - accounted for 82% of all recorded battle-related casualties.

---

[9] https://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf
[10] https://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf
[11] https://hiik.de/conflict-barometer/current-version/?lang=en
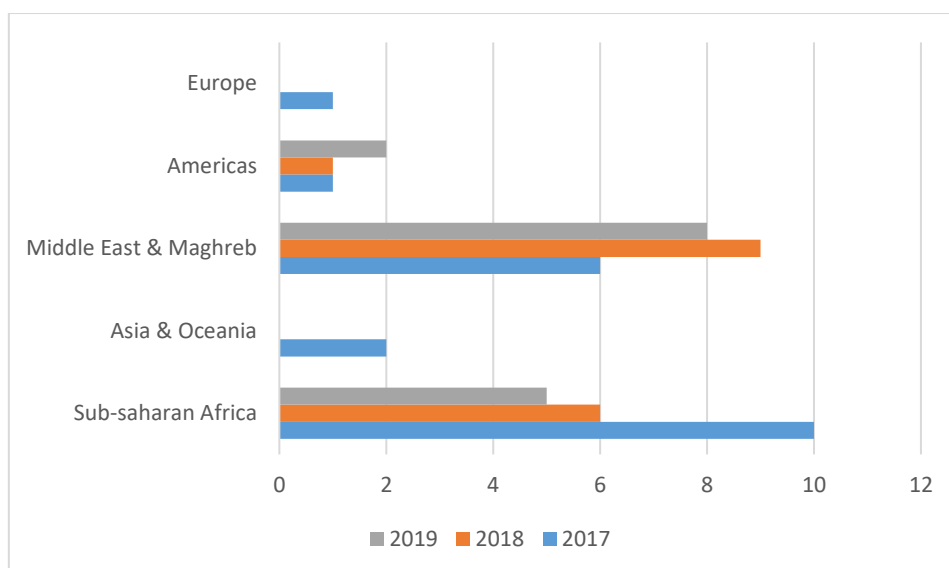
Figure 2: Frequency of wars by region

The *Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disaster* (CRED)[12] data shows that there were 1,046 **natural disasters** between 2017 and 2019, affecting close to 257 million people. Approximately 33,000 people lost their lives to disasters in this time, and an estimated US$ 570 billion of damage was caused worldwide.

The number of natural disasters increased from 335 in 2017 to 396 in 2019. The number of people killed also increased, but the cost of total damage fell from $335 billion in 2017 to $103 billion in 2019. In 2018, floods affected more people than any other type of disaster in the 21st century (127 events). The August flash flooding in India's Kerala state was by far the largest flood event of the year, with 504 dead, and two-thirds of the state's residents affected (more than 23 million people). In 2019, the most notable features of the year included large, severe and long-lasting wildfires, which captured international attention and had dramatic impacts on the environment.

	2017	2018	2019	Total
Number of natural disaster events	335	315	396	1,046
Population affected – million	95.6	66.5	95	257
Population killed	9,697	11,804	11,755	33,256
Damage – billion US$	335	132	103	570

Source: *Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disaster*

Only one UN system wide Level 3 (L3)[13] response was activated during the review period. It was activated in DRC in October 2017 for six months and expired in May 2018[14]. In late 2018, the L3 process

---

[12] https://www.cred.be/

[13] L3 and system-wide scale up responses are activated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to the most complex and challenging humanitarian emergencies based on an assessment of the scale, complexity, urgency, capacity and reputational risk involved with the crisis. Broadly speaking, they are an indicator of the need to surge additional capacity to support a response, rather than an indication of the scale of the emergency response.

[14] https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-transformative-agenda/iasc-system-wide-response-activations-and-deactivations

was replaced by a new process – the system-wide scale up[15], a system-wide mobilisation of the UN in response to a sudden onset and/or rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in a given country, including at the subnational level, where the capacity to lead, coordinate and deliver humanitarian assistance does not match the scale, complexity and urgency of the crisis. To date, this system has been used for the following responses:

1. the Cyclone Idai response in Mozambique, which was activated from March 2019 to the end of June 2019
2. the 2019 Ebola outbreak in the DRC. The scale up process was activated in May 2019, renewed twice, and deactivated in March 2020
3. the COVID-19 pandemic, which was activated for six months in April 2020

In addition, two protracted crises that had previously required an L3 response to be activated are still in a state of enhanced response under the scale-up model: Syria, which was activated in January 2013; and Yemen, which was activated in July 2015.

In terms of funding, in 2019 the volume of international humanitarian assistance dropped from US$31.2 billion in 2018 to US$29.6 billion. This 5.3% reduction is the first drop in global funding since 2012 and was driven by a fall in contributions of US$2.1 billion from governments and EU institutions. The timing of this drop is challenging as, in response to growing need, the funding requirements for UN-coordinated appeals are higher than they have ever been. In 2019, the UN called for US$30.4 billion in the Global Humanitarian Overview[16], and while the total of funding committed through UN-coordinated appeals rose to a record high of US$19.3 billion, this was only 64% of the funding that had been sought was allocated. The impact of COVID-19 is putting increased strain on already limited funding for humanitarian responses. In December 2019, the UN projected a requirement of $28.8 billion in the Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) for its response to humanitarian needs in 2020. Drawing a parallel to the global crisis of 2008-2009, when humanitarian requirements grew by 54%, all indications are that humanitarian needs will increase significantly by the end of 2020 due to the secondary impacts of COVID-19. Including requirements for COVID-19 response, which in July 2020 rose to US$ 10.26 billion, overall humanitarian funding requirements now exceed US$ 40 billion[17].

The table below shows the trends during the current review period:

	2017	2018	2019
International Humanitarian Assistance (US$ billions)	29.1	31.2	29.6
UN coordinated appeals (US$ billions)	27.3	29.1	30.4
UN coordinated appeals: total funded (US$ billions)	16.4	17.4	19.3
Percentage funded	60%	60%	64%

Source: Global Humanitarian Assistance

---

[15] https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/42279/humanitarian-systemwide-scaleup-activation-iasc#:~:text=IASC%20scale%2Dup%20activation%20is,complexity%20and%20urgency%20of%20the

[16] https://devinit.org/resources/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2020/executive-summary/

[17] https://hum-insight.info/

3. Concern's Emergency Responses

In the period under review, Concern responded to 213 emergencies, directly assisted an estimated 13.9 million people, and spent in excess of €289 million on humanitarian responses[18]. Compared to the previous review period (2013-2016), the number of responses we have been implementing on a yearly basis has significantly increased from 160 between 2013 and 2016 to 213 between 2017 and 2019. 2019 saw the highest number of responses (82) delivered in the last seven years. However, there is a degree of unevenness in the way in which countries have categorised emergencies: while reviewing the Emergency Response Table in section 3.2 of the Annual Country Programme Progress Reports (APPRs), some inconsistencies can be noted in the way in which emergency responses were listed. Some countries reported emergencies by grant (e.g. Sudan, Bangladesh), others by individual event (e.g. Afghanistan), and others by their underlying cause (e.g. Chad, Syria). This means that the overall number of emergency responses should be taken with some caution.

Total expenditure also saw a significant increase in the period under review, and so did the total number of people reached through direct implementation:

	2017	**2018**	**2019**
Emergency responses	65	66	82
Countries	24	20	21
Expenditure (million €)	105.2	89	95
People reached through direct implementation	6 million	4 million	3.9 million

Source: Concern Worldwide's Annual Reports

Concern responded in a wide range of contexts and to various types of emergencies, including environmental disasters such as flooding, landslides, cyclones, earthquakes and drought, and conflict-related emergencies, many of which caused migration and displacement. As we maintain our focus on fragile countries and protracted crises, we also need to consider that the emergencies to which we are increasingly responding are complex emergencies - multi-faceted humanitarian crises requiring international multi-sector responses that tend to be protracted and have humanitarian appeals that last longer than three years. The response to the Syria conflict is a good example, as the UN declaration of an L3 response, which was activated in January 2013, is still ongoing.

While most of the responses have taken place in countries in which Concern had a presence, in 2019 we re-entered Mozambique in response to Cyclone Idai. In this case, Concern chose to work in partnership with two Alliance2015 members, under the lead of Cesvi, which was already registered in country and operational in one of the areas most affected by the cyclone. This strategy allowed the organisation to rapidly scale up its operations in country and avoid the delays that going through the registration and programme approval processes would have caused.

The evaluations under review for this reporting period give an indication of the variety of sectors that Concern delivers in emergency contexts. In addition to food security and livelihoods (FSL), which remains the key sector, the organisation is also significantly increasing its engagement in WASH, shelter/non-food items (NFIs) and Protection, with the Middle East seeing the highest number of

---

[18] Data on Concern emergency response 2017 – 2019, is compiled from information submitted to the International Programmes Directorate and detailed in the Concern Annual Reports 2013 to 2016

protection interventions. Protection is an essential component of all humanitarian responses and is a key element of the responses in the Middle East.
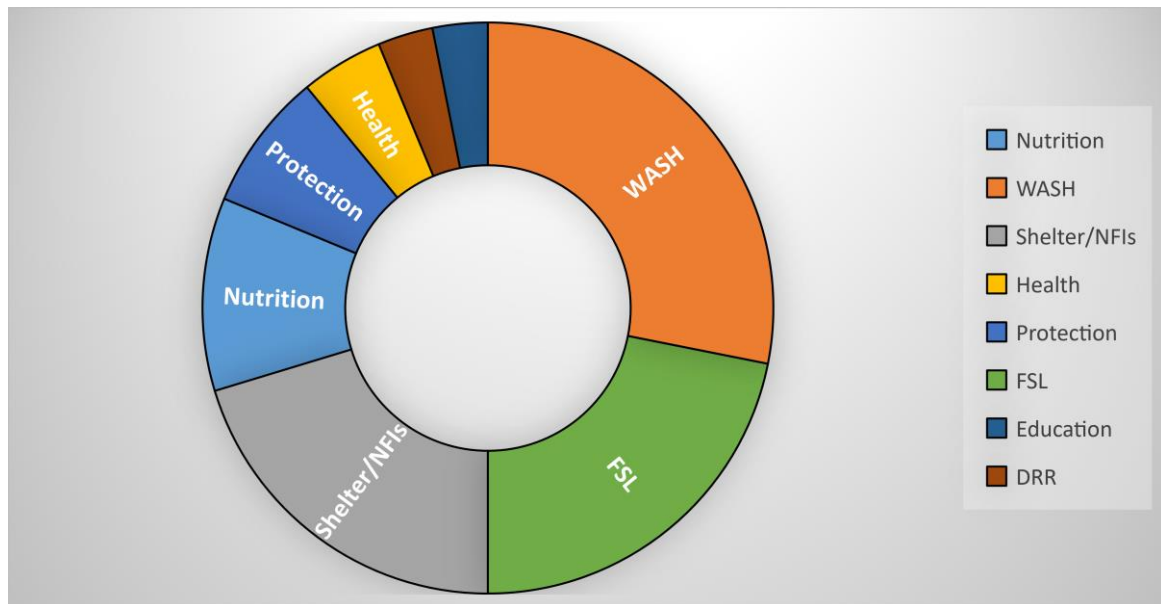

Figure 3: Programme areas covered in evaluations assessed

3.1. Case study: Alliance2015 response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique

Cyclone Idai originated from a tropical depression that formed off the east coast of Mozambique on 4th March 2019. The storm made landfall in Mozambique later that day and remained a tropical cyclone through its five days over land. On 9th March, the depression re-emerged in the Mozambique Channel and strengthened into Moderate Tropical Storm Idai the next day.

Idai then intensified rapidly, reaching an initial peak intensity, with sustained winds of 175 km/h (110 mph) on 11th March before dissipating, only to regain intensity. On 14th March, it reached its peak intensity, with maximum sustained winds of 195 km/h (120 mph), and the following day it made landfall near Beira.

Cyclone Idai displaced 1.8 million people, destroyed 220,000 homes and damaged a further 110,000. 700,000 hectares of crops were lost, resulting in 220,000 households losing their main source of livelihood as the primary crop of the year was in the field, ready to be harvested. Many of the districts in Sofala province, one of the hardest hit areas of the country, saw up to 100% crop loss. The loss and damage was estimated at $773 million (approximately 5% of the national GDP).

The response was implemented through a partnership of three Alliance2015 members:

Concern, Welthunegrhilfe and Cesvi. The Alliance2015 members carried out the work under Cesvi as the lead agency as it had a long-established presence in the areas of intervention and was registered in the country. At the time of the response, Concern and Welthungerhilfe were no longer registered in Mozambique, but joined the response by providing financial, operational and technical support through the secondment of programme and systems staff, and the provision of material and funding. Concern deployed ten humanitarian staff for a combined total of 550 days.

The initial phase of the response targeted 5,000 households through the restoration of lost assets, WASH and food security (the distribution of seeds and a seed protection ration). A major focus for the partners was the very short lead-in time due to the fact that the next planting season was less than three weeks away. Following the first phase of the emergency, the response transitioned to an early recovery focus, covering WASH, food security and semi-permanent shelter.

Of the combined Alliance2015 budget of approximately €4.4 million, the Concern contribution was €1.15 million, and the programme reached over **90,000 people.**

Lessons to be learned[19]

The **partnership approach** adopted proved very effective in allowing the rapid scaling up of a response to meet the needs of the affected population. This joint approach increased the effectiveness of the response as, jointly, partners were able to bring more to it than they would have been able to do individually. In terms of representation, both on the ground and with the donors in the respective partners' countries, Cesvi, Concern and Welthungerhilfe were recognised as a single consortium, rather than as individual agencies.

Coordination and relationships with local authorities and the international community was positive. The technical and contextual knowledge of Alliance2015 teams was a recognised asset in the coordination with other humanitarian actors. Concern and its Alliance2015 partners closely coordinated with the Institute of National Disaster Management (INGC), humanitarian fora, and various clusters and working groups. Particularly important was the engagement that the response partners had with the district level government, with whom it coordinated the design of the response plan. This ensured that the local capacity to lead and coordinate emergency responses was strengthened through this response.

Response management structure: roles and management lines were clearly identified and covered by the different agencies according to their capacity. The staff deployed were very experienced and tasks and responsibilities were clearly divided. This allowed rapid actions and good coordination with external actors which benefitted from each agency's networks. Finally, and most notably, flexibility in the management structure proved key. This included flexibility between the staff stepping in and out to cover different roles as needed.

4. Concern emergency responses – How have we done?

The criteria used for this meta-evaluation are the extended OECD DAC (Development Assistance Committee)[20] criteria for evaluating complex emergencies which have been used to analyse the performance of the Concern emergency programmes, based on the evaluations that are included in this report. The DAC criteria can be defined as follow[21]:

Relevance	Is concerned with assessing whether the project is in line with local needs and priorities. **Appropriateness** is the tailoring of humanitarian activities to local needs to increase ownership, accountability, and cost-effectiveness.
Coherence	Relates to the need to assess all relevant policies (security, developmental, trade, military and humanitarian) to ensure that there is consistency and, in particular, that they all take into account humanitarian and human-rights considerations.

---

[19] The lessons identified for learning in this case study were generated from two evaluations (one of the overall response and the other of the cash transfer intervention) and an inter-agency review process held in the Cesvi head office in Bergamo.
[20] https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/eha-2006.pdf
[21] Evaluating Concern's Emergency Responses, March 2019

	Organisationally, we note that, in conflict contexts, country programmes may seek to limit the degree of coherence that exists with peace and stabilisation actors if engagement with them may affect the security of our teams.
Coverage	Involves determining who was supported by humanitarian action, and why. In determining why certain groups were covered or not, a central question is: "What were the main reasons that the intervention provided or failed to provide major population groups with assistance and protection?".
Efficiency	Measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – achieved as a result of inputs. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving an output, to see whether the most efficient approach has been used. **Cost effectiveness** is included in this criterion.
Effectiveness	Measures the extent to which an activity achieved its purpose, or whether this can be expected to happen on the basis of the outputs. **Timeliness** and **Coordination** are included in this criterion.
Impact	Looks at the wider effects of the project – social, economic, technical, environmental – on individuals, gender and age-groups, communities and institutions. Impacts can be intended and unintended, positive and negative, macro (sector) and micro (household).
Connectedness	Refers to the need to ensure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a way that takes longer-term and interconnected issues into account.

In addition, **gender equality**, **protection**, **HIV and AIDS,** and **partnership** have been examined.

4.1. Relevance

Of the 34 evaluations reviewed, 29 of them (85%) considered the question of relevance. Of these, only in 17 evaluations (50%) did the evaluators ascribe a 'score'. Of these, 12 scored the response as "satisfactory" and five scored it as "highly satisfactory". To provide a more comprehensive analysis of the evaluations against this criterion, whenever possible the meta-evaluator ascribed a score for those that used the criterion but did not score the evaluation against it. The meta-evaluator was not able to offer a score for five of the evaluations[22]. These scores are highlighted in a different colour in the graph below:

---

[22] In relation to this criterion, the inability to offer scores was either because they were wash-up reports (of which there were two), the meta evaluation of the previous HPP evaluations, or evaluations that did not use the criteria at all – such as the synthesis report from the DEC East Africa evaluation [3]. For the other criteria for which there are fewer scores noted, it was largely due to the fact that the evaluators did not use the DAC criteria in the evaluation reports.
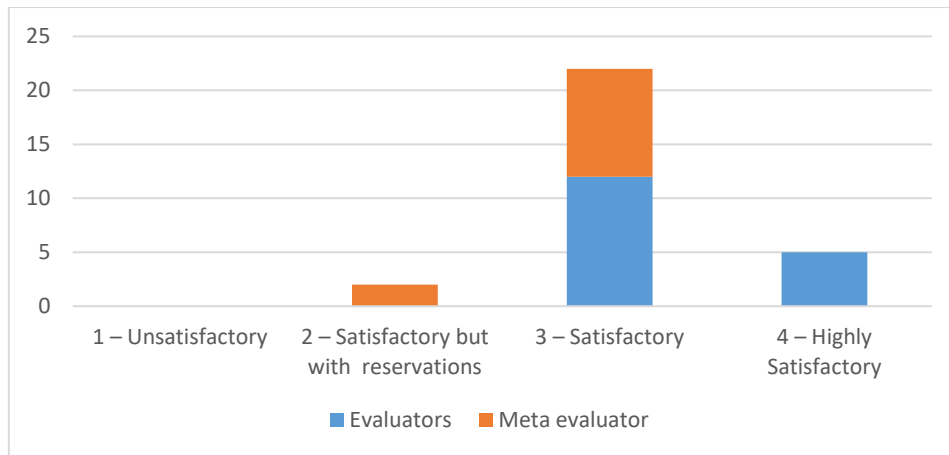
Figure 4: Assessment of Relevance

The evaluation reports indicate that all of the emergency projects were considered appropriate and relevant. The responses were found to be in line with the priority humanitarian needs of beneficiaries, and tailored to local needs as much as possible. It is clear that Concern teams have put significant efforts into setting up effective Complaints and Response Mechanisms (CRMs), but there is still room for improvement in relation to these, particularly in relation to community participation in the design phase.

The programmes addressed **key humanitarian needs**, and the following examples taken from the evaluations are illustrative of this:

a. The evaluation of HPP programme in South Sudan [evaluation 6 in the attached list of evaluations reviewed for this meta-evaluation] found that the HPP funds were utilised in ways that were in line with local needs and priorities. The focus on cash distributions, WASH, health, education, and protection were identified as priorities by beneficiaries interviewed during the evaluation process.

b. The evaluators of the OFDA funded response in Norther-East Syria [23] found the intervention addressed the immediate needs identified at the time of programme start-up. Moreover, they noted that the intervention sensibly adjusted its approach as the situation changed.

c. The Responding to Pakistan's Internally Displaced (RAPID) Fund programme (RF-II) [20] was found to be highly relevant and appropriate to the needs of Pakistan, which is a country prone to natural disasters including floods, earthquakes, droughts and man-made disasters. RF-II was considered an excellent humanitarian instrument to reach the vulnerable communities affected by natural disasters or complex emergencies.

d. In the Evaluation for the OFDA-funded Multi-sectoral Emergency Response in South Sudan [8], the evaluators found that the programme addressed the wide array of issues that affect the overall health and nutrition of extremely vulnerable populations, and adapted well to the different contexts in which the programme was implemented. Moreover, the programme was found to be fully integrated with Concern's overall emergency response, and was widely acknowledged by stakeholders as relevant and appropriate.

Where necessary, the programmes showed **flexibility and willingness to change**. This is particularly important when responding to programmes in protracted crises, where accessibility can be an issue and programmes can be required to expand to new areas as more communities become accessible.

This was highlighted in the evaluation of the ECHO-funded intervention in North-east Syria [23]. Having initially started working in the northern parts of north east Syria, the team expanded its reach into new areas of implementation as more areas became accessible. The proposal was found to be well designed to allow maximum variability in such a difficult context, meaning that the Concern team could deliver assistance where it was most needed, and shift support to different locations when necessary.

In the majority of the responses evaluated, internal **needs assessments, surveys or external reports** were used at the design stage. Needs assessments were not always carried out specifically for the projects assessed, but sometimes drew on assessments conducted for larger projects. In some cases, such as in the UNICEF Funded Nutrition Project [7], the assessment of needs was anchored in a comprehensive context analysis of literature such as the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017/2018, previously conducted SMART surveys, Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring (FSNMS) assessments, and the engagement of stakeholders. The DEC's East Africa evaluation [3] found that partners extensively used common and interagency needs assessment data to guide their response, supplemented by localised and sector-specific assessments carried out by individual agencies. In the event that an assessment could not be conducted at the beginning of the response, such as in the Emergency Protection and Resilience Building for Refugees project in Turkey [26], the team conducted additional assessments during the programme implementation, in particular through focus group discussions (FGDs) which helped them to re-assess humanitarian needs and adapt their activities accordingly.

The communities targeted largely felt that their needs were met by Concern's responses. During the evaluations of the HPP programme in Afghanistan [19], the community members participating in FGDs and key informant interviews (KIIs) reported that they were very satisfied with the activities of the project in responding to their DRR needs.

4.1.1. Complaints and Response Mechanisms (CRMs)

It is clear that Concern teams have put significant efforts into setting up effective CRMs. However, there are still some issues that need to be addressed for these to be used consistently by the beneficiaries across all of Concern's emergency responses. This is a sector wide challenge and reflects both the results of the HQAI[23] audit of our compliance with our Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) commitments, and the CHS analysis of the evaluations completed for all of its certified members.

The first challenge is to ensure that CRMs are widely **accessible** to the targeted population, and that the **channels of communication are appropriate** to and usable by the beneficiaries. In South Sudan, for example, phone coverage is limited, and literacy levels are quite low as noticed in the End of Program Evaluation for the OFDA-funded Multi-sectoral Emergency Response [8]. Therefore, while phone lines were purchased and staff explored the possibility of having suggestion boxes at health facilities, in this context it would have been more effective for staff to be trained in effective CRMs and to have the skills to take in complaints, elevate them as necessary, and provide feedback to programme participants. Similarly, in Afghanistan [19], one of the main obstacles to the running of the

---

[23] HQAI – the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative - is an independent auditor for the humanitarian and development sector. HQAI audits determine the degree to which the implementation of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) - and therefore good practice and accountability to affected communities - has been successful, and identifies areas for potential improvement.

CRM was the fact that the majority, if not all, of the community are illiterate. Therefore, having a CRM based on written complaints means that community members have to pay someone who can transcribe their complaint, making the formal CRM process less accessible. Where suggestions boxes are used, it is important that they are widely accessible and that beneficiaries feel comfortable using them. For example, in some villages in the DRC, the team placed suggestion boxes at the house of the village chief, a location that sometimes prevented people from using them for fear of being seen as trouble-makers. In other instances, in the same evaluation of Concern's Emergency Program in Tanganyika and Haut-Lomami, DRC [29], the transmission mechanism was complicated because complainants would have to walk several kilometres to file their complaints.

Another issue that can lower the effectiveness of this tool is the **poor knowledge of CRMs by some of the beneficiary groups targeted** through Concern's emergency responses. In the evaluation of the HPP programme in Ethiopia [4], the evaluators noted that some beneficiaries were not aware of the existence of CRMs. Similarly, in the evaluation of the HPP programme in CAR [32], it was suggested that there was a need for increased community sensitization on the CRM and a more streamlined and timely process of assessing and responding to complaints received. In DRC [29], it was reported that the community targeted was poorly informed of the existence of this information collection system. During a focus group discussion with displaced men in Mangi, a participant said, "I never knew how to file a complaint, nobody told us how." Similarly in Afghanistan [19], it was recommended that Concern district staff should spend some time at the start and at various stages during the project to verbally explain what the CRM is and how it could be used.

During the evaluation of the HPP programme in CAR [32], it was noticed that complaints were rarely collected (one complaint was not addressed for six months). The reason given by the team was that it was due to insufficient staffing levels. It is important for Concern to review these situations in country, to ensure accountability to the beneficiaries, and that programmes are can be adapted to beneficiaries' needs where this is necessary.

4.1.2. Participation of beneficiaries

The meta-evaluation report of HPP evaluations [34], noted that there was evidence of uneven levels of community participation in the design of interventions. Participation of community members took place mostly at the needs assessments stage and in developing selection criteria. In the evaluation of the HPP programmes in South Sudan [5], it was noted that more could be done to ensure community ownership and continued relevance of interventions in a dynamic context throughout the project cycle, especially through strengthening feedback mechanisms and CRMs.

In the DEC evaluation of Yemen [25], an intervention in which we funded our Alliance2015 partner, ACTED's intervention, the evaluators noted that the involvement of beneficiaries for Phase 2 could have been strengthened. The involvement of the targeted communities in the design and implementation of the project was low, especially for women. In Al-Hudaydah, less than half of the respondents (35% of women and 48% of men) stated that they felt involved in the project's design and implementation. In Sa'ada, numbers went down to 6% for women and 41% for men feeling involved in the project.

In Northern Syria [27], the evaluators found that there was little evidence of community participation in the design of the interventions. In some cases, the lack of consultation also led to a lack of knowledge amongst beneficiaries as to what they are entitled to from Concern's intervention.

However, it was also noticed that one area in which there was strong community participation was in WASH, particularly around the design of latrines, where participation was used to ensure services were more appropriate for women, the elderly and those with disabilities.

4.2. Coherence

Of the 34 evaluations reviewed, 16 (47%) considered the question of coherence. Three more evaluations included coherence in their criteria, but the definition applied differed from the one used for this report, so their findings could not be considered for this section. The evaluators ascribed a 'score' to this category in 14 evaluations (41% of the total). Of these, 10 scored as "satisfactory", 2 scored "highly satisfactory" and 2 scored as "satisfactory but with some (major) reservation". Whenever possible, the meta-evaluator ascribed a score for the remaining evaluations using this criterion; this is shown in a different colour in the table below. The meta-evaluator was not able to offer a score for twenty of the evaluations:
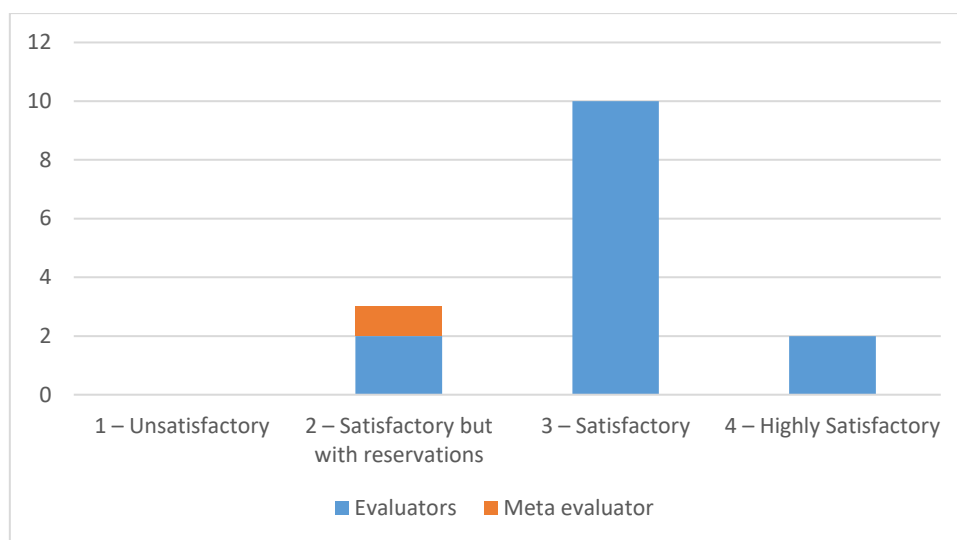
Figure 5: Assessment of Coherence

Despite coherence being included in the criteria adapted for the evaluation of complex emergencies (OECD-DAC, 1999), it is not consistently used in the evaluations reviewed. Concern staff conducted the majority of evaluations that included a consideration of coherence, whereas external consultants often failed to consider it. Although it is recognised that the DAC criteria should not be applied mechanistically, this criterion is particularly important as it allows the review of the linkage between the organisation's policies and their application and assesses the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which Concern adheres. As such, it should be used more consistently.

Overall, there was satisfactory coherence shown in Concern's programmes despite there being some areas for improvement.

The majority of programmes reviewed against this criterion reported adherence with **Concern's Approach to Emergencies** paper. In the final evaluation of the Emergency Protection and Resilience Programme for Refugees in Turkey [26], the evaluators reported that the Approach to Emergencies paper was relevant in the establishment of the whole emergency programme. Similarly, in Afghanistan

[19], the evaluators found that the HPP programme adhered to the Approach to Emergencies, and in Iraq/Syria HPP Programme [22], the evaluators noted that the programme fitted neatly within the relevant frameworks of both the Approach to Protection and the Approach to Emergencies papers. However, both in DRC and CAR [30, 32], the evaluators of HPP programmes noted that field teams did not seem to be familiar with the content or the scope of the document, despite the fact that it was clear that HPP programme activities were in line with the paper. In both reports, the evaluators noted that the teams, especially the national staff, would benefit from being familiar with the paper.

Training on protection, CHS, humanitarian principles and Red Cross Code of Conduct were conducted in several of the programmes reviewed; in the Idai response in Mozambique, training on the Red Cross Code of Conduct was conducted in the post-emergency phase, and included both national and international staff [15]. In the evaluation of the HPP programme in Ethiopia [4], the evaluator noted that all staff had been trained on the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). Similarly, in the evaluation of the Idai Response Programme in Malawi [16], the evaluator found that all staff and stakeholders engaging with Concern on the response were oriented on safeguarding and protection principles. In countries in which there is a high turnover of national and international staff, as is the case for South Sudan, it is important to conduct **refresher training** on humanitarian principles and standards on a regular basis.

Several of Concern's emergency responses are reported to adhere to **How Concern Understands Extreme Poverty** (HCUEP), but this is not considered in all of the programmes evaluated.

4.2.1. Preparing for Effective Emergency Responses (PEER) plans

In our programming, we seek to ensure that there is a level of consistency and integration in the way in which we understand and respond to issues of risk and vulnerability, and that we address the patterns of recurrent or predictable disasters.[24] Some of this work is considered in our risk analysis, but areas in relation to a country programme's preparedness for responding to emergencies is considered through the development of PEER pans. The work that country teams do in terms of emergency preparedness and the extent to which PEER plans are developed and used are important in identifying likely future disasters and prioritising a commitment to responding to them. Disasters often overwhelm mitigation measures that have been put in place, so country-level PEER plans, supported by early warning-early action analysis, should ensure that country management teams are able to anticipate and respond adequately to an emergency, and to identify and prepare the surge capacity required to do so.

Considerable work has been done at country level on this, but there is a need to improve the implementation and operationalisation of PEER plan in some countries, with a particular focus on those facing protracted crises and those more exposed to natural disasters. For example, in South Sudan, the evaluators found that the PEER plan for Northern Bahr el Ghazal was relevant and followed, but they recommended that it should be reviewed and expanded to the entire country [6].

In Afghanistan, the team went through a PEER training in 2016, but although the country programme team had already implemented many of the PEER plan activities, the team wanted more guidance on how to make the plan fit for purpose. There is also a need to follow up on the main recommendations of the reviews of the PEER plans to ensure that they are implemented [19]. Similarly, in the DRC,

---

[24] Concern Worldwide's Approach to Emergencies

management staff interviewed during the evaluation of the HPP programme [30], did not appear to be familiar with the country PEER plan's objectives and recommendations, and this was identified as an area of weakness requiring quick improvement. In CAR [32], knowledge of the PEER plan among staff was noted, but its implementation was seen as an area requiring further improvement.

4.3. Coverage

Of the 34 evaluations reviewed, 16 (47%) considered the question of coverage. Of these, only in 14 evaluations (41%) did the evaluators ascribe a 'score' to this criterion. Of these, 10 were scored as "satisfactory" and 4 as "satisfactory but with some (major) reservation". As with the other criteria, whenever possible, the meta-evaluator ascribed a score for the remaining evaluations using coverage, and this is shown in a different colour in the table below. The meta-evaluator was not able to offer a score for twenty of the evaluations:
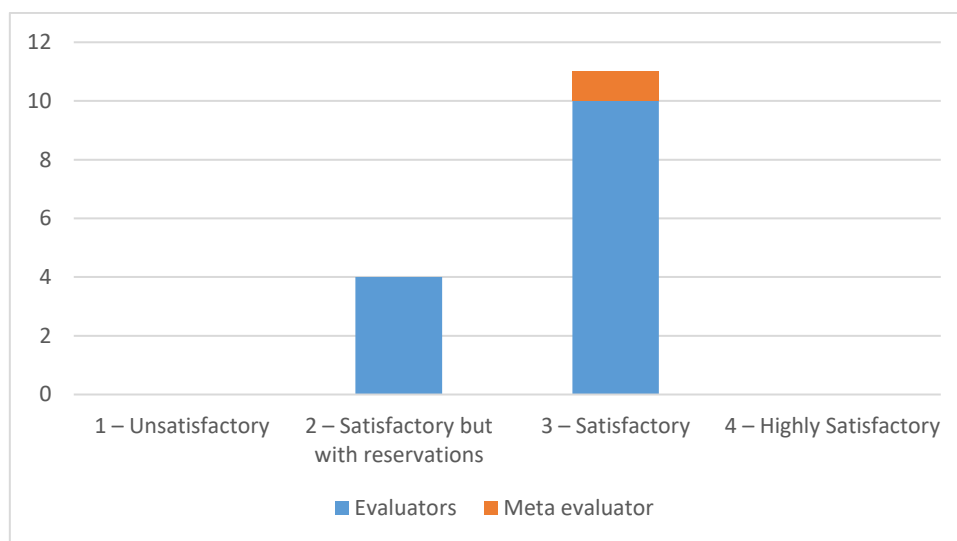
Figure 6: Assessment of Coverage

Overall, Concern's emergency responses are considered satisfactory in terms of coverage, but with room for improvement around beneficiary targeting criteria.

The majority of the projects evaluated are implemented in **areas that have high levels of vulnerability and a relatively low presence of other humanitarian actors**. Insecurity is a significant factor that needs to be taken into account when reviewing Concern's coverage. As highlighted in the meta-evaluation of the HPP programmes, Concern has been courageous in selecting areas of operations and has measures in place to help to ensure the security of its staff [34].

Concern's commitment to assisting those in greatest need in the **hardest to reach areas** has been acknowledged in the majority of the evaluations assessed against this criterion. Some examples include:

a) The humanitarian response in North-East Syria was lauded for its extensive coverage: the evaluator noted that Concern not only reached beneficiaries in its areas of operations, but chose to operate in areas in which few other NGOs were present [27].

b) Concern's emphasis on responding to those most in need and who were least well served by others was also highlighted in the evaluation of HPP programme in the DRC, where the

evaluators reported that the project reached remote areas not assisted by other humanitarian actors [30].

c) In Nepal, Concern targeted less well-served locations, leading to the decision not to work in Gorkha District, the epicentre of the earthquake, where the large numbers of NGOs were concentrated. The evaluator noted that the strategic approach to focus on less well-served locations allowed Concern more space to mount an effective response [17].

d) In the evaluation of the Syria/Iraq HPP programme, the evaluators noted that all of the Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) that Concern operated were in cities where there were very few protection partners. In those instances in which other protection NGOs were present, duplication was avoided through close and continuous coordination [22].

In line with its mandate and strategy, the evaluations that considered this criterion confirmed that Concern demonstrated its determination to **reach those most in need**; particular attention was given to the most vulnerable, including children, people with disabilities and women. For example, in South Sudan, the evaluation of the Integrated Emergency Multi-Sector Response for Conflict Affected Populations in Unity and Central Equatoria [1] found that the latrines constructed were child-friendly and designed to be accessible by people with limited mobility. In addition, solar lights were installed and distributed to deter protection incidents. In Somalia, women and children were identified as particularly vulnerable in the targeted IDP camps. This was reflected in the objectives of the HPP programme, through its focus on education, health services focusing on maternal and child health and for children under five, and in the reduced incidence of GBV [5]. Finally, when interviewed during the evaluation of the HPP programmes in South Sudan, women explained how the project made access to health services much easier for them [6].

4.3.1. Targeting

Concern's emergency responses have proven to be successful in targeting those most in need, and on focusing on areas that are least well served. In most of the projects in which selection was required, communities were involved in the targeting process. In the DRC HPP programme [30], the beneficiary selection process was found to be rigorous and participatory, carried out in an effective manner and using appropriate vulnerability criteria. The team used a standard tool, the NFI scorecard, which helped to reduce interference and subjectivity.

In a few cases, however, evaluators raised concerns around targeting, noting that some groups targeted through the responses may **not have always been those most in need** [34]. In evaluating the Irish Embassy funded project implemented as part of the Idai response [15], the evaluator reported some issues of exclusion mentioned during the community discussion and in the post-distribution monitoring, and concluded that the targeting process could be strengthened by adding vulnerability criteria related to the effect of the cyclone on food security and livelihoods.

More broadly, and while not specifically focusing on Concern, the evaluators of the DEC funded response to food insecurity in East Africa [3] warned DEC members against over-reliance on community leaders during the targeting process as, in some instances, they could unfairly influence beneficiary selection. In some countries, particularly in this region, influence was also attributed to clan, sub-clan and political influences brought to bear on community leaders. Where this is the case, a thorough context analysis can be key in deciding the best approach to use in beneficiaries selection.

In Malawi, when evaluating Concern's Idai Response [16], the evaluation's findings indicated that the response had included the most vulnerable, but also indicated **knowledge gaps** among some targeted communities on their entitlements and the targeting criteria. This problem was also noted during the evaluation of Concern's emergency response in Northern Syria [27], where the consultants recommended strengthening consultations with communities. The evaluators explained that some of the beneficiaries interviewed did not understand why they had been chosen for inclusion.

4.4. Efficiency

26 of the 34 evaluations (76% of the total) included detailed sections on efficiency. Amongst these, 17 (50%) scored them against this criterion. 13 considered the programme satisfactory, while 4 felt it was satisfactory, but with some (major) reservations. Wherever possible, the meta-evaluator has ascribed a score for those evaluations that used the criterion but did not score the evaluation against it. These scores are highlighted in a different colour in the graph below and confirms the trends highlighted by those scored by external evaluators. The meta-evaluator was not able to offer a score for ten of the evaluations:

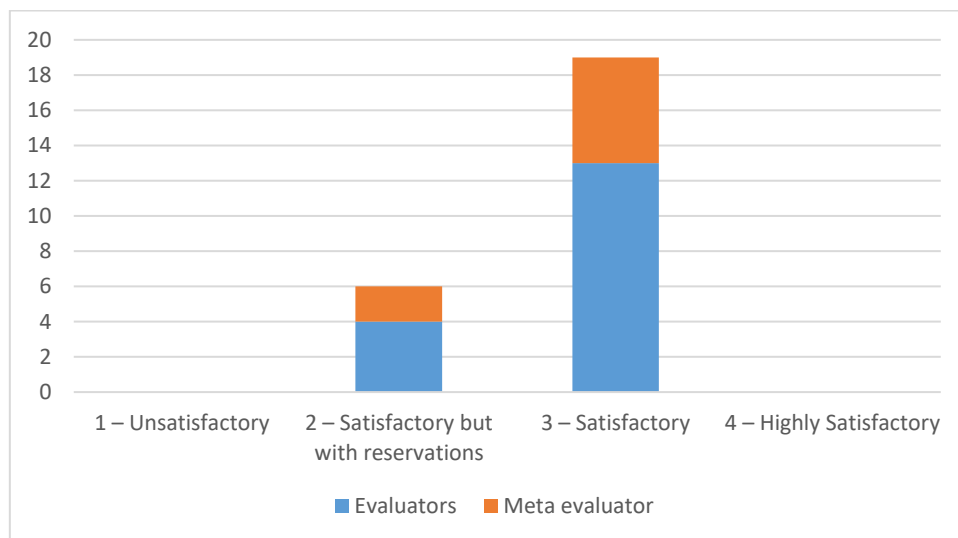*Figure 7: Assessment of Efficiency*

All 26 evaluations assessed against this criterion were reviewed to see how frequently certain issues were mentioned as challenges – the top four of these are presented in the graph below, many of which are a reflection of the challenging contexts in which we work. From this, it is apparent that staffing and budget management are the areas of greatest concern:
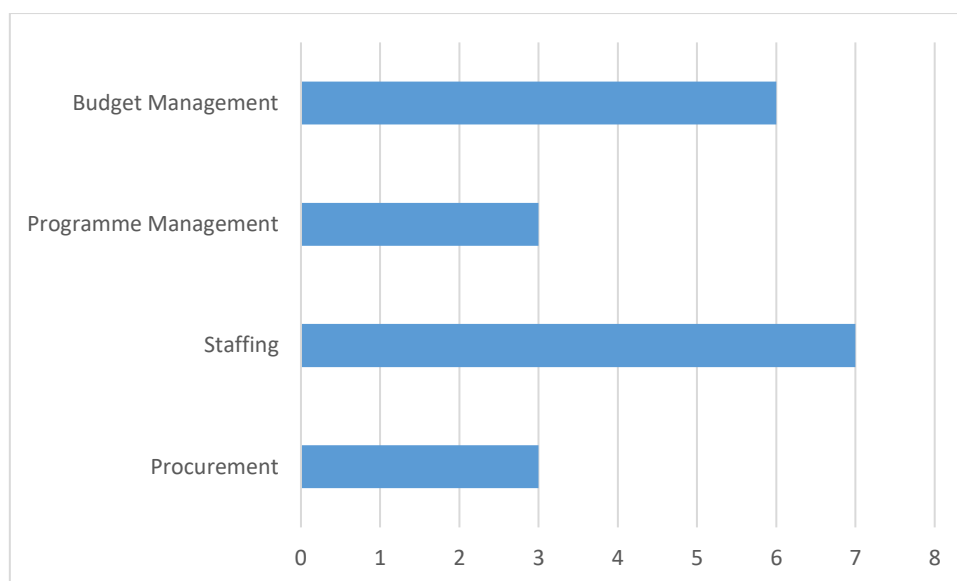
Figure 8: Most Frequently Mentioned challenges in terms of efficiency

4.4.1. Staffing

The biggest challenges around staff continue to be **turn-over** and **staffing gaps**. It is also important though to acknowledge the capacity of some country offices to address these issues. An example of this is South Sudan. In 2017, the evaluators assessing the Integrated Emergency Multi-Sector Response for Conflict Affected Populations in Unity and Central Equatoria States [1] noted a significant number of challenges around staffing. They highlighted how the cost of employing expatriates could only be justified if high capacity personnel were recruited, but noted that this was not always easy – a challenge that, in some cases, lead to programme inefficiencies due to gaps between staff departures and the arrival of new personnel. The evaluators noted that the workload of team members was considerable, and partly due to inefficiencies in the structure that may not fully serve the needs of management in terms of resources, processes and capacities. However, in 2018, the evaluator assessing the HPP programme [6], found that a review of the team organogram and staffing needs had led to a restructuring process involving a number of redundancies, the review of job descriptions, a reduction of management layers, the nationalisation of some positions, and a re-recruitment process. Although challenging, particularly with the necessary consideration of ethnic dynamics, this restructuring was carefully and well managed. The evaluators recognised that this was a sign of sound management based on lessons that had been learned, and the more efficient deployment of human resources.

Other challenges related to staffing were due to difficulties in **hiring staff to be deployed to hardship areas**. This was the case in Gambella [4], where the Ethiopia team experienced challenges in recruiting and retaining experienced staff, particularly in the areas of logistics and finance. This was an issue that affected other agencies, and the evaluation noted that agencies such as ACF and WFP also experienced the same challenges. Similar challenges were noted in Afghanistan [19]. In the evaluation of the emergency response to the earthquake in Nepal [17], the evaluators noted that high staff turnover is quite common in the first phase of emergency responses. However, it is important to secure adequate staff in SMT positions to avoid gaps in decision-making and leadership as these have a negative effect on the overall team's morale and performance and, consequently, on the impact of the programme.

A very positive note shared in a number of evaluations is the praise **for the dedication and commitment of Concern staff**, especially national staff. In the DRC [30], evaluators of the HPP programme noted that the staff who were interviewed proved to have strong commitment and capacities. They found that national staff covered key positions, providing a significant contribution in terms of knowledge, understanding of the context, and community acceptance. The evaluation also noted that many of the staff they met during the evaluation had worked for Concern for over five years, a long period considering the high turnover of staff working for NGOs in North Kivu.

4.4.2. Budget and Project Management

On the programme side, one of the challenges highlighted was the absence or limited use of **programme management toolkits**[25]. In Ethiopia, the evaluators of the HPP programme [4] explained that measuring the efficiency of the programme proved difficult for this reason. The report emphasised that the programme would benefit from stronger programme management tools such as the programme toolkit. In Afghanistan, the evaluators of the HPP programme [19] felt that there was room to strengthen the planning and budgeting processes to ensure that budgeting is accurately linked to project work plans and outcomes.

Issues of effective project management were also found in relation to **expenditure allocation**. The evaluation of the HPP programme in South Sudan [6] highlighted that the transparency of budgeting and expenditure allocations within the co-funded programming portfolio could be improved. It noted that unclear budget allocations across the co-funded programme resulted in the HPP response having to absorb a disproportionate share of support and capital costs. The evaluators also raised concerns around the area-based budget management system, an approach that was posing challenges to accurate and accountable reporting and expenditure allocations.

4.4.3. Procurement and Logistics

Logistics and procurement systems were found to be strong in the majority of the evaluations assessed. Some delays were reported, but in most cases these were mainly due to external factors linked to the difficult operational environments in which Concern works. When a high number of waivers was submitted, this was always considered appropriate in relation to the context. In South Sudan, the logistics and procurement systems were considered strong by the evaluators of the HPP programmes [6] who also noted good coordination between Juba and the field offices. However, the subsequent evaluation of the OFDA-funded Multi-sectoral Emergency Response [8] highlighted issues in relation to procurement, leading to delays in terms of both costs and the availability of goods. This, however, has also to be considered in relation to the operational context and external factors influencing the procurement process in the country.

4.4.4. Cost effectiveness

The majority of the projects were considered to be cost-effective. In Somalia, the evaluator found the HPP programme [5] to be very cost-effective, and noted that, in 2017, almost 80% of the funds were directly allocated to the beneficiaries in the form of unconditional cash transfers and vouchers.

---

[25] The purpose of the Programme Toolkit (PT) is to provide country programmes with the tools needed for effective programme planning, management, monitoring and reporting, while simultaneously meeting HQ and reporting requirements. The PT is aligned to the programme quality guide, which is available at http://Concern365.net. It was developed by a joint IPD and SAL working group with input from Finance, Logistics and several country teams. The latest version of the PT can be found here.

Similarly, in South Sudan, the evaluators confirmed that the programme reflected positively in this regard and that there was evidence of sound management decision-making in relation to the most efficient and effective use of resources [6], although this seems to be inconsistent with the weaknesses identified in the same evaluation around expenditure allocation.

4.5. Effectiveness

Of the 34 evaluations reviewed, 30 (88%) considered the question of effectiveness; but of these, only in 17 (50%) did the evaluators ascribed a 'score'. Of these, 11 were considered satisfactory, 2 highly satisfactory and 4 as satisfactory but with some (major) reservations. To provide a more comprehensive analysis of the evaluations under this criterion, whenever possible, the meta-evaluator ascribed a score for those evaluations that used the criterion but did not score the evaluation against it. These scores are highlighted in a different colour in the graph below. The meta-evaluator was not able to offer a score for eight of the evaluations:
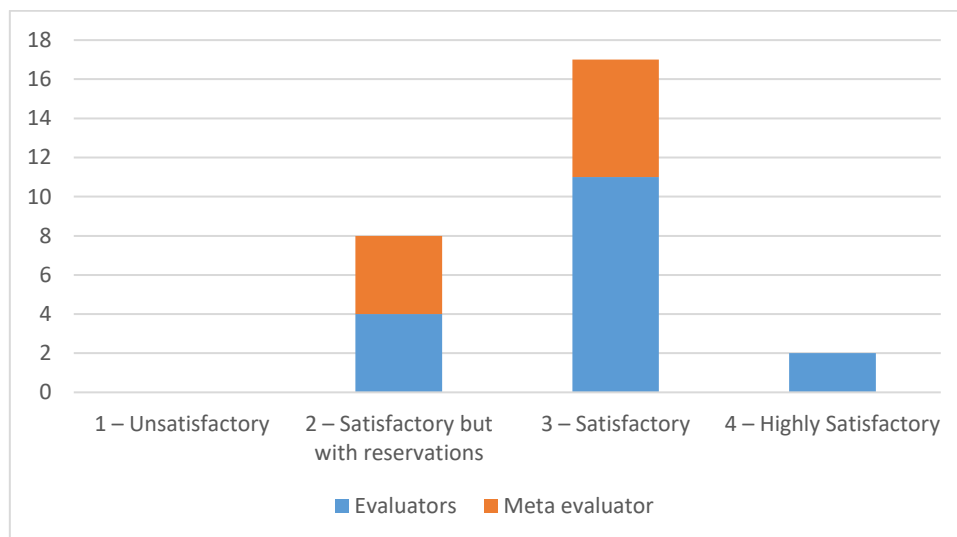
Figure 9: Assessment of Effectiveness

Overall, the majority of the programmes evaluated were deemed to be **effective in reaching their targets**. The following examples are illustrative of this:

a) During the Idai response in Malawi, the evaluators found that the purpose of the response [16] was achieved, with beneficiaries supported with food and non-food items; and livelihoods support through cash transfers and agricultural inputs. Through the agricultural input support, where various seeds and other inputs were provided to farming households, results indicate that at the time of the evaluation beneficiaries had been able to harvest food and sell part of the proceeds. In Mangani, Nsanje, farmers reported having harvested more than three bags of maize, vegetables and sweet potatoes.

b) Similar feedback was provided by the evaluators of the emergency response to the earthquake in Nepal in 2017 [17]. The evaluators found the response to have been largely effective. They praised the choice of distributed materials rather than cash as being more in

line with beneficiaries' needs in the aftermath of the disaster. The distribution process was found to be effective and was appreciated by officials and communities alike.

c) In the DRC, the evaluators of the HPP programme [30] concluded that the effectiveness of the programme was highly satisfactory: outcomes had been fully achieved to the great satisfaction of beneficiaries, particularly women.

d) When evaluating the ECHO funded emergency response in North-East Syria [23], the evaluators noted, in assessing effectiveness, the positive responses given by beneficiaries in terms of the changes they have seen in their own lives as a result of the intervention.

In some cases, **information from assessments and monitoring and evaluation activities** was used to make adjustments to the programme. This is very important considering the volatile nature of emergency contexts, particularly in protracted crises, but also in the aftermath of a natural disaster where information from rapid assessments is constantly reviewed and updated. In Lebanon, consultations with the target population resulted in adjustments being made to the HPP programme [21]. In Afghanistan, the project was redirected to respond to the national declaration of a drought through the construction of four water sources for the affected communities. During the evaluation, Concern staff noted a key benefit of HPP funding was that it gave the project the flexibility to respond to emergency needs with a predictable level of funding as these needs arose. When evaluating the ECHO programme in North-East Syria [23], the evaluators praised the team's flexibility and their ability to adjust the programme as needed. They noted that changes were made when necessary, based on good analysis of existing information from the programme's own monitoring system and a sensible analysis of available external data.

In terms of achievements against the planned output and outcomes, some evaluations were undertaken before the programme had been completed, and so the attainment of the intended **outcomes** could not be confirmed. In the Ethiopia HPP programme [4], three of eight intended outcome indicators were reported to be off track, while in Afghanistan [19], different versions of the Results Framework were being used, leading to difficulties in assessing the performance against the indicators.

In contrast, when evaluating the ECHO-funded protection project in Turkey [26], objectives and expected results were met and most of the planned targets were reached or about to be reached at the time of the evaluation. Interestingly, despite all of the beneficiaries who were interviewed stating that they were grateful for the assistance received by Concern in terms of protection support, they did **not feel that their main needs were met sufficiently** or sustainably, particularly when it came to livelihood generation, assistance with resettlement and emigration and education.

Some of the challenges faced in relation to the effectiveness of Concern's responses are mainly related to **programme design**. In the implementation of the DIRECT cash transfer programme in Zambia [10], the evaluators noted a significant problem in the disbursement of cash through mobile phones, especially in the rural community, which has very poor telecommunication infrastructure. During the implementation of Concern's Emergency Program in Tanganyika and Haut-Lomami in the DRC [29], Concern built latrines in some of the targeted communities with the intention that these would serve as "demonstration latrines" to allow IDPs in the community to build their own on the basis of this model. However, an important issue faced in this phase of the programme was that in this region of the DRC, the soil is sandy and the latrines built by the residents often did not last more than two months. These issues are related to specific activities of some of the responses rather than to the

programme in its entirety, and can easily be addressed through lesson to be learned exercises and programme adaptations.

4.5.1. Timeliness

In general, the evaluators found Concern's emergency responses to be **timely**. During the evaluation of the Idai response in Malawi [16], beneficiaries interviewed reported that the food basket support received was timely, especially as it was delivered during the critical phase of the emergency when the affected population had no food to rely on. The participants of the FGDs conducted in the evaluations of the HPP programmes [34], reported that they were happy with the timeliness of the interventions. In the DRC, recipients felt that they had received timely assistance from Concern teams. Similarly, the evaluators of Concern's humanitarian response in Syria [27], found Concern's response to displacement to have been rapid and timely.

4.5.2. Coordination

Concern has consistently put significant efforts into coordinating with relevant clusters and partners, as well as with local authorities. This effort has been consistently recognised across the countries in which Concern has an established presence and has strengthened its influence. During the evaluation of the HPP programme in Ethiopia [4], the evaluators reported that Concern was highly respected by UNHCR and therefore in a position to influence policy and strategy for the camps. The evaluators of the Nepal emergency response [17] made a similar comment. They observed that it was initially very difficult for NGOs to negotiate for space through the coordination mechanism that the government was leading, and that many organisations had cited coordination as their biggest challenge. However, Concern put significant efforts into trying to contribute with the coordination process and, over time, was able to guide and influence the approach and decisions made by the District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRC) and the cluster groups.

In South Sudan [1], Concern is the host of the NGO Forum, which ensures not only good networking and information sharing with other partners in country, but also allows Concern to have a high level of influence on policies, guidelines and coordination across the international humanitarian response in South Sudan. In Juba, Concern has also been a key player on the NGO steering committee of the forum and has represented the humanitarian sector on the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).

During the Idai responses in Malawi and Mozambique [12 and 15], Concern was able to effectively coordinate within the cluster system and with other NGO partners on the ground. During the evaluation of the DEC response in Malawi [12], the evaluator confirmed that all DEC members participated in coordination meetings, and also informally shared information to prevent their interventions overlapping in the same district or camps. This resulted in their activities being complementary and created bilateral synergies. In Mozambique [15], the Alliance2015 partners worked in coordination with the clusters to avoid duplication and maximize efforts to share information, tools and approaches.

These positive ways of working were also confirmed by teams' engagement with the **donors**. For example, in Turkey [26], the implementation team regularly communicated with the donor in relation to project implementation, context updates, and the challenges faced by Concern or its partners. The feedback received by the evaluators from ECHO's Technical Assistant was very positive in relation to this. Concern was considered by ECHO to be one of their strongest implementing partners.

4.6. Impact

Of the 34 evaluations reviewed, 25 (74%) considered the question of impact. Of these, only in 15 reports (47%) did the evaluators ascribe a 'score' to it. Of these, 10 scored as satisfactory, 4 as satisfactory, but with some (major) reservations, and 1 as highly satisfactory. To provide a more comprehensive analysis of the evaluations under this criterion, whenever possible the meta-evaluator ascribed a score for those evaluations that used the criterion but did not score the evaluation against it. These scores are highlighted in a different colour in the graph below. The meta-evaluator was not able to offer a score for eleven of the evaluations:
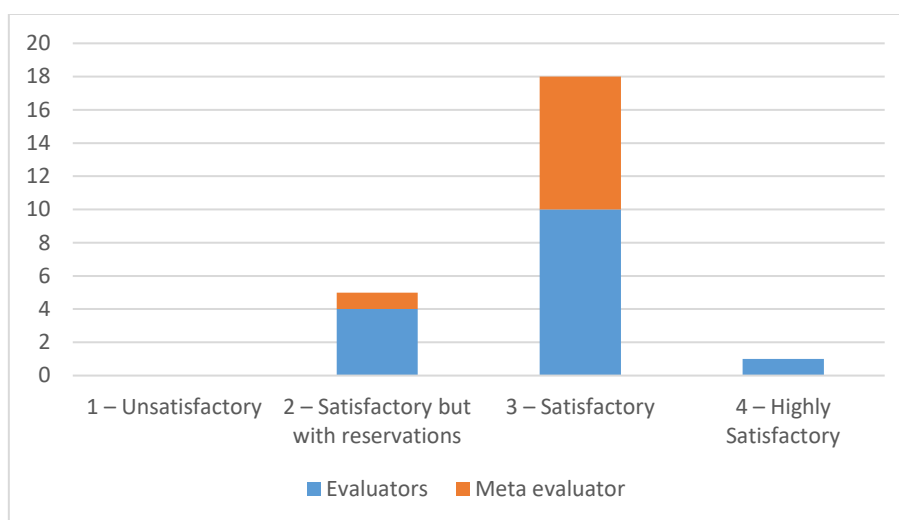
Figure 10: Assessment of Impact

Although it is difficult to draw firm conclusions on longer-term impacts and wider effects due to the emergency response nature of programmes under review, the majority of the evaluations reported the responses to have had a **positive impact on beneficiaries**. Some examples of this include:

a) The evaluation of the Food Security Thematic Program in Northern Bahr-El-Ghazal [2] reported that the project had a positive impact on beneficiaries' food and income status, while the cash for work intervention improved household purchasing power during the lean season - a time when inflation had severely affected food access.

b) The evaluation of the Integrated Emergency Humanitarian Response to the Rohingya Population in Cox's Bazar [18] reported that despite the short duration of the programme, the substantial impact of the nutrition component was visible with different mothers' support groups functioning well and the dietary requirements of children under 5 being monitored. Groups were aware of essential topics on nutrition such as balanced diet, care required by young babies, care needed by lactating mothers and pregnant women, etc.

c) In Mozambique, in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai, the beneficiaries of the Irish Embassy funded project [15] reported being very satisfied with the assistance they had received. They also added that the voucher programme helped them to recover from the devastating impact of the cyclone. This project co-funded a wider ECHO intervention and its integrated design amplified its impact. Beneficiaries identified the hygiene and environmental improvements in their communities achieved through the promotion of waste collection and hygiene kit distributions.

d) In the DRC, the evaluator of the HPP programme [30] reported that despite the emergency nature of the intervention, some roads were improved and rehabilitated, allowing people to more easily move and access local primary services. In addition, most of the families supported through the programme declared that they were still using the NFIs distributed by Concern.

Concern's **advocacy work** was reported on in a number of evaluations. In CAR [32], the HPP evaluators noted that Concern utilised advocacy efforts to invite health actors to intervene in Kouango, resulting in Caritas and COHEB starting interventions in these areas. In Turkey [26], the active role Concern played in local advocacy through its ECHO project was noted. The fact that local government's protection practitioners increasingly approached Concern and its partners' to learn and get support was recognised as a sign of great quality and appreciation. In South Sudan [6], representation and leadership on the Humanitarian Country Team, Nutrition Cluster and NGO Forum were considered by the HPP evaluators as very positive indications of higher-level influence on policies, guidelines and coordination for prioritised interventions to improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable people.

A number of projects implementing cash programming were seen to have boosted **economic empowerment** in the communities in which the projects were being implemented. In Malawi, the evaluators felt that the Idai response [16] demonstrated that provision of unconditional cash transfers during the emergency response gave the beneficiaries economic power to buy farm inputs to revive their livelihoods, repair their damaged houses and buy basic needs including food. In Zambia [10], the injection of cash in markets that were on the verge of collapse benefited not only local business people, but also the whole population in the three districts, which, as a result of the project, could rely on their market structures to access an array of food and non-food commodities at competitive prices. In CAR [32], an unintended positive effect of the intervention mentioned by Concern programme staff was that project activities were driving 80% of local economy in Kouango. It was evident that since Concern had arrived in the town a lot of new businesses had been built, with new shops opening and new items becoming available.

Only a limited number of unintended impacts were identified in the evaluations reviewed. However, the issue of **aid dependency** was highlighted in a number of evaluations. While this is mostly linked to the contexts in which Concern operates, it is important to highlight the need to challenge long standing reliance on aid wherever this is possible. In Ethiopia, for example, the evaluators of the HPP response [4] explained that Concern had been implementing a CMAM intervention in Pugnido since 2015. During the project, Concern agreed to manage two additional stabilisation centres on behalf of the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). The evaluators suggested that Concern could have encouraged alternative means of supporting and improving ARRA's management of stabilisation centres rather than taking on this task. In a context such as South Sudan, where aid dependency is embedded in the overall nature of the crisis, the evaluators of the HPP programmes [5] praised Concern's programme for making efforts to support local ownership and accountability. However, they also noted that there was evidence of long-term aid dependency that needed to be further investigated and addressed. For example, it was suggested that some women might be keeping children just under the threshold for SAM or MAM treatment so that they could access general food distributions and health services (whether delivered by Concern, the Ministry of Health, or other agencies), but this was not substantiated.

One of the positive impacts that was highlighted in some evaluations, was that some beneficiaries had access to employment opportunities as a result of the projects in which they participated. The **increase in the level of employment among beneficiaries** supported through Concern's programmes was highlighted in the evaluation of the programme in North-East Syria [22] which noted how one of the activities conducted as part of the programme was intended to create much needed employment for the local population. When interviewed, both local authorities and community members agreed that this represented a valuable opportunity for poor and vulnerable households to earn an income, enabling them to contribute to the local economy and markets. During the evaluation of the OFDA-funded Multi-sectoral Emergency Response in South Sudan [8], the evaluators noted that a significant number of Concern national staff had been hired under this programme, and that many of the staff working in the protection of civilian camps (PoCs) in Juba and Bentiu were also beneficiaries of Concern's programmes. Beyond the income they were earning for themselves and their families, they were also gaining valuable knowledge and skills.

4.7. Connectedness and Sustainability

Consistent with the extended DAC principles, the Approach to Emergencies paper and the Evaluating Concern's Emergency Responses guidelines recommended the use of broader criterion of connectedness rather than sustainability. However, the evaluations reviewed present a mix of the two; 25 evaluations were assessed against the criterion of connectedness/sustainability and, of these, 15 used the extended DAC criterion of connectedness, and ten were assessed against sustainability. The remaining ten evaluations did not consider either criterion.

While sustainability was included as a criterion in the original OECD DAC guidance on evaluating humanitarian assistance, the extended DAC criteria suggest that this is better considered under connectedness, which also refers to the need to ensure that emergency responses consider longer-term development issues and approaches.

As shown in the two graphs below, of the 15 evaluations that used connectedness, 13 assigned a score. Of these, 4 scored Satisfactory with some (major) reservations, 8 scored Satisfactory, and 1 Highly Satisfactory. It is worth noting that of the 15 that used connectedness, 12 were conducted by Concern staff.
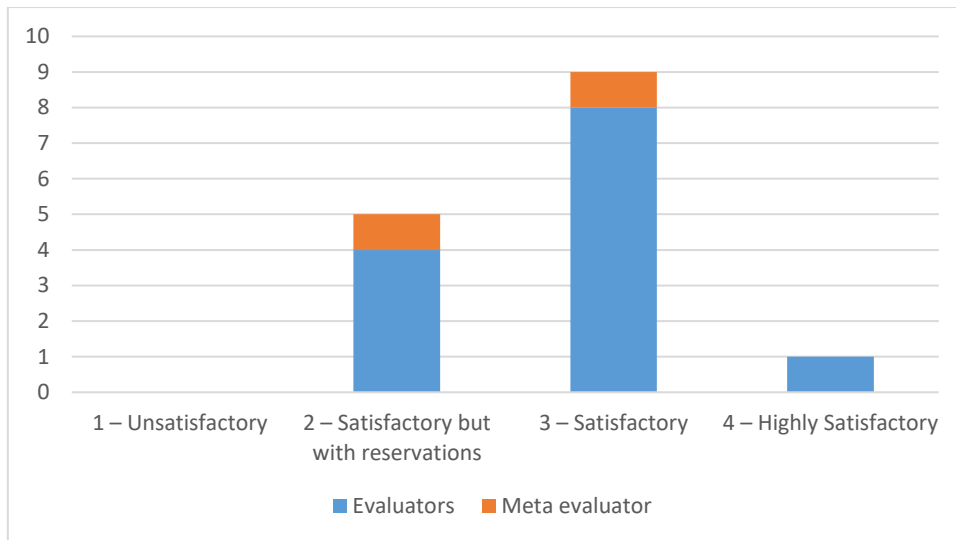
Figure 11: Assessment of Connectedness

Of the ten evaluations that used sustainability, only two ascribed a score to it: 1 scored Satisfactory with some (major) reservation and 1 scored Satisfactory.

As with the other criteria, the meta-evaluator used the information provided in the reports reviewed to propose a score for those evaluations that did not have one. This is captured in a different colour in the graphs above and below:
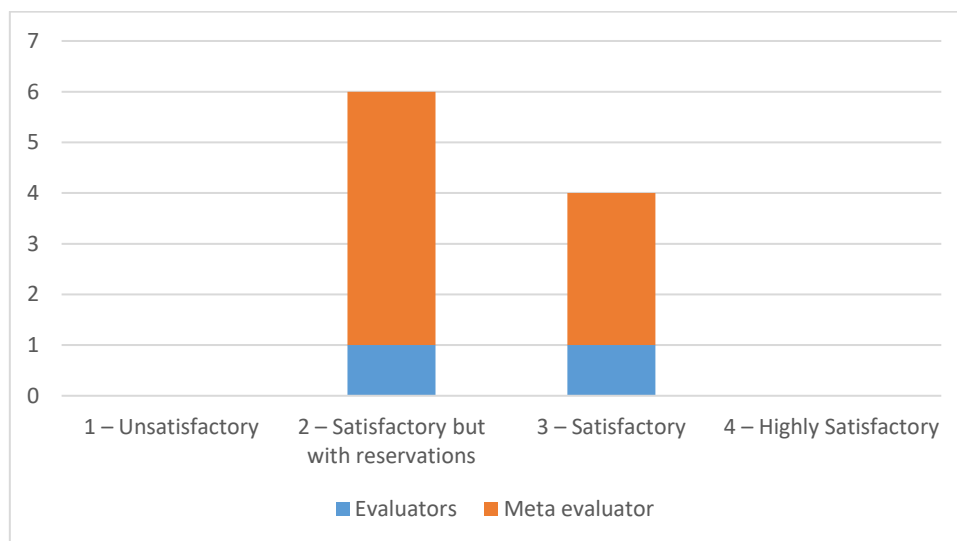
Figure 12: Assessment of Sustainability

When reviewing responses against the **sustainability criterion**, which considers the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time[26], it is important to keep in mind that many of the countries in which Concern implements humanitarian programmes are facing a total or large-scale breakdown of authority, largely due to internal and/or external conflicts. These emergencies tend to be protracted in nature. This may be one of the reasons why evaluations assessed against this criterion raised more reservations. This criterion is the one that scored lowest across all of the criteria. The evaluator of the

---

[26] https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf

Integrated Emergency Multi-Sector Response for the Conflict Affected Populations of Unity and Central Equatoria in South Sudan [1], explained that the sustainability of a programme in South Sudan is dependent on a durable solution to the crisis being negotiated at national, regional and international levels. None of the informants interviewed during this evaluation believed that this could be achieved nationally.

A similar conclusion was also reached by the evaluator of the DEC response in Yemen [25], implemented by Concern through its Alliance2015 partner ACTED. The evaluators explained that due to the volatile context in the targeted areas, and the humanitarian crisis faced by the country in general, no viable exit strategy was possible. The main challenge remained the worsening humanitarian context, which affected the capacity of organisations to shift into and promote early recovery activities.

In terms of **connectedness**, the overall analysis changes, and the assessments lean towards the majority of the evaluations being considered Satisfactory.

When evaluating the ECHO funded emergency response in North-East Syria [23], the evaluators reported a number of examples of the **introduction of medium-term thinking**, such as the rehabilitation of water systems as opposed to water trucking, and the provision of food and NFI vouchers as opposed to focussing on the delivery of goods in-kind. In Afghanistan, the evaluator of the HPP response [19] reported that long-term problems were given satisfactory consideration, as the design of the programme was predominantly focussed on DRR and emergency prevention, activities which are long-term in nature. Fundamental to this, the **nature of the HPP funding** allows long-term planning while maintaining flexibility for responses to be adapted to changing needs.

The Idai response in Mozambique and Malawi proposed a different scenario, as the response to this large scale natural disaster was implemented in countries in which Concern or its partners were implementing long-term programmes in coordination with the local government. In Mozambique [15], the lead Alliance2015 partner, Cesvi, was already implementing long-term programmes in some of the most affected by the cyclone and had good relationships with the local communities. In this case, Concern and the Alliance2015 members designed their response activities in coordination with the Institute of National Disaster Management (INGC), the humanitarian fora, various clusters and working groups, and in collaboration with the local authorities in Sofala and Nahmatanda districts. The design of the emergency response widely benefited from the established presence of Cesvi in the area, which allowed rapid coordination with different actors, including local authorities and other NGOs. During the Idai response in Malawi [16], Concern's **early recovery** livelihoods intervention in the form of short-cycle crop varieties was informed by consultations with beneficiaries and stakeholders, demonstrating how the response was informed by existing approaches and key relationships with the local communities.

Some of the reservations and recommendations are around **long-term crises**, such as the refugee crisis in Gambella [4], where a large number of refugees have been living in a camp for more than 20 years. The evaluators lauded the synergy between Concern Ethiopia's emergency and development programmes through the sharing of an international nutrition adviser, the secondment of staff, and the use of development approaches such as Mother-to-Mother Support Groups and back yard gardens. However, they found that this could be further strengthened by considering other options to gradually move away from direct implementation. A similar recommendation was provided by the

evaluators of the HPP programme in DRC [30], where an increased level of synergy between the humanitarian and development programmes was encouraged. They noted that as Concern DRC was in the fortunate position of having both an emergency coordinator and a PD, the programme should ensure that both humanitarian and post recovery/development actions received attention and technical support.

4.8. Cross-cutting issues

Evaluations of Concern's emergency responses should include separate sections on the following **cross-cutting issues and themes**: equality; protection; HIV and AIDS; partnership; and disaster risk reduction (DRR). This is outlined in the Evaluating Concern's Emergency Response guidelines, and explained in the ALNAP guide to the use of the extended DAC criteria[27], which adds that not every evaluation needs to include every cross-cutting theme, but if any are to be left out, there should be a clear rationale for doing so. When reviewing the 34 evaluations of emergency responses, only 9 evaluations (27% of the total) covered cross-cutting issues in separate sections:
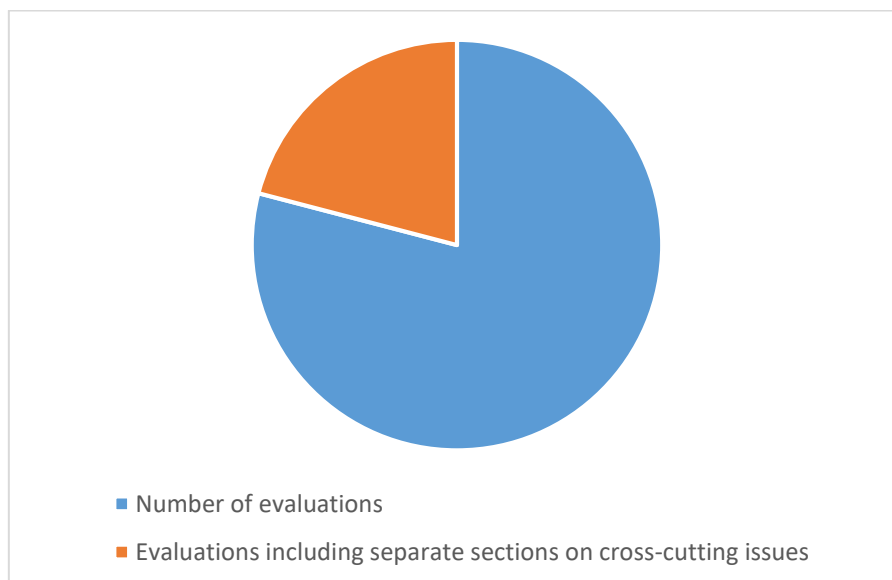
Figure 13: Cross-cutting issues in evaluations reviewed

4.8.1. Protection

When looking at protection as a cross-cutting issue, we need to look at the capacity of the organisation to mainstream protection throughout its programmes. In other words, the extent to which the organisation has considered and included protection issues in the contextual analysis and design of all consequent programmes.

Given that protection, as a cross-cutting issue, was only analysed by a quarter of the evaluations reviewed, it is difficult to determine the extent to which it is integrated in the design of Concern's emergency responses. In those evaluations that reported against it, however, the comments of the evaluators are generally positive. There seems, for example, to be a **good integration of protection**

---

[27] See page 20: https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/eha-2006.pdf

principles in the WASH components of emergency responses. In evaluating the Integrated Emergency Multi-Sector Response for Conflict Affected Populations in Unity and Central Equatoria States in South Sudan [1], beneficiaries reported solar lighting installed in the latrines was of particular benefit to women and girls. In North-East Syria, [23 and 24], the evaluators noted that latrines were adapted to be more acceptable for women and accessible for people with disabilities, which showed a willingness on the part of the Concern programme team to learn and adapt. Modifications included privacy walls for women's latrines with a wash basin inside the wall, the use of solar lights, and the installation of hand-rails and seats for the elderly and people with disabilities.

When conducting NFI distributions or cash-based interventions (CBIs), the evaluators noted that particular attention was given to **vulnerable individuals**. In Malawi [16], the evaluators explained that as a way of ensuring the safety of beneficiaries, assistance was distributed sufficiently early to allow people to travel back during the day, especially in areas where accessibility was a challenge. Whether there was anybody with a disability living in the household was a key consideration in the needs assessment for voucher assistance in North-East Syria [24]. In the DRC, the protection and gender supervisor told evaluators that they had been involved in all NFI distributions to ensure that the process did not cause any harm and that the team was facilitating the access of the most vulnerable during the implementation of the HPP programme [30].

The majority of the evaluations stressed the importance of **training staff on protection principles**. In Malawi [16], the evaluator of the Idai response noted that Concern programme staff, including short-term enumerators hired during the response, were trained on issues of safeguarding and protection. However, the evaluators of the HPP programme in Afghanistan [19] noted that Concern Afghanistan could do more training with staff on protection and how to uphold its principles through programming.

Overall, the **principles of protection** have been incorporated in the majority of the programmes analysed against this cross-cutting issue. In Afghanistan, the evaluators [19] found the principles of protection were considered in the design and implementation of the HPP programmes, including both beneficiaries and staff. In Afghanistan, the team was also commended for their availability to support UNHCR in protection assessments in the IDP camps. In North-East Syria, the evaluators [27] noted that protection was well integrated into the design of the multi-sectorial intervention. They explained that Concern was increasingly integrating Psychosocial Support (PSS) into the education programme, and that in the new education proposal, PSS was increasingly incorporated into the work with formal schools. Other activities also considered how protection would be incorporated - e.g. the inclusion of PSS training within the Technical and Vocational Education and Training activities, strengthening protection activities in the design of WASH facilities, and increasing training of staff on GBV and other protection issues.

4.8.2. Equality
As with protection, it is difficult to have a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which equality is integrated into Concern's programming as very few evaluations considered this issue. In those that did, the comments were generally positive, although there remains room for improvement.

Some evaluators noted that, when considering gender, it is important to understand **the role that men have** in communities, and to engage them in behaviour change activities when possible. In South Sudan, in evaluating the UNICEF funded programmes [7], the evaluators noted that the project was informed by the role of men in the communities it targeted. Men were targeted in behaviour change

interventions through messaging and sensitisation during community gatherings. From the interviews and discussions with some of the evaluation participants, it emerged that the involvement of men in Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) sensitisation was important in promoting acceptability of behaviour change interventions in the community. In the evaluation of the OFDA-funded Multi-sectoral Emergency Response for Conflict-Affected and Food Insecure Populations in South Sudan [8], the evaluators noted that the involvement of men should have been better articulated, and their involvement increased.

In terms of **NFI assistance**, in the DRC, the evaluators of the HPP programme [30] noted that NFIs were adapted to women and girls and included washbasins and sanitary pads. They added that despite the fact that the *Internal Gender Analysis* report[28] mentioned that sanitary pads were not the locally preferred method of managing menstrual hygiene, all women interviewed who received the distribution were very happy about modern sanitary pads and expressed a preference for these over the traditionally made piece of "*pagne"*. The assessment of the NFI intervention was different in the evaluation of the emergency response in North-East Syria [23], where programme participants raised an issue in relation to the quantity of the sanitary pads provided and the lack of underwear for girls. Concern followed the guidelines provided by the cluster, but these were considered inadequate by the evaluators, who recommended addressing this internally and raising this issue at cluster level.

In the DRC, the evaluators of the HPP programme [30] greatly appreciated the involvement of women in the same cash for work (CFW) activities as men. When women were asked if they would be able and willing to work on the roads, they happily accepted. The women interviewed were consistently pleased with the opportunity to be involved in the programme and to earn an income, and reported no adverse experiences.

It is not always easy to achieve a **gender balance among Concern staff**, but evaluators recognised and praised the efforts Concern was making to address this issue across its programmes. In South Sudan, the evaluators of the OFDA-funded Multi-sectoral Emergency Response for Conflict-Affected and Food Insecure Populations [8] appreciated the efforts that were made in this regard, adding that this did not go unseen by the programme participants who, during the focus group discussions, explained that it was nice to be able to speak to a woman. In Afghanistan [19], Concern established a Gender Working Group that included field-based systems and programme staff. In addition, the country programme also rolled-out gender training and developed a Staff Gender Attitudes and Behaviours Survey. A total of 172 Concern Afghanistan staff participated from every level of Concern's eight offices. At the time of the evaluation, Concern Afghanistan was also engaging with an external consultant to develop a gender strategy which included the development of a training of trainers' manual for religious leaders. In North-East Syria [23], the evaluators noted that Concern had made progress in terms of recruiting a more gender-balanced team, as the disaggregated staff figures showed considerable change between 2017 and 2018.

4.8.3. HIV and AIDS
There was very limited reference to HIV and AIDS in the evaluations reviewed. When including it as a cross-cutting issue, a number of evaluators noted that Concern does not integrate HIV and AIDS into its programming [1]. Similarly, no evidence of a consideration of issues of HIV and AIDS was seen in either the programme design, implementation or monitoring in the emergency response in North-East

---

[28] Noelle Rancourt, Internal Gender Analysis report, DRC, Dec. 2017

Syria [23 and 24] – although it is important to add that available data would suggest it is not a priority in this country [27].

When evaluating the Integrated Emergency Humanitarian Response to the Rohingya Population in Cox's Bazar [18], implemented through a consortium of NGOs, the evaluators noted that the health programme did not have any awareness-raising activities around HIV and AIDS. They recommended that this should be addressed given that, in a camp situation, it is essential that the camp population is aware of HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

In Ethiopia, the evaluators of the HPP programme [4] noted that, overall, the programme was reported to have reached the most vulnerable, including malnourished other cases (MOCs) from the host community living with HIV. MOCs in host communities who are HIV-positive are referred to nutrition sites for nutritional support.

4.8.4 Partnership

The experience in Concern's operational countries in the last few years has resulted in the organisation finding a decreasing number of credible local partners to work with. Only 30% of the emergency responses reviewed for this meta-evaluation were delivered through local or national partners. Moreover, Concern's expenditure dedicated to partnership in emergencies has dropped from 13% of Concern's emergency budget in 2015 to 5% in 2019[29]. Those evaluations that considered our work with local partners suggested that the partners' major challenges are in relation to inadequate financial and human resource systems and policies.
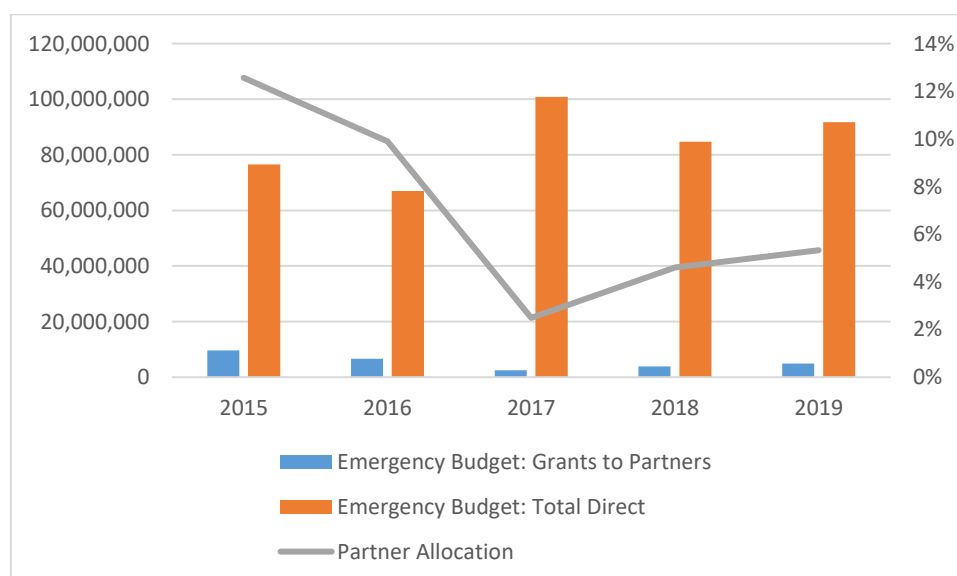
Figure 14: Emergency Budget Partners Allocation

In **Syria**, the evaluation of the HPP programme [22], recognised that the localisation priority was balanced by the reality that **identifying national partners had proven to be challenging**, adding that, in some instances, direct implementation remained the only viable option. At the time of the evaluation in 2018, some local actors were present, however, they were all new and had limited capacity, especially in terms of protection – a key element of the programme. To make the situation

---

[29] This includes both national and international partners. Financial data are available in Concern Annual Reports: https://www.concern.net/accountability/annual-reports

even more challenging, two organisations that could have had potential for partnership were much sought after as partners by other international NGOs and appeared to lack the capacity to manage the demands of having many different partners/donor organisations or projects.

Somalia is an example of a country where partnership has undoubtedly represented **an added value**. The evaluators of the HPP programme in Somalia [5] noted that partnerships with the two local NGOs, Youth Link in Mogadishu and GREDO in Baidoa, proved highly valuable. Both local partners delivered many of the services funded by the HPP, keeping Concern's staffing and administrative costs down, but also reaching some beneficiaries (especially in Baidoa) whom Concern would not otherwise have been able to reach. Youth Link delivered most of the educational services through the Emergency Education Centres in Mogadishu, while GREDO provided support to all project interventions in Baidoa.

In **South Sudan**, Concern has been working with the **local NGO Nile Hope** in a number of projects. Two evaluations reviewed and assessed this partnership. The first was conducted in 2017 to evaluate the Integrated Emergency Multi-Sector Response for Conflict Affected Populations in Unity and Central Equatoria States [1]. At the time of the report, Concern had been working with Nile Hope for over two years and, during this time, had invested in support and capacity building. However, the performance of the partner was not satisfactory. However, in 2019, the evaluator of the OFDA-funded Multi-sectoral Emergency Response for Conflict-Affected and Food Insecure Populations in South Sudan [8] confirmed that Nile Hope remained a critical partner for Concern as the LNGO provided life-saving services in areas where other NGOs would struggle to operate. Concern had assigned one person to support Nile Hope technically, but the evaluator found that Nile Hope's administrative systems were still very weak and recommended that Concern should invest more to help the local NGO strengthen these.

Many evaluators stressed the importance of focusing on **capacity building** when operating with local partners, indicating that this is an area that requires further investment and strengthening. In the evaluation of the Food Security Thematic Program in Northern Bahr-El-Ghazal [2], the evaluator recommended that future partnership with local NGOs should be prioritised while ensuring sufficient capacity building is carried out not only on programming, but also on all operational issues, including timely narrative and financial reporting. This was echoed by the other evaluations of programmes implemented in collaboration with partners in South Sudan, especially in relation to Nile Hope [8]. In Nepal [17], the evaluators of the emergency response to the earthquake found that while Concern staff were knowledgeable about Concern's Programme Participant Protection Policy (P4), and clear on how they should report an issue of abuse should they suspect one, there was a very low level of understanding of the P4 amongst the local partners' staff.

When a significant portion of the programme portfolio is implemented through partners, having a **dedicated person** in charge of managing the partnership would ease communications, facilitate the prioritisation of capacity building needs, and strengthen the working relationship between Concern and its local partners. In Nepal, Concern implemented its response to the earthquake in collaboration with two local partners. The evaluator [17] found that while some problems were anticipated, these appeared largely attributable to the lack of detailed documented agreements at the start of the partnership. The evaluators emphasised that working with partners often requires a different skill set to delivering responses through direct implementation. They found that while Concern had staff with partner experience at various points during the response, ensuring stronger staff awareness regarding how best to work with partners may have eased some of the issues that were encountered. In Turkey

[26], during the evaluation of the ECHO funded protection programme, the evaluators lauded the choice of appointing a dedicated partnership manager who worked full time to support the partners in terms of systems and programmatic aspects. A finance partnership officer was also appointed to work with the partnership manager, further strengthening the control and the support on the partners' support systems.

5. Conclusions

34 evaluations have been reviewed and analysed as part of this meta evaluation. Evaluations were reviewed from programmes delivered in the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, CAR, DRC, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Yemen, Zambia. Overall, this represents a greater number and better balance of evaluations than was evident in the previous meta evaluation. The chart below is presented to give an overview of general performance. The performance against the extended DAC criteria across all programmes was good according to the reports.
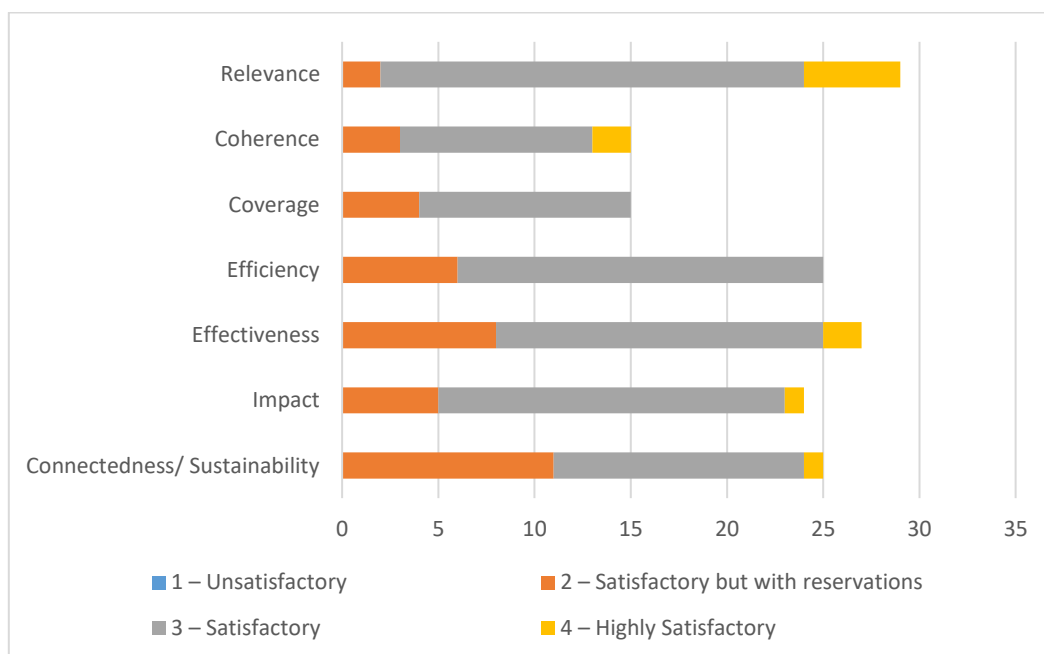
Figure 15: Overall scoring against extended DAC criteria

Relevance: All of the emergency projects evaluated were considered appropriate and relevant. The programmes addressed key humanitarian needs and, where necessary, showed flexibility and a willingness to change. This is particularly important when responding to programmes in protracted crises, where accessibility can be an issue and programmes can be required to expand into new areas as more communities become accessible. In the majority of the responses evaluated, internal needs assessments, surveys or external reports were used at the design stage, and the communities targeted largely felt that their needs were met sufficiently. It is clear that Concern teams have put significant efforts into setting up effective Complaints and Response Mechanisms (CRMs), but there is still room for improvement in the effective design and utilisation of these. Community participation could be strengthened, particularly in the design phase of some projects.

Coherence: Despite not being consistently used in the evaluations reviewed, overall there was satisfactory coherence shown in Concern's programmes. The majority of the programmes reviewed against this criterion reported adherence with Concern Approach to Emergencies paper and reported that staff have been trained on protection, CHS, and the humanitarian principles. When looking at the Preparing for Effective Emergency Response (PEER) plans, it clearly emerges that considerable work has been done at country level on this, but that there is a need to improve the implementation and operationalisation of the PEER process in some countries, with a particular focus on those facing protracted crises and those more exposed to natural disasters.

Coverage: Overall, Concern's emergency responses are considered satisfactory in terms of coverage. The majority of the projects evaluated are implemented in areas that have high levels of vulnerability and a relatively low presence of humanitarian actors. Insecurity is a significant factor that needs to be taken into account but, as highlighted in the meta-evaluation of the HPP programmes, Concern has been courageous in selecting areas of operation and has measures in place to help to ensure the security of its staff. In line with its mandate and strategy, Concern has demonstrated a commitment to reaching those most in need in the hardest to reach areas, with particular attention given to the most vulnerable, including children, people with disabilities, and women. In most of the projects in which selection was required, communities were involved in the targeting process. However, a number of evaluations recommended the need to strengthen targeting criteria and communications around them with the communities.

Efficiency: Overall, Concern's emergency responses are considered to have been satisfactory in terms of efficiency. The majority of the projects were considered to be cost-effective. Logistics and procurement systems were found to be strong, and while some delays were reported, these were mainly due to external factors linked to the difficult operational environments in which Concern works. On the programme side, one of the challenges highlighted was the absence or limited use of programme management toolkits. Issues of effective project management were also found in relation to the allocation of expenditure. The biggest challenges around staffing continue to be the high level of staff turn-over and staffing gaps. However, it is important to acknowledge that the capacity of some country offices to undertake restructuring processes to address these issues, an effort that has led to an improvement of the staffing environment over time. Other challenges related to staffing are due to difficulties in hiring staff for remote and hardship posting areas. A very positive note shared in a number of evaluations is the praise for Concern's staff dedication and commitment for their jobs, especially among national staff.

Effectiveness: Overall, the majority of the programmes evaluated were timely and effective in reaching their targets. In numerous cases, information from assessments and M&E activities were used to make adjustments. This is particularly important considering the volatile nature of emergencies, particularly in contexts of protracted crisis, but also in the aftermath of a natural disaster where information from rapid assessments is constantly reviewed and updated. Some of the challenges faced in relation to the effectiveness of Concern's responses are mainly related to **programme design.** As noted above, the timing if some evaluations relative to the programme cycle resulted in some challenges in relation to being able to demonstrate achievements against the planned output and outcomes, with a concern raised that some **outcomes were still at risk of not being achieved.** In terms of external coordination, Concern has consistently put significant efforts into coordinating with relevant clusters and partners, as well as with local authorities. This effort has been

consistently recognised across the countries in which Concern has a presence and has strengthened Concern's ability to influence the responses in which it is an active member.

Impact: The majority of the evaluations reported the responses to have had a positive impact on beneficiaries. The increase in the level of employment among beneficiaries as a direct result of the projects implemented has been highlighted. A number of projects implementing cash programming have been considered to have boosted economic empowerment in the communities in which the projects were implemented. There were not a lot of unintended impacts mentioned; but, the issue of aid dependency was highlighted in some evaluations. While this is mostly linked to the contexts in which Concern operates, it is important to highlight the need to challenge any long-standing reliance on aid wherever this is possible.

Connectedness and Sustainability: Consistent with the extended DAC criteria, the Approach to Emergency paper and the Evaluating Concern's Emergency Responses guidelines recommend the use of connectedness rather than sustainability, but the evaluations reviewed presented a mix of the two. When reviewing responses against the sustainability criterion, the evaluations assessed raised more reservations. In fact, this criterion is the one that scored lowest across all of the criteria considered. However, some of these comments related to the inherently unsustainable nature of the operating context – usually as a result of protracted conflict. In terms of connectedness, the overall analysis changes, and the assessment leans towards the majority of the evaluations considering the responses to be Satisfactory. A number of examples of the introduction of medium-term thinking in the emergency response implemented were reported in the evaluations reviewed.

6. Measuring-up to previous meta-evaluations

The **number of countries** in which emergency evaluations have been conducted over this period has increased from 16 to 19. The evaluations analysed for this reporting period therefore provide a good snapshot of Concern's emergency response environment. In terms of the **number of evaluations**, between 2017 and 2019, 34 evaluations of emergency responses were conducted, compared to the 36 reviewed in the four year period of the previous meta. While this represents only 16% of the overall emergency responses conducted over the last three years, we need to be cautious as to how emergencies have been categorised and counted, and this is something that needs to be addressed at an organisational level.

Documented management responses to the recommendations made in the evaluations are still not being routinely produced as part of the overall evaluation process.

Staff capacity continues to be a challenge. The biggest difficulties remain staff turn-over and staff gaps. However, it is also important to acknowledge the capacity of some country offices to lead restructuring processes which looked at this issue specifically. In some case, this has led to an improvement of the staffing environment over time.

In the previous meta-evaluation, the lack of **female programme staff** was noted as a significant weakness in our programmes. While a good gender balance continues to be difficult to achieve in some of the countries in which we work, in a number of evaluations analysed in this review period, evaluators recognised and lauded the efforts Concern was making to address this issue across its programmes.

Whereas the previous meta-evaluation reported that only two of the evaluations assessed mentioned **PEER**, in this review period this has significantly improved. When assessing the coherence of Concern's programmes, an increasing number of evaluations looked at how PEER is being developed and operationalised. While the evaluators recognised that considerable work has been done at country level on this, there is a need to improve the implementation and operationalisation of PEER plans in some countries, with a particular focus on those facing protracted crises and those more exposed to natural disasters.

Almost all of the evaluations addressed the issue of **accountability** and CRMs in the current review period, which confirms the positive trend highlighted in the previous meta-evaluation. It clearly emerges that a considerable amount of work has been done to strengthen Concern's accountability towards it beneficiaries, in particular in regards to CRMs. However, some issues around CRMs still need to be addressed, and the mechanism needs to be strengthened to be effective and participatory. We also need to be cautious in not assuming that having effective CRMs will address all of the obligations that we have to be accountable to disaster-affected populations. We must continue to ensure that we roll out and strengthen our work in relation to all of the areas of the Core Humanitarian Standard.

In terms of **monitoring systems**, the lack of monitoring documents was not mentioned as an issue in the evaluations analysed for this meta-evaluation, which suggests a significant improvement on the concerns raised in the previous meta.

Whereas the previous meta-evaluation noted an improvement in reporting against **cross-cutting issues**, very few evaluations reviewed for this report included separate sections on them. When this was done, these sections mainly covered the issues of gender and protection, but the number of sections addressing these issues was very limited, making it difficult to have a good picture of the mainstreaming capacity of the organisation in relation to these issues.

Finally, while in 2017, the meta-evaluator concluded that responses were increasingly being implemented through and with **local and national partners** (65% of the responses reviewed), in the evaluations analysed during this meta-evaluation, this percentage seemed to have significantly contracted as only 30% of the evaluations reviewed were implemented in collaboration with local or national NGOs.

7. What have we done well?

1. In the three years under review, **almost 14 million people** have benefited **directly** from Concern's emergency interventions. Many of Concern's responses have been evaluated **very positively**, and the evaluations show that the organisation continues to **apply learning and adapt** its responses based on experiences of previous emergencies and existing/emerging good practice.

2. The programmes reviewed **addressed key humanitarian needs and showed flexibility and a willingness to adapt** to changing contexts as well as to expand to new areas as more communities became accessible. The communities targeted by these interventions largely felt that their needs had been met in a timely manner.

3. The majority of the evaluations recognised that there was a **good level of knowledge of all of the relevant internal policies** across Concern's programmes and that these were taken into account in the design and implementation of humanitarian responses.

4. A high proportion of the projects evaluated were implemented in areas with high levels of vulnerability and a relatively low presence of other humanitarian actors. Concern's commitment to reaching **those in greatest need in the hardest to reach areas** has been confirmed through the evaluations reviewed.

5. The majority of the projects were considered cost-effective. Although some improvements are required around **staffing**, in particular around staff turn-over and gaps, a number of evaluations praised Concern's staff for their dedication and commitment to their work, and this was especially noticeable in relation to national staff.

6. Concern has consistently put significant efforts into **coordination and external representation**, both at cluster level, but also with donor and local authorities. These efforts have been consistently recognised and should be continued as they will allow the organisation to have a stronger voice in strategic decisions made at country level and increase the organisation's ability to influence policy.

7. In terms of **protection mainstreaming**, overall, the principles of protection have been incorporated into the majority of the programmes analysed against this cross-cutting issue. A good integration of protection principles in the WASH components was reported in a number of evaluations. Similarly, when conducting distribution of NFIs or Cash Based Interventions (CBIs), the evaluators noted that particular attention was given to vulnerable individuals.

8. Achieving **gender balance among Concern staff** is not always easy in all of the countries in which we work, but evaluators recognised the efforts that Concern was making to address this issue across its programmes. Concern should maintain a strong focus on this, not only because this is a strategic priority for the organisation, but also because these changes do not go unnoticed by female beneficiaries.

8. Challenges and Recommendations

Evaluation Process Overview:

1. While the value and importance of evaluating emergency responses is recognised across the organisation, **the majority of emergency responses have not been evaluated** in this review period and, of these, only 21% included **management responses to the evaluation recommendations.** The management responses provided were only the initial responses to the recommendations, and, while key actions were identified, it was not possible to track whether these had been applied and integrated into the programmes. More work and a greater commitment are necessary to ensure that all emergency responses are evaluated in a timely

manner. To improve the percentage of emergency responses evaluated, it is recommended that Emergency Directorate should take on an active role in monitoring the evaluations of emergency responses conducted on a yearly basis, with the commitment to lead on a limited number (no more than three) of evaluations of large scale responses per year[30]. We also need to see the consistent completion of management responses to evaluations reports.

2. An analysis of the list of 213 emergency responses reported in the annual reports for 2017, 2018 and 2019 was outside of the scope of this evaluation. However, while reviewing the emergency responses of 2019, inconsistencies can be noted in the way in which emergencies were listed. Some countries reported emergencies by grant (e.g. Sudan and Bangladesh), others by single event (e.g. Afghanistan), and others by their underlying cause (e.g. Chad and Syria). In Afghanistan, for example, the country programme team reported having responded to 26 emergencies in 2019. These were classified by individual event and by Concern's response to it. However, the high number of emergencies listed in 2019 APPR initial draft and the low number of beneficiaries reported per emergency, led to a reassessment of the list, resulting in a reduction in number of reported emergency responses to nine. Syria chose a different approach and classified all events and grants related to the conflict by its cause, resulting in one overall emergency, i.e. "conflict". In Bangladesh, the team classified the emergency responses by grant and reported to have responded to nine emergencies. **The categorisation criteria of the APPR should be reviewed** to ensure better consistency of the data provided and, consequently, the number of evaluations completed of these responses.

3. There is still a degree of **inconsistency in the DAC criteria used** to conduct evaluations of emergency responses, and in terms of the **grading systems** used to score them. While this seems to have been addressed in the evaluations conducted by Concern staff, it remains an area of challenge for the evaluations conducted by external consultants. The Evaluating Concern's Emergency Response[31] document, introduced in 2018, recommends the use of a scoring system that goes from 0 to 4, and this scoring system should be used to ensure consistency in the scoring of future emergency response evaluations. Moreover, to ensure a greater level of consistency in the application of these guideline*s*, it is recommended that the Humanitarian Adviser in the Emergency Directorate contributes to the review process of the TORs for evaluations of humanitarian programmes before they are signed off by the Regional Directors.

4. In the medium term, and perhaps contrary to some extent to the previous recommendation, consideration should be given to reviewing the scoring system. Some of the evaluations reviewed here have given rise to a question as to whether a simple five point scoring system allows sufficient nuance of the relative degree to which programmes have sought to adhere to the extended DAC criteria. A greater range of scoring might also allow for evaluators to show progress in terms of programme performance on an on-going basis.

---

[30] COVID-19 permitting.
[31] https://concern2com.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/Emergency/Core%20Documents/Emergency%20evaluation s%20and%20meta-evaluations/Evaluating%20Concern%27s%20Emergency%20Responses%20- %20March%202019%20.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=rv6VnP

5. Consistent with the extended DAC principles, the Approach to Emergency paper and the Evaluating Concern's Emergency Responses guidelines, recommend the use of the broader criterion of **connectedness rather than sustainability** but, as noted, the evaluations reviewed present a mix of the two. It is recommended that all Concern evaluations use the connectedness criterion when evaluating emergency responses.

6. A very limited number of evaluations included separate sections on **cross-cutting issues**. While it is recognised that not every evaluation needs to include every cross-cutting theme, it is important to keep in mind that evaluations offer an excellent tool to assess the organisation's capacity to mainstream protection, DRR and gender issues.

Programmes Overview:

1. In terms of accountability to beneficiaries, it is clear that Concern country programme teams have put significant efforts into setting up **effective CRMs**. However, there are still some issues that need to be addressed for the CRMs to be widely accessible to beneficiaries. The recent investigation of sexual abuses perpetrated by aid workers during the Ebola Response in DRC[32] reminds us of the importance of this tool and of the need of continuous work to improve its efficacy as part of our wider efforts in being accountable to the communities with which we work. More needs to be done to ensure that the channels of communication used for CRMs are appropriate to and usable by targeted beneficiaries, and to improve knowledge around CRMs by some of the beneficiary groups targeted through Concern's emergency responses. Strengthening communication with communities, both to understand their needs and to explain how to use CRMs, will contribute to strengthening these tools. More consideration also needs to be given to ensuring that project participants at the field level are aware of Concern's CRM processes and to ensure that they know how, and about what, they can make complaints. CRMs need to be adjusted and tailored to meet communities' access needs, including those of beneficiaries who are illiterate, to ensure full and uncompromised access to the CRM.

2. **Staffing** continues to be identified as a challenge in terms of staff turn-over and gaps in key positions, especially in the first phases of the response. It is important to recognise that this will continue to be difficult to address in rapid onset emergencies, where the length of deployment of international staff has to take account of the need of shorter rotations to allow staff to recuperate after an intense period of work. However, good information management systems and a robust handover process can ensure a smoother transition between staff and avoid gaps in institutional knowledge. In countries dealing with protracted humanitarian crises, an increased investment in national staff and capacity building can help reduce this challenge - and this is something that is being actively pursued by some countries. A continuous investment in capacity building of national staff is recommended; in countries dealing with protracted humanitarian crises or that are prone to natural disasters, particular focus should be given to identifying and training national staff who could be redeployed in-country to respond to emergency spikes when necessary. This will help decrease the need to deploy international staff for short periods of time

---

[32] https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/2020/09/29/exclusive-more-50-women-accuse-aid-workers-sex-abuse-congo-ebola-crisis

and will help the organisation to fill staff gaps, in particular in the first phase of an emergency response.

3. In our programming, we seek to ensure that there is a level of consistency and integration in the way in which we understand and respond to issues of risk and vulnerability, and address the patterns of recurrent or predictable disasters[33]. Consistent with this, the work that the country teams do in terms of emergency preparedness and the extent to which **PEER plans** are developed and used by country programmes are key. Considerable work has been done at country level on this, but there is a need to improve the implementation and operationalisation of PEER plans in some countries, with a particular focus on those facing protracted crises and those more exposed to natural disasters. The yearly review of PEER work plans needs to be strengthened to ensure that work plans are effectively integrated into countries' emergency structures and well understood by staff. The Emergency Directorate, through the DRR Adviser, should continue to take the lead on this by supporting the collection and review of PEER work plans on an annual basis in an effort to ensure integration of lessons to be learned, and provide technical support where necessary.

4. **Training on humanitarian principles and standards** were conducted in several of the programmes reviewed. Going forward, considering the high turnover of national and international staff in countries implementing humanitarian responses, it is recommended to continue to conduct **refresher humanitarian training** on a regular basis.

5. In terms of investment in **local partners**, the changing profile of Concern's countries of operation may have contributed to the organisation finding a decreasing number of credible local partners to work with. However, when these partnerships are in place, there is a need to strengthen the focus on capacity building, as highlighted in a number of evaluations. Strengthening a country programme team's partnership management capacity by having a dedicated person, preferably a national staff member, in charge of managing partnerships is recommended. This will ease communication, facilitate the prioritisation of capacity building needs, and strengthen the working relationship between Concern and its local partners.

---

[33] Concern Worldwide's Approach to Emergencies

Annexe 1 – List of evaluations

#	Title of the Evaluations	Country	Year
1	Internal Evaluation of the Integrated Emergency Multi-Sector Response for Conflict Affected Populations Unity and Central Equatoria States South Sudan	South Sudan	2017
2	Final Evaluation of Concern Worldwide Food Security Thematic Program in Northern Bahr-El-Ghazal	South Sudan	2017
3	Disasters emergency committee – East Africa response review: Synthesis report	East Africa Region	2018
4	HPP Evaluation	Ethiopia	2018
5	HPP Evaluation	Somalia	2018
6	HPP Evaluation	South Sudan	2018
7	End of Project Evaluation Unicef Funded Nutrition Project	South Sudan	2018
8	End of Program Evaluation for the OFDA-funded Multisectoral Emergency Response for Conflict-Affected and Food Insecure Populations in South Sudan	South Sudan	2019
9	Emergency Nutrition Response Project For Drought Affected Communities In Marsabit County, Kenya	Kenya	2019
10	Final Evaluation of the DiRECT Response Emergency Cash Transfer Programme in Zambia	Zambia	2017
11	Evaluating the Efficiency And Effectiveness Of Shock Responsive Social Protection In Emergency Preparedness And Response In Malawi	Malawi	2018
12	DEC: Idai Response	Malawi	2019
13	Idai Response: Internal Wash-up	Malawi-Mozambique	2019
14	Alliance2015: Cyclone Idai Evaluation	Mozambique	2019
15	Emergency Response Recovery for Cyclone Idai affected population in Mozambique	Mozambique	2019
16	Concern Worldwide's Cyclone Idai Flood Response Programme in Malawi	Malawi	2019
17	Evaluation of the Concern Worldwide Nepal Earthquake Emergency Response Programme	Nepal	2017
18	"Integrated Emergency Humanitarian Response to the Rohingya Population in Cox's Bazar"	Bangladesh	2018
19	HPP Evaluation	Afghanistan	2018
20	Responding to Pakistan's Internally Displaced (RAPID) Fund (RAPID Fund-II)	Pakistan	2019
21	HPP Evaluation	Lebanon	2018
22	HPP Evaluation	Syria/Iraq	2018
23	ECHO funded Emergency Humanitarian Response in Syria – Phase II project	Syria	Nov-19
24	OFDA Evaluation of Concern Worldwide's Humanitarian Response in North-East Syria 2017-2018	Syria	2019
25	DEC Final External Evaluation Report Disaster Response In Yemen	Yemen	2019
26	Emergency Protection and Resilience Building for Refugees in Turkey: Final Evaluation Report	Turkey	2019

27	Evaluation of Concern Worldwide's Humanitarian Response in North-East Syria 2017-2018	Syria	Jul-19
28	Start Fund learning exchange for 'Alert 307 Sierra Leone (Fire)	Sierra Leone	2019
29	Evaluation of Concern Worldwide's Emergency Program in Tanganyika and Haut-Lomami, DRC	DRC	2018
30	HPP Evaluation	DRC	2018
31	Evaluation of Concern Worldwide's emergency program in Tanganyika and Haut Lomami, DRC.	DRC	2019
32	HPP Evaluation	CAR	2018
33	End of Program Evaluation report of "OFDA-funded Humanitarian Response for Newly Conflict-Affected IDPs from Basse-Kotto Arriving in Eastern Kouango	CAR	2019
34	Meta Evaluation of HPP 2018 country evaluations	Multi-country	2018

Annexe 2 – Meta evaluation checklist

**Meta-Evaluation
Checklist**

Evaluation title:

Type of
evaluation:

Use of Extended
DAC Criteria:

Management response to recommendations available:

Did the evaluation include separate sections on cross cutting issues:

Sectors covered:

Year:

Consortium:

	Criteria	Definition	Guiding questions	Comments	Score
1	**Relevance & Appropriateness**	Relevance is concerned with assessing whether the project is in line with local needs and priorities (as well as donor policy). Appropriateness is the tailoring of humanitarian activities to local needs, increasing ownership, accountability, and cost-effectiveness accordingly.	**To what extent did the programme meet immediate needs?**		
1.1			To what extent was the project in line with local needs and priorities?		
1.2			Was an assessment conducted?		
1.3			Did communities and people targeted by the intervention consider that their needs were met sufficiently?		
1.4			Were there agreed structures and respected timeframes in place to investigate and resolve complaints? How effectively were complaints received and dealt with?		

1.5			Has the team engaged beneficiaries in the design of the intervention?		
2	**Coherence**	Coherence is seen as the need to assess all relevant policies to ensure that there is consistency and, in particular, that they all take into account humanitarian and human-rights considerations.	**Was there consistency between our activities and the relevant policies?**		
2.1			Was there evidence that the intervention adhered to relevant policies (e.g. DRR, Equality, Protection, Approach to Emergencies)?		
2.2			Was the intervention informed by and aligned with the fundamental humanitarian principles? Was the Red Cross Code of Conduct respected?		
3	**Coverage**	Coverage involves determining who was supported by humanitarian action, and why.	**Is there evidence that our interventions reached the most vulnerable?**		
3.1			Have we reached major population groups facing life-threatening suffering?		
3.2			Have we sought to reach those who are least well served by the wider response?		
3.3			What efforts were made to ensure protection for all programme participants?		
4	**Efficiency**	It measures the outputs achieved as a result of inputs. **Cost effectiveness** is included in this criterion.	**Have the resources (financial, human, technical and material) been used appropriately?**		
4.1			Were there any alternatives for achieving the same results with fewer inputs/funds?		
4.2			Were the outputs achieved in line with the original project document? If not, why not? Were decisions to change the planned outputs clearly documented and explained?		
5	**Effectiveness**	Effectiveness measures the extent to which an activity achieves its purpose, or whether this can be expected to happen on the basis of the outputs.	**To what extent did the programme achieve the planned outputs and outcomes and were they delivered on time?**		

		Timeliness and **Coordination** are included in this criterion.			
5.1			Were the planned outputs and outcomes achieved?		
5.2			Did target communities feel that their needs were met on time?		
5.3			Is there evidence of collecting data to redirect programme interventions as results of on-going consultations as well as routine M&E?		
5.4			What was the level of participation of programme beneficiaries and other stakeholders?		
			Has the response team effectively coordinated with external stakeholders during the response? E.g. clusters, other NGOs and agencies, relevent government units, etc.?		
6	**Impact**	Impact looks at the wider effects of the project – social, economic, technical, environmental – on individuals, gender- and age-groups, communities and institutions.	**Was the goal of the project/proramme evaluated achieved through the emergency intervention?**		
6.1			What were the wider effects of the response/programme – social, economic, technical and environmental – on individuals, different gender and age groups, communities and institutions, including conflict dynamics?		
7	**Connectedness**	It refers to the need to ensure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a way that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account.	**How were longer-term problems given consideration during the implementation of emergency activities?**		
7.1			Were the emergency activities carried out in a way that considered longer-term programmes and relevant approaches?		
7.2			To what extent have communities been supported and prepared to withstand future emergencies?		

Annexe 3 - List of emergency responses – 2017

Country	No. of Responses	Type of Response	Total Direct Beneficiaries
Afghanistan	4	Natural Disaster and Conflict Response - NFIs; Cash Programming; WASH; Cash for work	97,480
Bangladesh	4	Rohingya Response- Nutrition, food, NFIs; Northern Floods - Multipurpose Cash; Cyclone Mora - Multipurpose Cash; Resilience to Floods	272,919
Burundi	1	Nutrition	10,762
CAR	7	Conflict Response - IDPs, WASH and Livelihoods, Cash for Work; Nutrition, Health	112,438
Chad	2	WASH Emergency- Cholera prevention in Koukou Angarana; Nutrition & Health in the Lake Region	145,401
DRC	4	Conflict Response - Non Food Items; Cash Transfers; WASH & Shelter; Cash for Work	75,709
Ethiopia	2	Emergency Response to IDP & Food Security, Nutrition, WASH, Seed	516,711
Haiti	1	Hurricane response - La Gonave - livelihoods, protection, gender equality, NFI, hygiene, cash transfers	1,594
Kenya	2	Drought Response, Urban /Rural Nutrition Response & livelihoods	121,947
Lebanon	1	WASH, Shelter, Protection	35,951
Malawi	3	Food insecurity, Cash consortium; Early Recovery and Resilience Building; Disaster Risk Management; Food for Asset Creation; Emergency Nutrition	409,545
Mozambique	2	El Nino Drought Response; DRR	12,277
Nepal	3	Education Support & WASH support; WASH Emergency Response; Flood Response	105,619
Niger	3	Emergency Nutrition; Education in Emergencies; Cash for work	244,228
Pakistan	2	Rapid Fund - Emergency Response Funding for disaster and conflict affected populations; Building Disaster Risk Management	1,389,707
Sierra Leone	2	Mudslide / Flood Response; Ebola Recovery	70,780
Somalia	3	Drought and Conflict Affected households Response - Food Security, WASH; Cash Transfers; Education, Resilience	460,629
South Sudan	9	Food Security and Conflict Response - Nutrition; WASH; Food Security, Shelter, NFI	418,137
Sudan	2	Conflict Response- Health, Nutrition, NFI, Shelter	92,916
Syria / Iraq	4	Syria Response - Food Security in conflict affected areas; Emergency WASH; Integrated Response; Protection	1,052,752
Turkey	1	Protection	42,313
Uganda	1	Nutrition / Strengthening District Health Service Capacity to respond to Emergencies West Nile	326,826
Yemen	1	Unconditional cash transfers and vouchers (Acted)	16,506
Zambia	1	Food Insecurity Response - Cash Transfers	111,937
Total	**65**		**6,145,084**

List of emergency responses – 2018

Country	No. of Responses	Type of Response	Total Direct Beneficiaries
Afghanistan	7	Winterisation Cloths, NFI kits, emergency shelter, Cash transfers	3,437
Bangladesh	3	SAM; MAM treatment; NFIs; cash transfers; dignity kits; livelihoods grants	112,722
Burundi	2	NFI/Shelter; SAM treatment; NFI kits and shelter;	117,080
CAR	3	Cash transfers; WASH; livelihoods support	59,483
Chad	1	WASH - construction of latrines and increasing access to potable water	8,923
DPRK	1	Food supply, WASH, winter clothing	4,772
DRC	8	NFI kits and hygiene kit distribution; Shelter; Cash transfers; water point rehabilitation; protection	313,390
Ethiopia	6	Food and NFI distribution; SAM and MAM treatment;	332,035
Kenya	3	Wash - Latrines, clean water, NFI distribution; management of acute malnutrition	200,131
Lebanon	4	WASH- safe water and latrines; Shelter; DRR; protection - psycho social support, case management and GBV sessions; Education	48,928
Malawi	2	Cash transfers; WASH; livelihoods support	290,675
Niger	3	Cash transfers, Nutrition, Education	102,932
Pakistan	5	Cash transfers; WASH; Health care; livelihoods support	140,625
Rwanda	2	NFIs; shelter	1,354
Somalia	4	Cash transfers; WASH; NFI distribution	477,631
South Sudan	4	Emergency nutrition services to acutely malnourished children and women; OTP, stabilisation centres; Mass MUAC, safe drinking water, latrines, bathing shelters, hygiene promotion, shelter materials and cash transfers	329,953
Sudan	5	NFI, Health, WASH, shelter	437,029
Syria	1	Food security (vouchers and in-kind; NFI distributions; shelter rehabilitation; WASH rehabilitation; child friendly spaces; non formal education; livelihood recovery	943,015
Turkey	1	Education; protection; livelihoods supports	23,842
Yemen	1	WASH	197,070
Total	**66**		**4,145,027**

List of emergency responses – 2019

Country	No. of Responses	Type of Response	Total Direct Beneficiaries
Afghanistan	6	NFI, cash, shelter	25,822
Bangladesh	8	MPCG, conditional cash transfer for household NFIs and livelihood restoration, hygiene awareness raising sessions, Health with focus on Nutritional treatment, DRR	215,832
Burundi	4	Cash, NFI, CHWs trained on sensitisation for cholera	46,057
CAR	6	Wash, food security, shelter, NFI, cash	26,386
Chad	2	Health and nutrition, WASH, NFI, Cash and Shelter	13,665
DPRK	5	Food supply, crop protection	23,813
DRC	4	Cash, WASH, food security	335,729
Ethiopia	7	Health and nutrition, WASH, agriculture, food security	215,483
Kenya	2	Nutrition, WASH, cash	31,132
Lebanon	4	Shelter, NFI, WASH, Cash	3,380
Malawi	3	Livelihoods, health, NFI, DRR, cash	163,500
Mozambique	1	NFI, WASH, Food security, cash/voucher	97,764
Niger	2	Nutrition, Education	202,830
Pakistan	5	Health, WASH, livelihoods	305,390
Rwanda	1	Livelihood	126
Sierra Leone	3	Shelter, NFI, WASH, Health	15,514
Somalia	3	Livelihood, cash, DRR, WASH, nutrition, education in emergency	271,838
South Sudan	5	Nutrition, WASH, Shelter, NFIs, cash	306,266
Sudan	9	Health, food security and livelihoods, nutrition, WASH	525,860
Syria / Iraq	1	WASH, Protection, livelihoods, Education	1,105,695
Turkey	1	Livelihood, education	32,654
Total	**82**		**3,964,736**

**Concern Worldwide
Terms of Reference
Meta-Evaluation of Concern Humanitarian Responses 2017 – 2019**

Purpose of the meta-evaluation

Concern is committed to the *systematic analysis and assessment of all of its projects and programmes[34], focusing on their planning, design, implementation and impact[35].* All of our programmes should be evaluated at least every three years, or within the programmes lifetime, if the intervention is of a shorter duration.

To monitor performance with regard to Concern's emergency responses, Concern has periodically carried out meta-evaluations of major emergency operations going back to 1990. The last meta-evaluation was conducted in 2017, covering the period 2013- 2016.

This meta-evaluation will cover a three-year period 2017 – 2019 to identify good practice, areas where our practice could improve, and to meet the requirement for sectoral reports to be submitted to the M&E sub-committee and the Board every three years. It aims to provide an update on progress made on the findings and recommendations of previous meta-evaluations.

The overall purpose of the meta-evaluation is, therefore, to critically review Concern's practice in responding to emergencies, including: response approach, quality of implementation, and results achieved against objectives of the programmes or projects evaluated.

Evaluation Objectives

The overall objective of this meta-evaluation is to provide an assessment of Concern's humanitarian responses and the organisational response practice and capacity.

The specific objectives of this meta-evaluation can be summarised as:

- To consider the overall quality of Concern's responses in the emergency interventions that have been evaluated
- To identify key learnings and make appropriate recommendations to inform future emergency responses based on the assessment of Concern's humanitarian response performance
- To assess the progress made on the findings and recommendations of the previous meta-evaluations, review the evaluations process of emergency responses and advise on how to better integrate these in future practice and future evaluations

---

[34] A programme is a group of related projects managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits not available from managing the projects individually. A programme may also include elements of ongoing operational work. So, a programme is comprised of multiple projects and is created to obtain broad common objectives – Concern's Programme Quality Guide

[35] Evaluating emergency interventions - towards good practice – Emergency Unit, January 2020

Methodology

The meta-evaluation will take a look at the wider context of Concern's emergency responses over the last three years, and examine and consider specifically the approach, the quality of the response and the outcomes achieved in Concern's emergency programmes and projects evaluated in the years from 2017 to 2019.

The meta-evaluation will closely examine what has been considered to be the emergency response success factors in the period under review, the main challenges that have been identified, and any positive or negative trends or patterns that have emerged. This will be done through an analysis of the evaluation reports received (full list is available in Annex I) against the extended DAC criteria of Relevance/appropriateness, Connectedness, Coherence, Coverage, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Impact. The cross cutting issues and themes - *equality; protection; HIV/AIDS; partnership; and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)* - will also be included in the analysis of the evaluations.

A checklist (Annex III) will be used to analyse each evaluation reports so as to identify the common themes and trends emerging from three years of lessons to be learned and recommendations. This meta-evaluation checklist is based on the assessment on the research questions developed as per each of the extended standard Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria. Each criterion will be scored using the following grading scale:

4	Highly satisfactory
3	Satisfactory
2	Acceptable with some (major) reservations
1	Unsatisfactory

To bring all of this together, and ensure learning on a strategic level, the meta-evaluation will develop into two papers:

- Executive Summary: Including main findings against set scoring system; conclusion vis-à-vis previous meta-evaluations' findings, and final recommendations for future emergency responses
- Full report, including:
    i. Introduction (including objectives and methodology)
    ii. Response Environment – A Global Overview
    iii. Concern Emergency Responses
    iv. Measuring up to Previous Meta-evaluations
    v. Recommendations for Future Emergency Responses
    vi. Annexes