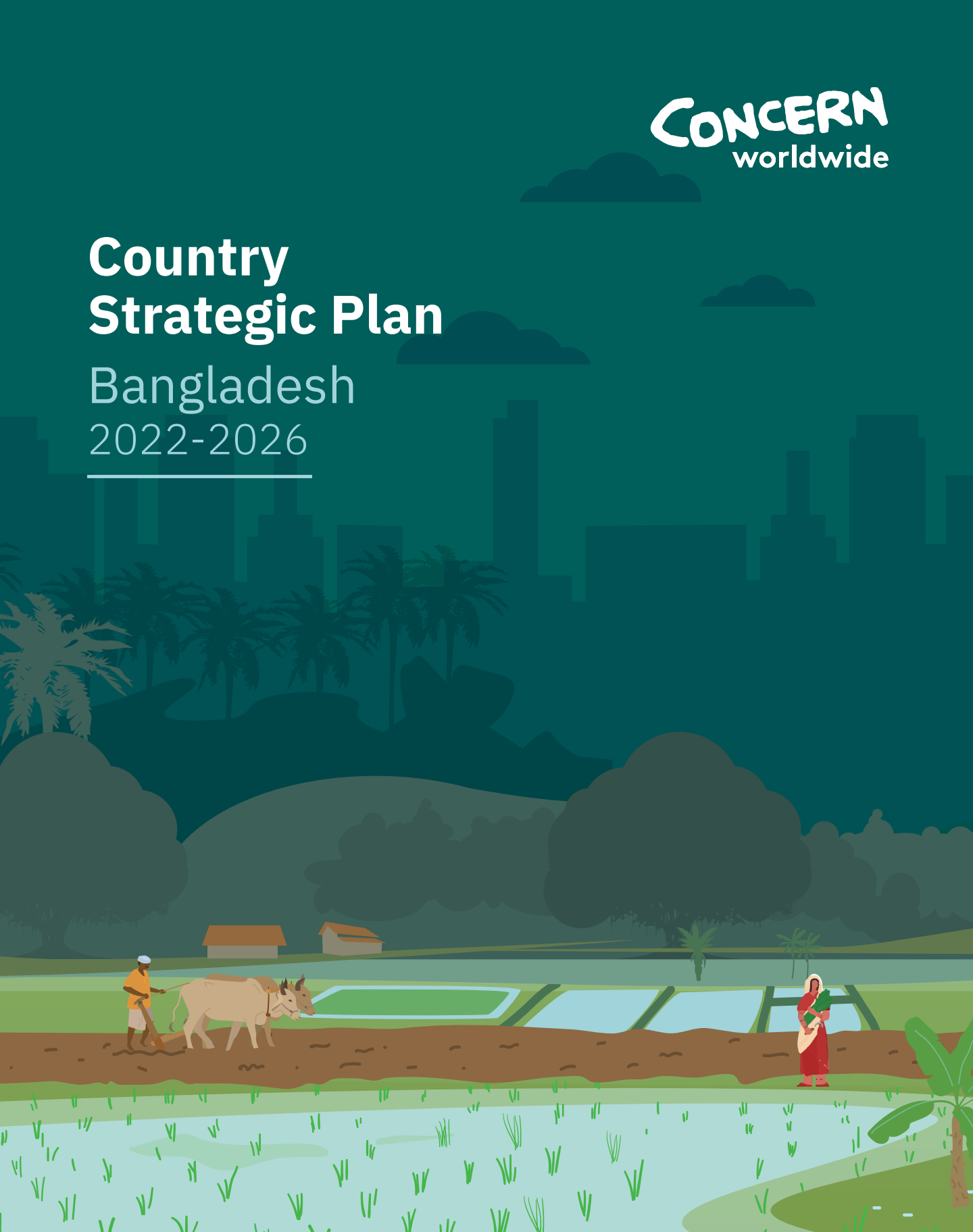


# Country Strategic Plan

Bangladesh  
2022-2026

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# Our Identity

Concern Worldwide is an international humanitarian organisation dedicated to the reduction of suffering and working towards the ultimate elimination of extreme poverty in the world's poorest countries.



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## Our Mission

is to help people living in extreme poverty achieve major improvements in their lives, which last and spread without ongoing support from Concern. To achieve this mission **we engage in long-term development work, build resilience, respond to emergencies and seek to address the root causes of poverty through our development education and advocacy work.**

## Our Vision

**is a world where no-one lives in poverty, fear or oppression;** where all have access to a decent standard of living and the opportunities and choices essential to a long, healthy and creative life; a world where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

# Introduction

The optimism of recent years that hunger and poverty can be eliminated has suffered a major setback with the triple impact of COVID-19, the challenges of climate change and the effect of conflict. For the first time in 20 years, the absolute numbers in poverty and hunger globally have started to increase, with expectations that the pandemic pushed over 100 million additional people into extreme poverty in 2020.

In Bangladesh this is seen in increases in the number of people described as being multi dimensionally poor and the job losses attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. This requires a doubling down on global efforts to ensure that we achieve the commitments to end hunger and extreme poverty by 2030, and ensuring that **no one is left behind, encapsulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

Founded in 1968 Concern has grown into a global organisation, supporting operations in the world's poorest and most vulnerable contexts.

**Concern is a dual mandate organisation, meaning we have an obligation to respond to emergencies and we seek to address the underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability through longer-term work. We are driven by an organisational culture, encapsulated in our identity, vision and mission.**

**The following outlines our five-year ambition and areas of focus for 2022 to 2026 in Bangladesh.** This strategy will signal 50 years since Concern Worldwide's first engagement in Bangladesh (in 1972) with an emergency response to natural disasters, subsequently evolving to include long-term development programmes targeted at those living in extreme poverty.

## Our Five Year Ambition

Our overall objective for the period 2022 to 2026 is to contribute to

*bringing sustainable, positive changes in the lives of people living in extreme poverty in Bangladesh.*

Our commitment to evolving how we work with partners at local and a national level over the course of this programme as well as making sure the lessons of our work, are shared with others to improve programme quality and impact targeted at addressing extreme poverty.

**We will achieve this through working on Five Particular Pillars –**



**Sustained Change From Our Programmes (Predominantly in the Health and Livelihoods sectors)**



**Climate Change**



**Humanitarian Action**



**Working through Partnership**



**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

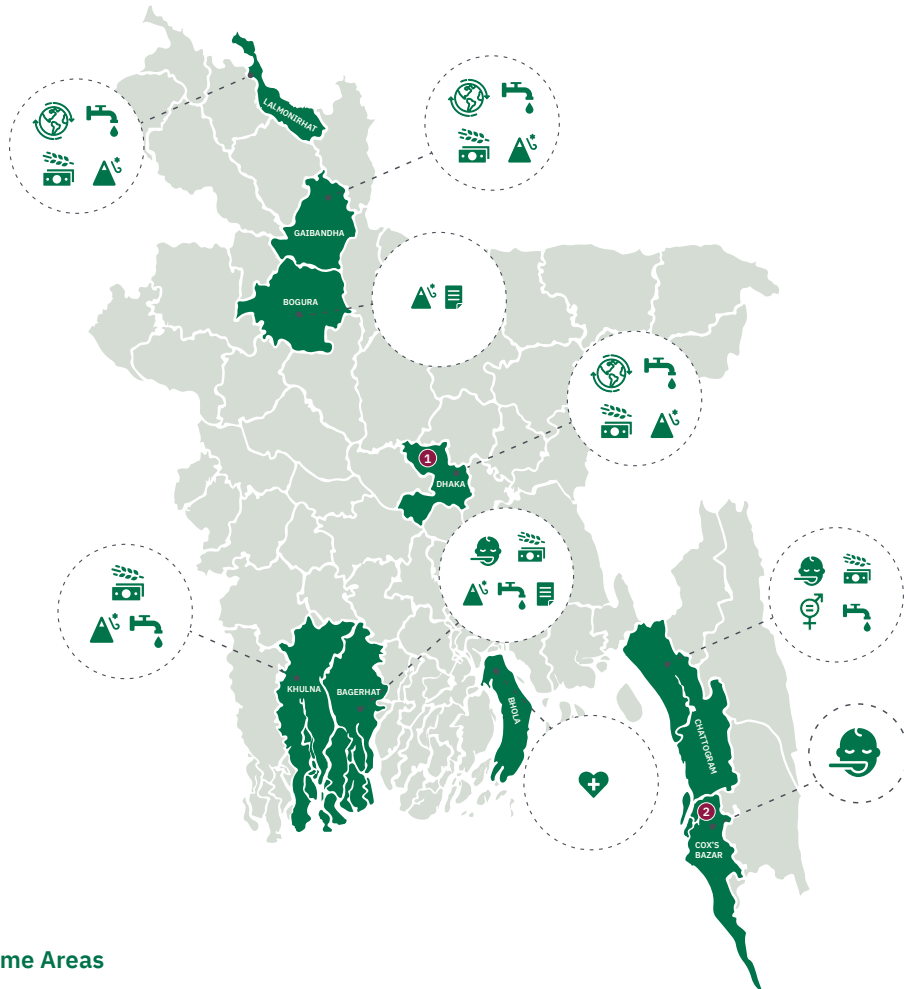


**We expect that our programmes will directly contribute to progress against Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), along with the Government of Bangladesh’s 8th Five Year Plan and other relevant policies and strategies.**

- |  |   |  |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|
|  | <p><b>SDG 1</b><br/>(No Poverty)</p>            |  | <p><b>SDG 2</b><br/>(Zero Hunger)</p>                |  | <p><b>SDG 3</b><br/>(Good Health and Well Being)</p>      |
|  | <p><b>SDG 5</b><br/>(Gender Equality)</p>       |  | <p><b>SDG 6</b><br/>(Clean Water and Sanitation)</p> |  | <p><b>SDG 8</b><br/>(Decent Work and Economic Growth)</p> |
|  | <p><b>SDG 10</b><br/>(Reduced Inequalities)</p> |  | <p><b>SDG 13</b><br/>(Climate Action)</p>            |  |   |

# What We Will Do

We aim to have a presence in approximately **15 of the most vulnerable districts** over the coming years (we currently work in nine: Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Bogura, Bagerhat, Khulna, Dhaka, Bhola, Chattogram and Cox’s Bazar). All programmes will be informed by context and needs analysis that are updated on a regular basis. **Working with our partners, we will support the implementation of programmes directed towards people living in conditions of extreme poverty. We will work with a variety of stakeholders (community, private sector, media, CSO, and government) in our programme areas.**



## Programme Areas

GENDER EQUALITY	GOVERNANCE	LIVELIHOODS
NUTRITION	WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE	HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING
CLIMATE CHANGE	DISASTER RISK REDUCTION	

## Offices

- 1 DHAKA
- 2 COX'S BAZAR



To achieve our CSP, we will adapt our current programmes to work in the three broad contexts outline below:

## Who We Will Work With



People Living In Extreme Poverty And Who Are The Furthest Behind



Communities Most Affected By Natural Disaster & Climate Change



People Affected By The Rohingya Refugee Crisis And Immediate Host Community

## Sectors



Emergency



Health



WASH



Nutrition



Climate Resilient Livelihoods



Disaster Risk Reduction

## Approach



Working With Local Partners And Government For Sustainable And Scalable Solutions

# Goal 1

## To achieve systemic change at all levels and to improve the lives of people living in extreme poverty

Our work will focus on improving the food security and health and nutrition status of those living in extreme poverty, including developing a greater understanding of broader health and food systems and the linkages between urban and rural areas. We will take two broad approaches to achieving this –

- Through the implementation of programmes that **work directly with people living in conditions of extreme poverty**, which will be done in conjunction with partner organisations; and
- Through our advocacy work which aims to **change policy and influence its implementation at both the district and division level and national level**

### S01: Deliver innovative approaches that strengthen the health and nutrition systems

Our work on **health and nutrition vouchers**, and our research into the effectiveness of this modality to support the poor and extreme poor in urban areas of Bangladesh has been well received and widely shared. We will build on this over the coming years, specifically focussing on:

- Design and implement programmes that address **Health and Nutrition Governance in both rural and urban areas** (with a specific focus on social protection, service quality, systems development, and capacity development of different stakeholders)
- Developing **sustainable and scalable health financing solutions** that contribute to Universal Health Coverage
- Continue being a **leading nutrition actor in the Rohingya Response** whilst shifting gradually from direct implementation of nutrition services to supporting local partners to fulfil this role

## S02: Improve the wellbeing of people living in extreme poverty in urban areas following proven, innovative and sustainable approaches that are appropriate for urban contexts

Concern's Integrated Urban Programme (IUP) has been addressing many issues, including supporting people to have a more **sustainable livelihood and providing access to essential services and their human rights**. To build on all this over the lifetime of this CSP, we will:

- Implement at least one Urban Graduation programme that **demonstrates sustainable graduation from extreme poverty**
- Continue to build on our past experience around **developing sustainable and scalable health financing solutions** that contribute to Urban Universal Health Coverage
- **Address urban malnutrition systematically** and all urban programmes will be nutrition sensitive, and there will be a concerted effort through our national level advocacy to address weaknesses in the health system

## S03: Through evidence based advocacy, address the underlying causes of extreme poverty, with a particular focus on addressing inequality, risk and vulnerability

We are keen to **strengthen our links to local and international research centres and universities** to examine further what works in terms of addressing extreme poverty. To achieve this we will:

- **Develop a five year Advocacy Strategy** that looks holistically at ensuring the CSP goals and objectives are delivered and systemic change is achieved
- **Ensure effective knowledge management across all programmes** to enable us to disseminate learning from local to global level to influence policy and practice
- **Produce pro-poor policy briefs** that critically analyse existing policy, budget allocation and practice gaps, and provide pragmatic recommendations that will help address the underlying causes of extreme poverty
- **Engage with the private sector** to ensure that our programmes are sustainable and scalable beyond the duration and target group, **priority will be given to issues such as: ensuring decent, dignified work and health provision**
- **Develop long term partnerships with key government partners** (such as: City Corporations, Municipalities, IPHN, BNNC, and UPs)

# Goal 2

People affected by natural disaster and human induced crisis are empowered to take action and build their resilience

Our humanitarian identity is central to our work and mandates us to prioritise the capacity to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies. We are committed to engaging in any response as the need occurs, focussing on saving lives and reducing suffering, while strengthening community preparedness for future emergencies. We maintain a regularly updated **Preparing for Effective Emergency Response (PEER) plan**, and are committed to engaging in coordination mechanisms at national and sub-national levels as part of any response. In line with the **Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS)** we strive to put communities and people affected by crisis at the centre of our programme.

Over the coming five years, we will continue to respond on the basis of need, in our existing programme areas, but as necessary outside of that as well. In particular we will focus on **(a) Anticipatory Action and Preparedness (b) Response and (c) Early Warning Early Action**. Considering the Rohingya Refugee Response, we will ensure our structure, systems and processes evolve with the wider response in Cox's Bazar.

### S01: Develop our emergency preparedness system at organization and partner level

We will also work with our local partners to develop their capacities to respond to emergencies. This contributes to the achievements of objectives under the broader localisation agenda. Specifically we will:

- **Strengthen our own capacity, and that of our partners**, on disasters preparedness, response and recovery
- **Ensure our Preparedness for Effective Emergency Response (PEER) plan** is a pragmatic living document that is reflected in how our Emergency Response Team (ERT) works
- **Strengthen our internal Emergency Response Team**, and identify where surge capacity can come from on areas as diverse as monitoring, communications, logistics and system support
- **Establish framework agreements with suppliers** prepared for emergency stock to ensure effective response within 24 hours

### S02: Effective responses delivered in medium to large scale emergencies through local partners

We will respond to medium to large emergencies, whether natural or conflict related, both within and outside our areas of operation. To achieve this we will:

- Where donors permit, **include emergency response preparedness and response budget** in all programmes (in design)
- Ensure **effective collaboration at national and local levels** in coordination with the broader humanitarian structure and stakeholders
- Ensure that all **our responses are based on high quality, rapid assessments, allowing for proper targeting** and accountability mechanisms
- **Work closely with partners**, both emergency and development, to **ensure we are informing communities** in all programme areas of their rights and entitlements with a strong Complaints Response Mechanism (CRM)
- Aim to **ensure that our response does not have a negative impact** on the environment, adopting climate smart approaches
- **Address issues of gender and disability** within all of our emergency response
- **Ensure that all of our emergency responses are evaluated** at least once during the period of this strategy

### S03: Scale up and expand early warning and early action system strengthening to reduce losses in disaster-prone areas

We will learn more about what works in terms of Early Warning / Early Action (EWEA), and to scale that up in a manner that contributes towards reducing loss and damage in disaster prone-areas, and increasing the resilience of households. Specifically we will focus on:

- **Embedding Early Warning / Early Actions (EWEA) systems** thinking in both our development programmes and Rohingya Response
- **Organise a series of cross learning events** to enhance our understanding of EWEA, while documenting our knowledge and learning and sharing with key stakeholders

- **Undertake national and local level advocacy** for effective implementation and financing of locally led disaster preparedness, EWEA and response actions
- **Developing a partnership with an appropriate expert technical organisation** to support our efforts around Early Warning Early Action system strengthening

### **SO4: To provide immediate, long term support and build resilience among people affected by the rohingya refugee crisis and support Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities to withstand various shocks and stresses**

Concern Worldwide will continue providing **both immediate and long term support to the Refugees and the immediate Host Communities**. Specifically we will focus on:

- Working with the nutrition sector a technical and implementing partner for the **nutrition sector response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis**
- Developing a partnerships with local partner to **deliver nutrition interventions** in the Rohingya Refugee Crisis

## **Goal 3**

# **To support all partners to implement quality programmes and strengthen accountability to stakeholders**

As an organisation, we are committed to the localisation agenda and expanding the proportion of work we undertake alongside our local partner organisations, including both Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and local government. **Over the five years of this plan, we are committed to identifying and working with a number of existing and new local partners** as a means of adding value to the quality, reach, and sustainability of programmes.

Together with partners, we see an opportunity to work more on issues of advocacy for those living in conditions of extreme poverty and to enhance our focus on climate change (including helping partners prepare for emergency responses).

Our greater **focus will be on capacity development and mentoring; identifying a number of partners to work with on particular areas;** and on developing networks and relationships between partners.

### **SO1: Institutional capacity building of partners to ensure our programmes are appropriate, relevant, effective and timely, whilst mitigating any potential risks**

We are committed to moving **beyond grant / project wise partnerships to more strategic and organisational partnerships**. This will require us to provide long term institutional support and developing joint approaches to how we build capacity. Specifically we will ensure the following;

- Develop a five year Partnership Strategy that looks holistically at ensuring the CSP goals and objectives are delivered and systemic change is achieved
- Review and update approach to our partnership selection, due diligence, on-boarding and day-to-day management to ensure this is up to date with the current localisation discourse
- Create an open discussion with a smaller number partners and identify what capacity development support they would like from Concern, then develop individual partnership plans based on this
- Promote cross learning between partners and Concern Worldwide and support partners to increase their exposure to donors and other stakeholders at the national and global level

- Ensure that we carry our regular evaluations of our long term partners that looks holistically at the whole partnership, not just programme delivery

## S02: Collaboration with specialised partners for strengthening our learning, advocacy and networking

In areas such as advocacy and research, and in certain specialised technical areas, we recognize the need to work with a number of specialist agencies and become more active in specific national forums. To achieve this we will:

- Identify and **work with a number of national forums** on the technical areas which we are prioritising, this includes work on EWEA, urban development, nutrition and equality
- Identify and **collaborate with specialist partners** that will work with us budget analysis, early warning systems, policy advocacy, etc

# Goal 4

## To mainstream climate change and environment across programmes and the organisation

We are committed to focussing on addressing the impacts of climate change.

### S01: Through concern programmes, practice and advocacy, address the challenges of climate change and environment

We will develop a number of climate specific programmes, particularly in the cyclone and flood prone areas. In particular we will:

- **Ensure all programmes are climate risk informed** and ensure they are building on anticipatory, adaptive and absorptive capacities from the household up to the national level
- **Work with local communities and government** to ensure the Standing Order on Disasters is realized at the local level, and there is a strong gender and inclusion lens applied to related actions
- **Ensure there is a Community Risk and Vulnerability Assessment** completed in all communities we work in, which is then supported either through Concern and partners or by linking with the relevant authorities

### S02: Through evidence based advocacy influence climate finance and policy from the local to global level

We will utilise the evidence generated from our programmes, and research we are undertaking on resilience (in particular around floods), to inform our advocacy on climate finance and policy, specifically we will:

- Ensure the Concern Bangladesh Advocacy Strategy clearly articulates where **Concern will contribute to influencing on climate finance and policy** (Linking to Goal 1 S03)
- Develop a strategic work plan for engaging with the International Advocacy Team to **advocate for climate finance at the local to global level**
- Using programme evidence and budget analysis, **advocate for improved domestic climate change and environmental policies** with the communities at the global, national and local level

### S03: Ensure our systems and processes are climate and environmentally friendly

We will take is to map out our carbon footprint, setting a baseline against which we can set targets for the remainder of the CSP. Specific action include:

- **Undertake a carbon audit** to map our carbon footprint in 2022
- **Reduce the carbon foot print and environmental impact** of our programmes and organization
- **Digitise our systems** as a means of ensuring greener practices
- **Ensure a gender transformative approach** is incorporated in all of our programmes and that all have a gender transformative action plan, that identifies the root causes of inequality, as a means of bringing about sustainable change
- **Design all of our programmes in a manner that is inclusive,** ensuring community participation
- Clearly articulate **actions and targets around equality, diversity and inclusion** in all of our programmes
- All staff will be provided with **gender transformative training,** following the approach developed with our partner, Sonke Gender Justice

## Goal 5

# Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion externally and internally for sustainable development

One of the key drivers of extreme poverty in Bangladesh is inequality, and we will continue to address this through our longer term programme work, and address issues of equality, diversity and inclusion within our emergency response. We will continue with our focus on addressing gender inequality. This is reflected in the following strategic objectives.

### **S01: Ensure a gender transformative approach throughout all our programmes and interventions**

By 2025, we will be able to show that all of our work is gender transformative, addressing the strategic needs (such as: status, power and decision-making capacity) of women, men, girls and boys. Specifically we will:

### **S02: Develop a diverse, empowered workforce that feel that their working environment supports them to achieve their role in an equitable and efficient way**

Concern is a people-to-people organisation. In this sense, in Concern Bangladesh, we will:

- Develop our readiness for the future through investment in our people and developing their leadership capacities
- Integrate wellbeing supports and adopt a more inclusive management approach that enables people reach and maintain their full potential

# Our Values

## **We focus on extreme poverty:**

We are driven by a clear focus on eliminating poverty in the most vulnerable places and responding to humanitarian crises.

## **We believe in equality:**

People are equal in rights and must be treated with respect and dignity.

## **We listen:**

Listening and partnership are key to empowering the poorest and most vulnerable to transform their own lives.

## **We respond rapidly:**

People affected by disasters are entitled to have their most basic needs met through rapid, effective, and principled responses.

## **We are courageous:**

Taking necessary risks, balanced with sound judgement, allows us to work in the most challenging contexts.

## **We are committed:**

Going the extra mile to support communities in times of need and in the face of very difficult operating environments.

## **We are innovative:**

Finding effective solutions requires innovative thinking combined with a pragmatic approach.

## **We are accountable:**




Accountability and transparency are central to all of our actions and use of resources.

**ENDING  
EXTREME  
POVERTY  
WHATEVER  
IT TAKES**

**CONCERN**  
worldwide

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