

CONCERN WORLDWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN

2026–2030

**Saving and
transforming lives**

Addressing hunger,
conflict and the climate
crisis in countries
facing extreme poverty
and fragility



CONCERN
worldwide



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Cover Image:

Aziza Fumo Satu is the chairlady of the Ghamano Farming Group and was born and raised in Wodesa, Tana River, Kenya. She is a mother of six and has learned to use family MUAC to monitor her children's health, while farming maize, spinach, and green grams with her group. Photo: Eugene Ikua/Concern Worldwide.

Images opposite:

1. Rouafi Pond in Konni, Niger, landscaped by programme participants. Photo: Ali Abdoulaye/Concern Worldwide.
2. Maula Dinho sprinkles seeds in his cotton field in Sindh, Pakistan. Photo: Zoral Khurram Naik/DEC/Concern Worldwide.
3. Haram has been a cook with Concern Worldwide in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan, since 2004. Photo: Kieran McConville/Concern Worldwide.
4. Mother-to-be, Mariatu Kamara at Concern-supported Mambolo health centre in Sierra Leone. Photo: Darren Vaughan/Concern Worldwide.
5. Luol Biar, Clinical officer at Malek Mir Primary health care unit, Aweil North County in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal State, South Sudan. Photo: Eugene Ikua/Concern Worldwide.
6. Ukrainian national partner *Angels of Salvation* go door to door in Mykolaiv Oblast, Ukraine, distributing winter fuel to vulnerable households. Photo: Dmytro Sazonov/Concern Worldwide.
7. A Concern team promotes hygiene sessions in Al Yarmouk School in Tabqa, Syria. Photo: Hani Al Ali/Concern Worldwide.
8. Yusuf Bile is the community resource person for the 364-member Mwafak Farmers group in Tana River, Kenya, now producing sunflower oil and onions. Photo: Eugene Ikua/Concern Worldwide.
9. Cairo* receives nutritional supplementary food from the Concern supported health clinic in one of the displacement camps in Tuban district, Lahij Governorate, Yemen where Concern provides health and nutrition services. Photo: Concern Worldwide.
10. Rohingya refugee Arshia* feeds her son Kassim* fortified food after visiting the Integrated Nutrition Centre in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Photo: Saikat Mojumder/Concern Worldwide.
11. Single mother, Birtukan Kassahun lives in Woreda 8, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with her two sons aged 18 and 11. She joined a KOICA funded project to support her new baking business. Photo: Eugene Ikua/Concern Worldwide.
12. Concern Bangladesh Programme Manager Mossiur Rahman assesses the situation in Feni district. Photo: Amit Kumar/Concern Worldwide.

* Names changed.

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1. Introduction

This strategic plan is built on **Concern’s track record of implementing high quality programmes** over nearly 60 years. It is informed by our commitment to do *as much as we can, as well as we can, for as many as we can, for as long as we can*. The plan ensures that we will continue to go where the needs are greatest, and work to save lives, protect and develop livelihoods, support recovery, and build long-term resilience. It **builds on our legacy** and advances the ambition and intent of our organisational Policy Statement which is presented in section two.

The fragile contexts in which we operate are characterised by increasing levels of need and reduced funding. As part of a wider pattern of reduced support for multilateral action, support for official development assistance (ODA) is in decline, and being further undermined by geo-political turbulence. The number and intensity of conflicts are increasing, reaching a level not seen since the end of World War II, and are characterised by a decline in both adherence to international humanitarian

law and the space for principled programming by civil society actors, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The numbers of people living in extreme poverty, experiencing hunger and malnutrition, and dependent on humanitarian aid, are expected to continue to rise in the coming years, especially in countries most impacted by conflict and climate change. Therefore, **Concern's mission and focus are more urgent, relevant and essential than ever**.

Facing this unprecedented level of challenge and need, Concern is well positioned to continue to make a meaningful contribution to addressing extreme poverty and humanitarian need in fragile countries.

Our added value lies in our long-term commitment to working in fragile countries as this is where needs are greatest. We are committed to working with people most affected by extreme poverty and crises, building trust through the delivery of high quality, community driven and accountable programmes. We support **locally led programming**, the strengthening of local systems, and equitable partnerships.

The challenging geopolitical and funding context faced by the aid sector means that, over the course of the plan, we will need to retain the flexibility to adapt and make difficult decisions on how to best focus our resources to advance our mission.

Our resolute focus will remain on continuously monitoring and strengthening the quality of our programming to ensure maximum impact for the people and communities with whom we work.

We cannot carry out our work without **public and political support** for ending extreme poverty. As such, we will prioritise leveraging our expertise and impact, mobilising public and political support to end extreme poverty.

Quality funding allows us to programme in a principled, community centred and needs based manner, facilitating the greatest impact for those furthest behind in fragile countries. We will therefore prioritise diversifying and optimising quality funding that supports our mission.

We cannot do this without the **exceptional people** working with us. Our **organisational culture** is widely recognised as one of our key strengths, but we know that to navigate these challenging times effectively, strengthening our inclusive, empowering and safe culture is vital and will support and facilitate our excellent people to work effectively.

The priorities presented here must be underpinned by ongoing **sound and accountable leadership, and risk and resource management**, appropriately balancing the most impactful use of resources with retaining financial robustness.

To help to end extreme poverty, we will support communities to tell their stories and share their experiences, and **we will document evidence and present learning of what works**.

While the contexts in which we work are challenging, we remain committed to using our resources to maximise the impact of all of our interventions. **Everyone who works with Concern has an important role to play** in supporting our organisational culture and delivering on our vision and mission.

We are fortunate to belong to a community of thousands of supporters across the globe who share our belief in a world where all people live in peace and prosperity and are treated equally, with dignity and respect in a better and safer world.



Concern MEAL Support Officer Liza Abdo conducts awareness sessions with the community about feedback and complaints in a displacement camp in Tuban District, Lahj Governorate, Yemen. Photo: Concern Worldwide

2. Organisational Policy Statement, 2026 to 2035

Identity, Vision and Mission

Our Identity – Who We Are

Concern Worldwide is an international, humanitarian, non-governmental organisation dedicated to the elimination of extreme poverty and the reduction of human suffering, primarily in fragile countries.

Our Vision

A world where all people live in peace and prosperity and are treated equally, with dignity and respect.

Our Mission

We work with people living in extreme poverty to achieve major improvements in their lives which last and spread without ongoing support from Concern.

Informed by the priorities of affected communities, we go where the needs are greatest, and work to save lives, protect and develop livelihoods, support recovery and build long-term resilience.

Our Core Values

To advance our mission and achieve quality and impact in all that we do, our work is guided by our core values and nurturing a culture of inclusion, compassion, and humanity. Built on the inspiration of our founders, and our long record of delivering effective programmes, our values reflect our history and our commitment to addressing extreme poverty in the most fragile countries.

We are:

- **community-led**, listening to and building trust with communities to agree effective solutions to their needs.
- **courageous** in our programming in the most challenging contexts, going the extra mile to support those most in need.
- **committed** to equality in all our work, strengthening our culture where those who work with Concern feel valued, safe, trusted and supported to thrive.
- **collaborative** in our approach by working with partners, peers and those who support and fund us.

How We Work

To advance our mission, we are guided by two key policies: **How Concern Understands Extreme Poverty** and **Concern's Approach to Emergencies**.

Recognising the challenges that exist in the countries in which we work, our standard operating model is to have an in-country presence informed by a robust risk management approach.

In our work:

- We collaborate with others to support people living in extreme poverty and affected by crises.
- We are accountable to affected populations, and all those who support us.
- We respond rapidly to emergencies, support preparedness and recovery, and invest in sustainable longer-term programmes.
- We adhere to the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence, and neutrality.
- We are agile, efficient and effective.
- We strengthen systems, policies and practices.
- We raise awareness on issues that contribute to extreme poverty and humanitarian need and influence policies for positive change.

Among our key approaches to ensure the quality and impact of our work:

- The **security** of personnel is of the highest priority. Strong and adaptive risk management is required to allow us to operate in insecure contexts.
- Maintaining the **safety, dignity, and protection** of the communities with whom we work is of primary importance. We are committed to **accountability** and **safeguarding** through our responsibility to ensure that our staff, anyone engaged with or by Concern, and our operations and programmes do good and cause no harm.
- We seek to understand power dynamics in all that we do and ensure that people from groups that experience **inequality** can participate fully and benefit from our programmes.
- We are committed to **locally led** programming, the strengthening of local systems, equitable partnerships, and increasing the visibility, voice and agency of communities and local actors.
- We aim to reduce the impact of **conflict** on communities and promote peace through a conflict-sensitive approach in our work.
- We seek sustainable solutions by working with communities on positive **environment** management and **climate change** adaptation.

Where We Work

Concern works primarily in **fragile** countries characterised by some or all of the following:

- Low income and high levels of **extreme poverty**.
- High vulnerability to **climate change** and other shocks and stresses.
- Affected by violent **conflict**.
- High levels of **hunger**, food insecurity, and malnutrition.

For emergencies of a sufficient scale and where Concern can add value to principled humanitarian responses, we may respond in higher income and less fragile contexts.

3. Our work

Concern is guided by the central principle that those living in extreme poverty must benefit to the greatest possible extent from our work. This principle is supported by our belief that this can only be achieved through the active participation of people experiencing extreme poverty, vulnerability or the impact of disasters, in decisions that affect them. As such, **our work is guided by: respect for people; the promotion of equality; and the empowerment and realisation of the potential of those with whom we work.** To ensure that our work has the greatest impact, we must be accountable to our stakeholders, programme participants, donors, colleagues, and partners.

Tackling the root causes and effects of extreme poverty and vulnerability requires context-specific, integrated and multisectoral approaches that benefit those most in need of support.

Concern's holistic approach, informed by our contextual analysis, spans emergency preparedness, response, early recovery, and sustainable development. We have significant experience across a breadth of areas, enabling us to respond flexibly to the needs of those who are most marginalised in different contexts. **We respond to crises in a timely, community-driven and principled way** in the countries in which we work and, where appropriate, to major disasters in countries in which we are not present.

We deliver quality programmes that are needs-based and community centred. Where possible, we seek to design integrated programmes that link sectors such as health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education and livelihoods so that individuals and households receive support that meets their interconnected needs.

To maintain the highest standards in programme delivery, **Concern has six foundational programme approaches: climate change adaptation; environmental sustainability; disaster risk reduction; conflict sensitivity; equality; and protection.** These approaches ensure that our interventions are safe, principled and sustainable, while addressing systemic problems and maximising positive impact. We continue to evolve our approach to locally led programming, putting local households, communities and actors at the centre of our programmes.

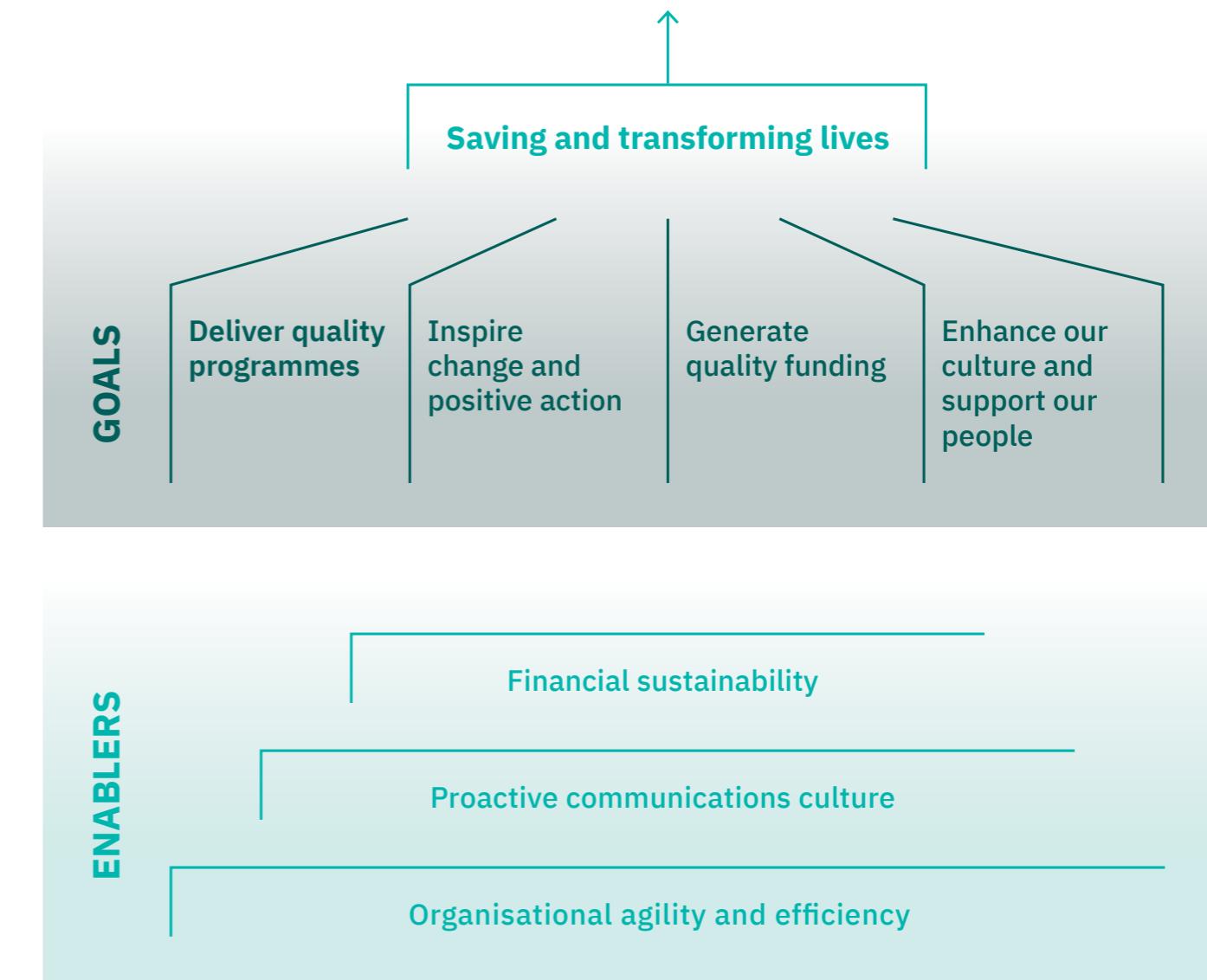
Concern's approach to environmental sustainability seeks to minimise the negative impacts arising from our work and strengthen our contribution to sustaining and restoring the natural environment. By embracing sustainable practices, we intend to mitigate climate change risks, support economic innovation, and foster collective well-being.

Concern's engagement with the public is an essential part of our work, and is done through global citizenship, communications, fundraising, campaigning and advocacy. With the support of teachers, youth workers and community leaders, our global citizenship programme brings schools, youth groups and communities together to engage in debate and to take action on issues driving extreme poverty and inequality. Our advocacy work, informed by research and evidence, is essential to influence policies that impact on the lives of people in vulnerable circumstances at national and global level. Our communications work amplifies the voices and perspectives of programme participants, and supports our fundraising efforts by sharing evidence of the impact of our work.

4. Our Strategy: Strategic ambition, goals and enablers

To achieve our strategic ambition of saving and transforming lives in fragile countries, we have identified **four strategic goals** that will be supported by **three strategic enablers**. These goals and enablers are interdependent, and the success of the plan requires all of them to be advanced. For each strategic goal and enabler, we have identified key **actions** and a limited number of **metrics** to monitor progress.

Concern is dedicated to the elimination of extreme poverty and the reduction of suffering in fragile countries



STRATEGIC AMBITION

Saving and transforming lives

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Deliver quality programmes

Ensure the consistent quality of all of our programmes, and their timely, effective, community centred and needs based implementation

How we will measure progress

- Progress on programme strategies through the annual programme review process
- Programme and meta evaluation scores based on DAC* criteria
- Findings of Core Humanitarian Standard audit, number of corrective actions requests (CARs) and observations
- Percentage of programme participants reporting that assistance is delivered in a safe, accessible, accountable, and participatory manner

Key actions

- Monitor the implementation of programme policies, strategies and approaches
- Implement simplified context and risk-informed analysis and programme design approaches
- Roll out and monitor adherence to minimum quality standards and programme management toolkits
- Ensure timely, community-driven and principled emergency responses
- Develop and implement a programme participant management system
- Promote learning and the use of learning opportunities and resources to strengthen programme quality

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Inspire change and positive action

Use our principled, trusted and inspiring voice to mobilise support and urgent action to address extreme poverty and humanitarian needs

How we will measure progress

- Biannual priority-sharing meetings between communications, fundraising, advocacy and global citizenship teams
- Evidence of political engagement and influence linked to Concern's work
- New supporters engaged across the communications, fundraising, and global citizenship activities

Key actions

- Use evidence from programmes and research, and perspectives from programme participants to inform policy dialogue and strengthen advocacy positions and communications materials
- Influence policies, practice and funding decisions that impact the poorest people
- Implement an annual integrated public engagement plan across the advocacy, communications, fundraising, and global citizenship teams

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Generate quality funding

Further diversify funding sources and optimise income to deliver sustainable, long-term impact

How we will measure progress

- Achievement of income targets for both restricted and unrestricted funding
- Amount and diversity of institutional funding secured
- Expanded and diversified funding portfolio to manage risk
- Audience engagement figures

Key actions

- Develop and implement a global funding strategy
- Strengthen the organisation's global brand
- Align audience engagement strategies in each market
- Optimise engagement with key institutional donors at country and support office level
- Invest resources based on data informed decisions that drive impact
- Secure relevant innovative financing mechanisms

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: Enhance our culture and support our people

Strengthen our inclusive and accountable work culture to support and empower those who work with Concern

How we will measure progress

- Biennial staff survey results tracking engagement, equality and inclusion, leadership trust, systems efficiency and culture of accountability
- Annual progress report on staff trainings
- Staff retention and progression data
- Annual gender pay gap report

Key actions

- Promote an empowering organisational culture encouraging autonomy, trust, and psychological safety, where all staff can contribute meaningfully towards Concern's mission
- Develop and embed a values-based behavioural framework
- Support managers to competently manage, navigate uncertainty and ensure accountability for staff, finances and other resources
- Invest in future-focussed skill sets – AI literacy, digital fluency, and adaptive leadership

* The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is the main body within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) whose evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) serve as the core reference for evaluating international development and humanitarian projects, programmes and policies. The seven 'extended' DAC criteria used for evaluating emergency responses are: relevance / appropriateness; effectiveness; efficiency; impact; coverage / inclusion; coherence; and connectedness.

STRATEGIC ENABLERS

STRATEGIC ENABLER 1: Financial sustainability

Ensure the long-term financial health and resilience of Concern to deliver our mission

How we will measure progress

- Quarterly financial reporting targets
- Progress on cost optimisation plans
- Amendments to budgets based on financial analysis

Key actions

- Define financial sustainability targets
- Establish metrics to guide income generation and resource allocation
- Implement cost optimisation and reduction plans
- Align operational strategies with financial goals through efficient resource use
- Strengthen financial planning, analysis and risk management to better inform decision-making



Lucia Bisenti (10) reading a school book with Concern Programme Support Officer Alan Milanzie in Mchiliko, Nsanje, Malawi.

Photo: Jon Hozier-Byrne/Concern Worldwide

STRATEGIC ENABLER 2: Proactive communications culture

Optimise communications resources across Concern to achieve greater global reach, coherence, and impact

How we will measure progress

- Monitor the frequency and timeliness of communications outputs
- Track leadership engagement in external representation and internal messaging
- Monitor the growth in visibility and engagement metrics across key channels

Key actions

- Embed communications as a shared leadership priority
- Improve proactive, effective internal and external communications
- Support teams to strengthen storytelling and increase participant-led, evidence-based stories in communications outputs

STRATEGIC ENABLER 3: Organisational agility and efficiency

Enhance organisational agility and efficiency to support effectiveness in a changing world

How we will measure progress

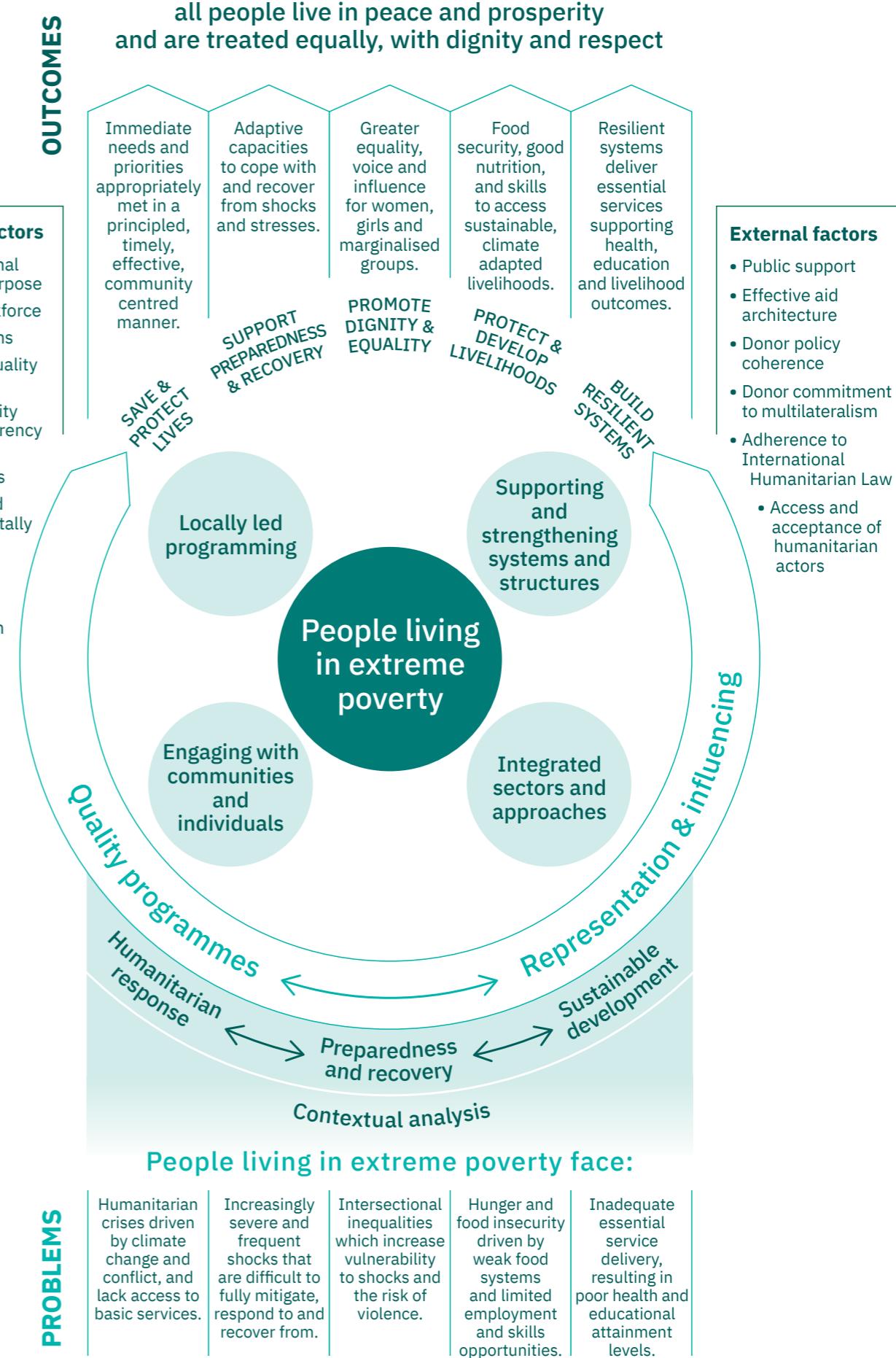
- Organisational review of our ways of working
- Updates on improving organisational ways of working
- Information management systems rollout on schedule and working effectively

Key actions

- Conduct a comprehensive review of our ways of working to inform decisions on global resource allocation, agility and adaptation
- Maximise return on investment in information management systems to drive efficiency and synergy
- Ensure effective collection, structuring and use of data to better inform decision-making
- Enhance digital transformation and expand the adoption of AI throughout the organisation
- Optimise natural resource use and energy efficiency



A world where
all people live in peace and prosperity
and are treated equally, with dignity and respect



5. Concern's Theory of Change – How we advance our vision and mission

This theory of change, developed to better reflect the contexts of fragility in which we work, describes the problems faced by people living in situations of extreme poverty and vulnerability, the actions that need to be taken to address these problems, and what will change if these actions are taken.

Reading from the bottom of the diagram, this theory of change articulates the problem statements at the bottom and the desired outcomes at the top, with the way Concern works and the pathways for change outlined in the centre.

Many enabling factors underpinning this theory of change are within Concern's sphere of control, and these elements continue to be developed as part of the organisational strategic plan. The external factors largely lie beyond our direct control, but we seek to positively influence these where we can.

6. How we will review this plan

Given the enormous financial uncertainty in relation to institutional donor support for ODA, this plan is one of pragmatism and optimism. We will work with compassion, humanity and determination to achieve our mission so that people living in extreme poverty can achieve major improvements in their lives which last and spread without ongoing support from Concern. We will continue to work where the needs are greatest, save and transform lives, protect and develop livelihoods, support recovery, and build long-term resilience.

Concern's Senior Management Team are collectively responsible for overseeing the delivery of this plan's goals and enablers, and for reporting on progress to the Board on an annual basis.

An implementation plan will be developed to support the delivery of the plan, with a working group established for each goal and enabler. Each working group will provide regular progress updates to the Senior Management Team to ensure collective responsibility for the delivery of the plan.

The strategic plans for Concern US, Concern UK, and Concern Korea will complement and contribute to the achievement of this plan.

A detailed review will be completed by the end of 2027. This will consider progress being made, and the viability of the plan in light of any changes in the operating and funding environment.

Images opposite:

1. Khan BiBi, a Concern weaving project participant, Khalilian village, Chahab, Afghanistan. Photo: Nava Jamshidi/Concern Worldwide.
2. Aminata Kougri, an internally displaced person at Yargo, Burkina Faso. Photo: Jean-Paul Ouedraogo/Concern Worldwide.
3. Displaced from Al Zaytoun, Amal Mohammed Ahmanan and her family now live in Al-Zawaida, Gaza Strip. Photo: Concern Worldwide.
4. Single mother-of-four, Dibida Brahim lives in Ouaddai, Chad, and is a RESPECCT programme participant. The programme is a multidimensional effort to help improve livelihoods and economic opportunities for vulnerable people in Eastern Chad. Photo: Kieran McConville/Concern Worldwide.
5. In the town of Grimari, Ouaka in Central African Republic, the mayor performs a ribbon-cutting to mark the contract handover by the RELSUDE project manager. Photo: Concern Worldwide.
6. Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ from Limerick City celebrate winning the All-Ireland Concern Debate 2025, as the competition celebrates 40 years. Left to right: Zoe Norris-Cable, Ellie McCaffrey, Aida Hehir and Prisca Afolabi. Photo: Karen Morgan/Concern Worldwide.
7. Sandrine Sinzobakwira attends school in Cibitoke, Burundi. Photo: Eugene Ikua/Concern Worldwide.
8. Mothers and children collect water and wash their hands at water wells constructed by Concern's Emergency Programme in Baidoa, Somalia. Photo: Concern Worldwide.
9. Father-of-two, Moïse Ukelo, revived his tailoring business thanks to a sewing machine provided under the EAST programme. Photo: Concern Worldwide.
10. Nayou Guah, a farmer and mother-of-five, with a Concern-provided wheelbarrow at an agroforestry project in Grand Bassa, Liberia. Photo: Kieran McConville/Concern Worldwide.
11. Patrick Makani is Chairperson and farmer for the Mano Irrigation Scheme, Valani village in the Mwanza District, Malawi. Photo: Chris Gagnon/Concern Worldwide.
12. Concern Haiti Finance Assistant Claire Dorah Jaetan at Concern office. Photo: Jon Hozier-Byrne/Concern Worldwide.

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www.concern.net

Republic of Ireland

52–55 Lower Camden Street
Dublin 2, D02 H425
+353 1 417 7700
info@concern.net

Northern Ireland

47 Frederick Street
Belfast, BT1 2LW
+44 28 9033 1100
enquiries.info@concern.net

England & Wales

The Foundry
17 Oval Way
London, SE11 5RR
+44 28 9033 1100
enquiries.info@concern.net

USA

420 Lexington Ave #2035
New York, NY 10170
+1 212 557 8000
info.usa@concern.net

Republic of Korea

5F, 12 Yanghwa-ro 11-gil
Mapo-gu
Seoul, 04034
+82 324 3900
info.korea@concern.net



Concern is a member of Alliance2015, a network of European non-governmental organisations engaged in humanitarian and development action.



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