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**A Strategy to Deliver Sustainable Livelihoods for the Extreme Poor through Food, Income and Market (FIM) Interventions: 2014 – 2018**

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Strategy Overview and Highlights

Over the five years of this strategy, we aim to reach over one million extremely poor people annually through our development work in some of the poorest and most vulnerable contexts in the world. Further, it is our intention that by 2018 we will be recognised as a global leader in Food, Income and Market programmes that deliver secure livelihoods to the extreme poor[[1]](#footnote-1).

Our activities will focus on **improving the livelihoods of the extremely poor people by implementing programmes in the poorest and most vulnerable parts of the world**. Building on analysis carried out at country level as part of the Strategic Planning process to identify the poorest parts of a country, all new programmes will undertake a detailed Contextual Analysis before deciding on specific activities to be undertaken. New programmes will be expected to provide clarity on their engagement at household (micro), sub-national (meso) and national (macro) level. Though not saying we will only work with the extremely poor people, all programmes will be able to show that the benefits disproportionately accrue to this target group.

Our programmes will build on our expertise in a number of areas **contributing to lasting improvement in the incomes and food and nutrition security of the Extreme Poor by implementing high quality multi-dimensional programmes**.

Specifically we will focus on:

1. Climate Smart Agriculture: in particular Conservation Agriculture and Agroforestry, with a secondary focus on improving the post-harvest handling of crops to address issues of food and nutrition security and strengthening livestock production systems.
2. Graduation to Economic Productivity: A second stream of programmes will be targeted at an individual level, aimed at graduating selected individuals from extreme poverty. Within all of these we will focus on ensuring the extreme poor are brought into the markets to guarantee the sustainability of benefits accrued.
3. Community Resilience to Under-Nutrition: At community level, we will focus on programmes that develop resilience to under-nutrition, specifically addressing the threats posed by climate change. While we wish to build resilience in all of our programmes, we feel that this is a potential niche area for Concern and combines our understanding of extreme poverty, our experience in DRR, an added nutrition focus of agriculture and other livelihoods programmes with our focus on the most poor-vulnerable countries.
4. Urban Livelihoods: We will start to develop expertise in the implementation of integrated programmes to address urban poverty in disadvantaged areas. While this is more of a context in which to apply specific livelihood interventions, it is important to identify it as an important area for expertise building at an organisational level.
5. Promoting Social Protection: Being aware that not everybody amongst the Extreme Poor will be able to take advantage of the above activities, we will also push for the delivery of national social protection programmes.

Our programmes will also **work towards addressing obstacles and systemic changes necessary to bring about improvements in the lives of the extreme poor**. In line with Concern’s Understanding of Extreme Poverty, we will focus especially on the structural issues of equality and risk and vulnerability and will prioritise new programme development in the overlap between these issues and the nature of programmes described above. We also intend for country programmes to engage at the sub-national and national level on key policy issues relevant to the nature of the programmes, such as anti-poor subsidies in agriculture, for African governments to meet their commitments to the CAADP process, the greater integration of agriculture and nutrition at national level, and addressing the disadvantaged position of the extreme poor, in particular women, in society. Each country programme will be expected to incorporate advocacy in their sustainable livelihoods programmes building on our areas of programme expertise.

To deliver on each of these, country programmes will be expected to produce a brief strategy to promote secure livelihoods through interventions in the area of food, income and markets. This will take account of the local context, the political maturity and capacity of the state and Government’s own commitment to addressing Extreme Poverty. Each strategy can serve as a basis for the production of funding proposals and will highlight our way of working, the focus of our programme and the level of engagement we will target at national level.

While the main aim of the strategy is to deliver impact for our programme participants, as an organisational global strategy, we cannot ignore some internal imperatives to be able to deliver high quality programmes. We will also therefore also include **developing the capacity of those working on our programmes through the provision of high quality technical support and training**. This will be delivered through trainings and coaching on a variety of technical areas while providing support for the improvement of programme quality, and will be manifest in some basic programme improvements. Given the importance of being able achieve and to show clear evidence of, tangible results, these will include the existence of a baseline and endline for all key indicators and a clear impact pathway for all programmes.

During the lifetime of this strategy we intend to reach the same number of beneficiaries each year and are targeting a small increase in expenditure on an annual basis, which will come from carefully targeted sources of co-funding.

Introduction

This strategy is designed to provide focus to Concern’s work in supporting Extremely Poor people and households in the poorest and most vulnerable regions of the world develop secure livelihoods, while enhancing our reputation as one of the leading agencies in the delivery of programmes working on food, incomes and markets in these contexts[[2]](#footnote-2). The focus of the programme means it will contribute towards the achievement of the first Millennium Development Goal, which aims to *eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*, with clear contributions to halving the proportion of the world’s population living below the standard global poverty line of $1.25 per day, and halving the proportion of people suffering from hunger. While we recognise that the MDGs will be replaced by another set of goals, probably universal, we will still focus on tackling extreme poverty and hunger in our sustainable livelihoods programme. Over the five years of this strategy we aim to reach over one million people annually through our development work in this area. It is our intention that by 2018 ***Concern Worldwide will be recognised as a global leader in the design and implementation of Sustainable Livelihoods programmes that deliver secure livelihoods to the extreme poor in the poorest and most vulnerable contexts***.

The five-year period from 2008 to 2013 has seen some major changes both within Concern and in the external environment in which we operate. In a number of the countries where we work, the first decade of the 21st century has seen large-scale economic growth[[3]](#footnote-3), improvements in Human Development and an improvement in the business environment in many countries, albeit from very low beginnings[[4]](#footnote-4), all contributing to a number of developing countries joining the ranks of middle-income countries. At the same time the spread of technology offers an array of opportunities to people in the developing world; around three-quarters of the world’s inhabitants now have access to a mobile phone, offering possibilities that were not available even ten years ago, including technology for improving the efficiency of the agriculture and food sectors[[5]](#footnote-5).

Despite much progress in recent years, our experience shows that the benefits of these improvements in growth and welfare are not being distributed equally. Two years before the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (in 2015) much still needs to be done as 870 million people worldwide continue to suffer from hunger and chronic malnutrition and with child deaths caused by malnutrition 45% higher than previously thought[[6]](#footnote-6).

At the same time the world’s population is growing – presently standing at seven billion this is expected to reach nine billion by 2040[[7]](#footnote-7). Within this the population profile of least developed countries shows a greater proportion of young people who require an education and who will enter the labour market every year, and while this means a younger workforce and lower dependency ratios, it also has the potential for conflict if their expectations and aspirations are not being met. We are also witnessing an increase in urbanisation across countries – 3.5 billion people (roughly half of the world’s population) now live in urban centres. By 2030, this is expected to rise to 61%; by 2050, 80% of the world’s urban population will live in the developing world. However the proportion living in urban areas in the countries we work in, is considerably lower (an estimated 30.5 per cent)[[8]](#footnote-8), from a low of 10.9% in Burundi to over 40% in Haiti, Liberia and DPRK – this means these countries will remain predominantly dependent on agriculture in the short to medium term. Against these changing population dynamics the position of women remains a major challenge, with women accounting for two-thirds of the world's working hours and producing half of the world's food, they earn 10% of the world's income and own less than one per cent of the world's property[[9]](#footnote-9).

Extremely Poor people in developing countries face many risks, a number of which are associated with climate change and the related increase in the incidence and severity of climate-related disasters. There is consensus[[10]](#footnote-10) that “the regional distribution of hungry people will change, with particularly large negative effects in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) owing to the impact of declines in crop yields on both food availability and access”. By 2025, it is projected that 64 per cent of the world’s population will live in water-stressed basins, compared with 38 per cent today – with implications for irrigation, making land more productive and the ability to adopt new varieties. Food security will become more difficult to achieve as commodity prices increase and local production shortfalls become the norm. Extreme weather events will add to the existing corrosive and cumulative negative effects of extensive risks faced on a daily and seasonal basis by the extreme poor.

On top of this, in many countries, the HIV and AIDS epidemic continues to enforce economic hardship and contribute to food and nutrition insecurity, with large proportions of the population who require medication remaining unable to access it.

Internally, Concern’s Strategic Plan (2011-2015) focuses on having a greater impact in an increasingly vulnerable world. The plan contains a commitment to being able to demonstrate how to achieve real change in the poorest and most vulnerable countries, managing frequent emergencies and significant development programmes with an aim of influencing national and international policy. Since May 2010, Concern has also adopted an understanding of ***extreme poverty*** as opposed to poverty. This highlights the lack of basic assets and/or the low return to these assets as the first and core dimension of extreme poverty, with the need to address the causes, maintainers and obstacles that prevent people from escaping extreme poverty. These are many and often interlinked, though the two key ones for us are inequality and risk and vulnerability.

A 2012 review of all the FIM programme evaluations commissioned in the previous three years, found most programmes to be moderately satisfactory or better. These evaluations found that historically FIM programmes focus disproportionately on the generation of assets (and returns to assets) across all streams and regions. In terms of equality many of the programmes evaluated appear to address this by trying to ensure an equal representation of men and women amongst beneficiaries, failing to address systemic, underlying causes of inequality, while there was better coverage of risk and vulnerability, even if interventions tended to deal with vulnerability to a particular shock or hazard. Historically programmes have been challenged by weak systems for monitoring and reporting, though substantial improvements continue to be made in this area. The programme has also struggled with having a national level presence with less than half managing to include an advocacy element in their work. The following strategy outlines how we will address the impact of the external environment on our target group with an evolving programme that is strengthened in its implementation through addressing the constraints identified in the internal analysis. It will be guided by approved policies, specifically

* Livelihood Security Policy (approved June 2003)
* Microfinance Policy (approved March 2004)
* Social Protection Policy (approved 2008)

Working with the Extreme Poor in Poor-Vulnerable Contexts

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| ***Strategic Objective One:*** *To improve the livelihoods of the Extreme Poor by designing and implementing high quality Food, Income and Market programmes in the poorest and most vulnerable parts of the world.* |

Much attention has been drawn to the fact that almost three-quarters of the world’s poorest people live in what is described as Middle Income Countries (MICs) – with two countries, India and China, accounting for half of the world’s poor[[11]](#footnote-11). Our 2012 analysis of the Poor / Vulnerable context showed that across 39 countries where 1 billion people live below the poverty line, almost half (46%) lived in India. However, poverty levels in the world’s least developed countries remain particularly high, estimated at over 80% in countries such as Burundi and Liberia. It is these countries that lack the capacities (and sometimes will) to address Extreme Poverty, requiring additional support, and these countries where we have committed to work. At present we work in 12 of the 20 bottom ranked countries on the Human Development Index. Our own analysis that takes account of inequalities and risks and vulnerabilities as well as assets, shows that all except one of the countries we work in are in the bottom 40 globally. With our exit from Laos, East Timor, Nepal, Cambodia and India and shift to more poor-vulnerable countries, we are now focusing more on Sub Saharan Africa. Of the countries in the bottom 40 in which we do not work, only Yemen and Myanmar are not in Africa.

Understanding context is essential to the type of programme we implement and means we will need to strengthen our capacity to examine the needs, constraints, potentials and opportunities in these fragile environments to inform our programmes. By the end of this strategy all of our Livelihoods programmes will be based on a sound understanding of the context in which they will be implemented, and will be able to demonstrate clearly that they are operating in the poorest and most vulnerable areas of the country. This will in turn influence the level of ambition we need to strive for in terms of influence and policy change, and being able to effect systemic change.

In addition to being better focused in terms of where we work, we also have to be better at identifying with whom we work – the target group for our Livelihood programmes are the extreme poor – and at the end of the day the benefits of any intervention must accrue disproportionately to them. Our contextual analyses should reveal who these vulnerable group(s) are, using a variety of indicators, such as the nutritional burden, education levels and access to education for children and health status as well as their holdings of physical or capital assets – for instance in rural areas this could be women smallholder farmers or landless labourers. Our programmes subsequently need to be designed in a way that ensures that these groups benefit. This will require a great deal of skill in targeting, as the extreme poor are not always reached through our programmes being overlooked at the time of community assessments.

However that does not mean that we only work with the extreme poor. In the early stages of programme implementation it may be necessary to work with lead farmers and community leaders who can influence how decisions are made, with private sector traders who can provide a market for goods produced or a supply of goods otherwise not accessible and with whole communities for natural resource management. However, we have to resist the temptation to work solely with these better off groups who can exhibit faster uptake or overall productivity gains.

Our commitment for the next five years

1. Have 80% of livelihoods programmes being implemented in the poorest and most vulnerable countries and poorest and most vulnerable areas of our countries of operation.
2. Have 80% of livelihoods programmes that include a clear targeting strategy making sure the benefits are accruing to the Extreme Poor.
3. All new livelihoods programmes will be based on a sound contextual analysis, based on Concern’s Understanding of Extreme Poverty and understanding of the livelihood system in the area. This will include a detailed risk analysis, looking at all major risks, not forgetting the often hidden risks of HIV and AIDS or Gender Based Violence (GBV) as well as a detailed equality analysis.
4. Ensure that all livelihoods programmes have effective Monitoring and Evaluation systems that are able to distinguish between the benefits accruing to various targeted groups based on inequality analysis, the prime one being women.
5. All livelihoods programmes will seek to support district level civil society and government institutions as a core part of programming, as far as contextually possible.

Developing Areas of Specialisation in our Work

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| ***Strategic Objective Two:*** *To**contribute to lasting improvements in the Incomes and Food and Nutrition Security of the Extreme Poor by implementing high quality multi-dimensional Programmes* |

Over the five-year period of this strategy we will focus on delivering five distinct types of programme, each developed based on evidence generated from our own research and designed to address Extreme Poverty from a number of directions:

1. Climate Smart Agriculture programmes targeted at the Extreme Poor in rural areas that focus on strengthening the links between agriculture and the markets.
2. Well targeted Graduation style programmes.
3. Programmes aimed at developing Resilience at Community Level.
4. Integrated Programmes to address urban poverty in disadvantaged high population areas.
5. Using knowledge generated from our programmes, especially work in cash transfer and other safety net programmes, to lobby and support Governments to deliver national social protection programmes.

Climate Smart Agriculture and Markets

While 40% of the world’s population are employed in agriculture, amongst the bottom billion this is as high as 70%[[12]](#footnote-12). For this reason, agriculture and agricultural based programmes will remain the mainstay of our livelihoods interventions. For many, agriculture is about more than food it is their livelihood system and a fundamental part of their culture as they continue to face a myriad of challenges to produce more with fewer resources. Within this we recognise the essential role of women in agricultural production and the need to focus our interventions on their access to and control of important resources. Over the next five years our agricultural programmes will focus on three particular areas of work:

1. The introduction of Climate Smart Agriculture, in particular the use of Conservation Agriculture, Agroforestry and System for Rice Intensification (SRI) to bring about sustainable improvements in crop production for both own consumption and sale.
2. Improving the post-harvest handling of crops to reduce losses, including of nutrients, and address food safety concerns through improved handling, processing and value addition.
3. Strengthening livestock production systems, including a focus on developing livestock products, to enhance beneficiary engagement with the market (including pastoralists) as well as for nutritional outcomes.

We will not just emphasise increases in production, but strengthening the nutritional outcomes of our work, based on the premise that producing more food does not assure improved nutrition. This will force us to bring in new elements to our agriculture interventions and ensure our livelihoods teams develop their capacity to analyse the nutritional content of accessible foods, and existing cultivation and feeding practices, as well as introducing bio-fortified crops. This will also require the incorporation of elements of behaviour change communication to try to change “traditional” (and sometimes less effective) means of production.

Figure 1 Agriculture at the Centre of our Rural Livelihoods Programmes



Our work will also focus on making markets based on agricultural production work for the Extreme Poor. We will enhance the capacities of the Extreme Poor to participate in the markets through training and coaching, including assisting in the formulation of producer groups and cooperatives and other culturally and economically appropriate business entities, while working with them to see ‘farming as a business’. We will also work on enhancing their access to microfinance. This will predominantly focus on the establishment of informal savings groups, such as Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), and developing links to formal financial services, where such service providers exist. Underlying this is a better ability to undertake value chain analysis and market assessments, to have a better understanding of how markets function, the roles of different actors in the markets, particularly focussing on men and women, understanding whether micro-enterprises are profitable, and whether we have the capacity to intervene.

Behind any improvement in agricultural production, livestock and forestry is an ability to manage natural resources properly. Environmental degradation is rapidly accelerating and is often linked to climate change, however much can still be done at a local level to deal with some of these challenges. We will work with communities to enhance their capacities to do this, with a particular focus on watershed management and the management of common resources utilised by pastoralist and settled communities, including rangeland management and restoration, fodder production and conservation, water point construction and management, and services for pastoralists.

Finally, women play a particularly important role in addressing the food and income security of extremely poor households. For instance most of the world’s food is grown by women, who represent 40% of the global labour force and 43% of the world’s agricultural labour force[[13]](#footnote-13) however women’s productivity levels are lower than that of men due to inequitable access to fertiliser, extension services and land[[14]](#footnote-14). Our programmes will be designed in a way that enables women’s greater participation and control over the outputs, while taking account of existing workload. This will be a challenge as women are the least represented in community organisations, they lack control over the produce of their labour and are not in a position to make decisions within their household.

#### Our commitment for the next five years

Traditionally agriculture has formed the largest part of our livelihoods programmes, and we do not expect this to change over the coming years – however we do expect to achieve the following:

* Implement Conservation Agriculture programmes in at least eight countries[[15]](#footnote-15), with clear strategies for measuring yields and disaggregated benefits between men and women.
* Clearly document the benefits of Conservation Agriculture, both in terms of production and elevating the position of women, and make an assessment of the amount of carbon sequestered through our interventions to allow the opportunity to trade these savings.
* Introduce agroforestry into programmes in five countries[[16]](#footnote-16).
* Introduce SRI into at least three countries[[17]](#footnote-17) documenting the process involved and the benefits accruing to the Extreme Poor.
* Ensure 80% of our agriculture programmes include nutrition indicators at an outcome level.
* Introduce specific post-harvest activities in eight countries that contribute to reductions in food crop losses[[18]](#footnote-18).
* In four countries[[19]](#footnote-19) develop a strategy for interacting with pastoralist communities that informs the development of all our programmes.
* In at least four countries, work with local organisations on some of the systemic problems that affect production, such as ensuring access to land with secure tenure arrangements for poor women and men.
* Introduce elements of context appropriate microfinance into 10 country programmes and clearly document our experiences in this[[20]](#footnote-20). This will distinguish between (a) where we have linked the Extreme Poor to existing formal institutions (b) where we have facilitated the establishment of institutions in either the formal or the informal sector.
* Undertake comprehensive market and value chain analysis in six countries to inform the development of market sensitive interventions[[21]](#footnote-21).
* Establish and strengthen producer and marketing groups, in which the Extreme Poor participate, to the level they are able to engage with existing private sector operators on an equal basis in six countries.
* Implement natural resource management programmes, particularly watershed management programmes, in at least five countries[[22]](#footnote-22) and conduct a comparative analysis between them, documenting how this has enhanced community level resilience and showing how the extreme poor and women in particular have benefitted from this work.

Graduation from Extreme Poverty

However, in rural areas there are those amongst the Extreme Poor who will not remain as farmers, whether due to lack of access to land, an inability to farm or personal choice. For these people, our programme will need to focus on enhancing their capacities to undertake new livelihoods as they leave agriculture. This group includes poor and vulnerable farmers with land holdings too small for a viable livelihood and the “left behind” pastoralists. New livelihoods are also required for recent migrants to urban areas, including small provincial towns and peri-urban areas as well as for urban youths who experience very high rates of unemployment. For these individuals, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) or enrolment on a Graduation programme that enhances their individual skills may be more appropriate.

In that regard, during the lifetime of this strategy we will promote the expansion of our Graduation Programme, which includes elements of (i) comprehensive targeting, (ii) consumption support, (iii) skills training and regular coaching, (iv) micro-finance, and (v) asset transfer. We are committed to undertaking Graduation Programmes in at least five countries[[23]](#footnote-23) in a way that the experiences are clearly documented and lessons learned. This will build on earlier work in Haiti and Burundi and focus on enabling the poorest to generate income, build skills, confidence, social and financial capital and to create a pathway for them to become included in mainstream microfinance and value chains. We will continue to adapt the lessons coming from international experiences to make sure they are applicable to the poor vulnerable contexts in which we work[[24]](#footnote-24).

Any such programme has to be seen as “part of the whole” rather than as training for jobs or markets that may not exist, and will require a great deal of preparation work, including careful targeting and analysis of markets. We also have to be aware that the number of beneficiaries for such a programme will be small, and the cost of delivering the programme high. However this needs to be offset against the sustainability and long-term impact of these interventions, and the opportunity they offer to break the inter-generational transmission of poverty.

#### Our commitment for the next five years

* Implement Graduation programmes in five countries, with a particular focus on ensuring the appropriate targeting process is followed and we can measure the sustainability of the benefits accruing.
* Address global knowledge gaps in terms of the costs of the different components of the Graduation programme and its applicability to poor-vulnerable contexts in which we work.

Community Resilience to Under Nutrition

The third type of programme builds on our experiences of implementing the Community Resilience to Acute Malnutrition (CRAM) model in Chad and earlier experiences in Niger, Ethiopia and Kenya. Concern defines resilience as the ability of a community, household or individual to anticipate, respond to, cope with, and recover from the effects of shocks and adapt to stresses in a timely and effective manner, without compromising their long-term prospects of moving out of poverty.

Within our programmes, our particular focus is on working at the community level to develop resilience to under nutrition. This is done through a multi-sectoral series of interventions across areas such as agriculture, agro forestry, WASH and health system strengthening, alongside developing strategies for disaster risk reduction (DRR) at community level, all with a focus on improving nutritional outcomes. At the same we will focus on promoting the provision of social protection to the most vulnerable in society, while incorporating elements of early warning and early action into our programmes.

Resilience programmes require greater integration across our programme areas, and a focus on breaking down the (artificial) silos that have emerged between humanitarian response and development programming, with a focus on ensuring we have Early Warning and Early Action (EWEA) built into our programmes.

It is important to note that the building of resilience is important across sectors and programmes and can be seen as a cross-cutting issue, just as HIV and AIDS was a specific programme but also needed to be a critical issue for analysis and addressing in other sector programmes. However, we also feel that it is important to identify a number of specific programmes where the building of resilience to under-nutrition (our best proxy measure of ‘hunger’) is the key goal. We believe that this is a significant niche area for Concern.

#### Our Commitment

* To expand our community resilience programming to at least eight countries by 2016[[25]](#footnote-25) and to ensure that this will focus on learning the lessons in the implementation of these programmes

Integrated Urban Programmes

While the majority of our programmes will remain rural in nature, we will start to develop an expertise and knowledge base around working in urban areas – a reflection of the growing number of people in the world living in these contexts. This will build on our experiences in Addis Ababa, Monrovia, Freetown, Port-au-Prince, Nairobi, Kabul and Dhaka to develop more coherent, integrated urban programmes that also draw on the experiences from other sectors.

With high population densities in urban areas, usually higher again in slum areas, even small scale disaster affect larger numbers than in rural areas.

We acknowledge that working with Extremely Poor urban populations is a challenge – prior to programming, we may lack even the most basic information about their age profile, their rationale for being in the cities, the structures in which they live and their coping strategies. While targeting can be particularly difficult in urban areas, with major differences in income levels even within the “slum areas”, any urban programme will be based on a strong understanding of context, where ‘city level’ measures of poverty and progress are balanced against rural measures. Given also the differing population densities and different impact of disasters, we will build on the urban indicators for emergencies work currently being undertaken in Nairobi, Kenya to better analyse and plan for humanitarian crises in urban areas.

The main types of livelihoods interventions we or our partners shall manage in urban contexts include: graduation from extreme poverty (model), micro-enterprise usually with microfinance, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), DRR and emergency response activities. The usual cross-cutting issues shall be built into programme design and activities.

Our urban livelihoods programmes will be closely linked with activities in the area of health and nutrition security, education and water and sanitation.

While we will undertake a small number of programmes in favour of the Extreme Poor in large urban centres, we will also develop expertise on working in more remote and small urban settlements. It is in these areas that we face the biggest challenges, particularly in times of forced migration, such as Mornei in West Darfur and Goz Beida in Chad. It is in these areas that the opportunities in terms of working with the markets are not being maximised, particularly when it comes to developing linkages with the agricultural sector and acting as service hubs.

#### Our Commitment for the next five years

* Develop at least five urban programmes that address extreme poverty in this context building on our existing experiences and utilising the interventions listed above.
* Explore and develop an effective surveillance system for shocks in the urban context.

Using knowledge generated from our Programmes to lobby for Social Protection

A number of the programmes outlined above (specifically the Graduation interventions) focus on the realisation of the “promotive” aspect of social protection, however, the unfortunate reality is that even after exposure to these some of the Extreme Poor will require support from a comprehensive, government led Social Protection programme. In that respect we will promote Social Protection at a national level as *a means of enabling these programmes to maximise depth of reach to those living in extreme poverty*[[26]](#footnote-26). International evidence shows that supporting specific groups – particularly the elderly – with long term and predictable consumption support can also foster poverty reduction more broadly since transfers are invested in such things as the education of grandchildren and enabling work-seeking amongst care givers[[27]](#footnote-27). However, we recognise that this is a permanent commitment and must be the responsibility of the governments. In this regard we will advocate to governments and donors for an increased commitment to social protection.

In some countries rapid - but inequitable - growth means that this is now affordable, opening the opportunity for us to push for a better redistribution of the benefits of this growth. Where appropriate we will work with governments and strengthen their capacity to coordinate, design and implement integrated, pro-poor social protection systems which are entitlement based and provide a minimum level of support for citizens throughout the life cycle. In countries that have large-scale social assistance programmes, such as the PSNP in Ethiopia, the FSNP in Kenya or the VUP in Rwanda, we will particularly focus on ensuring that the benefits of these programmes are reaching the Extreme Poor. Where the extremely poor people are highly vulnerable to risk of food and income insecurity caused by widespread, repeated shocks we will advocate for the inclusion of effective and reliable safety nets or social insurance mechanisms they are contextually appropriate and will share evidence from our own humanitarian interventions.

#### Our commitment for the next five years

* In five countries, we will work closely with governments and other actors, including Civil Society Organisations, to develop national Social Protection policies and strategies, programmes or systems[[28]](#footnote-28).
* Contribute to the international evidence base regarding the design and implementation of interventions supporting social protections systems, such as cash transfers, that are beneficial for the extreme poor.
* In two countries, and in close consultation with other programmes, explore means of optimising and measuring the impact of social protection interventions on nutritional outcomes.

What will a country programme look like?

The types of programmes we undertake will be influenced by the national and local context. We can loosely group our countries of operation into three streams.

* Stream One Countries have weak local capacities, often with no tradition of service provision by central government, and are afflicted by frequent natural hazards, conflict, poor security and instability. In these countries, our work will focus on the contiguous nature of interventions traditionally described as emergency response, rehabilitation and longer term-development, with a general focus on enhancing community resilience. In these contexts, we often deliver benefits to our target group directly with little scope for policy dialogue.
* Stream Two Countries are more stable, with a government somewhat committed to service provision and are easier to work in, though there are still operational challenges. In this context, we will focus on longer-term programmes, developing a greater engagement with government agencies and system strengthening, and focus on improving targeting. Programmes implemented here include the likes of the Graduation and RAIN models.
* Stream Three Countries have a higher level of domestic capacity for service delivery and we expect our interventions to be at the forefront of innovative programming. Much of our work is delivered through partners, with an emphasis on influencing policy change to benefit the extreme poor. Our programmes will deal with specific issues such as vulnerability to natural disaster, political instability or the exclusion of specific areas or groups of people.

The following figure tries to capture graphically the types of programmes appropriate for specific countries.

Figure 2 A snapshot of what Livelihoods Programmes could look like at Country Level



The columns distinguish between the types of contexts, ranging from countries that are politically unstable, to ones that have a rapidly increasing urban population to ones that are highly vulnerable to natural disaster – countries can belong to more than one group. The rows represent the three specific streams described above, while the bubbles illustrate the type of programme which we could focus on implementing. The final column tries to show the balance between micro (or community) level engagement and macro (or national) level engagement we expect to see.

This table is not exhaustive, and there are further elements that need to be considered that will influence the type of programme that can be implemented, for instance whether a country has a high HIV prevalence rate (e.g. Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia). There may also be geographic differences within a country which need to be considered. In this respect, each country programme needs to clarify for itself where it fits into this and the type of livelihoods programmes they intend to implement. This should be done by producing a brief strategy to promote secure livelihoods through interventions in the area of food, income and markets.

To assess the impact of our work in these programmes each will include indicators that are able to assess:

* Improvements in Dietary Diversity (of children under-two and women)
* Improvements in the Coping Strategies Index
* Improvements in the Households Assets Index
* Harvested crop yield per hectare (for agricultural programmes)
* Proportion of months in a year in which households report a shortage of food
* Changes in income as a direct result of undertaking new activities (whether agriculture or adopting new businesses)
* Seasonal workloads of women
* Nutrition Status - Stunting and Acute Malnutrition

What we want to Change

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| ***Strategic Objective Three:*** *Our livelihoods programmes will work towards addressing obstacles and systemic changes necessary for sustainable improvements in the lives of extremely poor people.* |

Many of our activities in the area of agriculture, markets and natural resource management entail working directly with the Extreme Poor, or through partners. However we recognise that we also need to work at both meso (district) and macro (national) level to bring about changes to the enabling environment and the social, economic and political processes that contribute to vulnerability and food insecurity. This could be through a variety of subjects identified during the contextual analysis such as:

* The reduction of clearly anti-poor subsidies in agriculture, and/or the potential to introduce or expand smart, pro-poor subsidies, such as grants for drip irrigation, ceiling and floor prices for staples or micro-nutrient enhanced fertiliser.
* For African governments to meet their budgetary commitments to agriculture under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and for better food system governance.
* The greater integration of national level nutrition and agriculture initiatives towards a common goal of improved child nutrition.
* Ensuring the role of women in agriculture is understood and that policies introduced at national level do not disproportionally increase the burden on them without addressing issues of access to and control of resources.
* The delivery of Social Protection programmes by national governments.
* Pro-poor and pro-pastoralist land tenure regimes.

While it is essential for us to work with government-led systems, we must be clear on our role and not blindly support or implement them. Where necessary, we need to challenge government policies and seek to inform and improve these, particularly as they relate to the often-neglected Extreme Poor. A frequently recurring theme across the documents reviewed for the most recent FIM meta-evaluation, was the need for greater clarity on what is being done in the advocacy element of the livelihoods programmes, and that this needs to come from developing a clearer theory of change utilising existing results frameworks, that can be targeted at national or district level.

Additionally, it is our intention to carve out a programme niche that allows us to show a high level of expertise in terms of enhancing the livelihoods of the extreme poor. In addition to implementing high quality programmes, we need to put ourselves in a position in which we are influential and able to have an impact at policy level, both nationally and internationally. As an organisation we are investing heavily in research around the implementation of our flagships programmes in the areas of Prevention of Undernutrition (PUN, also known as RAIN), Graduation and Community Resilience, and have prioritised interventions such as Conservation Agriculture. During the course of this livelihoods strategy we will ensure that the impact on our target populations and the lessons in implementation are learned and documented, and presented in a coherent manner through a number of different channels.

Over the next five years, we will undertake high quality operational or action research in at least three countries on priority areas in this strategy, while continuing to develop small scale research interventions with new and existing partners.

#### Our commitment for the next five years

* In almost all countries, work with the advocacy team to develop a national advocacy strategy linking the outputs from livelihoods programmes with key advocacy messages.
* Be able to demonstrate our contribution to significant policy change in at least four countries in favour of the extreme poor.
* Ensure the lessons from our Resilience Programmes feed into the global advocacy and campaign agenda.
* Target the lessons from the Graduation Programmes towards influencing national and global discussions on Social Protection.
* As part of our livelihoods programmes, support indigenous civil society institutions that link community realities with national policy and strategy debates.

Implementing the Strategy

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| ***Strategic Objective Four:*** *To develop the capacity of those working on our programmes through the provision of high quality technical support and training.* |

This strategy should not be taken as a blueprint for how to do livelihoods programmes. It is hoped that it provides a framework for those responsible for implementation at country level to improve and develop what they are doing, as well as ensuring that as an organisation we are learning – through a cycle of monitoring, evaluation and adjustment. To assist with this, we will strive to ensure that we provide appropriate high quality technical assistance in a timely manner that helps to develop the capacities of those working on the programmes, both Concern and partner staff, to deliver. This will include:

* Maintaining a regular flow of information between technical advisers and field staff through “help-desk” support, visits, workshops, webinars, newsletters and technical briefs.
* Providing support that enhances programme quality including design, planning, monitoring and evaluation, developing a results focus and strengthening impact pathways.
* Undertaking Value for Money analysis in at least three livelihoods programmes over the course of this strategy.
* Presenting at least three papers at international conferences outlining our experiences and successes.
* Build Concern’s reputation in livelihoods programmes through contributing to key peer networks and university courses.

A Results Framework has been developed to go alongside this strategy and will form the basis of reporting to Concern’s Council on progress in the implementation of the livelihoods strategy. In addition, annual milestones will be used to track progress on a more regular basis. At country programme level it will be essential that all livelihoods interventions have a baseline and an endline which allows for an assessment of the success of the interventions.

Funding and Beneficiary Numbers

Funding for FIM Programmes has remained reasonably constant over the 2009 to 2012 period, and during the lifetime of this strategy we are targeting a slight increase in expenditure year on year. In terms of the composition of the budget, we expect this to comprise 15% from own resources (reflecting the recent downturn in this area, which saw it drop as a proportion of the FIM programme from 23.6% in 2009 to 13.7% in 2011), 35% from Irish Aid Programmes Financing (and its successor programme post-2016), and 50% from other co-funding sources.

At present, this co-funding predominantly comes from the EU (42%), USAID (14%), DFID (3%) and Others (41%), which suggests an obvious scope to target more submissions for funding at DFID. In that respect, we will look at strengthening the technical support available to the UK office in the preparation of multi-country programmes. The technical support team will also work with the New Business Development team to identify key donors that can provide funding for the livelihoods strategy. This is the rationale for the slight annual increase included on the preceding figure (as represented by the red line in the figure below).

Figure 3 Projected Trend in Funding and Beneficiary Numbers (2009 to 2018)

**Source:** Concern Worldwide Annual Reports and Accounts 2008 – 12

Finally, over the past number of years, as we became clearer in terms of how we measure beneficiary numbers at country level, the number of direct beneficiaries from the livelihoods programme has shown a rapid decline. However, we expect this to bottom out from 2013 (as shown by the blue or dotted line on the figure).

As more beneficiaries are included on Graduation style programmes (which based on our current experiences can cost up to €140 per beneficiary per year, as opposed to our 2012 expenditure of approximately €26 per beneficiary), the average cost per beneficiary is likely to increase (as shown by the green or dashed line on the figure). However, we feel this is justified in terms of the longer-term sustainability of these programmes in terms of the benefits accruing to the Extreme Poor. We shall monitor this coverage v. impact balance carefully during the strategy.

1. In this paper, we use the term livelihoods in two ways: 1) to denote ‘the means by which a person or household makes a living over time’, which is central to our Livelihood Security policy; and 2) to mean our programme of livelihoods supporting interventions which has previously been called Food, Income and Markets (FIM). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Concern has a policy on Livelihood Security, since 2003, and has been implementing programmes under the heading of Food, Income and Markets (FIM) for a number of years. This strategy attempts to bring a more consistent approach to the utilisation of the terms. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Data from the World Bank’s *World Development Indicators* suggests that per capita income in US dollar terms has increased (between 2004 and 2012) by between 17% (as recorded in Haiti) and 157% (as recorded in Liberia). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The World Bank’s *Doing Business Report* show the costs of starting a business as a percentage of per capita income has declined in almost all of the countries we work in between 2009 and 2013 (with the exceptions being Chad, Kenya and Haiti), while the cost of dealing with construction permits also shows a decline, except for the same three countries and Zambia. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See for example, http://www.vodafone.com/content/dam/vodafone/about/sustainability/2011/pdf/connected\_agriculture.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Lancet, June 2013 – Maternal and Child Nutrition [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. An estimate for population projections for all countries is available at <http://populationpyramid.net/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. All urbanization figures have been calculated from data available at <http://esa.un.org/unup/index.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. (2005). Gender Equality, Education and Sustainable Growth. Istanbul, Turkey, Eighth Eurasian Economic Summit: Section for Women and Gender Equality, Bureau of Strategic Planning. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. World Bank (2012) Turn Down the Heat – Why a 4 degree Celsius warmer world must be avoided. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See for example Sumner, A. (2010) Global Poverty And The ‘New Bottom Billion’: What If Three-Quarters Of The World’s Poor Live In Middle-Income Countries? -http://www.ids.ac.uk/publication/global-poverty-and-the-new-bottom-billion-what-if-three-quarters-of-the-world-s-poor-live-in-middle-income-countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. World Economic Forum – Putting the New Vision for Agriculture into Action <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FB_NewVisionAgriculture_HappeningTransformation_Report_2012.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. World Bank (2012) World Development Report 2012 – Gender Equality and Development, Washington, World Bank [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Agricultural yields are estimated to be about 20–30% lower for women for these reasons. See FAO (2011) The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11: Women in Agriculture – Closing the Gender Gap for Development, Rome, FAO [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Potentially Malawi, Zambia, DPRK, Tanzania, Liberia, Republic of Sudan, South Sudan, Haiti [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Potentially Chad, Malawi, Zambia, Republic of Sudan and Niger [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Potentially Bangladesh, Zambia, Sierra Leone [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Potential countries: Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Haiti, South Sudan, Chad, Republic of Sudan. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. From Chad, Republic of Sudan, Kenya, Niger and Ethiopia [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. From Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Haiti, Bangladesh, Malawi, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Kenya [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Kenya, DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Malawi, Bangladesh, Uganda and Mozambique [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Republic of Sudan, DPRK, Haiti [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Rwanda, Burundi, Haiti, Zambia, Somaliland [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. This is easily accessible at <http://graduation.cgap.org/about/> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Chad, Niger, Ethiopia, Kenya, Pakistan, South Sudan, Republic of Sudan and Somalia [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Concern Worldwide Social Protection Policy [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Vincent and Cull, (2009);Impacts of social cash transfers: case study evidence from across southern Africa; Devereux, “Social pensions in Namibia and South Africa”, IDS Discussion Paper 379, 2001 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Kenya and Zambia [↑](#footnote-ref-28)