



# KNOWLEDGE MATTERS

Private Sector and Social Enterprise  
Engagement

Issue 32 | August 2022

**CONCERN**  
worldwide

**ENDING  
EXTREME POVERTY  
WHATEVER  
IT TAKES**

If you have any contributions, ideas or topics for future issues of Knowledge Matters please contact the editorial team by email at [knowledgematters@concern.net](mailto:knowledgematters@concern.net).

The views expressed are the authors' and do not necessarily coincide with those of Concern Worldwide or its partners.

## Knowledge Matters basics

Knowledge Matters offers practice-relevant analysis relating to the development and humanitarian work of Concern Worldwide. It provides a forum for staff and partners to exchange ideas and experiences. The publication is committed to encouraging high quality analysis in the understanding of Concern's work. Concern staff and partners document their ideas and experiences through articles. Articles are very short – 500 – 1,500 words. Usually, you only have space to make one or two interesting points. Here are some tips on writing a short feature article:

- Start by imagining your audience – a Concern colleague. Why are they interested – why do they want to read what you have to say? When you identify what your most important point is, say it straight away, in the title or first sentence.
- What can others learn from your story? Focus on this. Remember to back up your story with evidence. This can be taken from evaluations.
- It's easier to get people reading if you start with the human perspective – mentioning real people and real-life events. (You don't have to give names).
- Use short sentences. Use Concern's style guide to help you.
- Keep paragraphs to a maximum of six lines long.
- Use clear language. Many of the readers of Knowledge Matters are non-native English or French speakers, so think carefully about using phrases or colloquial language that might not be easily understood by others.
- Always avoid assuming too high a level of knowledge of the topic you are writing about on the part of the reader.
- Use active sentences ('we held a workshop' not 'a workshop was held by us')
- Use short and clear expressions.
- Keep your title short - no more than eight words.
- Where necessary use photos to accompany the narrative but ensure that you follow the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.

**Cover photo:** Sensory analysis with trained panellists at Kerry Taste and Nutrition, Nairobi, November 2019. Photo: John Kipkurui / Concern Worldwide.

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## From the Issue Editor:

Welcome to the latest issue of Knowledge Matters! This issue showcases many of the diverse ways that Concern has been engaging with private sector and social enterprises to date, in a number of different countries, through:

- Shared value partnerships, comprising collaborative programme development/co-creation and implementation, technical expertise and advisory support, service provision;
- Private sector development and engagement, including facilitation of market linkages through value chains and financial inclusion;
- Funding support.

The articles examine both the rationale and process for those engagements, demonstrates the added value of these diverse partnerships to Concern's programming and, most importantly, their contribution to bringing impactful and sustainable outcomes in the lives of programme participants and the wider communities in countries where Concern works. The articles do not exhaustively capture all Concern's work with private sector and social enterprises to date, but illustrates a strong cross-section of varied and insightful examples from Concern's programming in Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan and Pakistan.

This issue evidences the cross-organisational efforts on this theme across Country teams, New Business Development and Fundraising colleagues, SAL technical advisors and the International Programmes Directorate, all of whom have either written or contributed to articles showcased in this Knowledge Matters. I thank the authors and reviewers who together have made this issue possible, with special recognition to Jenny Swatton, Regine Kopplow, Emanuela Burello and Amy Rose Mc Govern who initially came up with the idea and suggested the issue outline, as well as Finola Mohan for her support to produce the content.

Enjoy reading these articles! I hope the innovations, promising practices and learnings they contain will provide good inspiration for further exciting opportunities to engage with private sector and social enterprises, leading to ever more impactful programming.

**Andrea Solomon**, Markets & Cash Adviser, SAL Livelihoods Team

# Introduction to Working with Private Sector and Social Enterprises

Written by Andrea Solomon

## Defining “the Private Sector” and “Social Enterprises”?

Concern’s interest and commitment to engage with Private Sector and Social Enterprises is well articulated in a number of organisational documents:

- **Concern’s Strategic Plan 2021-2025:** ‘Reaching the Furthest Behind First’<sup>1</sup> contains a commitment to “*localisation and strengthening of local capacity*”, as well as to “*deepen our partnerships with the private sector, in line with our values and mission*”.
- Further, the goal of Concern’s **Private Sector Engagement Strategy** 2019-2025 is to “*Increase the value and impact of Concern’s relationships with private sector actors by building strategic partnerships that complement and enhance Concern programmes and help us to deliver Concern’s mission*”.
- Complementary to this, **Concern’s Livelihoods Strategy** 2021-2025, with its focus a market-based livelihoods, specifies that, “*Our work will focus on barriers to market entry, and work to achieve sustainable solutions in facilitating market access, while working with other market actors to adapt existing services to make them ‘pro-poor’ or supporting private sector actors and enhancing technology transfer. This means that we will place greater emphasis on sustainable*

*market-based solutions working with different market actors to address systemic constraints in the market system.”*

These Concern strategies are informed by, reflect and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, especially **SDG17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.**<sup>2</sup>

The **Private Sector** can be defined as “*Organisations that have a core strategy and mission to engage in profit-seeking activities through the production of goods, provision of services, and/or commercialisation.*”<sup>3</sup>

A **Social Enterprise** on the other hand can be understood as: “*An operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. There is no single legal form for social enterprises. Many social enterprises operate in the form of social cooperatives, some are registered as private companies limited by guarantee, some are mutual, and a lot of them are non-profit-distributing organisations like provident societies, associations, voluntary organisations, charities or foundations.*”<sup>4</sup>

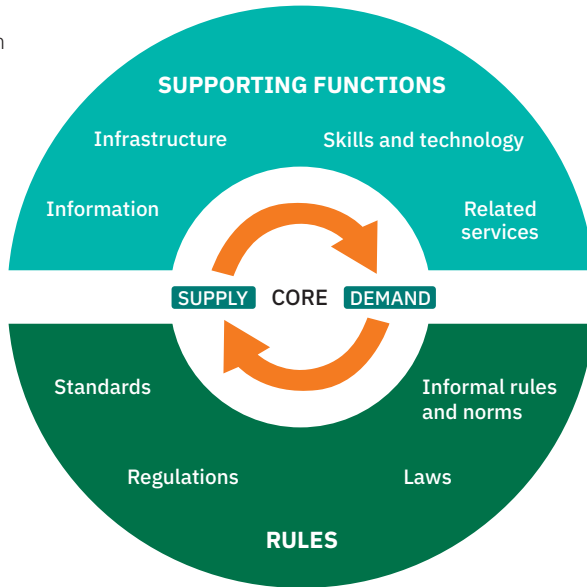
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.concern.net/knowledge-hub/concern-worldwide-strategic-plan-2021-2025>

<sup>2</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal17>

<sup>3</sup> Concern’s Private Sector Engagement Strategy 2019-2025

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu/social-enterprises\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu/social-enterprises_en)

**FIGURE 1:**  
The market system



## Why is Concern interested in working with the Private Sector and Social Enterprises?

Concern operates within - and our programme participants live, access goods and services, and conduct their livelihood activities within - broader systems that extend beyond the organisation's immediate programme and project interventions. Market systems in particular are vital to how people survive and thrive. Beyond the physical marketplaces where people meet to buy and sell products and services there is a whole market system that comprises the core function of exchange (the supply chain) and the supporting functions and rules that govern not only the production but also the delivery and quality of products and services to the end user.<sup>5</sup> Where market systems function well and are inclusive, people and businesses can benefit from economic growth. There are a

whole range of varied stakeholders in any given market system, including private sector actors and social enterprises as well as government, communities, NGOs, regulatory bodies, etc. Yet people living in conditions of extreme poverty, who are Concern's primary programme participants, often lack integration with market systems. If we overlook to recognise, analyse and, where appropriate, intentionally seek to engage, influence and/or work with those other stakeholders, then efforts towards extreme poverty reduction are unlikely to achieve their full potential.

This is where a market systems development approach (which aims at identifying and addressing the root causes of why markets often fail to meet the needs of people living in conditions of poverty) comes in - to create lasting changes that have larger-scale impact.<sup>6</sup> There is a huge opportunity to leverage the experience,

<sup>5</sup> SDC/DFID 2015 Making Markets Work For The Poor Operational Guide: <https://www.enterprise-development.org/wp-content/uploads/m4pguide2015.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://beamexchange.org/market-systems/what-market-system/>

knowledge, expertise, technology, market presence and financial capacities of private sector and social enterprise actors, and to align our collective energies and efforts to poverty reduction outcomes.

## How can we work with Private Sector and Social Enterprises actors?

Once range of stakeholders and their respective (current or potential) roles and interactions within the market system have been mapped out and sufficiently well understood, it is important to explore the (potential) motivations of those stakeholders and why they might be interested to engage with projects aiming at development or humanitarian outcomes. At the same time, it is important to reflect on what Concern can offer to those actors and how working together could align with their current business goals or add value to future endeavours. The same applies whether the entity has its base and primary operations in developed or developing country/ies.

Some key considerations when scoping and analysing potential partnerships can include:

- Shared values e.g. CSR commitment; Social Enterprises, and a commitment towards a common objective;
- Added value of working through a collaborative multi-stakeholder approach to achieve the intended outcome or impact;
- What market systems changes the partner could contribute to, i.e. which specific expertise, technology, experience, influence etc may they have that can be harnessed;
- What Concern, our partners and programme participants can most benefit and learn from the private sector actor or social enterprise; and -vice-versa:

“The private sector engages with development and humanitarian funding for different reasons: from altruism through to improving shareholder value by increasing market size or market share. The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a critical driver for private sector involvement in international development. We are also conscious of Mutual Social Responsibility – where businesses, their suppliers and consumers combine to take a shared interest in, and assume a mutual responsibility for, being good citizens.”

*Concern’s Private Sector Engagement Strategy*

- What the private sector or social enterprise can learn from Concern, our partner and our programme participants, that could help them improve their products/services and expand their consumer/client base or social impact.

Concern has identified and gained experience working with private sector and social enterprise to date through:

- Shared value partnerships, comprising collaborative programme development/ co-creation and implementation, technical expertise and advisory support, service provision;
- Private sector development and engagement, including facilitation of market linkages through value chains, and efforts to create an enabling environment for programme participants’ businesses to flourish, such as financial inclusion;
- Financial support, which generally comes from company CSR budgets or from corporate foundations. Development of new funding models is also being explored.

## Examples of working with the Private Sector and Social Enterprises:

The articles in this issue of Knowledge Matters represent these varying types of private sector and social enterprise partnerships and aims. They demonstrate several aspects of work across the market system, engaging at different times and in different ways. This includes:

- the core functions of supply and demand (including, for example, through value chains work or improving access to livelihoods inputs)
- supporting functions (such as access to finance, information, technology, skills, infrastructure)
- working to improve rules and norms (such as laws, standards, regulations, as well as issues of exclusion/marginalisation relating to gender, (dis)ability, displacement status, etc)
- providing funding and specialist expertise to enable and strengthen programme activities and their outcomes.

There are several articles that evidence collaboration with private sector and social enterprise actors to strengthen livelihoods opportunities and household income of people living in conditions of poverty through inclusion in value chains. The **Lishe Poa project in Kenya** is an excellent example of how the expertise of various stakeholders in the market system have been brought together for **product development, manufacturing, marketing, sales and demand-creation of highly nutritious, affordable chapatis** made from yellow-fleshed sweet potato dough. The article also demonstrates the engagements of Concern's Kenya team to improve the policy and regulatory environment for food standards and fortification.

We read in another article about how Concern has introduced bio-fortified millet to farmers and linked them to the social enterprise PAFAN for **production and marketing of nutritious millet flour in Niger**. Both projects in Kenya and Niger have resulted in dual outcomes through both improved household incomes for the primary programme participants (street-food vendors and farmers respectively) as well as improvements to household nutrition within the communities, especially of infants, young children, pregnant and lactating women.

An article from **Pakistan** explains how Concern is supporting **inclusion of women Afghan refugees in the garment and accessories value chain** through linkage to local social enterprises for development, production and marketing of beautiful products that draw on traditional heritage designs. These products are then marketed and sold within international markets where there is high demand.

An article from **Malawi's PROSPER** Resilience programme provides another excellent example of how private sector collaboration can be leveraged and market systems development approaches applied to improve sustainable outcomes and impacts for Concern's programme participants. PROSPER Markets took a **co-creation approach to identify and engage local/national private sector companies** working in the targeted market systems to improve access to improved inputs and services for increased agricultural production and sales.

In another article, we read how women in Mogadishu, **Somalia** are being supported to establish and grow their own small businesses as market actors through the evolution of women's Self-Help Groups to Cluster Level Associations. This continued to establishing a Womens' Savings Hub, registered as a Social Enterprise, which is **strengthening financial inclusion through**

## linkages to micro-finance institutions/ banks and private sector inputs suppliers.

This article also explains how consultancy services from a Nairobi-based social enterprise were engaged to support the process of developing and piloting the Savings Hub innovation.

Another article explains how Concern has been collaborating with the global **engineering consultancy Mott McDonald** since 2017, showcasing an example of the technical advisory partnership to find solutions to challenges and support quality

standards on WASH construction projects in **South Sudan**.

Our final article highlights how Concern's relationship with **Kerry Group** and **Z Zurich Foundation** has evolved, enabling not only **funding support** to really interesting projects in several countries but also deepening the shared value partnerships to benefit from **the technical and market-specific expertise** of those companies. Concern also works in partnership with other companies such as innocent Foundation and Accenture in a similar way.

TERM	DEFINITION
Market	A set of arrangements by which buyers and sellers are in contact to exchange goods or services; the interaction of demand and supply. <sup>7</sup>
Market system	A multi-function, multi-player arrangement comprising the core function of exchange by which goods and services are delivered and the supporting functions and rules which are performed and shaped by a variety of market players. <sup>6</sup>
Inclusive market systems	Market systems that engage and benefit a range of actors including the poor, women, youth, ethnic minorities and/or other marginalized groups who are often excluded – or even exploited – by traditional market systems. <sup>8</sup>
Market systems development	An approach that seeks to address the root causes of why markets often fail to meet the needs of people living in conditions of poverty. It looks to find solutions from within the market itself. It recognises that these environments are complex and will not be easily solved, and that sustainable solutions must be sought. MSD focuses on interventions that modify the incentives and behaviour of businesses and other market players – public, private, formal and informal – to ensure lasting and large-scale beneficial change to poor people. <sup>9,10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> SDC/DFID 2015 Making Markets Work For The Poor Operational Guide: <https://www.enterprise-development.org/wp-content/uploads/m4pguide2015.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://beamexchange.org/market-systems/glossary/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://beamexchange.org/market-systems/key-features-market-systems-approach/>

<sup>10</sup> DevLearn Market Systems Development Online Training Coursebook, May 2022 220505\_DevLearnCoursebook\_MSD\_Rev-9.pdf



Private Sector	Organisations that have a core strategy and mission to engage in profit-seeking activities through the production of goods, provision of services, and/or commercialisation. <sup>11</sup>
Private Sector Development	Activities by governments and development organisations focused on creating an enabling environment for business to flourish. <sup>9</sup>
Private Sector Engagement	Working with the private sector who wish to fund and/or align core activities to explicitly contribute to the achievement of development outcomes. <sup>9</sup>
Social Enterprise	An operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. There is no single legal form for social enterprises. Many social enterprises operate in the form of social cooperatives, some are registered as private companies limited by guarantee, some are mutual, and a lot of them are non-profit-distributing organisations like provident societies, associations, voluntary organisations, charities or foundations. <sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Concern's Private Sector Engagement Strategy 2019-2025

<sup>12</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu/social-enterprises\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu/social-enterprises_en)

# Improving the nutrition status of young children, women and men in the informal settlements of Nairobi, Kenya through a Public Private Partnership with Food Manufacturer and Vendors

Written by: Edwin Mbugua, Health & Nutrition Coordinator, Concern Kenya

## ‘The Issue’

Acute and chronic malnutrition in children under the age of five is highly prevalent in Kenya. 1.9 million children under five are stunted (26%); 290,000 are wasted (4%); and 794,200 (11%) are underweight<sup>1</sup>. There are geographical variations in severity of malnutrition. Within the urban informal settlements in Nairobi City County, one in every three children is stunted<sup>2</sup>. The major risk factors for malnutrition within the urban informal settlements of Nairobi include; limited household food security, poor maternal, infant and young child feeding practices, high disease burden and poor access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities<sup>3</sup>.

In Nairobi, the consumption of non-nutritious unsafe street foods has increased substantially in recent years, particularly in the lower-income areas and in the industrial area. Street foods play an important role in the diet of poor households in Nairobi, in particular for breakfast and snacks, because they are cheap, readily available and convenient.

There is also an increasing number of ‘food poor’ people in Nairobi. These people are unable to meet all nutritional needs due to expenditure on other basic non-food essentials. For example, the poorest urban-dwellers spend up to 75% of their income on staple foods alone<sup>4</sup>. Food insecurity predisposes them to negative coping strategies such as reducing the number of meals, reducing food diversity and quality, scavenging, and eating street foods, which worsens their nutritional and health status<sup>5</sup>. This is further worsened by the COVID 19 pandemic and the precautionary measures put in place by the Government of Kenya. The Food Security Surveillance (FSS) in Nairobi by the Kenya Cash Consortium in the informal settlements determined that the proportion of severe food-insecure households almost tripled from 27% in October 2020 to 75% in March 2021 because of the COVID 19 pandemic.

## ‘The solution’

It is against this backdrop that Concern Worldwide, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Nairobi City County, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

1. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Health/Kenya, National AIDS Control Council/Kenya, Kenya Medical Research Institute, and National Council for Population and Development/Kenya. 2015. Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2014

2. Nairobi City County, SMART survey, 2020

3. Concern Worldwide Kenya, Nutrition bottleneck analysis, 2016

4. OXFAM, Urban Poverty and Vulnerability in Kenya, 2009.

5. Vulnerability to Food Insecurity in Urban Slums: Experiences from Nairobi, Kenya, E. W. Kimani-Murage et al, APHRC, 2014

(JKUAT), Kenya Bureau of Standards and GAIN, is implementing an innovative Public-Private Partnership project, *Lishe Poa* (Swahili for Good Nutrition) funded by KOICA<sup>6</sup> for five years (2018- 2023). Euro Ingredient Limited were engaged formally into the project as the private manufacturer following a rigorous selection process. The project aims at improving access to and consumption of affordable healthy, nutritious snacks among 173,622 young children and 109,632 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) in informal settlements of four sub-counties in Nairobi County.

Concern undertook a feasibility study to understand the barriers and enabling factors related to the food consumption habits of the urban poor, specifically pregnant and lactating women and children under five (CU5) from four slums (Mathare, Mukuru, Kayole Soweto and Korogocho) in Nairobi County. The study determined that street food was widely accepted and regularly consumed by the target population. Regarding affordability, the main determinants included the serving amount (especially for cereals and legumes), the market price of the ingredients, level of household income and seasonality. The average cost of a single serving of street food was Ksh. 18 (USD.0.14)<sup>7</sup>, while the average frequency of consumption was 3.5 times per week (varying by the type of street food). Further, in regards to nutritious content, the study determined that most of the street foods sold were mainly carbohydrates that provided energy but lacked micronutrients. At the same time, few respondents consumed protein or vitamin-rich foods. Finally, in regards to hygiene, the study determined that the major concerns expressed by the respondents (street food vendors) were related to food safety and



Antonio Magnaghi, during the Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato dough production process at Euro Ingredients Ltd, EIL factory, Kikuyu, June 2021. Photo: John Kipkurui / Concern Worldwide.

hygiene during food preparation, handling and cleanliness of the environment.

Concern undertook a market analysis to understand the viability of healthy food snacks to improve the health and nutrition status of CU5 (children under 5) years, and pregnant and lactating women living in the informal settlements. 93% of the 500 community members interviewed expressed a desire for healthy food snacks. Most of the respondents expected the products to be flour based since they are more filling, inexpensive, have a longer shelf life and are easier to store and distribute. In addition, the majority of the pregnant and lactating women and mothers of CU5 would like the product prepared locally and if possible in their neighbourhood since it would make the product more credible as well as create employment opportunities.

Based on the formative research, Concern co-creatively ran a food hackathon to identify suitable nutritious products that can be scaled up. A hackathon is a design sprint event where participants work intensively to tackle a design challenge. The hackathon's goal was for various manufacturers to develop suitable healthy food products

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.koica.go.kr/sites/koica\\_en/index.do](http://www.koica.go.kr/sites/koica_en/index.do)

<sup>7</sup> Concern Worldwide Kenya Feasibility Study of The Lishe Poa Project In Urban Informal Settlements- Nairobi County, January 2019

that are nutritious, affordable, hygienically prepared and are commercially viable. From the hackathon, three potential products were shortlisted for sensory analysis. The objective of the sensory analysis was to determine which food product would be accepted by the target group. First, trained panellists tested the products at Kerry Group. Subsequently the products were trialled at the community level in the target areas. Out of the 77 products submitted, a nutritious product, the orange-fleshed sweet potato dough was identified for further development. The product, manufactured by Euro Ingredients Limited (EIL), will deliver high vitamin A content, one of the micronutrients inadequately consumed in the target area. Concern has worked with EIL, the Ministry of Health, Nairobi City County and other partners to improve the quality and safety of the product. Moreover, Concern has also been able to get inputs from Kerry group<sup>8</sup> to further accentuate the product and enhance its shelf life and nutrient-content.

Concern, through *Lishe Poa*, has also trained community health volunteers to undertake household visits to promote maternal infant and young child nutrition (MIYCN), food safety, and water and sanitation (WASH) practices, as well as screen and refer children and PLWs for treatment of malnutrition. In the context of COVID -19, the CHVs have also been providing messages on the prevention of COVID 19 as well as hygiene promotion.

## ‘Innovatively working with Private Sector Partners’

The importance of public-private partnerships to meet the nutrition needs in informal settlements cannot be overstated – with many within the nutrition sector noting the need for such partnerships to address the undernutrition burden. Leveraging the knowledge and existing resources of food companies are key to creating acceptable,

safe nutritious and affordable foods. Therefore, *Lishe Poa*, has provided a unique opportunity to not only create acceptable products for which there is latent demand, but also trial their ability to impact on the health and nutrition status of women and children. It also aims to address sustainability challenges due to its focus on developing the skills of a local manufacturer, which not only will reduce costs of production but also work to increase employment opportunities within the informal settlements.

In line with this, the local manufacturer started engaging with local vendors to sell the orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) dough as well as the ready-made *Chapati* (pan fried unleavened flatbread) in May 2021. The manufacturer has committed to ensuring that the product is produced in full adherence with the minimum quality standards as recommended by Kenya Bureau of Standards<sup>9</sup> (KEBS). Further, the manufacturer has made significant progress towards strengthening key areas based on recommendations made by a quality audit undertaken by a food safety subcommittee comprising of Concern, Nairobi City County and the Ministry of Health. The dough manufacturer, EIL, has capped the cost of OFSP dough for the *Chapati* sale vendors to ensure affordability. A majority of the engaged vendors in the informal settlements are women and they rely on their pre-existing networks to sell the products. These vendors sell from 50 – 300 pieces per day in the above-mentioned informal settlements of Nairobi. Over the life of the project, it is expected that EIL will produce approximately 1.5 million pieces of the product. Whilst this is a huge financial incentive for the manufacturer, it will also contribute to the improved socio-economic status of the street vendors as well as to

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.kerrygroup.com/>

<sup>9</sup> Kenya Bureau Of Standards (KEBS) <https://www.kebs.org>

the improved nutritional status of young children and women. Moreover, the project will provide the food manufacturer with an opportunity to continuously research and improve on the nutritious products as informed by the market demands and in collaboration with all the stakeholders on the project. Already the manufacturer, in anticipation of a potential inclusion of the product in a school meal program, is developing an OFSP flour based porridge. Experience from the project also holds valuable learning for the scale up in future.

In the first year of production, May 2021 – April 2022, EIL has sold 559,746 OFSP products. To date, 117 vendors have been trained from the target four informal settlements so that they can take part in marketing and selling of the product. Moreover, EIL has developed a customized cart to support the vendors to store, prepare and sell their products in hygienic manner. The cart is made of food grade stainless steel and has a storage area for pre-cooked foods, gas cylinder receptacle, food warming/preparation part, glass display for complementary products, receptacle for waste material, capacity for the provision for separation of fresh and grey water and

handwashing station. Through the KOICA-funded *Lishe Poa* project, 50 vendors will have access to these carts. EIL was recently recognized as a food application and processing specialist company, for developing technologies to use bio fortified crops as active ingredients in fortified foods by the SUN Business Network in Kenya. The project is exploring other areas of distribution including schools in the informal settlements.

*Lishe Poa* has aspired to ensure that there is an enabling policy environment to promote access to and consumption of healthy, hygienically prepared and affordable products. At the County level, the project has supported the development of the Nairobi Food Safety and fortification Bill 2021 which will promote the highest attainable standard of food of acceptable quality and alleviate micronutrient deficiencies and the food vending regulations and policy that will regulate the safe and hygienic vending of food products in Nairobi City County.

Project outcomes attributable to the project will be measured through a process evaluation-taking place from July 2022 to March 2023.



Vincent Basweti, a *Lishe Poa* vendor in Mukuru Informal settlement, Nairobi, March 2021. Photo: John Kipkurui / Concern Worldwide

# Development of fortified millet value chains in Niger, to increase producers' incomes and improve infant and young child nutrition.

Written by: Claver Kabuhungu and Yaya Diabate, Concern Niger

## Background

With its arid climate and desert land, Niger is limited in its agricultural production. Due to poor access to water and a worrying acceleration of climate change, natural resources are scarce. As a result, the population relies overwhelmingly on a very limited range of food sources, including livestock, millet, sorghum and cowpeas. Millet, the main subsistence food in Niger, accounts for 76% of total cereal production. Harvests usually take place in October to November and are crucial for annual food availability. During the dry season, Nigeriens depend heavily on supplies from neighbouring countries, particularly Nigeria, for access to certain products. However, neighbouring countries are also severely affected by climate risks, posing a significant threat to Nigerien households and more specifically, a high vulnerability for mothers and children.

Since 2018, Concern Niger has been implementing the 'PAFAN' programme (Projet d'Appui à la Fortification Alimentaire au Niger / Support to Food Fortification in Niger project) in collaboration with the NGOs GRET and ACF, to improve the nutritional status of vulnerable populations in Niger by strengthening sustainable access to and consumption of fortified foods, specifically targeting women and their young children. At the start of the programme, according to the results of the 2018 SMART survey,

15% of children under 5 years of age suffered from global acute malnutrition (GAM), including 3.2% in a severe form (severe acute malnutrition, SAM), about 40% from chronic malnutrition and only 8.7% of 6 to 23 month olds had a minimum acceptable dietary diversity. Indeed, due to inadequate intake of protein, calories and other nutrients, malnourished children experience stunting, weight loss and preventable diseases. In addition, the poor nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women propagates a continuous cycle of intergenerational malnutrition. Factors such as acute and chronic food insecurity, inadequate infant and young child feeding, limited access to safe water and sanitation, socio-cultural factors, diseases (malaria, diarrhoea or Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI)), as well as inadequate access to health and social services especially for women and children, exacerbate the situation. In addition to this, there is a low profitability of local products which, in addition to being rich in nutrients, can serve as a considerable and sustainable source of income for improving household livelihoods.

In order to address these structural issues, Concern Niger has developed integrated projects to improve household food and nutrition security, while promoting the local production and sale of fortified products. With Concern's support, partnerships have been established between fortified flour

production units and local millet producers to create sustainable marketing arrangements between the two. An innovative example of this partnership between local farmers and the private sector is represented by the positive experiences of the Wadata Al'umma (Irish Aid funded) and PAFAN (EU funded) programmes, detailed below.

**MISOLA** (MIL + SOja + LAit\*) is an association of women who work together with the objective of helping the population, primarily children, to combat malnutrition and the lack of development of infants and young children.

Established in Niger since 2005, MISOLA currently has six (6) units in the country: 1) Tahoua, 2) Tillabéry, 3) Niamey, 4) Dosso 5) Zinder 6) Maradi. Each unit produces fortified organic flour, based on the processing of three local products: millet, soya and groundnuts. The Tahoua unit was built in March 2020 under the PAFAN project and has been operational since December 2020. It is composed of 18 staff, with a production capacity of 3 tons per day.

In relation to the marketing of organic fortified flour, there are two types of sales: institutional and conventional. Institutional sales are made in large quantities to institutions or organisations, notably the WFP, Concern, ACF, Cellules de Crises Alimentaires (CCA), while traditional sales are made via individual clients, through different sales outlets (pharmacies, shops, neighbourhood food stores, etc.). The majority of customers are women/families. Based on decentralised production and local techniques, the MISOLA project is integrated into community development programmes. It enables the mobilisation of all local actors: agricultural, health, educational and economic sectors, and generates local employment.

\*from the French words for millet, soya and milk.

## Production of bio-fortified millet

Bio-fortification is a process that produces crops with increased nutritional value. The aim of bio-fortification is to grow nutritious crops, a process that experts consider much cheaper than adding micronutrients to already processed foods. It is a smart way to fight malnutrition. Organic fortified millet in Africa is naturally richer in iron and zinc - two essential micronutrients in diets for good health and productivity. The extension of fortified organic millet began during the 2018 season, following a study conducted by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) within the Wadata Al'umma programme. Through an action research done in collaboration with ICRISAT, the results showed a good performance of three varieties for which it was recommended to ensure their extension, of which CHACTI (a millet variety) was chosen to be multiplied and extended to the producers.

## Connection with other actors in the value chain

The idea for the partnership with MISOLA came about following a visit to the unit under the PAFAN programme. Concern, in collaboration with GRET, supported the production of fortified organic millet in the Tahoua intervention zone - through training in agricultural practices and support with tools - in order to link the communities producing organic millet with the production units and generate income through the surplus by facilitating producers' access to the market.

On the other hand, marketing support enables the women's units to promote MISOLA flour and better penetrate national markets. The income generated improves living conditions by generating a more stable income for the women who use



MISOLA staff members lightly toast soybeans over low heat, without burning them to avoid giving the flour a sour taste, February 2021. Photo: Ollivier Girard/Concern Worldwide.

this money for the benefit of their families (food, education, health etc), thus gradually reducing poverty.

Awareness was raised in the commune of Bambeye to mobilise quantities of fortified organic millet. The quality of the organic fortified millet is superior to that of the local millet previously purchased by MISOLA, as evidenced by the community's appreciation of the high yield, the quality of the grain and the quality of the flour appreciated by MISOLA. The PAFAN programme has taken the opportunity to promote the use of the improved flour. A difference in price per kg also facilitated the change for MISOLA. The price per tia (1 tia = 2.5kg) of local millet was FCFA 700 (equivalent to €1) at the time the connection with MISOLA was made, compared to 800 CFCA (€1.2) for fortified organic millet.

## Achieved results

Concern's programmes (IAPF and PAFAN) have linked local producers of organic fortified millet with the fortified flour production unit to create more economic opportunities and important value chains, while promoting quality products to combat child malnutrition. This has generated great

social impact from a nutritional, economic and gender perspective.

In collaboration with GRET, programme teams worked on the adoption of good health and nutrition practices through a network of 254 health workers, 2,557 community outreach volunteers and 46 infant and young child feeding (IYCF) support groups, trained in essential family practices, infant and young child feeding, cooking demonstrations, danger signs of major childhood diseases (malaria, diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections), and symptoms and prevention of COVID-19.

In the Tahoua region, the combination of activities deployed has contributed, according to SMART survey data, to a 3.2% reduction in the prevalence of GAM and a 6.6% increase in minimum dietary diversity among children aged 6 to 23 months between 2018 and 2021, as well as a 33.3% increase in the exclusive breastfeeding rate between 2019 and 2021. Work on the sustainability of the programme's achievements has been completed through the development of action plans to support community mobilisation activities.



The final product of fortified organic flour, ready to be distributed and sold, February 2021. Photo: Ollivier Girard / Concern Worldwide.



## Lessons learned

Fortified organic millet was highly appreciated by producers and consumers alike due to its nutritional qualities and high yield compared to local millet, both of which facilitated marketing and promotion of the product.

The motivation of the producers was evident from their decision to restructure in order to carry out large-scale production to meet the demand. Thanks to awareness-raising on the use of fortified flour, accompanied by cooking demonstrations on the preparation of the flour, demand was created at the local level. As a result, millet collection sites at village level were set up. The sustainability of these sites as well as that of the MISOLA unit is ensured by the fact that millet is the raw material for the production of fortified flour. In addition, a framework for exchange between MISOLA and the regular producers has been created, manifested in a quarterly meeting of the innovation platforms.

The link with MISOLA has enabled the producers to expand their market reach, which has allowed them to sell at a wider level locally. In addition, the selling price is higher (14% more) than local millet, which leads to an increase in the producers' income.



MISOLA staff pack enriched flour into bags ready for distribution, February 2021. Photo: Ollivier Girard / Concern Worldwide.



Two MISOLA staff members pour roasted soybeans onto a tablecloth and spread them out to cool, February 2021. Photo: Ollivier Girard / Concern Worldwide.



Madam Madania, director of the MISOLA flour production pictured in the production room, April 2020. Photo: A.G. Tchouake / Concern Worldwide.

# Engagement of women Afghan refugees in artisanal value chains and international market systems for sustainable livelihoods

Written by: Shafqat Ullah and Andrea Solomon

## Background

Pakistan has the second highest number of refugees in the world, who for over forty years are residing in different parts of the country. Pakistan currently hosts more than 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees and a similar number of undocumented Afghan nationals (including asylum seekers and migrants)<sup>1</sup>. This puts a significant strain on the country's limited resources. Almost one third of Afghan refugees are living in refugee camps, where they lack access to basic services, livelihood opportunities and shelter, negatively impacting their health, education and food security, and making them extremely vulnerable, particularly female-headed households and peoples with disabilities. Lack of formal education, training and a mismatch of skills with market demand limits women's access to sustainable livelihoods, and they have little choice but to take up low-end, unskilled and often hazardous jobs with low wage rates. These women have few rights and undocumented refugees face the threat of losing their jobs or deportation. Income generated through these informal occupations is often insufficient and refugees, in particular women and children, are exposed to protection risks, health hazards, exploitation and abuse. Afghan refugee women/girls are mostly skilled in production of traditional

garments and accessories, but they don't opt for it as a viable livelihood due to limited or no access to the market system or lack of the required skills and tools to develop products for which there is demand in local, national and international markets.

## The solution – a pilot project

In 2020, Concern Pakistan was engaged by UNHCR to implement a pilot sustainable livelihoods project called 'MADE51'. MADE51 is a community and marketplace established by UNHCR to support refugee artisans and small businesses. MADE51 stands for 'Market Access, Design and Empowerment for Refugee Artisans' and the 51 is a reference to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention<sup>2</sup>. Through this project Concern identified and linked 100 female Afghan refugees to five existing local social enterprises (LSE)<sup>3</sup> who are engaged in the garment and accessories market, to design and produce beautiful, high quality products. Through working together with the LSEs, the MADE51 pilot project enabled

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Pakistan <https://reporting.unhcr.org/pakistan>

<sup>2</sup> The Refugee Convention, 1951: <https://www.unhcr.org/4ca34be29.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Local social enterprises (LSEs) are registered businesses in Pakistan which also have social objectives to support marginalised communities. The LSEs support these communities to produce high value items suitable for the national and international markets. LSEs are common in Pakistan, building off a tradition of social and business engagement.

# Integrating Refugees Artisans into National/Global Value Chains



## Integrating Refugee Artisans into National / Global Value Chains

the Afghan refugee women to add value to their traditional craft and designs so as to produce modern products which had value and demand in market system; thus creating a sustainable means of earning a living for the women and enabling them to put to good use their skills and knowledge.

The MADE51 initiative brought together different actors along the value chain, such as designers, suppliers of quality raw material, experienced trainers, product development specialists, packaging, pricing, marketing and demand creation expertise. Samples of the garments and accessories were developed as per demand, leading to subsequent orders received by the LSEs which the women then worked on. The products were finalised, packed and shipped for sale by the LSEs through both local and international markets, including the MADE51 website (<https://www.made51.org/>) and, as interest and demand increased, also to fashion retail brands and companies.

This innovation of working with the private and social sector actors worked very well. The LSEs involved in the initial MADE51 pilot project received huge orders from different international markets including Chloe France, MADE51, Virgin Atlantic Airline, etc. These orders have been realised thanks to the labour and skills of the women beneficiaries. As the order volume was high, the LSEs also brought in additional Afghan refugees who had worked with them before.

## Adopting and expanding the successful project model

After successful piloting of the project concept, Concern Pakistan decided to replicate the MADE51 project model and selected to partner with the LSE 'Indus Cultural Heritage Foundation' (ICHF)<sup>4</sup>. This

<sup>4</sup> ICHF was one of the five LSE partners Concern worked with under the MADE51 project.

project is known as ‘Supporting Afghan Refugees in Livelihoods and Access to Markets’ or SALAM. It is funded by Concern’s own General Donations plus funding from a Private donor. Concern linked ICHF with 120 Afghan refugee women in two districts in Pakistan: Swabi (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and ICT Islamabad. ICHF has a specialised team with expertise in product development, packaging, pricing, marketing, and experience processing orders from local, national and international buyers.

Concern’s livelihood team worked with ICHF to conduct informal needs assessments with these Afghan refugees to know their skill level and what sort of support they require to initiate sustainable income opportunities. Based on this initial assessment, a value chain map was developed which was translated into a work plan that included: 1) a skill test; 2) training on different clothing and accessories’ designs; 3) development of attractive colour schemes for the products; and 4) provision of quality tools and raw materials for the production.

ICHF provided Afghan women artisan groups with training to create high quality products, and provided production management, design skills and support to improve the quality of their products through better input supplies and finishing units. Skill development workshops were conducted with Afghan refugee artisan groups in their communities, led by the ICHF trainer/designer. Beneficiaries were exposed to the new SALAM-project specific designs/patterns and transferred them onto specified textiles using their specialized crafts and abilities. The artisan groups worked with ICHF to develop a range of varied product designs. ICHF has a specialised team with expertise in product development, packaging, pricing, marketing, and processing orders. These small embroidery designs were transformed into different products and they were then packed and priced as per demand in the market system. MADE51 asked for samples

of the work to be made up, for which each woman was paid for their work upfront according to agreed wage rates<sup>5</sup> for different embroidery and design work and quantity requested. Then, based on the quality of the samples, MADE51 requested ICHF to prepare an order. The orders comprised of small products mostly having a unit value of under US\$5.

The products developed and made by the 120 SALAM project beneficiaries have proven to be very successful; they have been displayed by MADE51 in Geneva and Hong Kong during international events as well as displayed on their sales website ([www.MADE51.org](http://www.MADE51.org)). Based on these events, ICHF received another order from the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), which is being fulfilled by the project beneficiaries at the time of writing this article. The Afghan refugee women Concern selected to participate in the project are now registered with ICHF and will continue to work with them to continue their sustainable livelihoods activities.

Concern Pakistan team factored safeguarding considerations into the project design, as it engaged with vulnerable Afghan refugee women. These women were provided with a safe space which was protected and they felt happy to work in. Concern’s team drew on the ‘Engaging Men’ approach to gain acceptance of the male family members for the women to get involved in the project, and the men were further briefed by the ICHF team in full respect of their cultural norms. The female beneficiaries further received guidance on financial management, especially savings system and utilization of income for family support, with emphasis on monthly household food basket and education of children.

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<sup>5</sup> The Afghan refugees calculated their rates based on the quality, time required and number of designs before they developed the designs and samples.

## Advantages of the innovation and working with private sector partners

This success of the pilot UNHCR supported MADE51 project encouraged Concern to replicate the proof of concept and best practice learnings in the new SALAM project, bringing more beneficiaries into the LSEs' network and enabling their skills to be drawn upon to fulfil the market demands for their products. These beneficiaries will receive a sustainable earning as they utilise their skills. The SALAM projects' inception phase runs to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022, and in next phase this project will be scaled up by increasing the number of beneficiaries based on the demand in the market system.

The LSEs had an existing reputation in the selected market system; through the MADE51 and SALAM projects their capacity to create and meet increased demand has been enhanced through linking the available labour and skills of the Afghan refugee women to the value chain. The LSEs played an important role through both enhancing skills of the Afghan refugees, and providing them with an earning opportunity via linkages with a viable market system.

In its first six months the SALAM project has achieved its intended results, i.e. enhanced the skills of Afghan refugee women and supported them with sustainable livelihoods through linkages with a relevant markets system. A review at the end of inception phase will provide further evidence on e.g. how effective was the project, how the women's skills have been enhanced, how much their income has increased, plus broader outcomes of the SALAM project. Initial data shows that the refugee women - who were not engaged in any income generating activity prior to joining the project - are now earning between PKR 5,000 (€23) to PKR 8,000 (€37) per month.

## Recommendations for design of market systems programming

A key learning and recommendation based on Concern Pakistan's experience of the MADE51 pilot project and SALAM project inception phase is the importance of conducting a comprehensive value chain analysis (VCA) in order to provide a systematic business model for the primary beneficiaries. The VCA should have clear guidelines, clearly define the different stakeholders that would be involved in the value chain and outline their role in ensuring sustainability of livelihoods for the project beneficiaries. This VCA will also help all stakeholders to understand the entire cycle from production to the end user, and will lead to development of relevant and achievable project objectives.

Another key learning and recommendation is that brainstorming and researching newly developing or existing project ideas that could be piloted and/or replicated is a great way to gain experience in a new way of working in value chains. This can provide proof of concept to make a strong, viable case for further replicating and scaling the approach for achievement of project outcomes as well as wider impacts.

Selection of SALAM products:





Afghan refugee woman (not named to protect her identity) doing embroidery work, May 2022. Photo: Mehreen Aslam / Concern Worldwide.

# PROSPER Markets in Malawi

Written by: Jason Agar (Kadale Consultants), Andrew Seward (Kadale Consultants), Chris Connelly and Andrea Solomon

The high vulnerability of households and communities to shocks and stresses in Malawi, combined with persistent poverty<sup>1</sup>, natural resource degradation, low resilience to climate change and high population growth, results in cyclical food insecurity crises and dependence on aid, eroding development gains and undermining long term poverty reduction. With a large proportion of Malawi's population reliant on subsistence agriculture, there is limited economic diversification. Highly seasonal patterns of production and low outputs are key constraints to household resilience. Over-reliance of smallholder farmers on rain-fed maize means the average diet is insufficiently diverse, resulting in high levels of chronic malnutrition. Smallholder farmers have few assets, low purchasing power and limited access to inputs, agronomic information and credit. Household resilience is further constrained by lack of access to productive resources (including inputs, information, financing and markets) and limited opportunities for secure, predictable incomes. Markets for farm inputs and produce function poorly and are often characterised by mutual distrust between buyers and sellers.

The "Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience" (PROSPER) programme launched in December 2018, funded by UKAID under the Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Change (BRACC) umbrella. It was jointly

implemented by two consortia: an NGO consortium of Concern Worldwide (lead agency), GOAL, United Purpose, Kadale Consultants, CUMO Microfinance and CARD; and a UN consortium of WFP, FAO, UNDP, UNICEF and UN Resident Coordinator's Office. The programme covered four districts of Malawi (Balaka, Chikwawa, Mangochi, Phalombe), selected based on high levels of poverty, with households vulnerable to climate shocks and constrained by limited access to finance, underdeveloped market systems, and low levels of crop diversification and production.

*"Rather than trying to directly fix market constraints, or directly perform a function in the system... PROSPER Markets worked to leave behind stronger and more inclusive market systems...that support more secure and predictable incomes for the poor."*

PROSPER took a strong market systems development approach in aim to achieve 'Enhanced and inclusive access to the productive resources necessary to develop increased, secure and predictable incomes'. Rather than trying to directly fix market constraints, or directly performing a function in the system, such as supplying inputs to smallholder farmers, PROSPER Markets worked to achieve transformative change and leave behind stronger and more inclusive market systems that will, of themselves, support more secure and predictable incomes for the poor, long after the end of the programme.

<sup>1</sup> Per capita income of only US\$255; 50% of the population living under the national poverty line.

### Increased incomes and strengthened resilience

- More secure and predictable income streams
- Greater ability to withstand current and future shocks and stresses



### Improved access to productive resources and markets

- Sustained improvements in the quantity and quality of productive resources
- Improved awareness and understanding of the value of productive resources
- More inclusive and integrated access to input and output markets



### Strengthened and improved market systems

- Improved input supply
- Integration of input and output markets
- Improved access to value-add products and services



## ACTIVITIES

### *PROSPER Markets Theory of Change*

The programme worked with 10 private sector partners to co-create and invest in pro-poor business initiatives, that would benefit smallholder farmers and change the way businesses competed in the market, with the aim that other firms would copy these better ways. These initiatives increased access to income-enhancing inputs, services, or markets for over 108,000 poor people. Working with private sector actors in this way means that the impact of the interventions reaches even beyond the PROSPER programme's directly targeted beneficiaries, since the pro-poor services and products developed can be accessed by other communities in Malawi too.

This article presents examples and achievements of the pro-poor business initiatives developed and supported by Concern Malawi in collaboration with Kadale Consultants and other consortium members under the PROSPER programme from 2019 to 2021. Due to UKAID funding shortfalls in FY2021, the difficult decision was taken to end PROSPER NGO Consortium programme activities early. However the technical support and leveraged investments to demonstrate pro-poor business models among the private sector partners over the two years of NGO consortium implementation have demonstrated the viability of these initiatives, and will in many cases lead to continuation



and expansion of them, thereby sustaining the gains that have been made.

## Access to improved seed

PROSPER Markets partnered with four seed companies to expand and strengthen sales of improved seed varieties through agro-dealers, institutional sales, product combination sales (e.g. seed with inoculant<sup>2</sup>) and credit sales models. The focus was on promoting certified seed for crops with high commercial potential for smallholders: groundnut, soybean, beans and cotton. After piloting, two companies successfully implemented and are scaling their pro-poor business models:

- Global Seeds sold 57 metric tonnes (MT) of groundnut seed, 31 MT of soybean seed and 14 MT of bean seed, estimated to have reached 2,228, 1,407, and 590 smallholders respectively.
- Quton Seed sold 28 MT of Bollgard 2 (BG2) hybrid cotton seed across 16 districts, and was supported to train 220 agro dealers and government extension staff from PROSPER districts on BG2.

It is estimated that an additional 17,235 people living in conditions of poverty have accessed improved seed varieties in 2020-21, of which 9,654 were in PROSPER's districts.

## Access to spray service provision

PROSPER Markets worked with Crop Life Malawi (CLM), along with other market actors to promote uptake of the spray service provider (SSP) business model as a means of increasing agro-chemical sales and safe usage. PROSPER Markets tested a new approach by partnering directly with two agro-dealer chains: AB Mwale and Agriculture Trading Company (ATC).

60 SSPs have been trained by CLM across three businesses (AB Mwale, ATC, Bayer), offering spraying services to farmers in their

localities. Each SSP serves 24 smallholders on average, meaning an estimated 1,440 smallholders reached. Also, 855 existing SSPs benefitted through promotion activity conducted with CLM. In addition, 140 Lead Farmers have been directly trained by Bayer on effective use of agro-chemicals by the SSP trainers trained by CLM in Year 1. The number of beneficiaries will continue to grow as the trainers remain active.

It is estimated that 1,533 poor people have accessed spray services from newly trained SSPs, or been directly trained in agro-chemical use by an SSP trainer. Of these, 68 are in PROSPER districts.

## Improving Access to Inoculant<sup>2</sup>

PROSPER Markets worked with MANDOLO, a private sector supplier of inoculant in its second year of business. Inoculant has the potential to substantially increase crop productivity. Key objectives for the partnership were to increase inoculant sales, improve viability of the business, and promote competition. Key areas of support included: business planning; cost-sharing promotional activities (radio adverts, marketing materials, a 10-day roadshow); and salary contribution for a Sales and Distribution Officer.

It is estimated that 77,976 poor people have accessed inoculant in Year 2, of which 5,277 were in PROSPER's focal districts.

## Improving Input supply mechanisms

PROSPER Markets partnered with Osho Chemicals to improve access to quality agro-chemical products for smallholder farmers to improve pest and disease management. This involved working with Osho to promote sales and appropriate

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<sup>2</sup> An inoculant is a substance that adds beneficial microbes to the soil, which helps plants to get the nitrogen they need to flourish

use of its agro-chemical products through a series of marketing channels: a five-week series of radio programmes; mini-clips; shop branding; radio adverts; and demonstration plot hosting by PROSPER NGO partners. Osho achieved an average 50% growth in sales of 14 'second tier' products that targeted smallholder farmers. They reached a wider audience with product information through the radio programme, the recruitment of new agro-dealer outlets and through turning high-performing agro-dealers in some areas into hub agro-dealers (that distribute to other agro-dealers). The company engaged 71 new agro-dealer outlets and 15 hub agro-dealers in 2020. There were 16 new outlets in PROSPER districts.

It is estimated that 9,929 poor people have accessed Osho agro-chemical products and extension services, of which 2,178 are in PROSPER districts.

## Access to Animal Health Products

PROSPER Markets partnered with a private agro-vet company, Ziweto Enterprises, to expand its distribution and sales of animal health products and services. The partnership focused on improving Ziweto's supply chain management systems, wider promotion of their products and services, and linking community animal health workers (CAHWs) with the PROSPER NGO teams, particularly to the livestock pass-on schemes and drug box management. PROSPER Markets' low-cost investment included cost-sharing of training expenses and inventory management systems, along with ongoing business advisory support to Ziweto's management and sales teams. PROSPER Markets supported Ziweto in training 70 CAHWs and 88 livestock farmers in animal health, parasitology and nutrition, including 13 livestock farmer organisations' representatives.

It is estimated that 3,538 poor people have accessed Ziweto's animal health products and services, of which 848 are in PROSPER districts.

## Cotton Policy Support

PROSPER Markets provided advisory support to cotton stakeholders. The programme subscribed to the Cotlook platform to provide actors with time-critical, reliable and relevant information on the world cotton market, including independent and transparent world market price information. This helped all stakeholders in their decision-making processes. It contributed to a revision in the 2020 season minimum price policy that significantly increased smallholder's cotton sales to ginners (rather than to traders at lower prices) and therefore also increased the average price they received. An independent impact assessment conducted in February 2021 found that 47% of cotton-growing smallholders sold cotton to ginners after the policy change, giving an estimated outreach of 16,475 smallholders, of which 11,360 were in PROSPER districts. The calculated gain in average price for smallholders that sold after the policy change was MWK 21/kg; an estimated income gain of £11.33 (MWK 12,384) per smallholder.

PROSPER Markets also supported the Cotton Council of Malawi (CCM) and other stakeholders to mount an estimated 500 cotton demonstration plots, where recommended agricultural practices from land preparation through to harvesting and grading were showcased. PROSPER Markets also linked Osho and Farmers Organisation Limited (FOL) to showcase their products and services through the demonstration plots.

## Incentive-Based Contract Farming (IBCF)

Kaporo Smallholder Farmers Association (KASFA) recruited 883 farmers into an IBCF scheme. Farmers were provided with certified Kilombero rice seed, along with extension service support. Following on from the attractiveness of funeral expense insurance as an incentive, demonstrated in the pilot IBCF scheme in 2019/20, KASFA implemented its own in-house 'insurance' cover for the 883 farmer members in 2020/21. This evolution and expansion of the scheme was done with very limited support from PROSPER Market, which bodes well for the sustainability of the IBCF scheme as this is now embedded in the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) and KASFA's business approach.

## Lessons and recommendations

The market systems development component of PROSPER had learning at various levels, notably the benefit of 'learning by doing' and adapting. This involves engaging private sector partners through practical, hands-on collaboration.

*"Using a market systems approach to improve the functioning of markets helps stakeholders to see private sector as a crucial element in resilience building.... NGOs should avoid getting too involved in supply and demand functions, and seek to find ways to interest private sector in targeting the poor as this has potential to become sustainable."*

It was seen that organisations require time to institute changes, and that buy-in from management is key. Progress can be slow, especially when there is staff turnover. Skepticism from farmers, NGO staff and government authorities on the role of private sector is tough to overcome, but using a market systems approach to improve the functioning of markets helps stakeholders to see private sector as a crucial element in resilience building, and that there are benefits in engaging them as stakeholders. Linked to this, NGOs should avoid becoming part of the market system by getting too involved in supply and demand functions, and seek to find ways to interest private sector in targeting the poor as this has potential to become sustainable.



Oliver Daniel (60) is a lead farmer in Vikiwa Village in Phalombe, Malawi. Concern Worldwide taught Oliver new agricultural techniques that have completely changed the yields Oliver and her husband James have harvested. Photo: Chris Gagnon/Concern Worldwide.



James Msonkho, a PROSPER village advisor, and Teleza Gosten, a member of the local Village Savings and Loans speak with Concern staff member Timothy Kampira. James and Teleza both say that the business training they've received as a part of the PROSPER project has greatly increased profits and allowed them to pay for their children's school fees. Photo: Chris Gagnon/Concern Worldwide.

For successful adaptation and results, continuous measurement and cultivating a culture of learning is crucial to ensure use of evidence for decision-making. 'Quick and dirty' rapid assessments can be timely and as useful as more 'slow and rigorous' research. It was seen that policymakers often lack market-based evidence for decision making, and the government-applied rules and norms distort the market and opportunities for private sector partner growth; examples included input and product subsidies, minimum farm-gate pricing, and zoning restrictions. These rules can lead to inflated expectations of farmers, and low risk appetite from the private sector limiting the interest of both sides to engage in market transactions. With low marketable surpluses, realistically, poor households have to engage in informal markets as their main market option. There is need to address the huge gap in productivity

versus potential among smallholder farmers as a first step to ensure surplus crop for market engagement. Until there is sufficient production, the formal private sector will use informal players to aggregate crops, as this is the most efficient and least difficult option for them. Increasing marketable surpluses, though better functioning input markets is an important stepping-stone to improved access to better crop markets.

The overall recommendation from the programme is that the market systems component was generating strong results, and resilience building programming and stakeholders could achieve greater impact and sustainability through using market systems approaches and engagement of private sector actors in their programme designs and implementation.

# Evolution of financial inclusion for women in business in Somalia

Written by Abdulkadir Ibrahim, Mariam Abdikarim Mohamed, Faduma Abdi Mohamed, with inputs from Finola Mohan and Andrea Solomon

## Background

Although women make up half of Somalia's 15.9 million population<sup>1</sup>, there are high levels of gender disparity. Men have a literacy rate of 49.7%, while only 25.8% of females<sup>2</sup> are literate. These disparities limit women's ability to participate in economic activities, particularly the establishment of small businesses. Women struggle to get bank accounts and the requirement of financial institutions to have guarantors before lending money also inhibits many women's ability to run their own business and sustain viable income generating activities (IGAs).

## Women's Self Help Groups

Because of these barriers, women in Somalia have sought informal ways to save money to establish and grow businesses as well as to support each other to meet their household economy needs. Women's Self Help Groups (SHG) are a well-established institution in Somalia, aimed to strengthen both financial and social capital of women. Concern has been supporting SHG formation and functioning for many years through its programming in Community Resilience (FCDO 'BRCiS' and Irish Aid 'MODEL' and subsequent 'SPHERES') as well as Durable Solutions to Displacement (FCDO 'Danwadaag').

SHG's meet on a weekly basis with each member contributing US\$1-2 monthly into a central revolving fund from which group members can take loans. If a particular member cannot afford to pay the agreed amount, the group agrees to cover that individual's contribution until they are able to pay, to ensure inclusion and sustained access to the revolving fund. The loans are given in compliance with Sharia regulations<sup>3</sup>, which is important for social acceptance in the Islamic society. The women are expected to pay back their loans within 1-2 months.

However, despite mutual trust and a high rate of repayment of the loans, women still faced challenges. There was poor documentation due to the low literacy levels, and lack of a clear growth path for the IGAs. Additionally, the seed money available to the SHGs' revolving fund was insufficient for the women to each seek loans of US\$20-50, which they really needed to start their businesses. They also faced some time delays to access the revolving fund as they waited for other women to repay their loans.

To address these challenges, Concern and local partner YouthLink supported the SHGs with literacy, numeracy and business skills development training, along with mentorship. The groups were further supported with a cash grant of US\$1,500 each. This enabled all

<sup>1</sup>. UNPFA, World Population Dashboard (Somalia)

<sup>2</sup>. <https://borgenproject.org/tag/literacy-in-somalia/>

<sup>3</sup>. Sharia complaint loans are interest-free; the borrower will repay the amount owned according to the principals set by the group without any other mark up or interest being charged.

the SHGs to open a group bank account, and transparent and accountable transactions were ensured. The business trainings also included financial management and conflict resolution. The revolving loans continued, but now because of the grant, the women could access greater amounts, leading to more impactful investments to establish and sustain viable businesses.

Six months after group formation, evaluation of the groups' performance revealed they were performing well, with more members taking loans, improved documentation and record keeping and an impressive 100% loan repayment. This was very encouraging and showed great promise for further progression; Concern and YouthLink decided to grant a further \$1,500 to the groups to boost their revolving kitty for business start-ups and expansion of existing businesses. Another evaluation six months later showed that the SHGs continued to perform well and that the women's ambitions and requirements now exceeded what the SHGs could provide. By 2017 Concern and YouthLink teams felt that the highest performing SHGs were ready to evolve into a 'Cluster Level Associations' model.

## Cluster Level Associations (CLAs)

Recognising the capacity and opportunity of these SHGs, Concern's team developed and piloted a new model to further advance financial inclusion; it is known as "Cluster Level Association" (CLA). A CLA is formed by 10 SHGs coming together, each nominating two members to represent them at the CLA Executive Management Committee. Each CLA elects officials who are literate, dedicated and passionate, and are capable of managing the revolving finances. The Executive Committee of 20 members elects several positions including Chairwoman and Vice Chair, and establish several committees focused respectively on: Conflict Resolution,

Social Protection, Procurement and Logistics, and Loan Approval. The CLA then opens bank accounts to manage the revolving loans, leveraging on the collective capital of the various member SHG participants.

Three CLAs have been formed in Mogadishu, Somalia's capital city, to date: 'Dadihiso' formed in 2017, 'Danwadaag' in Bondheere in 2018 and 'Daruro' in Wadajir in 2019. Concern and YouthLink continued to support these groups with capacity building, though the CLAs took over responsibility for directly supporting the member SHGs, thus enabling Concern and YouthLink to step back to a more facilitative role. This provides a sustainable and locally owned model of peer-to-peer support that recognises the collective capacities, experience and expertise of the Somali women.

The uniformity and strong management of the SHGs allowed the CLAs to achieve formal registration as a Social Enterprise. Having this legal entity allowed the women members to work more directly and effectively with other actors in the market system. Further, this helped to increase the membership, enabling women to have a greater voice to advocate on key social issues of priority to their communities, such as education of girls and women's literacy.

As the CLAs could effectively handle much larger amounts of seed funding than the SHGs, Concern and YouthLink supported the CLAs with collateral of \$25,000 for Dadihiso and \$15,000 each for Danwadaag and Daruro. This acted as collateral to 100 SHG members per CLA, who repaid their Sharia compliant loans against a small profit margin of 5% for loans repaid over a three-month period, and 10% for loans repaid over six months. The loans were guaranteed by the CLA/SHG members. The CLA Procurement and Logistics Committee purchased the inputs the women required for their businesses: the Committee is able to negotiate and secure cheaper prices and better value for money to buy business inputs from private sector suppliers on behalf of the SHG members.

## The Women's Savings Group Hub

In 2020, Concern commissioned a consultancy to map financial services for SHGs and barriers for women to access microfinance services in Somalia. Drawing on the learning and recommendations from this study, Concern's Resilience team pitched an idea to the BRCIS Consortium's 'Challenge Fund' in hope to further develop and pilot a viable solution to improve women's sustainable access to finance for investment in their businesses, building on the existing success of the SHG and CLA models.

The proposal was to create a **Women's Saving Group hub** led by mature CLAs that will catalyse all the efforts in capacity building, knowledge sharing, networking and linkages with the private sector, government and development stakeholders. The hub would be a community centre accessible to the CLA/SHG locations in Mogadishu. Led by the CLAs, it would be open to all CLA and SHG members as well other women interested in saving groups or participating in the activities of the hub.

Throughout 2021 and early 2022, Concern and YouthLink worked with Tethered-Up<sup>4</sup>, a Nairobi-based Social Enterprise contracted as a service provider by BRCIS Consortium Manager Unit to support co-creation, development, piloting and learning of the selected Challenge Fund ideas. Through a series of workshops and coaching sessions, Tethered-Up facilitated a "Growth Hack" process together with Concern and YouthLink team members. This engaged the team in problem identification, seeking solutions, envisioning a business plan, identifying potential risks and coming up with a successful implementation plan for the Hub centre.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tetheredup.com/>

Dadihiso, Danwadaag and Daruro CLAs teamed up to form a Women's Savings Group Hub called Hiil Haween Women Savings Group Cooperative Hub. The main functions of the Hub are to support the development of women's enterprises by:

- Providing capacity building and mentorship services to SHGs
- Establishing more CLAs
- Support economic and financial inclusion through provision of business incubation and development services, access to CLA loans, private sector engagements
- Fundraising for the Hub's activities and development
- Promote knowledge and information exchange, social interaction and women's agency
- Advocate for favourable policies and establish linkages that support women's empowerment.

Through partnerships with other stakeholders like Concern and YouthLink, the Hub intends to lobby and advocate for microfinance institutions (MFIs) and banking corporations to review their lending policies to promote financial inclusion to all. The programme invited potential MFI stakeholders in Mogadishu to attend the opening ceremony of the Women's Saving Group Hub. Additionally, the team conducted multi-stakeholder meetings to showcase the progress of the Hub. This has attracted a number MFIs, and to date two MFIs have entered into an agreement with the Hub. Among them is International Bank (IBS), which provided a \$15,000 loan to Hub members in March 2022.

The formation of the three CLAs and subsequent establishment of Hiil Haween Women Groups Savings Cooperative has impacted positively on women's business enterprises.

Status of CLA revolving savings and loans to date:

	Dadihiso CLA	Danwadaag CLA	Daruro CLA
Date of receiving collateral support	2018	2020	2020
# cycles of revolving loans	16	3	3
# women who directly benefitted from loans	570	78	106
Total disbursed loans	\$126,500	\$17,800	\$30,500
Total profit	\$11,843	\$1,780	\$3,050
Bank balance at this of writing this article	\$17,265	\$10,282	\$1,750

The two CLAs that received their funds in 2020 were adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in movement restrictions and a disruption of economic affairs in Mogadishu and throughout the country. Due to this disruption, SHG members are experiencing slow business, low sales, supply disruptions and some debt management issues. This has negatively impacted the revolving loan repayments, but the members have thankfully managed to avoid complete defaults. Concern and YouthLink have continued trainings on management of loans, conflict resolution, bookkeeping and literacy and numeracy training at the Cluster level. The CLA in turn cascaded this training down to the other SHG members and non-SHG members. The CLAs proceeded with disbursement of more loans in the first quarter of 2022.

## How improved access to finance helps link women with other private sector actors

The cohesion in the CLAs and the Hill Haween Cooperative ensured strong representation of the women's groups and enabled established of the savings group

networking and learning platform. These initiatives are empowering women as they are able to get easy access to loans, which they use to establish their businesses, while at the same time continue to enjoy mentorship and continuous training in business management and literacy. The operations of the three CLAs are efficient and sustainable as the Executive Committees are voluntary positions. The Hub's operations costs (utilities, stationary, salary of security guards and cleaners) are now being covered jointly by the three CLAs themselves from profits from the revolving loans and members' businesses, and there is a clear understanding that they will also take over responsibility for the centre rent (currently paid by Concern) from January 2023. The CLAs and the Hub have ensured equity in access to finance-to-finance business operations without the restrictions previously hindering the women, such as demand for collateral witnessed in microfinance institutions and banks.

The Chairperson of Hiil Haween Cooperative, Hadiya Hassan Abdulle, confirmed the profound impact the CLAs and Hub are having to support the women SHG members: *"Now women who have never worked before have created businesses for self-employment. They can pay school-related fees, there is improved nutrition status of households*



*because of increases in income, the women have improved self-esteem and self-worth and participate more in decision making at household level”.*

Members of SHGs use their collective voice and experience to advocate for children’s rights (particularly female children), improved literacy and numeracy for women, and women gaining recognition within their communities. CLAs are supporting less fortunate members within the communities by contributing food and non-food items to returnees from Yemen and Kenya and supporting hunger-stricken families during the current drought and food security crisis. Members of CLAs also led some COVID-19 awareness initiatives including mask making and distributing them to communities.

Through this process, the SHG members have realized their greater potential to participate and contribute to the welfare of the community. This process has shown how women, through their own hard work and dedication, have become strong actors within the private and social sectors themselves and have built a solidarity of women entrepreneurs.



Faisa Abdi Hassan, a member of Danwadaag CLA in her grocery shop in Bondhere district, June 2022. Photo: Fatima / YouthLink.



Hiil-Haween Cooperative Hub ribbon cutting ceremony in Mogadishu, August 2021. Photo: Amal Abukar / YouthLink.



Hiil-Haween Cooperative Management committee at Hiil-Haween center in Mogadishu, January 2022. Photo: Mariam Abdikarim Mohamed / Concern Worldwide



Hiil-Haween Cooperative Hub ribbon cutting ceremony in Mogadishu, August 2021. Photo: Amal Abukar / YouthLink.

# Mott MacDonald Technical Advisory Partnership

Written by Finola Mohan, Stephen Otieno and John Heelham, drawing on material originating from Kaye Pollard of Mott MacDonald and Alex Baekelandt formerly of Mott MacDonald.

Mott MacDonald is a global engineering, management and development consultancy based in the UK with a purpose “to improve society by considering social outcomes in all we do, relentlessly focusing on excellence and digital innovation, transforming our clients’ businesses, our communities and employee opportunities”. Since 2017, Concern and Mott MacDonald have collaborated together, delivering a variety of projects from assessing dam stability in Sudan, to checking hydraulic models for water systems in South Sudan, and contributing to the continuous development of Concern’s WASH engineering standards.

## Background

Around the world, engineering firms are being encouraged by both clients and staff to provide social value in their infrastructure programmes and embrace a wider role in society, with a stronger focus on having a social purpose. This has to be balanced with companies’ duty to their shareholders. Many engineering companies are achieving this through large Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) budgets and traditionally these arrangements have been project specific, typical donor-recipient relationships.

At the same time, NGOs are finding that due to a combination of factors including increased urbanisation and the effects of climate change, development solutions are becoming more technically complex.

Concern’s response to these challenges requires technical expertise across a broad range of technical disciplines. It can be difficult for an NGO like Concern to access this expertise within our staff, both at headquarters and in-country, including with local partners and local authorities.

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***It’s clear, therefore, that engineering consultancies and INGOs need each other.***

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However the different structures, incentives and mandates mean the relationships between engineering consultancies and INGOs can be fostered using efficient frameworks that allow us to work together to common benefit, whilst recognising our different operational purpose. The starting point is an acknowledgement of these philosophies and a desire to overcome the differences.

For Mott MacDonald this meant getting buy-in from managers that the main value of this collaborative partnership was the staff engagement and experience as well as social value, rather than increasing financial value of the company for shareholders. Following this, a standard Mott MacDonald framework contract with an additional Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was created to formalise the arrangement with Concern. This MoU stipulated that the proposed framework rates were at cost and thus that the collaborative arrangement was not-for-profit. The advisory support

provided by Mott MacDonald was also partially funded (50% of the value) by Mott MacDonald's CSR fund, with the other 50% coming directly from Concern.

## Risks and innovative solutions

Several risks with this arrangement were recognised, and innovative solutions developed to address them:

1. Sending engineering staff to high-risk countries was usually only ever done on donor-funded projects with experienced teams and expensive insurance policies. To deal with this challenge, Mott MacDonald focussed on remote delivery of projects, making use of recent advances in better internet connection and widespread use of smartphones globally. They used smartphones for videoconferencing with Concern's team and got recordings of good video and photos of the situation on the ground, which was then shared with engineers at headquarters for their input and guidance. A good example of this was the use of camera and video conferencing to guide a local team of Concern engineers to conduct basic geotechnical tests after the collapse of an irrigation dam in Sudan in 2017. In-person supervision of the tests was replaced by photos of the results, videos of the method, and sharing best practice documents. These inventive ways of collaboration were fostered even prior to the restrictions put in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, and as such, the partnership has not had to adapt too much since 2020. This has continued well into and past the pandemic through undertaking online calls with Concern's field staff to understand the situation on the ground and directly ask questions and provide advice.
2. Another major risk highlighted by Mott MacDonald was the role of liabilities – i.e. who would be at fault if something was to go wrong with a project? Given the reduction in in-person oversight by Mott MacDonald as outlined above, design liabilities were a major concern for Mott MacDonald in this partnership. Concern employ local engineers, and sometimes local consultants, to carry out the designs of WASH infrastructure, and then generally engage local engineering firms to carry out the construction on-site. Mott MacDonald support Concern and its consultants/partners through assessing design work (and in some cases, quality of construction) that has already been carried out – providing advice and suggestions. This allows for capacity development of Concern, our staff and our partners, as well as the design consultants and/or construction contractors being used, as well as providing a safety net from a liability perspective.
3. From Concern's perspective, a major risk of this agreement was the potential for inefficiency or unjustifiable spend. To mitigate this, we focussed on efficient use of technology and complete transparency of the framework contract to avoid surpassing agreed spending limits. We also minimised costs by engaging young professionals at Mott MacDonald to do most of the work – also giving them valuable exposure to engineering projects and challenges in differing operational environments - with more senior technical experts acting in a supervisory capacity. This, combined with clear scope agreements and continued communication through Concern's WASH Engineering Advisor as a focal point, has built trust over the five years and has created a collaboration which is commercially viable for both parties.

## South Sudan case study

Mott MacDonald has provided support to several major projects in South Sudan. One such project relates to the supply of water in Bentiu Protection of Civilians (PoC) site in 2018/2019. Concern had the responsibility of supplying over 44,000 residents of the camp with water, supplied from two deep boreholes. Due to technical challenges with both boreholes, at the end of 2018 Concern was only able to supply an average of 8 litres per person per day, compared with the SPHERE standards of 15 litres. One of the boreholes appeared to have partially collapsed, and the initial plan was to clean the borehole (through flushing or airlifting) with the hope that this would clear out the borehole so that its use could be continued. Likewise, it was hoped that the amount of water pumped from the other borehole could be increased. However, none of these methods were guaranteed to work. As such, Mott MacDonald strongly recommended the drilling of a new deep borehole, to ensure Concern could continue to serve the population of the POC. A further inspection of the partially collapsed borehole using a borehole camera confirmed that trying to rehabilitate the borehole was unlikely to succeed. As such, following this inspection, as well as the recommendation from Mott MacDonald, the Concern South Sudan team were approved donor funding to drill a new deep borehole, and the collapsed borehole was decommissioned. The donor was aware of the report from Mott MacDonald which substantially helped make the case for the new borehole drilling. This then ensured that the residents of the PoC had greater access to clean drinking water.

Another such project in South Sudan was outside the POC, in Bentiu and Rubkona towns. In April 2020 Concern undertook hydraulic modelling and technical assessment of the existing water systems, in order to propose measures to ensure the systems were able to meet



Excavation for foundation of pressed steel tank in Bentiu Water treatment plant, Rubkona County, July 2022. Photo: Stephen Waswa Otieno / Concern Worldwide.

the water demand of the ever increasing local population. Following completion of this activity by an external consultant, Mott MacDonald engineers were able to support Concern's South Sudan and HQ SAL-based engineering teams on reviewing the findings and recommendations. This multi-layer of technical review and input between the South Sudan engineers, SAL engineers and Mott MacDonald engineers enriched the report and its findings and recommendations. Using the recommendations brought up in this work, we were able to seek funding for construction of an additional elevated water tank (required to ensure adequate water pressure) within the system in Bentiu, to meet the current and future water demand; as well as an extension of the existing water network. To date more than 2km of pipeline has been laid in Rubkona and Bentiu towns, serving an additional 5,000 individuals. The previous population being served by the water system for the two towns was about 40,000 individuals, which is projected to be

about 60,000 following the current flooding, where nearby villages have flooded, making community relocate to higher ground within the two towns.

## Conclusion

The results of this partnership are something both Concern and Mott MacDonald are very proud of. This partnership is evidence that collaboration between INGOs and engineering consultants can be fruitful in a variety of ways and add social value for private sector to get involved in development infrastructure projects. Mott MacDonald has delivered support to over 30 projects to Concern Worldwide in over 10 of our countries of operation over the last five years. The partnership is continuing in 2022.

# Funding/ project sponsorship: Kerry Group and the Z Zurich Foundation

Written by Amy Rose McGovern

Concern delivers programmes worldwide with the help of valuable support from the private sector, which comes in many forms. Partners that share Concern's mission to help people living in extreme poverty achieve major improvements in their lives, provide project funding in addition to non-monetary contributions such as tailored technical expertise, access to their wide ranging networks and in-kind products and services. Concern sees the private sector as an important stakeholder in achieving sustainable development gains, and welcomes the increasing commitment from the sector to foster and grow partnerships with Concern based on shared goals. Partnerships between the private sector and aid agencies like Concern can have a significant impact and Concern has seen transformational results, both for the communities we work with and the companies with which we engage.

## Partnership with the Kerry Group

In 2021, Concern programmes helped to improve the food security and livelihoods of over 1 million people who, because of poverty, are struggling to earn enough to feed their families adequately, which has an impact on their overall health and wellbeing. We partner with private sector organisations to develop livelihoods programmes that support people with the tools they need to earn a sustainable living, learn new skills, improve the productivity and nutritional value of their crops and set up small businesses.

Kerry Group is a global taste and nutrition company headquartered in Ireland. Since 2012, they have partnered with Concern to fund the RAIN nutrition and livelihoods programme. RAIN stands for Realigning Agriculture to Improve Nutrition and works with subsistence farmers and their families to improve the quality and quantity of food production as well as maternal and newborn health practices. The RAIN programme was first implemented in Zambia between 2011 and 2015, with a second phase in Niger (2018 - 2022) where conflict and the impact of climate change contributes to persistent levels of hunger and food insecurity.

This multi-year financial commitment from Kerry has given Concern the opportunity to build on the learnings from the earlier phases of the programme and the financial security to implement the programme in graduated phases including elements of capacity building and systems strengthening. The RAIN programme is now enabling 7,000 programme participants to produce more varied and nutritious vegetables for consumption and sale through conservation agriculture techniques. As of November 2021, over 43,000 kg of vegetables had been cultivated through home gardens across the RAIN participating villages. Cooking demonstrations and mother support groups are helping to promote better infant nutrition. The programme's strong focus on gender equality has led to 570 women now accessing micro-loans for business through

Village Saving and Loans schemes and 78% of women now actively participate in community decision making bodies (up from 7% before RAIN). Community members are also managing and accessing safe water supply from 15 village wells which has positive implications for health, hygiene and crop and livestock maintenance.

Kerry have also partnered with Concern in non-traditional ways. Utilising their expertise and innovation in the nutrition space, Kerry joined the advisory panel of an urban nutrition project in Kenya. The Lishe Poa project sought to develop a healthy alternative to commonly consumed snack

foods in the informal settlements of Nairobi. Kerry offices and labs in Kenya and South Africa were engaged to provide pre-sensory analysis and technical testing during the development phase. See the article about this project titled “**Improving the nutrition status of young children, women and men in the informal settlements of Nairobi, Kenya through a Public Private Partnership with Food Manufacturer and Vendors**”.

In 2021, Concern and Kerry embarked on a process of co-creation to identify a new area of focus for the partnership, based on the principle of shared value. Taking learnings from the nutrition and livelihoods elements of RAIN and technical expertise employed on the Lishe Poa project, the process sought to shortlist opportunities that aligned with Kerry’s global sustainability strategy, “Beyond the Horizon”. Two projects were shortlisted; the first was an extension of Lishe Poa – seeking to scale up the consumption of healthy, safe and affordable foods in urban settings in Nairobi through the promotion of innovative urban farming technologies. Kerry’s anticipated role in the project would be to utilise their expertise in nutritional analysis, supply chain management, bio-fortification and blending of macro and micro-nutrients to enhance outcomes. A key benefit of this project was its urban setting and the high beneficiary numbers this brought with it. The second shortlisted and ultimately jointly selected project was also based in Kenya, in Tana River County. The project proposes building on the gains being made by the LEAF project, sponsored by Archer Daniels Midland and sought to scale up Climate Smart Agriculture with a specific focus on improving the value chain of mango fruit, a locally grown crop grown in abundance. Kerry’s expertise will be employed around quality assurance, safe handling, and post-value addition. Kerry’s strategic focus to work with smallholder producers also presented the opportunity to grow regional links with suppliers and distributors as well



Vegetable garden and community group from the RAIN project, Toungailli Village, Niger, February 2021. Photo: Ollivier Girard/Concern Worldwide.



Demonstration and preparation of a dish based on vegetables harvested in the garden by beneficiary Hassana Mahamadou (30) in Toungailli Village, February 2021. Photo: Ollivier Girard/Concern Worldwide.

as potentially embed the project’s mango harvest into Kerry’s procurement process. Not only does this 4-year partnership with a trusted Irish organisation present an opportunity for staff engagement and reputational awareness externally but it allows Kerry insight into value chains of developing economies and the nutritional challenges faced in vulnerable contexts.

## Partnership with the Z Zurich Foundation

Floods affect more people globally than any other type of natural hazard and cause some of the largest economic, social and humanitarian losses related to weather events. The people worst affected by climate change events such as flooding, are often those who are least responsible for causing it and have the fewest resources to cope. Concern is working in partnership with members of the [Zurich Flood Resilience](#)

[Alliance](#) to improve the lives of over 300 communities living with the threat of floods in 28 countries.

Since 2016, Concern has been working with the [Z Zurich Foundation](#) as part of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (The Alliance) at a global and local level. The Alliance is a multi-sectoral collaboration of nine member organisations from the private sector, international development and humanitarian sectors, and academia, and it brings together community programmes, new research, shared knowledge, and evidence-based influencing to build community flood resilience in developed and developing countries. The Alliance focuses on finding practical ways to empower communities to adapt their lives to cope better with flooding – and save lives. This innovative approach gives local community groups the technology, insights and skills they need to monitor, predict and plan for the effects of flooding.



Raised, resilient homestead in Charitabari, Sundarganj, Bangladesh, supported by Concern in the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance Project, February 2021. Photo: Mokter Hossain / ASOD.



As part of this partnership, the Z Zurich Foundation is providing multi-annual funding for Concern's flood resilience work in 62 flood-vulnerable communities in Bangladesh, Kenya, Malawi and South Sudan. The technical component of the community programmes in these countries, generates the evidence that the Alliance then uses to influence decision makers at all levels to invest in climate change adaptation and resilience. We advocate globally and locally for increased funding for flood resilience, stronger global, national and subnational policies, and improved flood resilience practice.

This partnership goes beyond a financial contribution. Funding comes through the Z Zurich Foundation, but Zurich Insurance Group is also a partner in the Alliance. Zurich has the ambition to be one of the most impactful and responsible businesses in the world and 'Adapting to Climate Change' with a focus on adaptation and prevention is a cornerstone of the Foundation's sustainability agenda, purpose, values and culture. Zurich employees are active partners in the Alliance and provide expertise from the perspective of a global insurer to develop risk informed programming that shifts the focus away from post-event recovery and rather stresses the importance of pre-event resilience-building. This helps communities to reduce the devastating impacts of floods, even before a flood hits. This is in synergy with Concern's approach to community resilience building of which disaster risk reduction is the foundation and a cornerstone of our approach to sustainable community-led solutions.

The objectives of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance are to:

- Increase funding for flood resilience
- Improve policy at global, national and sub-national scales
- Improve flood resilience practice at community level

Both Kerry Group and Zurich, have a strong focus on corporate social responsibility, which is evident from their steadfast support of our work throughout the years. Both companies have invested time to engage with Concern staff and to understand the complexities within which our programmes are implemented. They have participated in Concern initiatives such as Women of Concern and The Global Citizenship business leaders group, which has helped to raise the profile of our work and to encourage other like-minded companies to get involved and contribute to the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development.

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## For whom is the publication?

All staff involved in designing, implementing, managing, monitoring, evaluating and communicating Concern's work. This publication should also be shared with partners.

## What this publication includes

- Promising practice
- Organisational learning
- Promotion of multi-sectoral and integrated approaches to programming
- Links to full reports

## What it doesn't include

- Targeted recommendations
- Additional evidence not included in the papers cited
- Detailed descriptions of interventions or their implementation

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### Key words

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# KNOWLEDGE MATTERS

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**CONCERN**  
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ENDING  
EXTREME POVERTY  
WHATEVER  
IT TAKES