

CONCERN
worldwide



CONCERN - SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

YOUR SUPPORT CHANGES LIVES

Welcome to our 2023 Summer Newsletter – your chance to read more about the incredible work your loyal and generous support makes possible.

A message from our Executive Director

It has been a while since I have written to you, but I know Julia and her team have kept you informed about – and engaged with – Concern's work across the globe.

Over the past 12 months our teams – and supporters – have responded magnificently to huge challenges. From the 30 million people devastated by Pakistan's floods to the millions left homeless and displaced by the Türkiye and Syria earthquakes, because of your backing, Concern staff are on the ground, ready to act.

In parallel, we drew politicians' and the public's attention to the crisis still unfolding across East Africa – driven by the worst drought in 40 years, resulting in severe malnutrition and loss of livelihoods. We met MPs and worked with you and other supporters to lobby the government to give resources.

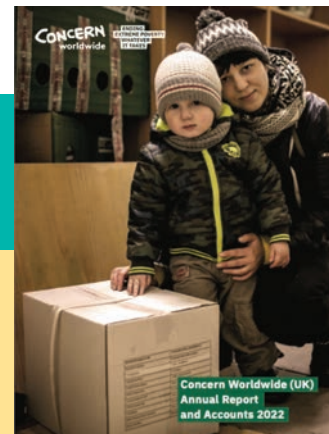
In October, I visited Afghanistan and met women who are saving and reinvesting funds in income-generating activities. I was inspired by communities coming together to protect their homes from flooding and produce food. We continue to find ways to ensure that we have women to support female programme participants there.

My visit reinforced the importance of long-term donor commitment: it enables real change to happen. Over the next page and a half, I trust you will be inspired by the highlights of our work in 2022. They show just what we can achieve – but only with your support.



Danny Harvey

WHAT YOU HELPED US ACHIEVE IN 2022



We've just published our 2022 Annual Report.* Here are a few highlights of all you helped us achieve, as we reached 36m people last year.

EMERGENCIES

We responded to 76 emergencies in 23 countries – helping 16m people

SPOTLIGHT: SYRIA

Twelve years on from the start of the devastating conflict, nearly 7 million Syrians are still displaced. In 2022, with your help, our programmes reached almost 290,000 people. We distributed food vouchers, provided temporary employment, gave grants and training to businesspeople and farmers; and restored safe water to 204,000 people.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

We reached over 11m people through our health interventions



Fatouma Hassane is a health volunteer at a nutritional rehabilitation centre in Illela, Niger.

SPOTLIGHT: SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone has one of the world's highest maternal-mortality rates. In 2022, we worked with six other NGOs to reduce maternal, neonatal and under-five mortality and morbidity. In the four districts where Concern works, we have helped introduce Clinical Mentors, like Mariamma Dugba, who support healthcare professionals, including Nurse Marion Thullah, to provide reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent services.

LIVELIHOODS

We improved the food security and livelihoods of over 5m people

SPOTLIGHT: EAST AFRICA

The worst drought in 40 years has devastated East Africa. In 2022, Concern teams in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya helped 1.5 million people with emergency cash payments, water, latrines in displacement camps, and life-saving outreach clinics. In Somalia alone, we helped more than 8,600 malnourished children.

* If you would like a hard copy of our Annual Report, please get in touch. You can view it in full, online, at: <https://www.concern.org.uk/accountability/annual-reports>

58-year-old Samiro and her family, including her grandson Calaso, live in a temporary displacement camp on the outskirts of Baidoa, Somalia. Samiro's family were pastoralists who lost their livelihood when their three cattle and nine goats died in the droughts. With limited access to food, Calaso became malnourished but is now improving after his grandmother took him to a hospital. The family left their home with only a few belongings and walked for six days before arriving at the camp. Concern supported them with emergency cash assistance which they used to buy food, clothes, medication and mats to sleep on.



EDUCATION

We helped nearly 700,000 people through our education programmes

SPOTLIGHT: ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia we work to improve access to education for the most marginalised girls. As well as basic literacy and numeracy skills the girls gain vocational training and join self-help groups. In 2022 we expanded into new neighbourhoods, enrolling 2,587 out-of-school girls.

INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES

We reached nearly 6 million people through work that 'brings together' sectors, tackle community needs comprehensively. Integrating agriculture and livelihoods with water, health and education had real impact

With your generous support, Concern teams will continue to work with communities around the world, supporting them in practical ways – and fighting for a future free of extreme poverty.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

You support us to ‘End extreme poverty – whatever it takes...’ As our new global strategy makes clear, expanding education opportunities is key to breaking this cycle – and empowering girls in the most-challenging contexts.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 calls for a huge expansion in education opportunities by 2030. But it is now 2023 and more than a quarter of a billion children are out of school. In the yellow box below, we unveil Concern’s new Global Education Strategy. It focuses squarely on practical ways to educate and empower children and out-of-school adolescents living in conflicts, emergencies and extreme poverty – including refugees.

Sierra Leone – education is empowering

In Sierra Leone we are part of a consortium that runs ‘Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER)’. In 2022, 5,982 girls enrolled and graduated.

EAGER is designed for just such marginalised and vulnerable out-of-school girls (aged 13-17): we help them gain skills so they can move into education, training or employment. The girls take part in learning sessions conducted by trained community volunteers and mentors. They cover literacy, numeracy and practical life skills and relate to the girls’ lives.

Once they have completed the learning phase, the girls receive one-to-one guidance and develop their own plans, including goals and next steps towards learning, financial empowerment and community. Mentors encourage them to think about what

**2,012 girls graduated EAGER in 2021.
A year later, 85% had completed at least two steps of each of their goals.**



Mariatu Conteh goes to school in Masakong, a village in Sierra Leone’s Northern Province.

Our Global Education Strategy 2023-7

How does education affect poverty? It can end it. It is the best long-term mechanism for breaking the cycle of extreme poverty and tackling the issues of hunger, climate change and conflict.

With basic literacy, numeracy and life skills, an individual can access markets and networks and be healthier and more productive. Future generations will mitigate and respond to risks, including climate change, disasters, and conflict.

Concern is committed to “sustainably improve the lives of the most vulnerable children and out-of-school adolescents living in conditions of extreme poverty – and those affected by crisis and conflict, by increasing access to high-quality, safe and protective education.”

positive changes they want to see in their lives and what actions they can take to bring them about. Parents and caregivers commit to support the girls and mentors provide follow-up. A big focus of our new education strategy is to run programmes like EAGER, so out-of-school adolescents (aged 10 to 19) can gain the skills to transition into formal education, technical or vocational pathways or age-appropriate livelihood opportunities.

In Sierra Leone we also run an integrated Livelihoods, Education, and health/nutrition programme with a Safe Learning Model. As we said on page 3 of this newsletter, we plan to run more integrated programmes to achieve sustainable improvements in children’s literacy, wellbeing and gender equality in schools and local communities.

We use the Life Skills component of the programme to promote sexual health amongst teens, prevent gender-based violence, and reduce teenage pregnancies.

Fourteen-year-old Mammy Konteh is in Class 6 at the school in Mathombo, Sierra Leone.



Kenya – staying in school to succeed

Hannah has just completed secondary school and plans to go to university. She lives with her two brothers in a one-room house in one of Nairobi’s slum areas. As part of Concern’s **Let Every Girl Succeed Programme**, Hannah received a bursary to cover school fees, uniform and supplies. She was also matched with a mentor.

‘Let Every Girl Succeed’ supported over 13,000 students and we intend to help many more. Collaboration with local agencies is key to ‘letting’ these girls succeed: in Nairobi we worked with the directorate of children’s services to engage child protection volunteers to teach parents and children about psychosocial wellbeing and safeguarding.



Hannah is enrolled on Concern’s Let Every Girl Succeed Programme in Nairobi.

“People are arriving tired and traumatised”

Concern’s Prudence Ndolimana speaks to us from Chad



Prudence is our Area Co-ordinator in Goz Beida, south-east Chad. He tells us about his work – and how the conflict in Sudan is exacerbating the humanitarian emergency in Chad.

“I am originally from Rwanda where I was a teacher. But, in 1994, we had a huge humanitarian crisis, and I joined an aid organisation to support my fellow citizens. I then decided to support others outside my country – so I came to Chad.

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN CHAD?

The conflict in Sudan has driven 2.2 million people from their homes. 149,000 have fled here to Chad, including Mariama:

“Armed men began to set fire to parts of El Geneina. At around 1am we started hearing screaming, We grabbed the children and fled. We became separated en route amidst the chaos. I arrived at the Adré border crossing with only four of my children. I do not know what has become of the other four or my husband. We arrived 12 days ago and are waiting to be registered by the UN.”

Refugees are scattered in various transit sites near the border. Some travelled more than 100km – they have arrived tired and traumatised.

HOW ARE WE HELPING?

Here, people are kind and are open to help – but they do not have the means. That is where we come in – we support both those fleeing and those who are here already.

In the Sila region, we provide shelter, basic household items, mobile health clinics and nutrition support, as well as WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) as clean water is a big challenge.

I like that Concern is clear in its policies, guidance, and values – it values people and I appreciate that. Concern respects the people we work with, and I can see the positive change it makes to people’s lives. It makes me proud to work for such an organisation.



Mariama and two of her children at the Chad/Sudan transit camp.



“People need someone who can hear them. I like to listen.”

Mental trauma knows no borders. Concern works intensively with adults and children fleeing conflict or disaster – or dealing with climate devastation and severe poverty in their own communities.

During Lockdown, Siba, pictured right, and her team set up a 24-hour hotline. Refugees used it to access basics such as food, shelter, and medicine. But there was a separate helpline for mental health assistance and Gender Based Violence (GBV).

“Most people need someone who can hear them, who they can feel comfortable with and easy to talk to. I like to listen. I am very interested in helping people to advocate for their rights, to build their confidence. Especially Syrian women – they don’t have any relatives in Lebanon. Through our support, they have gained confidence in expressing their feelings and are comfortable talking to a case worker who can understand them and listen to them.”

Concern’s psychosocial work is always context-specific and always evolving. In Afghanistan we



Siba Bizri is a Concern Psychosocial Worker in Lebanon. Originally trained in Child Protection, Siba supports Syrians fleeing the ravages of a 12-year war: children and adults who have lost homes and family. Most are completely dislocated.

developed a comprehensive life-skills manual and, in Bangladesh, we regularly visit the ‘invisible’ pavement-dwellers taking part in our Graduation programme. We refer them for treatment for malnutrition or antenatal care, but also to GBV and psychosocial services. Psychosocial interventions can only have a real impact if other factors affecting wellbeing are simultaneously addressed.

Concern is embedding psychosocial support in humanitarian responses, and in long-term humanitarian crises, including communities trapped in extreme poverty. With your support we can empower people to cope with challenges, rebuild their lives, and participate in their communities with dignity and respect.

WHAT IS PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT?

Concern gives psychosocial – emotional and psychological – assistance to those who have experienced or are experiencing a crisis, traumatic event, or other difficult circumstances. We promote mental and emotional wellbeing, alleviate distress, and foster resilience and social connectedness. From Pakistan to Ukraine, from DR Congo to Bangladesh, we do this in the appropriate healthcare, education and humanitarian contexts. Approaches range from counselling to community mobilisation and advocacy.



Lebanon, January 2023: the daughters and son of Ghalia and Youssef attended eight Concern psychosocial sessions designed for children. Their parents also received psychosocial support, including positive parenting sessions.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION



Ending poverty, hunger and conflict demands political change.
What is Concern calling for?



Campaigners from across the UK gather outside parliament before meeting with their MPs. *Anna Gordon*

Acting on East Africa

As our Executive Director emphasises on Page 2, the East Africa Hunger Crisis remains our campaigns priority. Over the last 18 months, we have raised the alarm on a prolonged catastrophe. As our government underwent many changes, Concern consistently held them to account. We:



LOBBIED MPS

Last February, we joined forces with other leading charities to bring together campaigners to meet their MPs. Constituents piling on the pressure does have an impact – and over 40 MPs attended. Campaigners posed hard questions to Development and Africa Minister, Andrew Mitchell, and Shadow Minister for International Development, Preet Gill.



DEMANDED ACTION FROM PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

In September 2022, we presented a joint petition of over 30,000 signatures to the Prime

Minister to uphold the UK's promise to act... before it is too late. Then, ahead of the Autumn Statement, Concern made its voice heard when we demanded that the Chancellor protect the aid budget. And, earlier this year, we called on Andrew Mitchell to make a new funding commitment to match the scale of the crisis.

In May, Andrew Mitchell announced £143 million in funding for the East Africa Hunger Crisis. **This falls far short of £861 million provided in 2017-18 during the region's last hunger crisis.**

While rains have finally arrived, the crisis is far from over. As we write, close to **40 million people face high levels of food insecurity in Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan.** Which is why Concern continues to push for more action from both our government and the international community. **Hunger and starvation is preventable.**

If you would like to get involved in our campaigns, or learn more about the issues raised, please contact Julia or Mary at: philanthropy@concern.net

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