



KNOWLEDGE MATTERS

Climate Resilience

Issue 35 | September 2023

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.

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: All modes of water collection can be found at Mesajid shallow well, Filtu Woreda, Liben Zone, Somali Region, Ethiopia. Communities and livestock from miles around rely heavily on this precious water source. Photo: Michael Mulpeter, Concern Worldwide

Contents

- 4 Introduction: Concern's understanding and approach to climate resilience

- 7 Achieving flood resilience through community-led advocacy: Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (ZFRA)

- 12 Participatory Community-Based Watershed Management Approach: Ethiopia REGRADE (REsilience / GRADuation / Evidence)

- 17 Building Community Resilience in Pakistan – 11 years of programme experience and learning

- 23 Early Warning Early Action (EWEA): Building Resilience in Somalia

- 29 PROSPER: Approaches to Enhancing Environmental Sustainability in Malawi

- 35 Concern's global advocacy on climate change

From the Issue Editors:

Welcome to the latest issue of Knowledge Matters!

This issue highlights the wide range of approaches adopted by Concern in promoting climate resilience across multiple countries.

The articles illustrate how complex it can be to integrate climate change into diverse programmes and contexts and reflect how rapidly thinking on resilience programming has evolved over time. Importantly, programmes have focused not only on individuals, households and communities, but also on the private sector, local and national government, and the institutions and policy frameworks that shape decision making and planning at all levels. We have further included an article about our advocacy at global level, where we work to influence how and how much climate resilience is funded.

The articles do not capture all of Concern's Climate Resilience experience to date, but provide a sample of the varying approaches implemented in Concern's programmes in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, Somalia and South Sudan. All of the programmes have contributed to strengthened resilience and improved wellbeing, despite shocks and stresses, for people living in extreme poverty.

By sharing learning on the types of climate resilience approaches that work in differing contexts, this issue of Knowledge Matters aims to influence programme design and implementation within and beyond Concern and our partners. It also contributes to the knowledge base of our Community of Practice on Climate Resilience. This Community of Practice is open to anyone within Concern who is involved or interested in climate resilience. Please do reach out if you would like to join or find out more.

We thank the authors and reviewers who together have made this issue possible, as well as Finola Mohan, Chris Pain and Michelle Kearns for their support in producing the content.

Enjoy reading these articles! They are packed with promising practices and valuable insights that we hope can spark new and impactful opportunities for climate resilience programmes.

Sally Tyldesley, Advocacy Manager and **Michael Mulpeter**, Organisational Climate and Environment Adviser, SAL Livelihoods Team

Introduction: Concern's understanding and approach to climate resilience

Written by Michael Mulpeter

The climate and biodiversity crises are very real and we are already seeing the stark impact that changes in climate conditions are having in the places where Concern works. People living in extreme poverty are often highly reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods and therefore disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change. Changes in biodiversity in turn affect climate, undermine food security and put people at risk. Both crises are intertwined, with declines in each accelerating our exposure to irreversible tipping points. Rather than tackling them as separate problems, we can address them together.

No country is immune from the impacts of climate change but the fact is the impacts of climate change will affect different parts of the world differently. Developing countries are set to face the brunt of the climate crisis, despite their minimal contribution to global emissions and their limited resources for response. Climate events have the greatest impact on those living in poverty and exacerbate existing inequalities. The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND GAIN)¹, a climate vulnerability index, reveals an overwhelming negative relationship between a country's income and vulnerability to climate change. According to a recent report from Oxfam titled "The Cost of Delay", the number of extreme climate and weather-related events that developing countries experience has more than doubled since

1991, resulting in over 676,000 deaths during that period. These countries urgently require international support to transition sustainably without compromising on growth.

In 2022, the Horn of Africa witnessed the worst drought on record², destroying livelihoods and pushing communities to the edge of famine. We are almost one year on from the 2022 deadly floods that hit Pakistan. There are significant gaps in the post-flood recovery and hundreds of thousands of people remain food insecure and without permanent shelter. Communities struggling to recover are now facing the likelihood of yet more disasters in the short term as climate extremes are set to intensify. This underpins the importance of Concern prioritising climate action but also signals that the window for adapting to climate change is shrinking rapidly.

At the heart of Concern's climate action is the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) approaches to help those living in extreme poverty to adjust to climate change and its effects, to minimise or avoid loss and damage and, where possible, to apply nature-based solutions. We support the sustainability of these actions through system strengthening, for example, developing effective community based Natural Resource Management (NRM) and disaster risk management systems.

¹. The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN): <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/>

². A recent rapid attribution study by the World Weather Attribution Initiative found that climate change has made the region's ongoing agricultural drought 100 times more likely.

Working with the most vulnerable communities in the context of a changing climate and building on their existing governance mechanisms are essential to reduce vulnerability and build resilience to withstand future extreme events. Central to our climate resilience approach is working to address root causes of vulnerability and strengthening the capacity of social, economic, and natural resource systems that enable communities to absorb, adapt, and transform. More than ever, it is crucial that climate and environmental action is not viewed as a “luxury” or “long term development” problem.

The science of climate change continues to reiterate the need for action^{3,4}. Moving ahead, major opportunities exist for Concern to build upon our programme experience and learning in this space and to act as a major player in addressing climate, nature and development priorities together.

The articles in this issue of Knowledge Matters represent the varying types of Concern climate resilience programmes aimed at supporting communities to adapt to the increasingly severe impacts of climate change and nature loss.

TABLE OF KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Climate Adaptation / Climate Resilience	Climate adaptation is defined as the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. ⁵
Resilience	Resilience is generally understood as the ability of systems to function in the face of disturbance.
Climate Justice	Justice that links development and human rights to achieve a human-centred approach to addressing climate change, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable people and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its impacts equitably and fairly.
3As	<p><i>Adaptive capacity</i> is the ability of social systems to adapt to multiple, long-term and future climate change risks, and also to learn and adjust after a disaster.</p> <p><i>Anticipatory capacity</i> is the ability of social systems to anticipate and reduce the impact of climate variability and extremes through preparedness and planning.</p> <p>The ability of social systems to absorb and cope with the impacts of climate variability and extremes is known as '<i>absorptive capacity</i>'.</p>

³. UNEP, 2022. [Emissions Gap Report](#)

⁴. IPCC, 2013: Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

⁵. IPCC, 2018. [Glossary](#)

TERM	DEFINITION
LLA	Locally Led Adaptation - The eight LLA Principles were developed by the Global Commission on Adaptation and launched at the 2021 Climate Adaptation Summit, to guide efforts to promote LLA.
Early Warning Systems (EWS)	The set of technical and institutional capacities to forecast, predict, and communicate timely and meaningful warning information to enable individuals, communities, managed ecosystems, and organisations threatened by a hazard to prepare to act promptly and appropriately to reduce the possibility of harm or loss.
Environmental Sustainability	<p>Environmental sustainability is the most prominent environmental reference in Sphere and to a large extent can be applied to other sectors. Its key activities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrating environmental impact assessment and management into all planning; - Implementing environmentally sustainable programmes; - Selecting sustainable materials and techniques; - Managing key environmental impact issues such as solid waste, energy and land use practice; - Establishing, restoring and promoting safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally sustainable energy supply systems; and - Protecting, restoring and improving the ecological value of operational sites during and after use and decommission/transition to development in an environmentally sensitive way.

Achieving flood resilience through community led advocacy: Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (ZFRA)

Written by Afsari Begum, Thomas Mayuen, Jackson Mekenye, Wongani Kawonga and Seona McLoughlin

Concern Worldwide has been a partner of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (ZFRA) since 2018. We are currently implementing the programme in four countries, Bangladesh, Kenya, Malawi and South Sudan. ZFRA is a multi-sectoral partnership focusing on finding practical ways to support communities strengthen their resilience to flood risk.

Concern's programmes in each country vary depending on the context but they all share common elements. Each country develops an evidence-based solution using the Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC) tool to holistically understand flood

risks and the communities corresponding level of resilience. This evidence is gathered with full participation of community members as well as involvement of local and national government authorities. After this data is collected it is assessed across the various sources of resilience, including using the five capitals of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework: human, natural, physical, social, and financial. After analysing of the data, the results are presented and validated by the community. Each community also develops a resilience vision statement. Through this approach communities are supported to better understand and identify their strengths

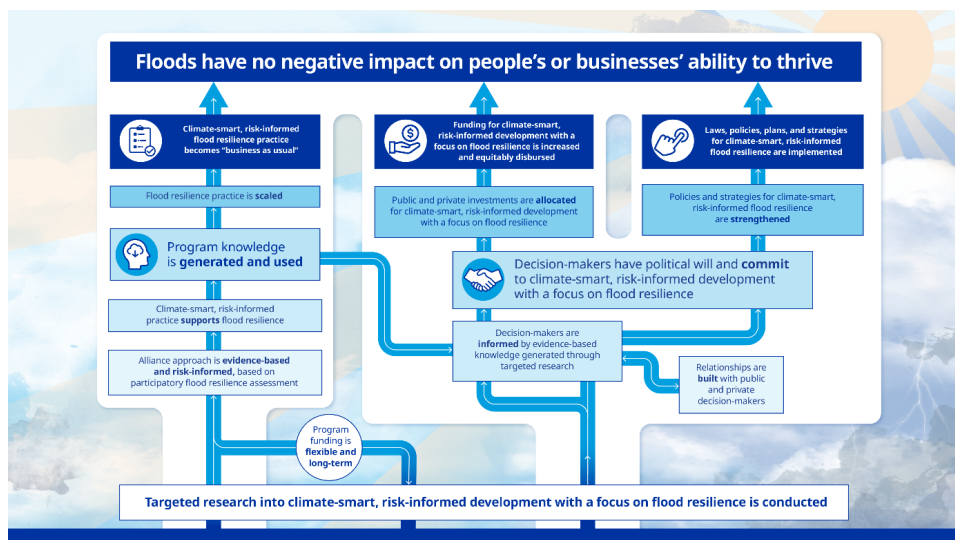


Figure 1: the ZFRA theory of change (video version available <https://youtu.be/JVS51MW7w5Q>)

as well as their risks and vulnerabilities to flooding. The communities then develop community action plans, which identify the interventions that are needed to support them prepare for, mitigate against the impact of, and ensure an early and effective response to floods.

Advocacy in the ZFRA programme

ZFRA's global objectives (see figure 1) are to improve flood resilience practices at community level; increase funding for flood resilience at local, national and global levels; and ensure laws and policies that impact flood resilience practices are strengthened and implemented. These objectives are in a large part achieved through advocacy and are built into each of Concern's country programmes. Actions are designed through a bottom up community led approach.

The ZFRA programme aims to create an **enabling environment** for communities to thrive and adapt to flooding. This involves examining the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders at all levels and holding them to account. In particular, we work with communities on strengthening their capacity to hold duty bearers to account rather than speaking on their behalf.

The data gathered in all the communities is used in different ways to communicate the specific needs of the communities, and ultimately to advocate for resources and policies to address these needs. Each programme under ZFRA prioritises building relationships between communities and government stakeholders through its participatory methodology.

Below we share some of the key activities communities identified and the impact of the advocacy approach taken in each of the four ZFRA countries:

Kenya

Through the FRMC data collection process, 13 communities in Kenya identified the following areas as priorities within their community action plans:

- Adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices.
- Installation of a fully equipped apiculture system.
- Community led sanitation.
- Development of micro-irrigation infrastructures.

From the community interactions it is apparent that most programmes in Tana River have been more focused on emergency response rather than strengthening pre-event preparedness and impact mitigation. The data from the FRMC tool and the community action plans are therefore being used to influence stakeholders to invest in flood resilience as opposed to response to flooding events. The programme has begun to influence funding at the county level by actively inputting into the county government's five year Integrated Development Plan to ensure that the community priorities are included.

Through advocacy training the communities identified champions to advocate on their behalf. The advocates have been very active and have seen some successes; one community used their community action plan to advocate for a footbridge and were successful in securing commitment of funding. Another community had challenges with a village leader who was not effectively advocating for their needs. Through skills gained in the training, the community advocates presented a petition to the Deputy County Commissioner and the village leader was removed. This was an essential first step to creating an enabling environment so that the community can more effectively hold stakeholders to account.



Handaraku womens group in Kenya discussion on possible interventions. Photo credit: Euniah Miruka, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer, Concern Worldwide

Malawi

In Malawi the project works with 15 communities in seven Traditional Authorities in Nsanje district, which is one of the country's flood hotspots. Through the FRMC process the communities identified the following intervention areas:

- Early warning system strengthening: community awareness campaigns, simulation exercises and drills, repairing and installing early warning materials (river gauges), and provision of communication equipment.
- Capacity building training on natural resources and integrated watershed management, disaster risk management, climate-smart agriculture, and WASH.
- Establishment of community funding mechanisms for resilience.
- Community guidelines for construction of better houses in safe areas and zone planning.
- Infrastructure rehabilitation (dykes and drainage).

The communities have been utilising the community action plans to advocate for government to take action on key gaps they have identified. Two communities approached the government authorities to demand action is taken on the issue of drainage and dyke rehabilitation. No funding was available at government level in the short term, so the communities decided to organise a fundraising event where they will pitch their action plans to organisations who fund resilience activities in the district.

Concern has also established partnerships with other organisations implementing resilience projects at the district level by sharing the key findings from the FRMC data. Developing flood simulations and drills was identified by the communities as important for building their ability to respond as quickly and effectively as possible to flooding. Four organisations came together and ran the simulations jointly; some provided finances, some provided the technical expertise, and others provided transport, materials and other in kind contributions. By working together this partnership approach removed

the silos organisations can sometimes work in and helped increase the reach of the exercise to more community members. District officials now want this approach to be replicated across the district.

Bangladesh

Under the ZFRA project, Concern has been working since 2018 with 21 Char land (Riverine Island) communities – these are communities that live on highly exposed vegetated islands in the rivers on the floodplain. Priority intervention areas include:

- Climate Smart Agriculture.
- Safe drinking water infrastructure.
- Livestock health.

The Community Action Plans determined which interventions were most needed and identified the relevant departments and government officials to engage with.

Each plan was presented to the entire community who subsequently chose representatives to lead the advocacy process. These representatives presented the community’s plan to government officials, highlighting areas where close collaboration would be needed. After this, communities and government officials worked together on Joint Action Plans detailing specific activities and interventions. This has resulted in a number of priority actions being delivered by the government, ensuring sustainability of the project. For example, in collaboration with agriculture department, it was determined that flood tolerant seeds could help farmers cultivate certain crops through the flood season and maintain their livelihoods. Accordingly, the Department of Agricultural extension provided training on flood tolerant cropping, coupled with post-flood support such as seeds, fertiliser and seedlings. Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture



In Daunbni, Rangpur-Bangladesh This 17 member committee meet once a month to represent their 1600 households. The group works with Concern through local partners and have worked on reconstructing embankments for flood resilience. They have also built pathways to make movement easier during floods. Photo: Gavin Douglas/Concern Worldwide

agreed to provide flood tolerant rice varieties. Where tube wells were installed to provide safe drinking water during floods, but these were compromised by floodwater, the Department of Public Health and Engineering agreed to modify the design to protect these sources of water from further floods. Where communities have been successful in their advocacy asks of government, the successes became self-reinforcing; communities are motivated to take increasing responsibility as they recognise it will generate mutual benefit.

South Sudan

Under ZFRA, Concern is working with local communities in flood prone areas in Northern Bahr el Ghazal (NBeG). Concern supported the establishment of community action groups whose main roles are planning, awareness raising, coordination and collaboration with local authorities on the gaps and necessary solutions to achieving climate resilient communities.

Some of the interventions needed include:

- Mapping of river crossing points for easier access and reduced flood risk.
- Construction of local canoes.
- Provision of protection and embankments at river crossing points.
- Training on areas such as first aid, natural resource management, WASH, and climate smart agriculture.
- Establishment of village savings and loans associations.
- Fruit Tree (mango, guava, lemon) planting at household level.
- Enactment of by-laws to curb random burning of bushes/forests and any other land degrading activities.

Building on the work at community level, Concern has started exploring opportunities for developing potential partnerships that will contribute to strategic engagement

with state and national actors. Following advocacy meetings and presentation of the FRMC data and community action plans, Concern was appointed co-chair of the UN-led Partnership for Peace, Recovery and Resilience working group in NBeG. Concern has been able to influence the selection of thematic areas that will be funded under a UN led programme. Concern used the community action plans to inform the funding priorities which has resulted in Disaster Risk Reduction being a key priority.

Conclusion

Across the four countries, it is clear that the approach of empowering communities and building relationships between communities and government is key to creating long-term sustainable change that contributes to flood resilience. Communities are the most knowledgeable about the risks they face and the best ways to address them. The impact of floods are also felt most significantly by the communities themselves, yet often they are excluded from the decisions that affect their own flood risk and resilience. The ZFRA approach aims to remedy that by using a participative, comprehensive data collection tool, followed by community led design of action plans based on this data, alongside empowerment of community groups through advocacy training and support.

Ethiopia: REGRADE (Resilience / GRADuation / Evidence)

Participatory Community-Based Watershed Management Approach

Written by Mulugeta Terfa, Tsedeke Desalegn and Lulseged Tolla

Ethiopia is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and, over the last fifteen years, has experienced five severe droughts, which have all required significant humanitarian interventions and critically impacted food and nutrition security and livelihoods of large portions of the population. Environmental factors such as climate shocks and stresses at various levels are exacerbating the risks already faced by the extreme poor and vulnerable communities, particularly those involved in agriculture and other ecosystem-dependent livelihoods. Reliance on subsistence agriculture means the impact of these shocks and stresses are felt keenly by rural communities, who depend directly on food system outcomes for their livelihoods.

As referenced in [Concern's experience and learning from Graduation \(Knowledge Matters, Issue 3\)](#), Concern designed the REGRADE (**R**esilience / **G**RADuation / **E**vidence) programme with the goal to 'build livelihood security and improve nutritional outcomes among the extremely poor households living in South Wollo, Amhara Region and Wolaita Zones, SNNP Region, Ethiopia'. In addition to building household assets, the REGRADE programme aimed to address the root cause of poverty in a given context and so it followed a Participatory Community-Based Watershed Management Approach in order to build the resilience of participating households and the wider community.

Overall, the programme directly targeted 11,660 households/59,185 people. Of these, households, 5,634 households were targeted with a comprehensive Graduation package and 6,026 were reached through wider community activities including Natural Resource Management (NRM), promotion of Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture, Maternal, Infant and Young Child Feeding, Family Planning, and Community-Based Saving.

A community area based approach was promoted through land reclamation, community micro-watershed management and climate smart agriculture. The REGRADE livelihood package was closely linked to the temporary direct support provision of the national Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP¹) with geographical targeting based on the national Community-Based Participatory Watershed Development (CBPWD) guidelines².

1. PSNP is a government flagship programme launched in 2005 funded by multi donors. A Temporary Direct Support clients are food insecure but have labour capacity and the PSNP provides them with cash and/or food transfers in return for seasonal public employment activities. In addition to the safety net function, the PSNP also has a livelihood component that provides technical assistance, business planning and access to financial services to further livelihood promotion. Whilst the safety net function of the PSNP covers the whole of Ethiopia, the coverage of the livelihood component is more limited.
2. Lakew Desta, Carucci, V., Asrat Woldem-Ageñehu and Yitayew Abebe (eds). 2005. [Community Based Participatory Watershed Development: A Guideline](#). Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Based on the application of the CBPWD guidelines, this article will provide a summary of how the REGRADE programme planned and designed community watershed management activities. It will also reflect on key achievements, challenges and lessons learned from implementing a community micro-watershed management approach.

Community Micro-Watershed Management Planning

Community micro-watershed (CMW) targeting is unique to REGRADE and provided a focused geographic area for clear integration of activities, including the restoring of the natural resource based to improve the micro-climate, land productivity, water sources and reduce flooding and landslides. The CMW targeting also allowed for joint risk analysis and planning between highland and lowland households.

At the socioeconomic level, a watershed includes people, their farming system (including livestock) and interactions with land resources, coping strategies, social and economic activities and cultural aspects³.

As per Ethiopia’s CBPWD Guidelines, the first two steps focused on forming Woreda level teams and the selection of watersheds. Major (critical) watersheds are very important, as they are often representative of important hydrological and socio-economic units.

The units include several interacting communities with their respective sub-watersheds and CMWs. The Woreda level teams used different criteria to select the CMWs, for example, degradation levels, levels of food insecurity, specific objectives (water, flood protection, major reclamation, etc.), manpower and resource availability.

³. Ibid.

FAO defines a watershed as the geographical area drained by a watercourse, and watershed management as any human action aimed at ensuring the sustainable use of watershed resources.

Steps 1 - 8: Watershed Management Planning Process

Step 1: Getting started at Woreda level

Step 2: Getting started at community level

Step 3: Biophysical and socio-economic survey

Step 4: Identification and prioritisation of interventions that bring change

Step 5: Options and interventions discussed and approved by the General Assembly

Step 6: Development maps, inputs and action plan

Step 7: Implementation strategies

Step 8: Participatory monitoring and evaluation

The REGRADE programme targeted 20 CMWs; 10 across six Woredas of Wolaita Zone in SNNP Region and 10 across three Woredas in South Wollo Zone in Amhara Region⁴.

⁴. Participating households resided in twenty community micro watersheds (CWS) across nine Woredas: 10 CWS across three Woredas (Dessie Zuriya, Delenta and Legambo) in South Wollo Zone, ANRS and 10 CWS across six Woredas (Duguna Fango; Humbo; Kindo Didaye; Kindo Koysha, Abala Abaya and Kawo Koyesha) in Wolaita Zone, SNNPR.

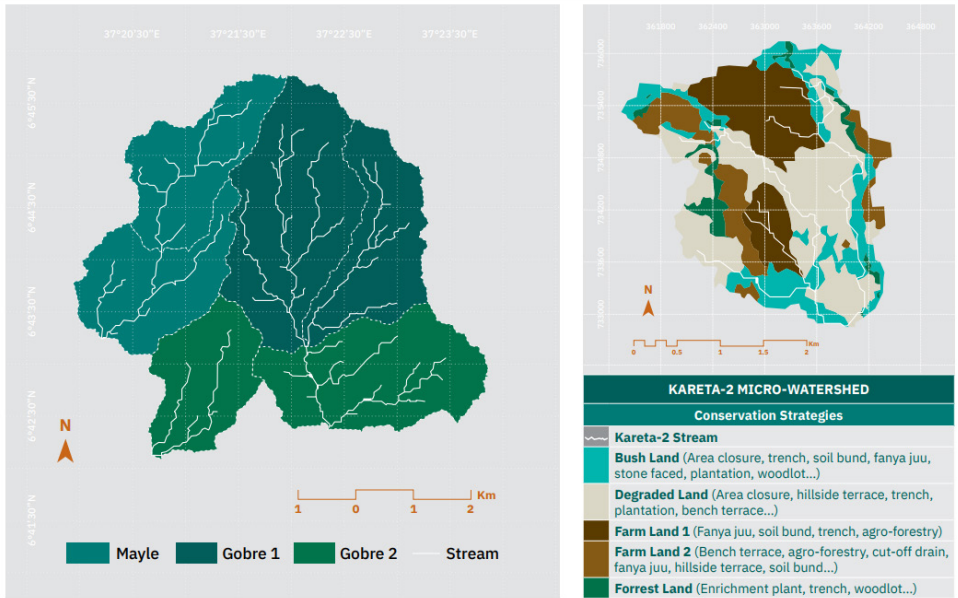


Figure 1 Area Delineation of Mayle, Gobre 1 and Gobre 2; Micro Watersheds in Humbo Woreda of Wolaita

Next, (Step 3-5), involved analysis of the biophysical and socio-economic status of the CMWs by a multi-disciplinary planning team. These exercises provide useful information about land resources in the CMWs, and assess the opportunities and the major issues and limitations that may hinder proper watershed development. For example, the interactions and common land uses shared with other communities (gully, hillsides, etc.). Once the analysis was complete, context appropriate CMW development plans were presented to the communities for validation.

Step 6 was developing community vision maps to allow for key actions to be translated into development maps using the ArcGIS tool. The development maps illustrated the actual placement of sites of development interventions with respect to land use types. Figure 1 shows the delineation of boundaries of three CMWs (left) and the development map (right) for Humbo Woreda, Wolaita Zone, SNNP Region.

Finally, Step 7 and 8 involved the planning team coming together with the CMW committees to develop implementation strategies and joint monitoring and evaluation procedures. This ensured that the planned list of activities, technical designs, reasons for selection and maps could be used as benchmarks, which allowed Concern programme staff to compare achievements and their impact against original targets throughout the programme cycle.

Contrary to the administrative boundaries, a watershed planning process follows the natural drains of water from higher to lower elevations located across single or multiple Kebeles⁵. For REGRADE, the 10 CMW of Wolaita Zone have portions in 20 Kebeles and the 10 CMWs in South Wollo zone are found in 10 Kebeles. This means that one watershed may consist of one or more Kebeles; and households who reside and/or whose farming plots are found within the targeted CMW are all considered

⁵. Kebele - is the lowest administrative unit of the government.

recipients of the REGRADE programme as they benefitted from the works undertaken on the CMW. Households targeted for graduation programme were then selected from these communities based on a complementary targeting process⁶.

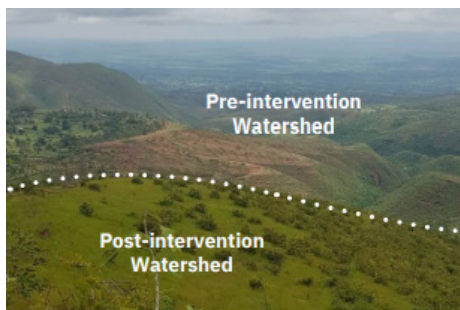
Achievements - community micro watershed approach – DRR, Livelihoods and Environmental Conservation

The community micro watershed management approach coupled with soil and water conservation activities had positive effects for DRR, livelihoods and environmental conservation:

- From baseline to endline, the number of hazards beneficiaries were exposed to reduced by 38% and the number of households affected by disasters reduced by 32%.
- From a baseline of zero, by the end of the programme, 91% of DRR committees were found to have developed a mitigation plan.
- Soil erosion was reduced by 70% in South Wollo and 27% in Wolaita. The area of reclaimed land increased from 330 hectares at baseline to 2,316 hectares at endline/
- The programme planted over two million tree seedlings and regenerated four spring's water sources, leading to increased water yield.⁷

⁶. Targeting activities at communities living in critical micro-watersheds allows for integration of activities, maximizing the use of resources, and the trickle down of effects between communities in the upper, middle and lower catchments of the watershed. It also promotes joint analysis and planning for sustainable watershed management and restores the natural resource base, which is essential for sustainable livelihoods.

⁷. In the past, women and children were spending on average of 1 hour to fetch water, this has been reduced to 20 minutes in most watersheds.



Challenges and Lessons learned

Challenges:

- **In-house knowledge and expertise:** At the initial stage of the programme, Concern lacked watershed management expertise, specifically that required to design watershed development maps, but also for measurement progress of soil erosion using the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) method. This necessitated support from GIZ and Addis Ababa University who provided technical oversight and backstopping.
- **Delimiting boundaries:** A majority of the CMW boundaries fall within more than one administrative Kebele. This created challenges when it came to creating development plans. It was resource intensive to mobilise communities across multiple Kebeles and it was difficult to integrate the various priorities of each Kebele within the broader development plan.
- **Limited participation of women:** There was limited participation of women in the watershed planning process, due in part to patriarchal attitudes that hindered women's participation and involvement in decision-making.
- **Lack of extension services:** Government agriculture extension services at the Kebele level have not kept pace with the changing climate and are constrained by limited human and financial resources.

People living in extreme poverty have less access to these services, as those with less land rarely receive incentives to support increased production.

Lessons learned

1. Community micro watershed management is feasible and replicable

- Interventions under the watershed approach were interconnected and supported each other.
- Using the micro watershed as the targeted area of the intervention concentrated the programme activities and benefits in an area large enough to produce vital ecosystem services and small enough to be managed by the people using the land and producing those services.
- The watershed approach promoted a sense of belonging, as the whole community were the direct beneficiaries of the conservation work. Community members reported a sense of ownership, which the programme evaluation found promoted programme sustainability.

2. Kebeles are umbrella structures for watershed management committees.

Where a watershed committee is formed by representatives from two or more Kebeles, as part of the handing over process, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) should be in place to ensure there is appropriate coordination and sustainability.

3. Uptake of new practices.

Integration of biological and physical conservation measures had multiple benefits for fodder for livestock, as well as agroforestry, all of which enhanced soil fertility and conserved soil.

4. Include women and young people in the process to ensure sustainability.

There is a need for a detailed understanding of how to empower women and other user groups that have traditionally been excluded from taking an active part in planning for watershed management. This would help to promote more equitable access to, control over, and distribution of natural resources and ensure that interventions do not adversely affect one social group more than another.

Building Community Resilience in Pakistan: eleven years of programme experience and learning

Written by Shafqat Ullah

Climate-induced disasters have increased the level of risk for vulnerable communities in Pakistan. Without the support of local government and Concern partners, low-income and vulnerable communities lack the adaptive capacity required to cope with climate extremes and often rely on ad hoc coping strategies that are no longer viable, such as informal lending and shifting planting schedules.

Concern has a long history of resilience programming in Pakistan. Since 2011, the country programme has demonstrated strong leadership in community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM)¹.

Each successive programme has been built upon prior experience and lessons learned, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement. In that time, significant investments have been directed towards building the resilience of vulnerable communities and strengthening the capacity of line departments through interventions aimed at improving outcomes for livelihoods, WASH infrastructure, health, nutrition, and governance. This article summarises the key programme experience and learning gained since 2011.

Year	Programme	Donor	Key sectors
2011 - 2017	Community-based Disaster Risk Management programme (CBDRM)	USAID/ OFDA	Livelihoods, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Education
2016 - 2020	Building Resilience in Pakistan (BDRP)	UK - DFID	Livelihoods, DRR, WASH, Shelter
2023 – present (5 year contract)	Building Resilience and Addressing Vulnerability to Emergencies (BRAVE)	UK - FCDO	Livelihoods, DRR, Climate Change Adaptation

Table 1 Timeline - Pakistan Resilience Programmes (2011 - 2023)

¹ For Concern Pakistan, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is the foundation of community resilience, which requires a thorough understanding of the local area’s risks, opportunities, availability of knowledge to withstand those risks, availability of local infrastructure, and linkages with the relevant line departments.

Building Resilience through Community-based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) Programme

In 2011, with the support of USAID/OFDA, Concern initiated a five-year community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) programme to support vulnerable communities residing in flood-affected areas across four provinces of Pakistan. The floods impacted 20 million people, leaving seven million without homes and caused massive destruction to their livelihoods.

The primary objective of this programme was to improve the disaster risk management capacities and strategies of poor and vulnerable communities, along with other key stakeholders, through sustainable preparedness, mitigation measures and increased institutional capacity. The programme sensitised communities on the impacts of climate extremes and supported village flood mitigation measures to minimise destruction and damage to houses and assets in the event of flooding. A key success of the CBDRM programme was the scale of its activities – it reached 1,260 villages in 150 UCs in six districts.

The main components of CBDRM programme were:

- Equip vulnerable communities and line departments (National Disaster Management Authority; Provincial Disaster Management Authorities) with necessary knowledge, and practices to enhance their capacity to improve risk analysis, mitigation, preparedness and response.
- Build skills of community members (male and female) on how to protect their livelihoods, assets from the drastic effects of different disasters (floods, droughts, earthquakes).
- Establish linkages between the community and their respective line

“As a result of Concern’s CBDRM Programme, local disaster management committees are now directly engaging with the district authorities in seeking early warnings and timely evacuation of their villages before flooding to avert loss of life – this clearly highlights a success of Concern’s experience and the Consortium’s approach. Recognising that women are more likely to be available and willing to play crucial roles in aiding others at home and in their village in times of disasters, the programme specifically targeted increasing the capacity of women as first responders.”

Saeed Ullah, Independent evaluator of CBDRM Phase 1 Programme

departments and relevant public and private sector organisations to provide prior and timely support in the case of any disaster.

- Promote gender equality (females in leading roles) and inclusion of the most vulnerable including people with disabilities to reduce their vulnerability to disasters.

Climate change and environment were a key point of engagement with the communities, especially in the context of recurring natural disasters. Major activities conducted under the programme included the formation of Village and Union Council Disaster Management Committees, Union Council Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) and School Disaster Management Committees (SDMC).

Following risk and vulnerability analysis exercises, Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Plans and School Disaster Preparedness Plans were developed and linked to community mobilisation, awareness raising and capacity building. Programme participants also benefited from the provision of emergency contingency stocks and engaged in advocacy related actions to

influence the integration of DRR in local development processes. A key impact of the programme was its ability to reach out to women through Disaster Management Committees. For the first time, women had the opportunity to receive formal first aid training and access climate and DRR interventions.

Building Resilience in Pakistan (BDRP)

Building on the experience from the CBDRM programme, the BDRP programme² prioritised assisting village communities in disaster prone districts to mitigate and prepare for disasters through improved early warning systems, risk information, community level response mechanisms, and improved linkages with disaster management authorities. Like the CBDRM programme, BRDP prioritised investment in improving the capacity and resilience of women to play crucial roles at household and community level. For example, following a Gender Analysis, a BDRP Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan was developed to ensure the integration of gender considerations of the affected vulnerable populations.

Empowering Change Resilience Model

The 'Empowering Change Resilience Model' centred on ensuring the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups and empowering communities to strengthen their skills and reduce their vulnerabilities to cope with current and future disasters. Programme participants benefited from improved access to early warning systems and community level response mechanisms, which were facilitated by local disaster management authorities.

² The BDRP consortium was led by Concern Worldwide (CW) in partnership with ACTED, Welthungerhilfe (WHH), and IRC (International Rescue Committee).

The three pillars of the Empowering Change Resilience Model are:

Pillar 1: Preparedness for response - building inclusive social institutions at the village and Union Council level

Pillar 2: Vulnerability reduction for dignified survival - disaster-proofing of community structures and key behaviour change

Pillar 3: Strengthened mechanisms for self-recovery - promoting sustainable environmental management and economic growth

Community based DRR and Climate Change Adaptation

Early Warning Systems were a key aspect of the BDRP programme and were operational in 164 communities, supporting local government authorities to respond appropriately to various emergencies, working closely with the local community in the dissemination of key messages. For example, the programme worked with the Flood Forecasting Division of the Pakistan Meteorological Department to estimate flood severity and generate flood scenarios that were incorporated into the community DRR plans. Community-based DRR and locally led adaptation measures were promoted through climate resilient infrastructure, such as single-room shelters built on raised beds and climate smart agriculture practices aimed at adapting planting schedules to climate variability and utilising hermetic seed saving technology.

Key achievements

Based on the results of the BDRP final evaluation, the programme accomplished its target of enhancing the resilience of communities to cope with disasters.

- *Enhanced Resilience:* 41% of the programme population improved their Household Resilience Index (HRI) score and shifted from low to higher categories of HRI. Table 2 shows that at endline, 39%, 35% and 26% of households were

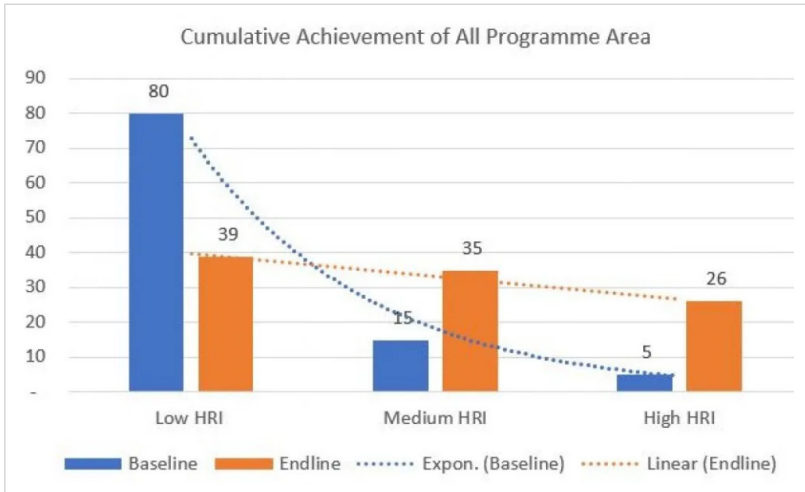


Table 2
Cumulative achievement in all programme areas - Household Resilience Index (HRI)

found in low, medium and high HRI categories respectively, compared to 80%, 15% and 5% at baseline.

- **Enhanced community capacity:** Inclusive community organisations were formed and trained at village/supra village level. Group Maturity Index (GMI) study ranked 90% of groups as having substantial organisational capacities to continue functioning after BDRP and established linkages with relevant stakeholders; 30% of groups had the ability to generate resources.
- **Enhanced Income:** Agricultural support to small farmers resulted in a 77% increase in yields and income while 53% claimed using less water/inputs than usual. Skills training and access to the market for the poor resulted in improving employment from 2% to 22% for women, and 10% to 24% for men.
- **Gender and Inclusion:** Gender analysis conducted in target districts led to development of a Gender Equality Action Plan, including sector-specific gender recommendations and adaptations for resilience building and empowerment of women. The inclusion of PWDs and old age persons was ensured across all activities.

Building Resilience and Addressing Vulnerability to Emergencies (BRAVE)

Based on the successful implementation of the BDRP, in 2022 Concern secured FCDO funding to lead the “*Building Resilience and Addressing Vulnerability to Emergencies*” (BRAVE)” programme. BRAVE will deliver a package of interventions aimed at building the resilience of communities to climate change and associated risks. Commencing in 2023, the programme is expected to target 1.5 million vulnerable persons across five years. Resilience will be built at the household, community, and public and private sectors level.³

Building on the experience and learning gained through CBDRM and BDRP, women’s

³. It is also worth noting that since early 2023, Concern has taken on the responsibility of hosting the Disaster Risk Financing (DRF) Programme for the START Network, operating under their Pakistan Hub, known as READY Pakistan. The primary objective of the DRF Programme is to empower partners to gain access to early and predictable funds, which will enable them to safeguard communities from forecasted hazards such as heatwaves, floods, and droughts.

meaningful participation will be prioritised again through the “Engage with Men” approach, to create a safe, contextualised and conflict sensitive support mechanism through sensitising men so that they can act as allies for promoting gender equality and ensuring women voices in community structures.

Short to medium term outcomes will focus on establishing mechanisms to support communities to plan and respond to climate risks by piloting innovative and scalable climate adaptation strategies such as climate smart agriculture (including soil nutrient enhancement and crop improvement practices), conservation agriculture, infrastructure protection, and clean energy.

Medium to long-term outcomes address the transferring of decision-making power to the community to identify and plan for the risks they face, in addition to supporting early warning early actions and capacity building of public sector institutions. From a resilience building perspective, a critical impact of the programme will be the enhanced capacity of the relevant public institutions through acquisition of new knowledge, skills and resources. Climate Change Adaptation Forums will be formed to develop applicable knowledge and practice. This will be achieved by engaging private sector and academia. The forums and structures will be empowered and linked with the government line departments for raising finance and for climate action planning at the community level.

Key lessons learned

In the interest of sustainability, over the past 11 years, Concern resilience programmes in Pakistan have fostered strong linkages between at-risk communities and the relevant local government authorities. During this time, key lessons learned include:

1. The importance of building on existing systems and structures

- Engaging with already established community based organisation in the villages for the purpose of training VDMC and UDMCs was more effective than establishing completely new community based structures.
- Turnover of government staff was a challenge for the working of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA). It is better to formalise DDMA meetings with the government departments to build institutional ownership and memory. Provincial governments should invest resources to provide permanent staff who are well trained on DRR and CCA and are clear on their roles and responsibilities.

2. Gender and Inclusion is central pillar of resilience programmes

- Gender is as an important factor in planning and implementing interventions to build people’s resilience to climate change and disasters. Engaging women in leadership positions in the committees and providing them with necessary skills helped them to play a more proactive and meaningful role in their communities.
- A central objective of the CBDRM and BDRP programmes was the inclusion and active participation of women in community-based structures. To drive this agenda forward, the most promising feature of BDRP Phase 2 was the establishment of the Technical Working Group on Gender and Inclusion, headed by a Gender Specialist who was responsible for rolling out the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan.

3. Focus on building community adaptive capacity, income generation and value addition

- The availability of high-quality seed for crops is a major issue in Pakistan, with only 30 percent of farmers having access. Farmers need access to high-quality seed for multiplication. In drought-prone areas, rotational grazing and planting of crops and drip irrigation should be promoted. Drip irrigation is the best solution for water conservation in water-deficient areas.
- The BDRP programme successfully diversified income generation activities and demonstrated enhanced crop and livestock productivity. However, to further enhance household income, greater emphasis should be given to the value addition of agriculture and non-agricultural products (e.g. handicrafts, fashion designing, embroidery, agricultural products, etc.).

4. Pay close attention to targeting, budgeting and trade-offs.

- To further enhance the capacity of communities, it is often better to engage fewer communities and dedicate more time to each one, rather than spending less time and allocating resources thinly across a higher number of communities.

Early Warning Early Action (EWEA): Building Resilience in Somalia

Written by Abdulkadir Ibrahim

Background

Somalia has experienced a threefold increase in severe climatic events since 1990, with three major droughts since 2010 and recurring flooding. In addition, the protracted conflict, political instability, limited resources, diseases and difficult access to aid lead to tensions between host communities and Internally Displaced People (IDPs). This has created a context in which communities find themselves exposed and defenceless to the intensifying risks of a changing climate. According to the Somalia-Multi-Partner-Technical-Release, approximately 6.6 million people across Somalia are expected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity outcomes for June 2023. As much as 39 percent of the total population is in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.¹

Solution

Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS) is a humanitarian Consortium of nine NGOs, including three national NGOs, led by NRC that supports Somali communities in developing resilience to climate-related shocks. It was designed to ensure that programming is led by the affected communities and focuses on addressing underlying causes that hinder resilience.

The BRCiS Consortium was created in 2013 in the aftermath of the 2011 famine, which killed nearly 260,000 people. The

Consortium's vision is to ensure that *"vulnerable people at the margins of Somali society are capacitated to engage with and influence their institutions, so that their needs are served in a more inclusive and sustainable way"*. BRCiS operates in 34 districts and is present in all states in Somalia. BRCiS partners reached 2,321,011 individuals (estimation based on the number of people reached with sustainable access to water) for the period between 1st September 2018 and 31st March 2022². This article will provide an overview of the BRCiS approach to Community-based early warning early action (EWEA), including related challenges and learnings.

BRCiS approach to Community-based Early Warning Early Action

Early warning early action (EWEA) response mitigates the risk of vulnerable people adopting extreme negative coping strategies or becoming dependent on aid.

The BRCiS EWEA approach adopts an early action, response and recovery approach to recurrent shocks such as conflict, drought, floods and locust infestation that adversely affect the livelihood systems of vulnerable communities in Somalia. The community-based approach helps to guard against

¹ [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#). 25 April 2023.

² [BRCiS 2 Final Report](#). February, 2023



Figure 1 EWEA CRC Focal Points Trained on two-way communication in Banadir. Photo Hussein, YouthLink, March 2021

impending shocks, and early response addresses short-term humanitarian needs while protecting overarching resilience gains. To find a solution to the recurrent and imminent natural and manmade shocks in Somalia, the programme works in the following way:

1) Community level shock data is collected monthly

The BRCiS consortium establishes and trains Community Resilience Committees (CRCs) in all target communities. CRCs trained on community-based EWEA play leading roles in monitoring early warning indicators at the community level, coordinating with district authorities and NGOs, identifying the most appropriate interventions and implementing early action and early response activities. Community based EWEA data collection³ is one of the many responsibilities of the CRCs. EWEA data is collected on a monthly basis from the target locations, using purposive sampling by national staff who are assigned to

cover a selected area based on their networks and understanding of the local context. Within this, Early Warning Focal Points (FPs) are then required to contact between two and four community actors from the sampled villages to synthesise all community generated shock information. Interviews are either conducted in-person during regular NGO field visits or via mobile phone.

2) BRCiS Community Real Time Risk Monitoring System (RTRM)

BRCiS designed the RTRM system to provide timely, community-generated shock information on key trends to trigger early actions in BRCiS operational areas. Consortium technical specialists used community feedback to determine the most common shocks, stresses and coping strategies. The RTRM system combines traditional early warning indicators, like remote sensing weather data and market prices, with community-level information on a wide variety of shocks and stresses. It encourages joint periodic shock monitoring and analysis, increases information value through synergy and adopts a common approach to the triggering of early action.

³. Including data on rainfall and access to water, crop and livestock health, market prices, migration and coping strategies.

Indicators, Thresholds and Red-Flagging

With the existence of programme mechanisms, BRCIS piloted three indicator thresholds of (“normal”, “alert” and “alarm”). These indicator thresholds are fundamental factors that the programme utilises to activate the early action response mechanism. Thus, each indicator contributes to one of these thresholds and has specific definitions:

- Normal: when the seasonal crises are normal, i.e. presence of a dry spell of more than 15 days (during the rainy season). In this condition, the rainfall performance is less than 20% from the average and the seasonal crop condition is normal.
- Alert: once the seasonal rainfall is 20-60% less than the average and water stress means that seasonal crops are 15-30% heading into wilting point; pasture continues to dry up and community rain water catchments are half full (50%).

- Alarm: when the crises and shocks has deteriorated i.e. no rainfall or over 60% less than average. Crop water stress is at wilting point and 40% of community water sources have dried up.

The EWEA data is generated from two sources: primary data collected at community level and secondary data sourced from other organisations (e.g. Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit – Somalia, IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre). The data is then submitted and stored via the data collection platform. It takes up to 25 days on average during triggering and approval to facilitate the early action response. Table 1 provides a sample of shock occurrence indicators for Climate and non-climate shock. The programme also monitors shock impact indicators for Livelihoods and Markets.

BRCIS community-based real-time monitoring indicators and thresholds summary			Normal	Alert	Alarm
Shock occurrence indicators					
1) Climate and non-climate shocks	Perception of rainfall performance **	Comparison with expected normal rainfall at this time of the year (during rainy seasons)	Average/normal	Poor/below average	No rain recorded
	Flash flood events	Presence or not of flash flood events	No		Yes
	River levels	Comparison with expected normal river levels at this time of the year	Normal for this time of the season	Below normal/ above normal	River completely dry/overflowing or at high risk of overflowing
	Acute watery diarrhoea/ suspected cholera cases under 5	Number of acute watery diarrhoea/ suspected cholera (reference health facility)	0 cases	1 case where not previously reported	Double the average number of cases from the previous two weeks
	Armed/ clan conflict events causing displacement of population	Presence of conflict events (armed/ clan) resulting in displacement	No population displacement	Yes, households displaced < 50	Yes, households displaced > 50
	Locust infestation	Presence of locust hoppers/swarms in the area	No locust presence	Yes, <2 days in community/ neighbouring	Yes, >2 days in community/ neighbouring

Table 1 BRCIS EW Indicator Thresholds

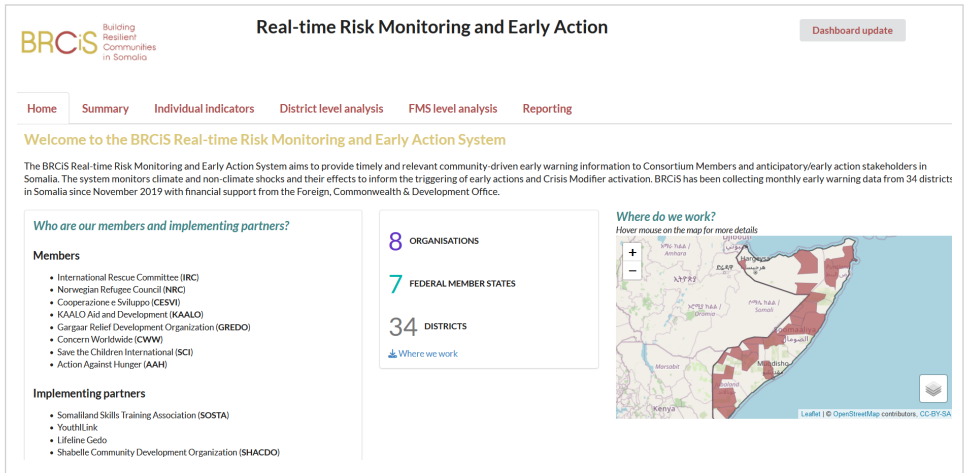


Figure 2 BRCIS Real-time Risk Monitoring and Early Action System (dashboard)

3) Decision Making and Early Action Planning

Data gathered through the RTRM system is automatically cleaned and made available on a publicly accessible [BRCIS Dashboard](#) from which the Consortium Management Unit (CMU) and BRCIS members provide an overview of red-flagged districts and underlying shock trends. The dashboard summarises the key shock indicators and their threshold categories (alarm, alert or normal) which are monitored by District-Level Early Warning Early Action committees who recommend early action.

A target area receives a red flag either when a sudden large shock such as flooding or a cyclone occurs or when too many of the indicators for that area pass the alert and alarm thresholds; either 1 alarm or 1 alert for the indicators of shock impact +3 in alarm/ 2 alarms and 3 in alert for the indicators of shock impacts.

4) Early Action triggered

Once the early action is triggered, a safety net scale up is implemented. This generally includes multi-purpose cash assistance and often includes community water vouchers,

disease prevention measures (health and hygiene kits, mosquito nets), agricultural inputs or fodder for livestock.

5) Use of crisis modifier where shock exceeds funds for early action

When the scale of shocks exceeds BRCIS's available resources for early action, a contingency fund is activated, known as a Crisis Modifier. The Crisis Modifier plays a central role in mitigating negative coping strategies, protecting community assets and saving lives either across the span of a short-term crisis or until the arrival of a large-scale humanitarian response in the face of a larger crisis. Based on the emergency plan set up by CRCs and BRCIS, the decision-making on crisis modifier implementation is led by the following criteria:

- The area must be red-flagged by BRCIS RTRM or by a sudden shock.
- There must be justification for the need to scale up early action.
- The proposed early action must be appropriate.
- There should be a lack of humanitarian stakeholders in the area.

For example, during the 2020 drought in Gedo Region, the consortium mobilised the Crisis Modifier to provide water trucking, facilitated through water vouchers for communities experiencing intense water stress.

Lessons learned

1. Community level committees can strengthen local capacities and coordination to prepare for and respond to shocks

Community Resilience Committees and district authorities took a leading role in analysing BRCiS RTRM data, reviewing secondary data, disseminating key information and considering relevant early actions options, including the scale-up of shock responsive safety nets. This strengthened local capacities for early warning information sharing, contingency planning and early action coordination.

2. Communities urgently require improved access to climate and weather information

Programme participants have limited access to early warning information and depend on alerts from NGOs and local authorities. BRCiS Phase 3 aims to close this gap by supporting communities to access weather forecasts and climate risk alerts.

3. Specific attention was needed to address slow uptake and limited community involvement in the EWEA system.

The BRCiS Consortium engages with poor and vulnerable communities to enhance preparedness and response actions at the grassroots level. Due to recurrent shocks, communities have become dependent on receiving emergency handouts. Initially there was little appetite from communities to engage in a community based EWEA system. However, following targeted capacity strengthening activities (or example, communities' risk and vulnerability capacity analysis) programme participants have gradually taken ownership and increased their participation across various interventions.

4. Localised crises are not receiving sufficient attention and funding

Despite the intervention of BRCiS, localised crises continue to manifest, disrupting and eroding the community's ability to mitigate and cope with the recurrent shocks. In addition, limited funding remains a challenge. Core funding streams are not sufficient to resource the response required which hampers the effectiveness of the EWEA system.

Looking ahead

During the past four years, despite the aforementioned challenges, the BRCiS EWEA pilot succeeded in achieving tangible progress by engaging with relevant stakeholders and training selected community members to run the EWEA system at community level. Towards the end of BRCiS 2, understanding and uptake of EWEA knowledge increased at community level.

Looking ahead, for BRCiS Phase 3, EWEA interventions will support communities to have direct access to short-term weather forecasts and climate risk alerts via an SMS alert system, called Digniin (from a Somali word meaning “warning”).

District level platforms will be in place to facilitate early warning information exchange with communities and support early action contingency planning (decentralised disaster management). Finally, humanitarian stakeholders and SODMA (Somali Disaster Management Agency) will use community surveillance (RTRM data) to triangulate secondary and satellite sources, ensuring that local perspectives are considered in high level aggregated data and early action decision-making processes.

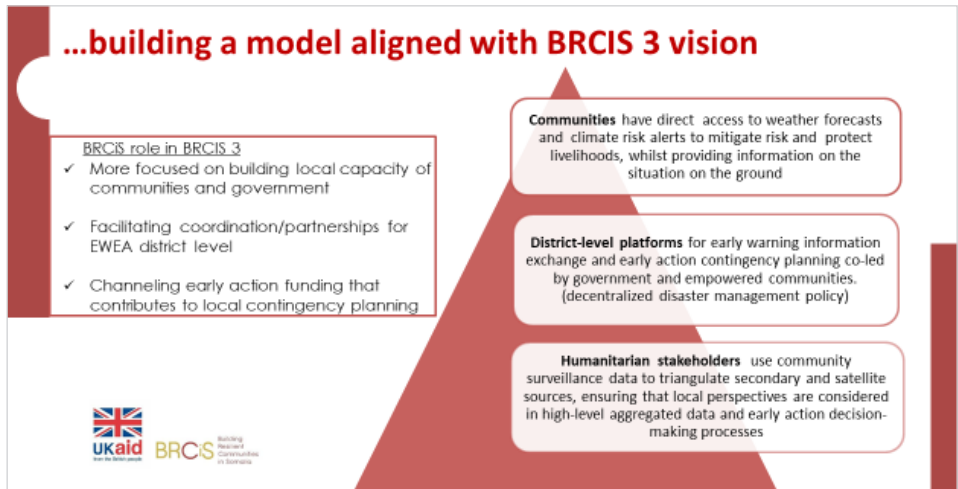


Figure 3 BRCiS Phase 3 Framework

PROSPER: Approaches to Enhancing Environmental Sustainability

Written by Chris Connelly, Suzanne Elder and Madalitso Munthali

The PROSPER (Promoting Sustainable Partnership for Empowered Resilience) programme was implemented by Concern Worldwide (consortium lead), United Purpose, GOAL Malawi, Kadale Consultants and CUMO Microfinance alongside a consortium of UN agencies in southern Malawi between 2019 and 2021. The programme aimed to reduce extreme poverty within the targeted communities and to end the recurrent cycle of crises and humanitarian assistance.

A focus on environmental sustainability was central to the programme's interventions, and is one of Concern Malawi's eight cross cutting themes more generally. The interventions encouraged participants to adopt green practices which create long-term viable livelihoods, as well as protect and restore the communities' natural resources. There was a strong emphasis on integrating pro-nature market systems to protect the communities' and environments' sustainability beyond the life-cycle of the programme. Interventions such as watershed management were included to address environmental degradation more directly, while climate smart agriculture interventions such as crop diversification, drought tolerant seeds and irrigation schemes aimed to mainstream environmental issues and adaptation into agriculture and livelihoods.

Programme Design

The programme's multi-layered packages of interventions were coordinated by the various agencies to ensure a sequenced

approach. The targeted communities were categorised into three cohorts; Stepping Out (households with the capacity to significantly expand their livelihoods), Stepping Up (households with the capacity to stabilise their livelihoods), and Hanging In (households that are reliant on the Malawian Social Protection Programme) based on their capacities and potential livelihoods strategies. Each cohort received tailored packages of shock-responsive, resilience-building interventions at both household and community level. These interventions were supported by close engagement with "community change agents" in order to identify and leverage positive disruptions within local markets and communities.

Key Interventions

A sample of key intervention areas that characterise the package of interventions are outlined below. These various elements contain contributions to environmental objectives in the programme, some through standalone interventions and some through mainstreaming.

Climate Smart Agriculture

Working with the Department of Agriculture Extension Services, the programme trained 3,153 Lead Farmers (49% of whom were female). In turn, the Lead Farmers reached 81,113 Follower Farmers (60,750 from Stepping-Up Households and 33,750 from Stepping-Out Household), 88% of the target population, in the 2 years of

implementation. Lead Farmers encouraged households to adopt intercropping (adopted by 35% of follower farmers) and conservation agriculture (adopted by 41% follower farmers). They also oversaw the maize (adopted by 43% of the follower farmers) and legume (adopted by 34% of the follower farmers) variation trials. These interventions contributed to farmers becoming more climate resilient, adapting their farming practices to increasingly unpredictable rainfall, and reducing the impacts of dry spells.

Programme Input Fairs, designed to reduce the barriers faced by participants in accessing quality agricultural inputs were held across the participating communities, and were adapted from year one to utilise local market systems, which contributed to more sustainable access to diversified seeds and inputs to cope with climate change. The programme provided cash-equivalent-vouchers for the Input Fairs to 26,458 farmers in 2019 and 59,822 farmers in 2020. Over 20% of the farmers grew new crops, including pigeon peas, sunflower, vegetables, groundnuts and soya beans.



Mary Mandala and Eneles Mpela maintain the watershed in Phalombe, Malawi. In this photo they're cleaning the swale, which diverts water runoff down to the ground water supply instead of flooding the farms below. Photo: Chris Gagnon/Concern Worldwide

The most adopted climate smart agricultural techniques reflect the local agro-ecology in each district. On average the top 3 techniques were:

- Improved land preparation (adopted by 87%)
- Applying animal dung (adopted by 65%)
- Decomposed matter manure (adopted 52%)

The programme also trained 1,022 (40% female) lead farmers in post-harvest handling, who in turn trained 26,000 follower farmers. Purdue Improved Crop Storage bags (95,382 in total) were distributed to 31,857 stepping up follower farmers. This intervention aimed to reduce post-harvest food wastage and loss, contributing to reduced waste generation and more efficient and environmentally friendly food systems, as well as boosting food security for target farmers.

Watershed and Natural Resource Management

A watershed management component encouraged adjacent communities to manage their local resources, contributing labour from the community to complement the tools and seed inputs provided by the programme. The Hanging-In cohort received MWK 14,400 cash incentive as the standard amount under Public Works Programmes due to their higher level of poverty, while the Stepping-Up and Stepping-Out cohort received a reduced incentive of MWK 7,200.

An initial analysis by government and the PROSPER consortium identified strategic sub- and micro-catchments within local watersheds. Watershed management committee members were trained in a Natural Resources Management module, focusing on Sustainable Land and Water

Management. This module was developed by FAO and the Department of Land Resources Conservation specifically for the Malawian context, and reached 488 committee members. The trainings focussed on soil and water conservation techniques including contour ridge making, deep trench and swale construction, and tree nursery management.

The watershed initiatives aimed to reduce the prevalence and impact of flash flooding, as well as run-off and soil erosion, by retaining water in the watershed for increased soil moisture and ground water. Communities observed that crop production improved due to the watershed interventions. They noted in particular that fewer plants were lost to dry spells due to increased soil moisture to sustain these periods. The increased reforestation in hill top areas to buffer existing tree stocks has improved ground coverage, while water retention structures reduced incidence of flash flooding.

Access to Finance

The programmes' Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLA) were self-electing groups that combined participants from each cohort. Managed by a community-selected volunteer, the programme supported the VSLA's through four phases of training to ensure that the independent groups had the capacity to manage their own savings, credit and insurance activities with minimal supervision and support.

Over a period of two years, the VSLA members accessed loans to the value of MWK 708,313,069 (GBP 687,682) from savings of MWK 1,270,310,069 (GBP 1,233,311) to support the diversification of their livelihoods through various small business and agricultural activities. This increased households' income and resilience, and reduced the need for households to resort to negative coping strategies such as charcoal production,

removal of tree cover for cropping, or use of unsustainable agricultural practices. The VSLA model also increased linkages with the consortium micro-finance partner CUMO, improving communities' access to larger size formal micro-loans and micro-insurance products, and digitised entrepreneurship-training modules. The programme's VSLA component had a strong focus on female-empowerment; 57% of the VSL group facilitators (Community Based Trainers) and 81% of VSLA members were women.

The programme worked with 10 private sector actors to develop pro-poor business initiatives. These modules have enabled 108,000 people to increase their productivity and income. Some of these initiatives included incentive-based contract farming, which aimed to make the food system and market system more efficient, and crop production more predictable and well managed.

Weather Index Area Yield Insurance

The programme rolled out a weather index insurance product, developed by WFP and insurance companies, to promote community uptake of insurance as a risk reduction adaptation measure to increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, and its impact on food security.

Weather Index / Area Yield insurance is an optional type of agriculture insurance where farmers are offered protection against specific weather related events that impact the entire community. Within the programme, this was specifically focused on rain fed crops. Premiums were set based on risk associated with various crops, size of plots and location. For PROSPER it was set at USD16.23 (MWK12,000) per farmer for two crops which was subsidised for PROSPER farmers at rate of 75% in Year 2, 50% in year 3 and 25% in year 4. Farmers were made aware that paying insurance premiums did not guarantee being paid at the end of every season.

Table 2: CUMO insurance services

Insurance Type	Cumulative Premiums (MWK)	Total clients	Female
Credit Health Life insurance (CHLI)	7,363,080	6203	77%
Family Funeral Benefits Insurance (FFBI)	1,480,200	4629	75%
Area Yield Index Insurance (Clients 25% is MWK1702300 and PROSPER 75% is MWK5162694)	1,702,300	565	59%
Total	10,545,580	11,397	75%

Of the insurance services provided by CUMO, Area Yield Index Insurance had the lowest uptake. From an initial target of 4,500 farmers, 565 farmers (233M, 332F) took up the product in the first tranche. While interest seemed high, the time of year (Dec/Jan) when the product was promoted found farmers with limited disposable funds to purchase the product, despite only needing to contribute 25% of the premium cost.

During the period of the programme the insurance product triggered in some locations, initiating a pay-out for households affected by a prolonged dry spell. However, some clients reported dissatisfaction with the delayed pay-outs despite their crops being affected by dry spells.

“The other year (referring to 2020) we were told to get insurance, so that when we are hit by disasters, we should be covered. However when we are hit, we do not receive anything and we wonder where our money goes.” – Group Village Headman, Chikwawa

Despite this, it was felt that the programme was successful in demonstrating the benefits of insurance products for risk reduction, and as a relevant investment of resources to buffer small scale farmers from climate change risks. The insurance scheme

has since been scaled up under WFP and insurance partners. CUMO will also continue to engage with communities to contribute to building greater understanding and uptake of the product.

Irrigation

A revolving-fund scheme was established within the target communities to finance irrigation schemes. A total of 15,939 Irrigation Group participants repaid part of the costs of the gravity-fed and treadle pump irrigation systems, which increased their productivity and enabled some independence from rain-fed agriculture, with additional cropping seasons. This money was in turn distributed amongst the irrigation groups, to purchase additional irrigation equipment or agricultural inputs. High-value crops were also available on a repayment basis.

Market Systems Approach

The programme’s initial market assessments identified that many of the local markets for agricultural inputs were either under-supplied or had insufficient demand. The programme’s market partner (Kadale Consultants) identified private sector partners who were interested in supplying agricultural inputs to, and buying agriculture produce from, poor and extremely poor households who were



Chifunilo Chisale, 31, is excited to use a treadle pump for irrigation to grow winter crops. She says she is no longer food insecure. Photo: Chris Gagnon/Concern Worldwide

the programme's target participants. The programme established links with companies selling seed, agro-chemicals, and agro-vet products to smallholders, and engaged them around innovations and pro-poor approaches, which resulted in increased productivity and income gains. In a context of high reliance on chemical fertilisers, agro-chemicals were promoted as part of mixed organic-chemical fertiliser blends. The agro-vet products improved animal health, and facilitated generation of manure for organic composting. The programme also encouraged linkages with organisations working through incentivised contract-based farming, which increased income security and food production stability for farmers.

Over the various districts, the programme engaged with 127 agro dealers through

Concern Worldwide in Mangochi/Phalombe, 55 through GOAL in Chikwawa and 143 through United Purpose in Balaka/Mangochi.

In 2020, Kadale Markets carried out an assessment, which showed that 70% of beneficiaries were satisfied with competitive prices, quality and variety of inputs offered. Sales increased by bringing in new customers to agro dealers.

Community Based Early Warning Systems and District DRR Systems

The programme worked closely with communities, District and Village Civil Protection Committee (D/VCPC) members, and District Councils to prepare for potential adverse weather and other disasters. Participatory Scenario Planning exercises shared downscaled weather forecast for October to April. The programme also worked with stakeholders to develop contingency plans for the districts' identified key hazards including floods, dry spells, storms, cholera outbreak and fall-army-worm, which contributed to communities' adaptation to climate change related weather events, and ability to adapt their agricultural practices and decision making around weather forecasts. Simulations were conducted at community level to support potential responses to flooding or other disasters, and VCPCs were provided with equipment, as well as rain and river gauges installed, to strengthen early warning systems.

Key lessons and recommendations

General

- The lead farmer approach allowed for the dissemination of improved technologies (and associated benefits) to a wide cohort of farmers.
- Promotion of district-specific farming technologies increased the adoption of the technologies across the communities.

- Mixing short and longer term interventions, and providing tailored packages encouraged household ongoing participation in the programme.
- Providing cash transfers to farmers, locating Input Fairs closer to communities, and increasing the number of agro dealers in attendance contributed to greater competition and fairer prices.
- The use of revolving fund mechanisms (for irrigation schemes) and linkages with local micro-financing institutions established structures that supported the programme's structures beyond the life time of the programme.
- The watershed initiatives reduced prevalence and impact of flash flooding, and brought improved crop production benefits. These benefits were most notable during dry spells, when fewer plants were lost to wilting, due to the increased moisture that had been harvested and retained in the soil. Watershed management also improved ground cover, soil and water conservation, and reforestation.
- Creating greater awareness of the importance of watershed management amongst communities, and strengthening the relationship between the chiefs and watershed committees, encouraged the communities to take ownership and responsibility for their local watersheds.

Environmental sustainability

- Farmer interest and adoption of organic composting techniques is high when knowledge and support is provided – with two of the three most adopted climate smart agricultural practices related to organic fertiliser production and use. However reliance on chemical fertilisers is also high, and will take time to replace/complement. Mixed organic/chemical fertiliser approaches can be a step towards more sustainable practices, and supporting improved soil structure and health.
- Production and post-harvest yield losses are one of the largest losses of produce and waste of resources required to produce food. Reducing these losses is key to improving efficiency of food systems, and reducing impacts on environment. Training lead farmers in post-harvest handling can reduce such post-harvest food wastage and loss, through improved storage and preservation post-harvest, and increased seed germination (inoculant) and loss to pests (integrated pest management) during production. Increased yields have the benefit also of boosting food security and incomes for target farmers.
- Weather index insurance product demonstrated the potential role of insurance in risk reduction and buffering small scale farmers from climate change, and has potential for scaling both for protecting farmer yields and incomes, and to increase general financial literacy.

Concern's global advocacy on climate change

Written by Sally Tyldesley

The previous chapters in this edition of Knowledge Matters set out examples of how Concern continues to work with the most vulnerable communities in the context of a changing climate. Central to our climate resilience approach is addressing the root causes of, and systems that increase, this vulnerability.

So far, the response to climate change has been insufficient to prevent the worst impacts. Sustained advocacy is needed to ensure that governments step up to the challenge, and respond in a way that puts the people most vulnerable at the heart of decisions.

Climate advocacy is one of the core pillars of Concern's global advocacy strategy. The strategy sets out the target of our advocacy; to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and disasters in all countries. Concern advocates on climate change across a range of governance levels, from local to global level. Each is important for making progress.

Advocacy at the national to local level in the countries we operate in varies from country to country, depending on the context, opportunities for influence and what element of climate resilience Concern's programmes are focused upon. Common themes are disaster risk reduction (DRR), early warning early action, shock responsive social protection, environmental management and funding for climate change adaptation. Country advocacy often includes working with communities to strengthen their capacity to advocate for approaches that will build their resilience.

This article centres on our advocacy at the global level and towards governments of the high-income countries that our support offices are based in, where we focus on how and how much they fund climate resilience. One of the key blocks to action in low income countries remains a lack of finance. Our advocacy at global level is therefore focused on unlocking financial and technical support for low income countries by direct engagement with key donors and stakeholders, and influencing the global policy agenda. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is where the longer term overarching goals and directions are set on climate change; engaging at this level allows us to influence the big picture.

The context for our global advocacy

Low income countries are exposed to some of the most severe climate impacts, have the least capacity to adapt, and find it hardest to recover from the impacts caused by devastating floods, droughts, heatwaves, cyclones, and rising sea levels. They also have the fewest resources available with which to respond. They urgently require international support to help them deal with the impacts of climate change.

High income countries owe a moral and ecological debt to low income countries for the damage they have done to the planet and their contribution to climate change. This debt includes financial responsibilities.

At Concern, we are clear that the way that the world responds to climate change needs to be in line with the principles of equity and *climate justice*. Those countries most responsible for climate change are also most able to cover the costs of dealing with the impacts. High income countries – like the EU Member States, UK and the US – must provide the means to allow poorer countries prepare for increasing climate impacts, and to follow a clean, climate-friendly development pathway.

The UN climate change negotiations is one mechanism that we can use to hold high income countries to account for their responsibilities. Through the UN climate process, high income countries committed to allocate USD 100 billion annually by 2020 through to 2025 to help low income countries reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the impacts of climate change. This commitment, made in 2009, has not yet been met and the USD 100 billion is expected to be reached now in 2023.

The USD 100 billion commitment was intended to be invested in a balanced way by both helping countries adapt to the impacts of climate change, and to reduce greenhouse gases. In practice that balance has not been achieved. In 2020, Concern commissioned an analysis of global adaptation funding flows, showing that:

- There was not enough funding going towards helping countries adapt to the impacts of climate change; high income countries were failing to meet their pledges.
- The funding invested in adaptation was not well targeted towards the countries that needed it most. In particular, fragile contexts were missing out.

Analysis by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) showed that, on average, countries with high or very high vulnerability to climate change have received less than a quarter of

the adaptation funding per person than went to low or very low vulnerability countries. Thirty-two of those most vulnerable countries received less than USD1 per person in climate change adaptation and DRR funding. A large proportion of the most neglected countries are those experiencing protracted crises or fragility¹.

Negotiations are now taking place within the UN process on what climate finance commitments should be after 2025. In addition, at COP27, a landmark decision was made for a new fund to be established for loss and damage – recognising that we're already experiencing the negative impacts of climate change. Advocacy is needed to ensure that the new commitments and funding mechanisms agreed upon address the insufficient funding to adaptation, and the challenges in getting that funding to the people who need it most.

What Concern has been doing at the global level

Concern has been working to maintain political pressure on high-income governments to deliver on their commitments by:

- **Commissioning analysis of climate finance delivery** to hold high-income countries to account. Through the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (ZFRA), we have funded analysis of where adaptation funding is going. This highlighted that fragile contexts are currently missing out on adaptation, despite many fragile states also being highly vulnerable to climate impacts². ZFRA have also commissioned ODI to look at which countries are meeting their commitment towards the USD

1. https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/20221108_ClimateSmartFinance.pdf

2. <https://www.concern.net/knowledge-hub/what-cost>

100 billion. Previously, failure to deliver on the climate finance goal had been laid at the feet of developed countries collectively, which made it difficult to hold specific countries to account. The ODI analysis found that Australia, Canada and the US fall massively short on international climate finance. Only seven wealthier countries provided their fair share in 2020 and pledged the full amount up to 2025: Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, France and Japan. However, the quality of the climate finance also matters; although France and Japan have provided their fair share, a very high share of their resources are provided bilaterally and as loans, with only a small fraction going to climate change adaptation³.

- **Keeping the issue on the media and public agenda**, using key moments like the UN climate change negotiations to share our messages and the urgency of action required. For example, led by Concern Malawi, we ran a twitter campaign to draw attention to the shortfalls in climate finance commitments. Within Concern's media work, a key focus has been highlighting that climate change is not a problem for the future, but is happening now. This is combined with a strategic drive to communicate the link between climate change and extreme hunger, with climate change as one of the key drivers.
- **Working in collaboration with others to amplify our messages**. As just one organisation in a busy and politically fraught space, Concern works closely with other actors who are aligned in pushing for greater action on climate change. In particular, we work closely with partners in ZFRA and actively

participate in the Climate Action Network, Stop Climate Chaos Ireland, Coalition 2030 and Dóchas to share our messages with others and to ensure we are speaking with a united voice with other actors for greater impact.

What impact have we seen?

Climate finance is one of the most contentious issues within the UN climate change negotiations, and progress can be slow. However, over the last couple of years we have seen some positive developments:

- Fragile contexts are now getting more attention in the climate space. The UAE Presidency of COP28 has announced that fragile states are a focus of this year's COP, with the first thematic day on fragile contexts.
- Within the UK's climate finance strategy, released in March 2023, fragile states are now referenced as being a priority along with Least Developed Countries.
- COP26 in 2021 saw high income countries commit to doubling adaptation finance from 2019 levels by 2025 (which would bring adaptation funding to USD 40 billion per year).
- Ireland's climate finance roadmap⁴, published in 2022, committed to maintaining a focus on supporting adaptation and resilience to climate change in some of the most climate vulnerable countries around the world.

What next?

A lot still needs to be done to ensure that commitments are delivered upon, and Concern can play its role in pushing for action:

³. https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/A_fair_share_of_climate_finance.pdf

⁴. <https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/publications/2022-Irelands-International-Climate-Finance-Roadmap-Digital.pdf>

- Continue to share evidence and the lived experience of the impacts of climate change on the people that we work with, including by working to amplify local and national NGOs. We have begun to do this – for example providing support to the Malawi Youth Network on Climate Change to attend COP26 and 27.
- Learn from others across the organisation of what works to build people’s climate resilience, particularly in fragile contexts. This will ensure that lessons from the community to national level influence global discussions and thinking. This includes finding opportunities for experts from country teams to participate in regional and global forums for lesson sharing, particularly on areas where we are building our own evidence base: early warning early action systems, nature based solutions, community-led DRR and localisation of funding for DRR and adaptation.
- Use the ZFRA funded research on climate adaptation funding delivery, as well as linking our advocacy on climate, hunger and conflict, to ensure that new commitments on climate finance do not come at the expense of other parts of overseas development assistance (ODA). Climate finance must be additional and genuinely new, not merely double-counted ODA. We will also be looking at climate driven malnutrition and how nutrition is integrated into climate adaptation programmes, and vice versa.

Contributing Authors

- **Michael Mulpeter** - Organisational Climate and Environment Adviser, Concern Worldwide Ireland
- **Sally Tyldesley** - Advocacy Manager, Concern Worldwide UK
- **Mulugeta Terfa** - Senior Programme Quality Coordinator, Concern Worldwide Ethiopia
- **Tsedeke Desalegn** - Food Security and Livelihood Technical Advisor, Concern Worldwide Ethiopia
- **Lulseged Tolla** - Programme Quality Director, Concern Worldwide Ethiopia
- **Abdulkadir Ibrahim** - Resilience Programme Manager, Concern Worldwide Somalia
- **Shafqat Ullah** - Programme Inclusion and Livelihood Specialist, Concern Worldwide Pakistan
- **Seona McLoughlin** - Desk Officer and Zurich Coordinator, Concern Worldwide Ireland
- **Afsari Begum** - Programme Manager - Sufal & Flood Resilience Project, Concern Worldwide Bangladesh
- **Thomas Mayuen** - Project Manager - FSL, Concern Worldwide South Sudan
- **Jackson Mekenye** - Livelihoods Coordinator, Concern Worldwide Kenya
- **Wongani Kawonga** - Programme Support Officer, Concern Worldwide Malawi
- **Madalitso Munthali** - Programme Coordinator, Concern Worldwide Malawi
- **Suzanne Elder** - Programme Director, Concern Worldwide Malawi
- **Chris Connelly** - Programme Development and Knowledge Coordinator, Concern Worldwide Malawi

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

EDITORIAL WORKING GROUP

- Issue Editors: **Michael Mulpeter & Sally Tyldesley**
- Editors-in-chief: **Chris Pain & Michelle Kearns**

Key words

Early Warning Early Action, Natural Resource Management, community-led advocacy, environmental sustainability, VSLAs, resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Smart Agriculture

The views expressed in Knowledge Matters are those of the authors and do not necessarily coincide with those of Concern Worldwide or its partners. Concern Worldwide encourages printing or copying information exclusively for personal and non-commercial use provided that the source is clearly acknowledged.

Design and Print: Pixelpress

Republic of Ireland

52-55 Lower Camden Street
Dublin 2
00 353 1 417 77 00
info@concern.net

Northern Ireland

47 Frederick Street
Belfast
BT1 2LW
00 44 28 9033 1100
belfastinfo@concern.net

England and Wales

13/14 Calico House
Clove Hitch Quay
London
SW11 3TN
00 44 207 801 1850
londoninfo@concern.net

Republic of Korea

(04034) 5 fl, 12, Yanghwa-ro
11-gil, Mapo-gu, Seoul,
Republic of Korea
00 82 324 3900
www.concern.kr

USA

355 Lexington Avenue
16th Floor
New York
NY 10017
00 1 212 5578 000
info.usa@concern.net

www.concern.net

KNOWLEDGE MATTERS

Issue 35 | September 2023

CONCERN
worldwide

ENDING
EXTREME POVERTY
WHATEVER
IT TAKES