



Nutrition and climate integration for transformative actions

October 2024

Our recommendations

Donor countries:

- Donor countries should increase funding for nutrition programmes that are climate-sensitive, and integrate more nutrition-sensitive objectives into climate change programmes.
- Donor countries must evaluate their Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending on nutrition and climate-sensitive programmes, in order to identify gaps and opportunities to improve nutrition-climate integration.
- Donor countries and government should establish a transparent and accessible methodology and data reporting system, based on the existing data sets (e.g. OECD-DAC¹ and IATI²), in order to be able to monitor and evaluate the finances invested in nutrition programmes that are climate-sensitive, and vice versa.

Governments:

- Governments must take all necessary steps towards realising the right to adequate food as a basic human right, and to uphold the commitments made in the Conference of the Parties 28 (COP) UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action, before the convening of COP30 in 2025. This includes the integration of nutrition and climate in National Nutrition Plans (NNPs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and other relevant strategies.

- Governments should work in partnership with the Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN), development agencies and civil society, in order to foster collaboration for accelerated, transformative action to tackle climate change and malnutrition.
- Governments should continue to support I-CAN on integrating nutrition and climate in national policies at all levels through engagement at key global events, such as the SUN Global Gathering 2024 and the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit 2025.

Development agencies and governments:

- Governments, donors and development agencies must adopt a gender-sensitive approach to nutrition-climate integration, recognising the centrality of gender equity in the links between nutrition and climate change.
- Governments, donors and development agencies must ensure that their efforts on the integration of nutrition and climate are rooted in community-led initiatives and include the perspectives and priorities of local actors.
- Governments, donors and development agencies should ensure that actions, strategies and programmes aiming at integrating nutrition and climate also include anticipatory actions.

Makifodi Labu (60) lives in Valani village, Malawi. His farming group uses a solar pump they received from Concern, which provides a direct water supply to their crops.

Photo: Chris Gagnon/Concern Worldwide

Why nutrition-climate integration?

Climate change is one of the leading factors driving rapid increases in global malnutrition and extreme hunger.³ In most of the fragile contexts where Concern Worldwide operates, the climate and malnutrition crises are closely interlinked.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has predicted that the biggest threat to health from climate change will be through its impact on undernutrition.⁴ In many regions climate change has contributed to malnutrition in all its forms, including undernutrition, overnutrition and obesity, and to disease susceptibility, especially for women, pregnant women, children, low-income households, Indigenous Peoples, minority groups and small-scale producers.⁵ It has been estimated that an additional 10 million children will be stunted by 2050, as compared to a future without climate change.⁶ It is therefore urgent to tackle the malnutrition and climate change crises simultaneously.

Nutrition outcomes can be severely affected by the climate crisis. Climate change has an effect on major components of food systems, especially on the availability, access and stability of food but also on the nutritious quality of these foods.⁷ For example, climate change is a key driver of biodiversity loss in agriculture by impairing the production of crops and affecting the nutritional content of those crops. Nutrition outcomes are also affected by impaired access to nutrition health services and care practices in cases of extreme climate events. For instance, it has been reported that changes in temperatures, occurrences of rising heat waves, floods and droughts have damaged health care facilities and commodities and service delivery in climate affected contexts.⁸

10 million more children will be malnourished by 2050, as compared to a future without climate change.

582 million people will be chronically undernourished in 2030

Malnutrition adversely affects the resilience of communities to adapt to the unpredictable effects of climate change on their livelihoods. This affects their capacity to adapt to the seasonal changes in livelihood activities, including livestock management and farming. In addition, health centres can also struggle to cope with increased seasonal peaks of child wasting, due to the unpredictability induced by the changes in climate and the frequency of climate events.

Due to the increased intensity of the major drivers of malnutrition, including climate extremes, conflicts, economic slowdowns and downturns, and growing inequalities, 582 million people will be chronically undernourished in 2030.⁹ Access to good nutrition is a fundamental human right, and an essential component for good health and economic development. Nutrition-climate integration is an essential part of the simultaneous response to these crises, and should always prioritise the needs of people who are the most vulnerable in climate-affected contexts, because they are in most cases disproportionately burdened by the impacts of both malnutrition and climate change.

Nutrition-climate integration is the process of planning and implementing policies and programmes (both long-term development and humanitarian response) that address nutrition needs and adaptation to the impact of climate change (including extreme weather events and climate variability). This involves:

- 1. Policy and financing:** Implementing nutrition policies that are both nutrition and climate-sensitive, and committing to deliver multi-year, flexible and predictable funding.
- 2. Programmes:** Planning and implementing programmes that are motivated by both climate implications and good health and nutrition.



Sayed Mia (47) works in his homestead vegetable garden in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, supported by Concern. Sayed and his wife Farija have received training on home gardening and seed production from Concern, which they can use to support their livelihood and their own nutrition.

Photo: Saikat Mojumder/Concern Worldwide.

Nutrition-climate integration in policies and financing

Integrated action on nutrition and climate can lead to an acceleration of improvement in both outcomes. As we strive to achieve progress on the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, more policy commitments and financing are urgently needed to eliminate hunger and malnutrition, whilst ensuring positive impacts for climate action and our natural environment.

1) The state of political and financial commitments for nutrition-climate integration

The Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN) conducted a baseline assessment on the level of integration of nutrition and climate in government policies.¹⁰ This assessment shows that, at the country level, there is a lack of integration of nutrition within climate change frameworks, and a lack of consideration of climate change in nutrition plans. For instance, the focus within climate National Adaptation Plans¹¹ (NAPs) is largely on infrastructure, economic impacts and resilience with limited consideration of climate change in nutrition-sensitive issues, such as food procurement, emergency plans in delivering malnutrition treatments, or prevention guidelines against peaks of child wasting.¹²

At the same time, national and subnational policies, strategies, and guidelines related to food security and nutrition don't sufficiently integrate climate either. The I-CAN assessment found that globally only 16% of NAPs and 28% of National Nutrition Plans (NNPs) include a sufficient amount of policy plans and financial resources that demonstrate ambitious commitments for taking actions to connect climate and nutrition.¹³ Policy plans include, for instance, annual food and nutrition security assessment, efforts in promoting dietary diversity and integrating nutrition-sensitive practices across agriculture, education, water and health sectors. NNPs have limited understanding of climate-nutrition linkages, focusing more on adaptation and mitigation measures related to food and agriculture.

The lack of nutrition-climate integration in policy plans can severely limit national initiatives and investments for programmes that link both nutrition and climate. At the global level, financing and investments for nutrition-climate integration are very limited. For example, from 2021 to 2022, only 3% of Green Climate Fund (GCF) grants included interventions specifically designed to address nutrition.¹⁴ For World Bank financing, less than 1% of projects included both climate and nutrition themes.¹⁵ Moreover, from 2019

to 2021, only 3% of total OECD climate-related ODA commitments explicitly referenced nutrition.¹⁶

Further analysis of funding for nutrition-climate integration programmes is needed to fully evaluate the existing level of investment and the gaps to fill. The I-CAN initiative has called for more routine data collection in future years, alongside an agreed global methodology to collect and integrate data.¹⁷ The current data sets (e.g. OECD-DAC and IATI) do not allow fully accessible analysis of funding flows for nutrition and climate, limiting transparency and public access to such information. Governments and donors should agree on a transparent and accessible methodology and data reporting system for monitoring and evaluating the finances invested in nutrition programmes that are climate-sensitive, and vice versa.

The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) commissions an annual assessment of its ODA nutrition spending, to ensure accountability for its commitments and create an environment for improved policy decisions. These assessments show that overall, between 2010 and 2021, 17% of the FCDO's programmes with International Climate Financing (ICF) spend were nutrition-sensitive, and in 2021 alone, 5% of the FCDO's ICF spend was nutrition-sensitive.¹⁸ We recommend all donor countries to conduct similar analyses of their ODA spending on nutrition and climate financing, in order to identify gaps and opportunities for increasing nutrition-climate integration.

As the FCDO is currently looking at more systematically linking nutrition and climate programmes wherever feasible, it is worth considering this in the context of overall reductions in the UK ODA budget since the budgetary cuts in 2021. The cut to UK ODA disproportionately affected nutrition financing, as the UK government cut 61.3% of the funding used to tackle malnutrition.¹⁹ This means that future commitments across the nutrition sector will be coming from a smaller budget than prior to the cut to UK ODA, and future years will see further reductions in nutrition spending as a result.²⁰

Operating with a smaller budget will constitute a real barrier for the FCDO to link nutrition and climate in programmes. In 2021, 68% of the FCDO's nutrition-sensitive spending was attributed to humanitarian programmes, and 51% of FCDO's humanitarian programmes were nutrition-sensitive.²¹ Humanitarian interventions tend to be short term, which represents a challenge for implementing long-term resilience building to mitigating the impacts of climate shocks to malnutrition. Multi-year and flexible funding are essential to finance long-term programmes that build communities' resilience against malnutrition in climate-affected contexts. The remaining nutrition budget after the UK ODA cut is therefore insufficient to allow the FCDO to shift to long-term funding. This will prevent the UK government from implementing programmes aimed at supporting communities to

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An inland rice field in Sierra Leone. Communities are learning new cultivation techniques, so that farmers can increase their yield and strengthen their livelihoods.

Photo: Concern Worldwide.

adapt to climate change and build resilience to the effects of climate shocks on nutrition. Nutrition and climate funding should be increased, and incorporated into resilience and adaptation programmes.

To meaningfully tackle the root causes of malnutrition in climate-affected contexts, and integrate nutrition and climate in programmes, we recommend donor countries, including the UK Government, to protect and increase financing to nutrition and climate, and to purposefully focus the ODA budget on programmes that integrate the two.

2) Opportunities for accelerating progress

UN climate process

Within the UN climate process there are a number of parts of the negotiations that will provide an opportunity to strengthen how climate change and nutrition are jointly addressed. Key opportunities include:

- **NAPs and Nationally Determined Contributions²²:** These planning processes should look at the interlinkages between climate change, food security and nutrition.
- **The UAE Global Framework for Climate Resilience:** Agreed at COP28, one of the targets of the framework is to attain climate-resilient food and agricultural production, and supply and distribution of food by 2030. It also includes increasing sustainable and regenerative production and equitable access to adequate food and nutrition for all. The framework set up a two-year process (i.e. by 2025) that will develop the indicators for the targets within it. These should include specific nutrition-sensitive targets.
- **Biennial Transparency Reports:** Established as part of the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement, the first of these reports will be due in December 2024. The guidance developed for the reporting process outlines that these reports should cover all elements of the Paris Agreement. I-CAN should work closely with this process to enable countries to increasingly integrate and report on the nutrition sensitivity of climate action.

Nutrition for Growth Summit

In 2025, the next N4G Summit will bring together country governments, donors and philanthropies, businesses and NGOs, to mobilise new policy and financial pledges on nutrition and to show accountability on previous commitments for eliminating global malnutrition. The Global South Civil Societies Declaration ahead of the 2025 N4G Summit, raises concerns of the threats caused by climate

change on livelihoods and nutrition.²³ The Declaration recommends the international community to direct its efforts towards a multisectoral approach that transforms food and health systems, while taking into account the imperatives of humanitarian contexts. This includes making commitments on the following:

- Supporting nutrition-sensitive and climate-resilient agroecological and local production systems, while improving access to land, especially for women and youth.
- Strengthening the resilience of countries and populations to conflict and climate shocks, by intensifying diplomatic efforts to uphold fundamental human rights and international humanitarian law, and by financing climate change adaptation in countries most affected by the impacts of climate change.
- Preventing and responding to humanitarian emergencies by providing sufficient funding for anticipatory actions and nutrition programmes (both preventive and treatment-oriented).

I-CAN Initiative

In 2022, the government of Egypt under its COP27 presidency, in partnership with WHO, FAO, other UN agencies and partners such as the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), launched the I-CAN initiative. The initiative aims to foster collaboration and accelerate transformative action to address the critical nexus of climate change and nutrition. It supports Member States in delivering climate change adaptation and mitigation, policy action that simultaneously improves nutrition and triggers transformative action to deliver healthy diets from sustainable food systems.

This initiative provides a framework through which global and domestic actions on nutrition and climate can be integrated. I-CAN addresses many of the gaps identified in implementing nutrition policies that are climate-sensitive and vice versa. Through specific indicators, it supports the integration of nutrition and climate in NNPs and NAPs, as it mobilises actors to collect data and captures quantitative indicators, e.g. record number of action plans that include nutrition and climate indicators.

I-CAN has a strong opportunity to mobilise governments and donors to make progress on nutrition-climate integration. We encourage I-CAN to continue their initiative and raising the profile of nutrition-climate integration in national policies at all levels. This would support governments and donors to make climate-sensitive commitments at relevant global moments, including the N4G Summit 2025, and to ensure that pledges reflect concrete action on nutrition-climate integration at country level.

Anticipatory Actions

Our operational experience shows that climate change frequently drives seasonal peaks in undernutrition, especially child wasting, and impacts the ability of local health systems to respond to these peaks. Investing in anticipatory action can support health services to adapt and respond to both climate and nutrition shocks. The results and learning from Concern Worldwide's Enhanced Responses to Nutrition Emergencies (ERNE) programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Niger, Republic of Sudan, and South Sudan, outline key recommendations for implementing emergency nutrition treatment, as well as prevention and preparedness activities that build communities' long-term resilience to undernutrition in climate affected contexts (see Case Study in Annex 1).²⁴

Multisectoral platforms, such as the Anticipation Hub, offer opportunities to access knowledge exchanges, learning, guidance, and advocacy around anticipatory action.²⁵ The Hub coordinates policy messages and actions, and facilitates a learning exchange on effective anticipatory humanitarian systems, which informs and supports collaboration across the climate and development sectors to manage risks. In addition, the Early Warnings for All initiative, launched in 2022 by the UN Secretary-General, called for multisectoral actions through an Executive Action Plan, to implement effective early multi-hazard warning systems by 2027.²⁶ These initiatives must include nutrition-climate integration in their policy plans and strategies, in order to ensure that anticipatory actions are nutrition and climate-sensitive.



Hazera Begum (32) lives in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. She has been able to build a goat shed in her home with support from Concern.

Photo: Saikat Mojumder/Concern Worldwide.

Best practices for nutrition-climate integration in programmes

In most of the fragile contexts where Concern Worldwide operates, the climate and malnutrition crises are interlinked. This requires us to plan and implement programmes that address both, and build on evidence of what works best in terms of integration of climate change adaptation and nutrition programmes. The below learnings from Concern's programmes serve as recommendations for best practice on effective nutrition-climate integration.

Implementing integration at the programme design stage:

- Promoting good health and nutrition interventions as building blocks for increasing the resilience of households and communities against climate shocks, with nutrition and climate objectives and outcomes embedded into the same programme at the design stage.
- Including nutrition and climate objectives and outcome indicators in the same programme, that are appropriate to the context and the design of the programme.

- Targeting the intervention to the nutritionally vulnerable, for instance children, especially those under five years of age, adolescents and women of all age.
- Promoting gender equity in targeting, planning, design and implementation of both nutrition and climate-sensitive programmes.
- Planning the delivery of an integrated set of interventions across multiple sectors at household/community levels, such as promoting Climate Smart Agriculture, diversifying livelihood options, promoting improved hygiene and access to clean water, promoting gender equality, and improving access to maternal and child health services.
- Addressing Climate Smart Agriculture directly and explicitly explaining in programme design how it will impact nutrition, whilst mitigating the impact of climate change. This includes supporting food security and increasing dietary diversity, or by promoting improvements in crop/livestock yields and reducing the seasonal variability of these.

- Integrating climate-smart integrated actions, to ensure that the programme interventions anticipate and build in timely response to seasonal peaks in child wasting. This can include, for instance:
 - Strengthening early warning systems and related measures to include appropriate food safety and nutrition indicators.
 - Increase availability, timeliness and use of data identifying health risks from climate change.
- Ensuring that a resilience approach is being integrated when designing the programmes, in order to make a lasting difference for communities and support them in lifting themselves out of the frequent shock cycle.

Implementing locally-owned programmes:

- Support community-led initiatives and include the perspectives and priorities of local actors living in climate-affected contexts. This includes:
 - Designing programmes with active participation of community members.
 - Ensure sufficient funding and human resources to secure meaningful local engagement.

- Ensuring local ownership of data, and promoting local decision-making and action.
- Supporting health facilities to recognise how service demands impact the workload of health facility staff before and when shocks hit, therefore allowing for planning and implementing a vast array of actions in a timely manner.
- Adopt a multisectoral approach that builds on existing initiatives at a local level and positions women and girls both as target groups and agents of change. This system approach would include for instance:
 - Working with women support groups, who are trained in vegetable production, with an emphasis on own consumption.
 - Focusing on how food, health, livelihood and social systems interact and can be strengthened at a community level to increase resilience to climate shocks.
 - Addressing and promoting women's land rights, to ensure land ownership by women, and to support female farmers in adopting Climate Smart Agriculture, without being constrained by land tenure issues.



A maize field in Tana River County, Kenya. The local community has developed an action plan to build resilience to floods and droughts, with the support of Concern and the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance Project.

Photo: Concern Worldwide.

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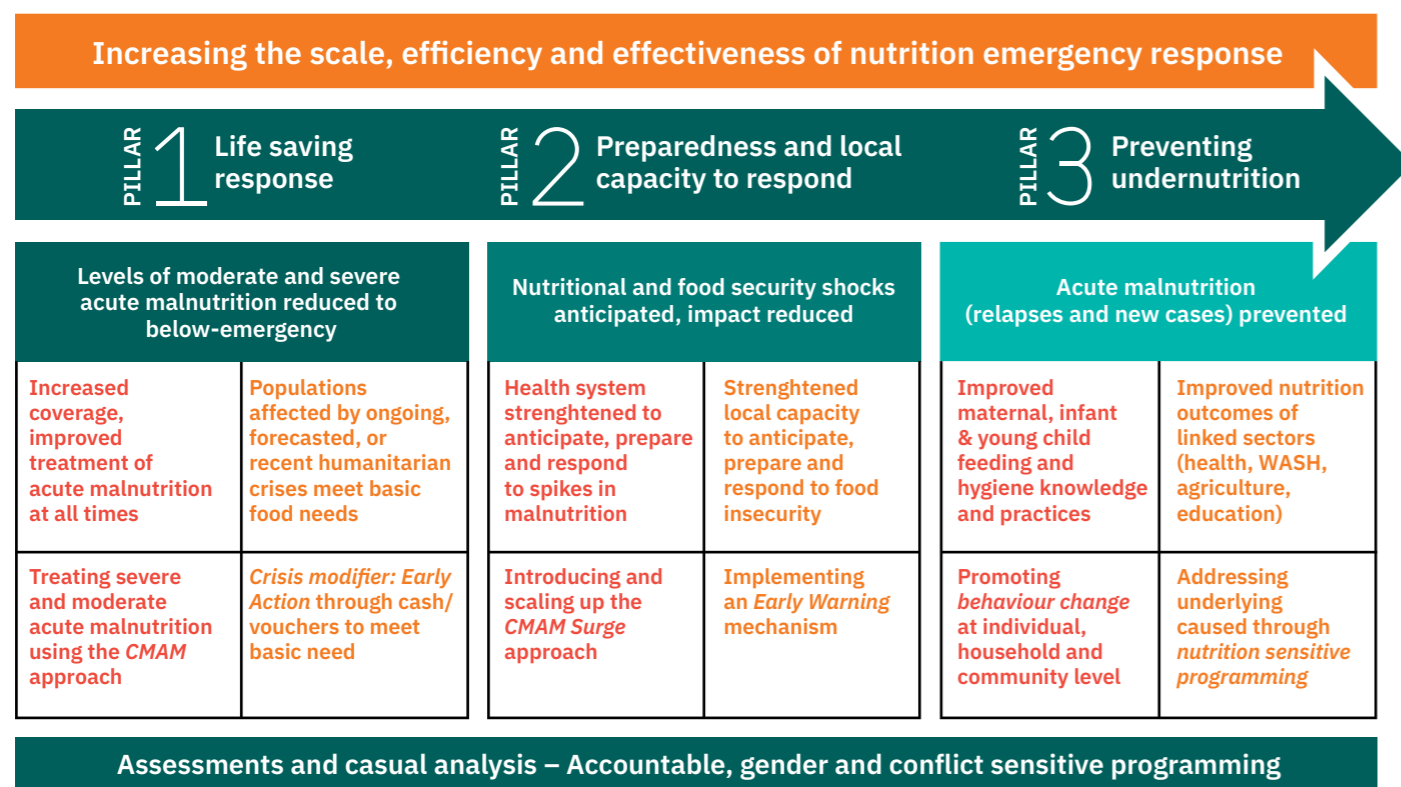
Annex 1: Emergency Response and Nutrition Enhancement (ERNE) case study

Overview of the approach

ERNE was a three-year (2020-2023) Concern programme implemented in five countries in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Niger, Republic of Sudan, and South Sudan. Through ERNE, Concern aimed to increase the scale, efficiency and effectiveness of its nutrition emergency responses by working with local services and communities to implement proven and innovative solutions in fragile, conflict affected and disaster-prone countries. The programme combined lifesaving emergency nutrition treatment and prevention and preparedness activities to build community resilience to malnutrition in the longer term, and to support over 1,000,000 people. In all contexts where ERNE was implemented, climate change is a driver of food insecurity, be it through the effects of persistent drought, flooding, or as a result of driving conflict through increased pressures on land and resources

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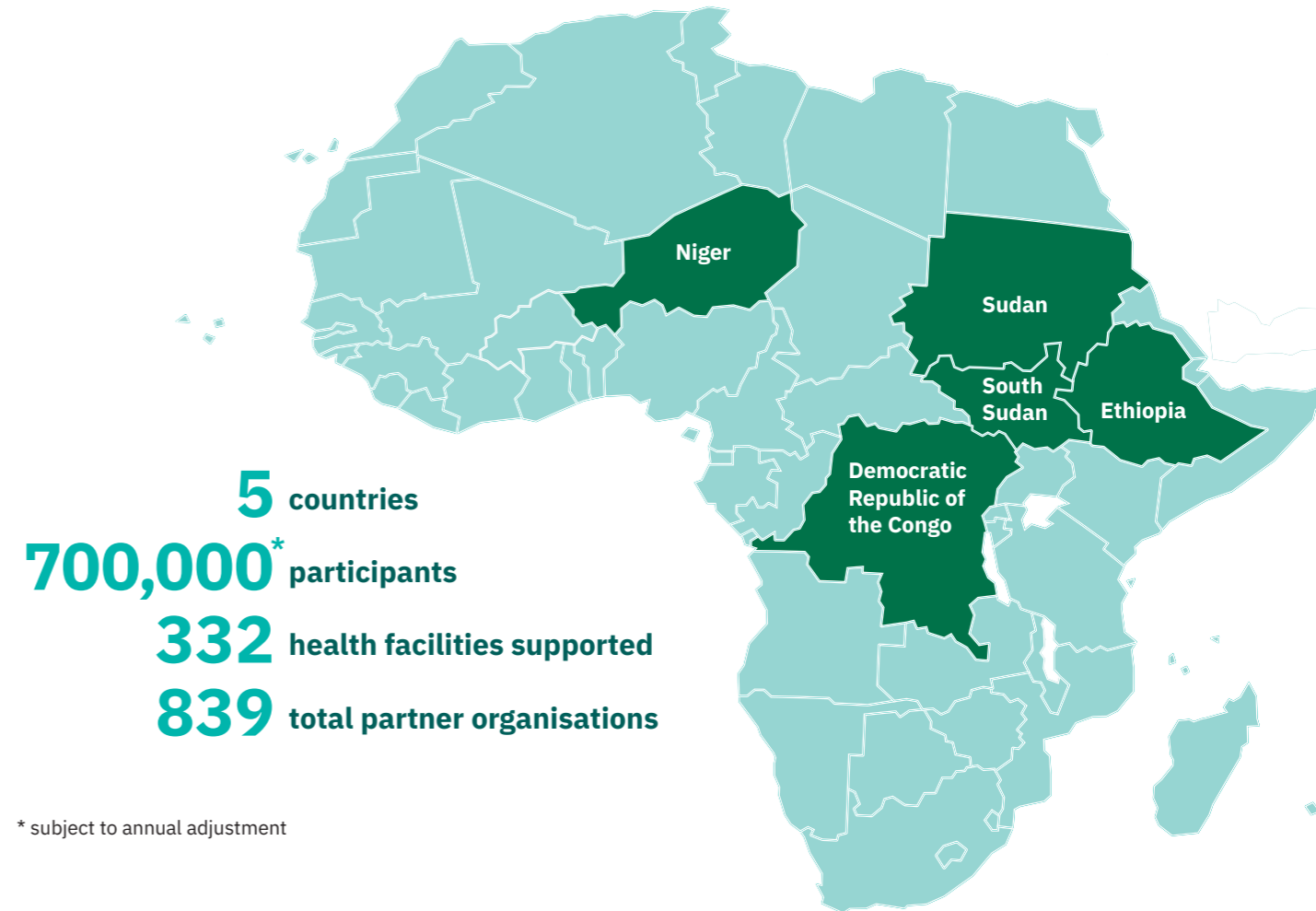
ERNE programme framework



Early warning systems

The ERNE programme took a new approach to addressing cyclical health and nutrition crises in fragile contexts. Combining lifesaving emergency health and nutrition treatment and cash transfers with shock responsive approaches and community resilience building, the programme sought to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency nutrition response. Within ERNE, Early Warning, Early Action (EWEA) was part of Pillar 2 which focussed on building preparedness and local capacity to respond. It was one of two “shock responsive” approaches that were implemented within the programme, the second being CMAM Surge.²⁷

The intention was to strengthen capacity at the community level to anticipate shocks that could have an impact on food security and malnutrition, and linking to national early warning systems where they were already in existence (primarily in Ethiopia and Niger). The programme was designed to provide cash transfers to vulnerable households based on early warnings of crises to help reduce negative coping strategies in order to prevent or mitigate the impacts of these potential crises on household nutritional status. Some of the key learning around EWEA systems include:



- **Building capacity of the system to take earlier action requires coordinated analysis and localized early action plans:** Incorporating indicators and actions which address the contextually-relevant drivers of malnutrition, which vary within a country and between seasons.
- **Ensuring reliable data collection:** Making sure that the right information is being collected and brought together at the right time for decision-making. In some cases, a disconnect remains between data collection actors and those who have the authority to trigger actions, which inhibits efficiency of the interventions. Information collected needs to provide enough clarity to trigger action and inform decision-making. Local ownership of the data is critical to promoting local decision-making and action.
- **Ensuring coordination of services in health systems:** Good communication and coordination between the implicated services in health systems is key for the sequencing of actions, and a critical component of successful delivery of services. This helps to inform whether or not early action is required in certain contexts, and it ensures ownership and commitment to the identified Health Surge actions that supports resilience of the health system to deal with times of increased caseloads.

Key elements of ERNE:

1. **Crisis Modifier:** ERNE included a crisis modifier, which enabled Concern teams to provide swift responses to emergencies, ensuring that affected communities received vital nutrition support (via cash-transfers) without delay. Concern's teams were trained to assess, plan, and implement nutrition and health interventions in high-pressure, volatile environments.
2. **Nutritional Support:** ERNE focused on delivering essential nutrition and health interventions, including therapeutic feeding for severely malnourished individuals, provision of supplementary feeding for vulnerable groups, and micronutrient supplementation to prevent deficiencies.
3. **Collaborative Approach:** Concern worked closely with local authorities, partners, and communities to ensure a coordinated and effective emergency response. Collaboration with other humanitarian actors and stakeholders was vital for efficient resource utilization and holistic support to affected populations.
4. **Resilience Building:** ERNE emphasized the importance of long-term resilience of health systems to enable them to better respond to nutrition and health shocks, including seasonal high-peaks of child wasting, often exacerbated by climate change

Lessons learnt:

In contexts where ERNE operated, climate change has been a driver of food insecurity and malnutrition by causing more persistent drought and flooding. Although ERNE has not been designed with climate-sensitive objectives at the planning stage, the programme responded to the impacts of climate on nutrition by providing swift responses to emergencies in climate affected contexts and delivering essential nutrition and health interventions. ERNE has been a learning opportunity for Concern in delivering responses to emergencies through the integration of more resilient nutrition services in health systems that are prone to climate shocks. The evidence²⁸ built with ERNE shows the need to design nutrition and health programmes with climate objectives. This would support a more holistic approach to programming and ensuring nutrition interventions are responsive and resilient to the impact of climate shocks, so they can be sustained even when shocks hit, e.g. through strengthening community management of child wasting.

An important lesson from ERNE is how resilience building activities can easily be overtaken by large needs to respond to full scale emergencies in climate affected contexts. Resilience-building activities in such contexts may be undermined or put on hold with the need for more immediate life-saving responses. This highlights the need to use weather and climate data to better predict the timing, location and likely impact of flooding, and inform health and nutrition service planning. This would include mapping potential

locations for mobile health and nutrition services based on different flooding and displacement scenarios.

The evaluation of ERNE has also been an opportunity to highlight the strongest aspects of this programme, and the key elements and considerations to integrate in nutrition and health interventions aimed at building resilience in climate-affected contexts. These include:

- Ensuring flexible delivery methods to meet the needs of those living in vulnerable situations, especially during conflicts, climate change events and acute periods of displacement (e.g. during floods). This can have a dramatic impact on access to health and nutrition services.
- Identifying institutional barriers to the integration of nutrition into health services and planning for these barriers, with an anticipatory and contextualized approach.
- Building capacity of the system to take earlier action, with coordinated analysis and localised early action plans.
- Engaging various community stakeholders, an essential process to ensure sustainability of the approach.
- Securing flexible funding, such as the crisis modifier included in the ERNE programme, enabling nutrition programmes to respond to unpredicted shocks, including climate-related shocks.

For more information about ERNE, please visit www.concern.net/knowledge-hub/ERNE

Asmaru Derebe at her home garden. As part of Concern's Emergency Lifesaving Health and Nutrition Responses project, Asmaru learned how to cultivate and grow different vegetable seeds. The aim of this project is to support food security and decrease the risk of malnutrition ahead of crises, such as drought. Photo: Concern Worldwide.



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Cover photo: Mwanaesha Haluwa Haji tends to a crop of maize on a community plot of land in Makere village in Kenya's Tana River County. The project aims to improve community resilience to climate change and transform livelihoods by providing smallholder farmers with access to markets, affordable finance, good quality seeds and climate-smart farming techniques.

Photo: Lisa Murray/Concern Worldwide

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