

SOMALIA



CONCERN
worldwide

Working with the world's poorest people to transform their lives.



Hajjiva Mohamed in Mogadishu's Shabelle IDP camp. Phil Moore, 2011

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Our 25th year in Somalia



Concern Worldwide began operating in Somalia twenty five years ago. Over the years, our team has responded to major emergencies and the needs of hundreds of thousands of Somali people living in poverty. Today, we are working in six regions in south and central Somalia, and have just expanded our programme to Somaliland in the north.

This booklet illustrates the pillars of our programmes in education; food, income and markets; health and in emergencies. It also shows how the resilience of the Somali people, and our partnerships with them, have helped bring about lasting changes to the lives of the poor. Our *Stories of Change* introduce you to Hussein, Muumina, Hawa and Amina who are lifting themselves out of poverty with the support of Concern.

Through these pages you will have a glimpse of the lives that have been transformed through the efforts of our dedicated staff in Somalia. This dedication cannot be exemplified more than by Valerie Place, a Concern nurse from Ireland who lost her life whilst working in Somalia in 1993. Valerie managed a feeding centre in Mogadishu which saved the lives of thousands of Somali children during the devastating famine of the early nineties. She is remembered by all those who worked with her and this publication is dedicated to her memory.

For those of you who have already supported us, thank you. And for those of you who are new to our work, we hope that you will be inspired to support us in the years to follow.

Tom Arnold
Chief Executive, Concern Worldwide

ABOUT CONCERN WORLDWIDE



A community water source built by Concern, Bay Region. Concern Worldwide, 2007



Men excavated water catchments in Sharifay village, Bay Region, in 2009 as part of a cash for work project.

Poor families received income for their work and the wider community benefitted from rain water catchments.

Concern Worldwide, 2009

Concern Worldwide is a non-governmental, international, humanitarian organisation dedicated to the reduction of suffering and working towards the ultimate elimination of extreme poverty in the world's poorest countries.

Founded in 1968, Concern Worldwide—through its work in emergencies and long-term development—has saved countless lives, relieved suffering and provided opportunities for a better standard of living for millions of people. We have more than 3,200 personnel working in 25 countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

Concern works in partnership with local organisations and people in their own communities to develop practical and lasting solutions to extreme poverty. We target the root causes of poverty and empower people to meet their basic survival needs and gain a voice in decisions that affect them. Our emergency response and long-term development programs focus on education; food, income and markets; health; HIV and AIDS, and emergency response.

We use our knowledge and experience on the ground to influence policy decisions at the local, national and international level, thus ensuring that we have the greatest possible impact on the lives of the world's poorest people.



« Abdi Youssef Hussein, a farmer in Gabiley, Somaliland. Concern staff visited his village to conduct a community needs assessment with the local community. Phil Moore, 2010

Operating in 25 countries:

- ▶ Afghanistan
- ▶ Bangladesh
- ▶ Burundi
- ▶ Cambodia
- ▶ Chad
- ▶ Dem. People's Republic of Korea
- ▶ Dem. Republic of Congo
- ▶ Ethiopia
- ▶ Haiti
- ▶ India
- ▶ Kenya
- ▶ Liberia
- ▶ Malawi
- ▶ Mozambique
- ▶ Myanmar
- ▶ Niger
- ▶ Pakistan
- ▶ Rwanda
- ▶ Sierra Leone
- ▶ Somalia
- ▶ Sudan, North & South
- ▶ Tanzania
- ▶ Timor Leste
- ▶ Uganda
- ▶ Zambia
- ▶ Zimbabwe

OUR VISION

A world where no-one lives in poverty, fear or oppression; where all have access to a decent standard of living and the opportunities and choices essential to a long, healthy and creative life; a world where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to help people living in extreme poverty achieve major improvements in their lives which last and spread without ongoing support from Concern.



ABOUT SOMALIA



Camel market, Somaliland. Phil Moore, 2010

Somalia is one of the poorest countries in the world, devastated by over twenty years of conflict. Since the collapse of the central government in 1991, the country's infrastructure has been in decline and services are largely provided by the private sector or aid industry. Almost half the population is under the age of 18, and have never known their country without war.

The Somali people, however, remain resilient and determined to build their self-sufficiency. Somalia produces over 40 per cent of its domestic food needs. There is a thriving private sector economy based on the livestock trade with neighboring countries and remittances from the Somali Diaspora. Somalis have a strong kinship network and a rich tradition of supporting those in need in their communities.

Despite their resilience, years of conflict, recurrent drought and cyclical flooding has made nearly a third of the population in need of humanitarian assistance. Millions of people live without access to basic services such as clean water, education or health care. Sixty per cent of people live on less than a dollar a day.

AT A GLANCE : SOMALIA

Population : **9.3 million**

Infant mortality (per thousand births) : **109**

Life Expectancy : **50 years**

Living with HIV and AIDS : **34,000 people**

Maternal Mortality Ratio : **1 in 14**

Living without access to safe water : **70%** of population

Internally Displaced Persons : **1.42 million**

CONCERN IN SOMALIA

We have been on the ground in Somalia since 1986, working with those most at need through drought, flooding and conflict, finding sustainable solutions to poverty reduction.

Where we work

For twenty-five years, Concern has been working in South Central Somalia. We work with poor communities in the capital Mogadishu; in the riverine and coastal areas of Lower Shabelle to the south; in the pastoralist areas of Gedo bordering Kenya; in the south-western regions of Bay and Bakool and the coastal plains of Galgaduud further north. In 2011, we established programmes in Gabiley and Maroodi-jeex regions of Somaliland.

Who we work with

Our beneficiaries are the poor and extreme poor of Somalia – they include men and women, boys and girls from agri-pastoralist, riverine farmer and pastoralist communities throughout South and Central Somalia and from 2011, Somaliland. We work with people from all clans, including minorities.

Our approach is grounded in partnership with the communities in which we work. Men and women from these communities provide labour, skills, time, land and other inputs for our projects. These lasting partnerships have resulted in unique trust, confidence and respect with communities and from other humanitarian organisations.



Shallow wells provided by Concern, through an implementing partner, Bani'adam, in Lower Shabelle. Concern Worldwide, 2008

Concern's support has been described as **"the most meaningful assistance"** from any NGO in the IDP area by Shukri Bootan Abdi, a beneficiary in our emergency cash relief programme

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Sustaining Lives & Dignity of People Affected by Disaster



Every year, disasters such as conflict, floods, drought and earthquakes leave millions of people around the world incapable of meeting even their most basic survival needs. When disaster strikes, the poorest are the worst affected.

Our Global Response

Concern is committed to meeting the humanitarian imperative to save lives and alleviate suffering. We recognise the need to respond quickly, effectively and creatively to sustain the lives and dignity of people affected by natural disasters or conflict. In countries susceptible to disaster, Concern believes that disaster risk reduction is an integral part of development. As a humanitarian organisation, Concern is committed to the principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality.

Meeting the Challenge in Somalia

Nearly one third of the population is currently living in crisis in Somalia. Concern responds to emergencies caused by conflict, drought and flooding. We use innovative ways of providing much needed assistance to vulnerable poor families that have been displaced, or have lost their livelihoods and incomes by disaster. In Food, Income and Markets; Health and Education we are providing both emergency responses as well as longer term development.

We are responding to a displacement crisis through a range of safety-nets including cash transfers, food through a voucher system and cash-for-work initiatives. These mechanisms ensure that beneficiaries can decide upon and prioritise the types of assistance they require, using cash to buy food, clothes, pay rent on shelter, buy medicine and other necessities.

We also provide life-saving water for communities affected by water scarcity due to erratic rainfall and recurrent drought. We do this through rehabilitation and provision of water sources or by water trucking.

Concern on Impact

- » 109 sustainable water sources were constructed, repaired or supported with spare parts in 2010, reaching nearly 230,300 people
- » Over 37,000 people have benefited from life-saving water trucking in times of extreme water scarcity in 2010
- » 34% of all cash-for-work beneficiaries in Bay region reported that they were able to avoid asset depletion or even increase their assets
- » Our cash relief beneficiaries reported a sense of dignity and pride due to their increased credit-worthiness and greater choice that cash relief afforded them

Concern Somalia: Emergencies

Social Protection:

46,720 beneficiaries (50% female)

Water & Environmental Health:

282,196 beneficiaries (50% female)

Non-Food Item distribution:

6487 beneficiaries (50% female)

Where: Mogadishu, Lower Shabelle, Bay Bakool, Galgadud, Gedo

A caravan of camels delivers water to a community affected by draught. Increasingly erratic rains in Somalia cause draught and flooding. Photo: Concern Worldwide, 2008

EDUCATION

Improving Access, Quality & Equity



A young boy enrolled in Alternative Basic Education at Benadir IDP camp in Mogadishu. Photo: Concern Worldwide, 2010

More than one in ten children around the world never get the chance to go to school. Access to education is not only a basic human right, but also a key factor in reducing poverty and child labour.

Our Global Response

For over thirty years, Concern has been working to **improve equity and access to basic, quality education for all children**, especially girls and working children. We place particular emphasis on reaching those who have been excluded from the formal schooling system, such as girls, children living in slums or isolated rural areas, orphans, working children, children belonging to minority groups, children affected and infected by HIV and AIDs, and children with disabilities.

Meeting the Challenge in Somalia

Ongoing conflict, civil unrest and fragility have had a catastrophic effect on education in Somalia, with only 31 per cent of children enrolled in primary school; this is markedly lower for girls with only 25 per cent enrollment. Since the collapse of the central government in 1991, free of charge state education is no longer provided. The majority of education is now provided through fee-paying institutions, thereby preventing the participation of poor vulnerable children, especially girls, orphans and those from displaced families and minorities.

Concern has over 15 years' experience implementing education initiatives in Somalia, and we are currently improving access to quality primary education for 11,974 children in Mogadishu and the Lower Shabelle Region. This includes 1,511 vulnerable displaced children and their families who are living in temporary camps.

Concern on Impact

- » **Girl's enrollment increased** from 36% in 2004 to 43.2% in 2011
- » **Literacy rates have dramatically increased.** Villages often had only one or two people who could read & write. Towfiq village, for example, now boasts literacy rates of 25-30%
- » **Community Ownership:** Communities donate 30-40% of school construction needs, ensuring sustainability
- » We have supported education in Somalia since 1993, our **beneficiaries have increased steadily** from 7000 in the late nineties to over 12,000 in 2011
- » **Adult education:** last year, 190 adults also benefited from literacy and numeracy classes at 5 schools

Concern Somalia: Education

Primary education:

12,550 direct beneficiaries (40% female)

Non-formal education:

1511 direct beneficiaries (45% female)

Indirect beneficiaries: 104,936

Target schools: 23

Where: Mogadishu, Lower Shabelle



Children at a Concern supported school
Liam Burke, 2003

Formal Education

Literacy rates in Somalia estimate that only a quarter of the population can read and write, drastically reducing the ability of people to climb their way out of poverty.



I am more confident than before, and respected at home and the community because of my education from school.

— Fadumo Sheikh Abdi, grade 7

Concern's programmes in formal schools focus on improving quality by training teachers, partnering with communities to repair and build schools; furnishing schools with desks, chairs and blackboards; providing classrooms with essential learning resources and supplies; and training Committee Education Committees (CECs). In each school we provide separate toilets for boys and girls and a water well to ensure students and their families have access to safe water.

In Mogadishu and Lower Shabelle we are targeting 23 schools—many for over ten years—to increase availability and accessibility of primary education for the poorest households. Concern supported schools benefit nearly twelve-thousand children and 330 teachers. In addition to the direct benefit to children, they also bring home important teachings to their families.

Non-Formal Education

The conflict in Somalia is over twenty years old. Over half of the population are under the age of 18 and have never known their country in peace time. Children continue to bear the brunt of conflict. Many of them have been unable to go to school or have been uprooted from their schools due to displacement.

Through our partner **Youthlink**, a local NGO based in Mogadishu, we assist 1511 children with non-formal education and other support. This includes vocational skills training, psycho-social support and provision of a safe refuge for recreation. These children are specifically targeted as they have left home, live and work on the streets, or are at risk of exploitation. Since 2006, we have supported over 3000 children. Three hundred of their families have also received cash grants to reduce child-labour and ensure that the children can attend school.



Children at our child-support project in Mogadishu which offers a safe space for recreation and education.
Abdulkadir Ibrahim, 2009

Children affected by the conflict take part in recreational activities. Concern Worldwide, 2007



FOOD, INCOME & MARKETS

Reducing Vulnerability & Inequality



Local farmer, Khadar Daud, shows sesame seeds from his crop during a Concern community assessment in Gabiley, Somaliland. Photo: Phil Moore 2010

Today, almost one billion people around the world are forced to survive on less than one dollar a day.

Our Global Response

Concern helps people to overcome extreme poverty by reducing their risks and vulnerabilities, protecting their assets, increasing their resilience, and working to reduce inequality. Our Food, Income & Markets (FIM) programmes aim to improve food security and increase food production in ways that are sustainable over the long term, and improve people's access to income by investing in their ability to support themselves and their families.

We do this through disaster risk reduction, capacity building and community development, as well as by providing communities with seeds, tools and agricultural training; giving poor people access to loans and savings through our microfinance programs; and offering skills training in areas such as small business development, animal husbandry, bee-keeping, carpentry and tailoring.

In the past year, Concern's FIM programs directly reached more than 4.2 million people.

Meeting the Challenge in Somalia

In Somalia, the majority of people live on less than a dollar a day. Crop and livestock production, the main sources of livelihoods, are undermined by frequent drought and flooding as well as the conflict. Food insecurity affects nearly a third of the population. We work with poor riverine farmers and agro-pastoralist communities to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to sustain their livelihoods through good times and bad to ensure household food security.

Concern on Impact

- » The average number of months for which a **harvest can feed a family has tripled** from two to six months
- » **Market interaction has doubled**, as well as experiencing a more diverse range of products and services for sale at markets
- » **Access to credit has trebled** for all beneficiaries, not just for self-help group members.

Concern Somalia: FIM

Farmers' Field Schools/Irrigation:

34,061 direct beneficiaries (50% women)

Market Interaction:

42,294 direct beneficiaries (50% women)

Disaster Risk Reduction:

3,110 direct beneficiaries (50% women)

Indirect beneficiaries: 139,631

Where: Lower Shabelle

FIM in Emergencies

Social protection:

46,720 direct beneficiaries

Where: Mogadishu, Gedo, Galgaduud, Bay & Lower Shabelle



A community field assessment meeting between Concern staff and farmers in Gabiley, Somaliland. Phil Moore, 2010

We are expanding our FIM programme to reach 55,500 people in Gabiley region, Somaliland. The programme will include: FFSs, SHGs and watershed management, and will be integrated with health interventions

Photographs, opposite page:
Top: Local farmers and Concern staff mark out a usage map of agricultural land during a community field assessment in Gabiley, Somaliland. Phil Moore, 2010

Bottom: Families in the Shabelle IDP camp were given money to start small businesses in Mogadishu. Concern Worldwide, 2010

FIM »

Knowledge is power. Through **farmers' field schools** (FFSs), we provide agricultural training and a space for farmers to trial improved crop varieties, pest management and farming methods. These trials are assisted by an innovative partnership with regional research groups who provide the latest developments on crop diversification. We provide seeds, tools, fertiliser and storage facilities, which combined with new skills, have resulted in greater yields and more sustainable livelihoods for poor. We currently support 16 FFSs in Lower Shabelle.

Access to credit is one of the main barriers to sustainable livelihoods for the poor in Somalia. We support poor men and women to form **self-help groups** (SHGs) that provide micro-finance services and support income-generating activities of their members, including business development training. They have established successful businesses in petty trading, sale of farm produce, communal farming and livestock rearing.

We improve **access to markets** for isolated rural poor communities, including the construction and renovation of market shelters and road culverts, improving market conditions.

Disaster Risk Reduction: Flooding has killed thousands in the Lower Shabelle region in recent years. Through the establishment and support of flood prevention committees, we help to prevent this loss of life and assets, and limit the impact of future disasters, ensuring crop production is stable across all seasons. Communities now plan together, rehabilitating weak river embankments and de-silting canals, which improves irrigation and mitigates flood damage.

Cyclical drought also affects the communities in which we work. In response we distribute less thirsty seeds to farmers to ensure food- and livelihood-security despite the erratic rains.



Concern Worldwide supports 68 women's self-help groups in South Central Somalia and plans to extend this programme to Somaliland in 2011



Men receive payment for a cash-for-work programme. Concern Worldwide, 2009

In many areas of Somalia, drought, flooding and conflict still overwhelm poor people's precarious livelihoods, leading to displacement and loss of income. When this happens, Concern's Food, Income & Markets work responds through a range of social protection and safety nets to ensure the poor can access food and services in the local market.

Since 2008 we have used **cash relief** as a critical component of our emergency response. Cash allows families to prioritise their own needs and to do so with dignity. We target families that have no other means of income and those that often, are unable to work due to family commitments or disability.

When possible, we use **cash for work** programmes to rehabilitate water sources or other community assets. We offer income generating opportunities to poor but labour-rich households, whilst the wider community benefits from rehabilitated water sources or roads. This gives a much-needed injection of cash into the local economy of communities affected by drought or conflict.

In the capital, Mogadishu, we provide **food vouchers** to displaced families, making agreements with trusted shopkeepers where vouchers are exchanged for a monthly ration of food. This has the dual benefit of increasing food security for vulnerable households whilst boosting the local economy.

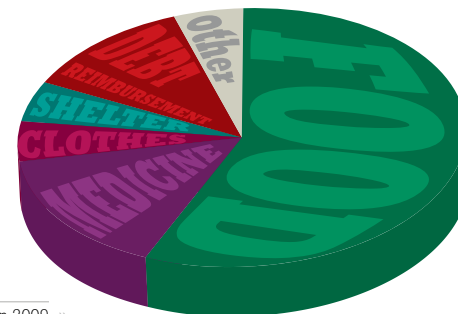
We have an innovative private sector partnership with remittance companies Dahabshiil and Qaran, ensuring effective and safe service delivery to our beneficiaries. Remittance companies form the backbone of the Somali economy and cash delivery through this mechanism gives beneficiaries a sense of safety.



Maryama Shiil Bakar, a mother of five, receives an installment of an emergency cash intervention
Hawa Sharaf, 2009

Concern on Impact

- » Our cash interventions have increased the purchasing power of the poor during times of crisis, enabling them to purchase food and access essential services.
- » Food vouchers feed poor households for almost two thirds of the month. They have enhanced food security for the most vulnerable, with all of our beneficiaries able to eat an extra meal per day, ensuring a nutritious and diverse diet.



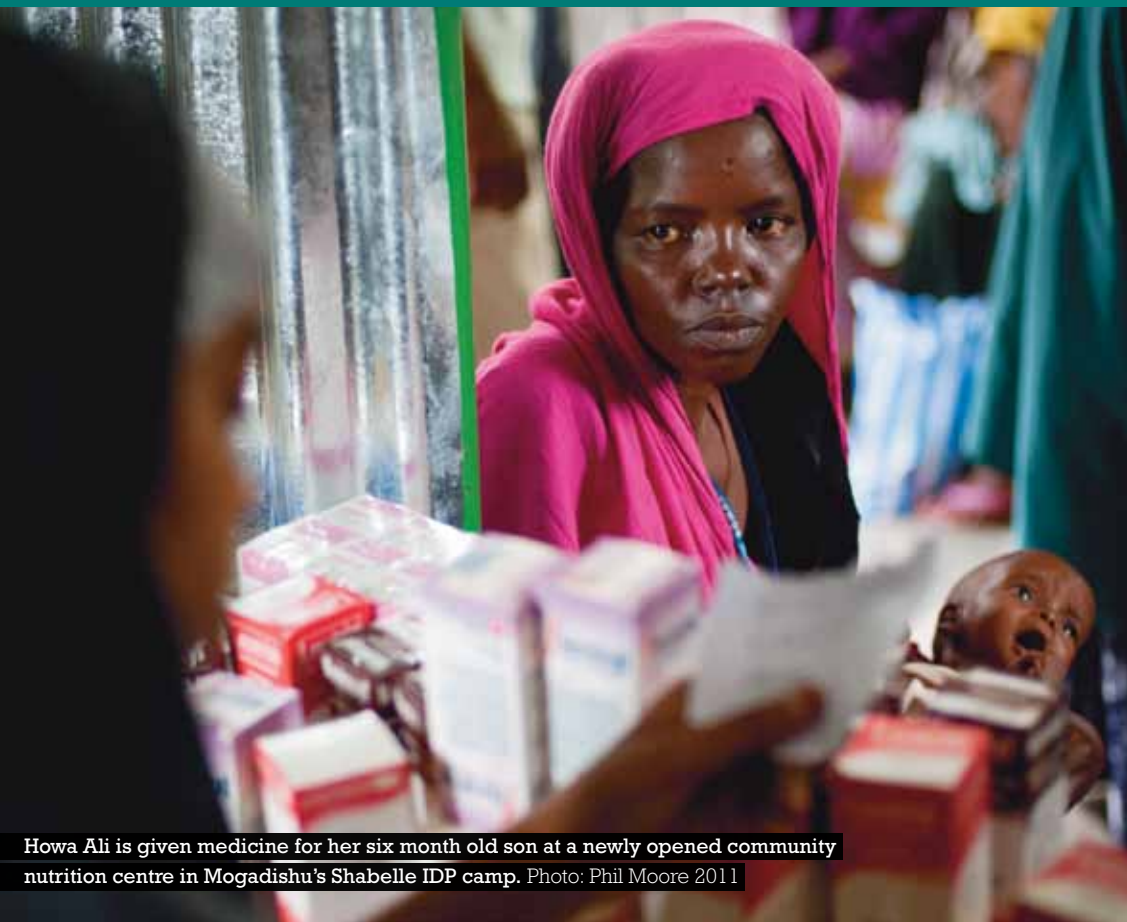
Families' use of cash interventions in 2009 »

For the first time in my life in the IDP camp, my family could eat a decent lunch for 15 days in a row

Shukri Bootan Abdi, a mother of eight, talking of the cash relief she received in her IDP camp along the Afgoye corridor

HEALTH

Bringing Services & Solutions to Communities



Howa Ali is given medicine for her six month old son at a newly opened community nutrition centre in Mogadishu's Shabelle IDP camp. Photo: Phil Moore 2011

Every year around the world, 8.1 million children die before they reach their fifth birthday from preventable, treatable diseases, and over 358,000 women die from pregnancy-related causes.

Our Global Response

For more than 42 years, Concern Worldwide has been working to save lives and ensure that the poorest communities have access to quality health care. We work in partnership with local governments and community organisations to develop sustainable, life-saving health solutions in three critical areas: water and sanitation; maternal and child health and nutrition. Our programs serve the urban and rural poor in areas otherwise neglected by health policy and resources.

Concern's Health programs reached 2.1 million people in the past year.

Meeting the Challenge in Somalia

In some parts of Somalia, 30 per cent of children under five are malnourished: one of the highest rates in the world and double what is considered an emergency. Half of all women are anaemic and deficient in micro-nutrients. Health services and infrastructure are very limited in Somalia, particularly in the rural areas where we work.

Maternal mortality is shockingly high, with one in twelve women at risk of dying in childbirth.

Almost 70 per cent of the population does not have access to safe water and less than half have access to latrines. Water-borne diseases are endemic and contribute to high rates of illness and death, particularly amongst children under five. Water infrastructure has been damaged by the civil war. Somalis are rain dependant for much of their water, leading to disaster in times of drought.

Concern on Impact

- » 93% of children with severe malnutrition admitted into our programmes are cured within two months.
- » 98% of malnourished children finish their treatment plan, a default rate well below sphere standards
- » We have constructed & rehabilitated over 140 wells with elevated water tanks since 2009, providing access to improved drinking water to approximately 126,000 poor people
- » Since 2009, latrines for 30,000 people have been developed, helping decrease diseases such as diarrhoea

Concern Somalia: Health

Malnourished children treated:

1,801 children under 5 (54% girls)

Pregnant women treated: 864

Health Schools Initiative:

11632 children (51% girls)

Water & Environmental Health:

18,259 beneficiaries

WEH in Emergencies:

282,196 beneficiaries

Where: Mogadishu, Lower Shabelle, Bay, Bakool, Galgadud, Gedo



Water & Sanitation

We ensure that thousands of poor families have access to clean water in Lower Shabelle, Mogadishu, Bay and Bakool, Gedo and Galgadud regions.

The majority of Somalis are dependent on rainwater catchment, using *berkads* (traditional water reservoirs) as their primary source of water. We build sustainable water supplies in rural and urban areas such as boreholes, shallow wells and piped water systems. We also help communities reduce water losses by rehabilitating and improving *berkads*, as well as installing under-ground water storage facilities, which help in times of drought.

During times of water scarcity, we ensure that lives are saved by water-trucking to communities in need. Rain water catchments are rehabilitated by local men and women in return for cash for their labour, increasing water supply and income opportunities for

the rural poor. Concern trains water and sanitation committees on the maintenance of water sources and on hygiene promotion, as well as hygiene promotion to water users.

We also construct latrines in rural and urban areas, particularly in camps for internally displaced persons, to ensure safe sanitation, privacy and dignity.

The leader or head (of a tribe) whose pan (water reservoir) dries is not worth being a leader.
— traditional Somali saying

Nutrition

Ninety-three per cent of all children admitted to our nutrition sites are cured within two months and we are actively trying to reduce the root causes of malnutrition in communities throughout Somalia.

We treat nearly 1,000 children suffering from malnutrition in the Bay and Lower Shabelle regions through **Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM)**, a community based approach that builds upon and supports local capacity. Voluntary community nutrition teams and remote referral agents are trained in identifying malnutrition and in mobilising communities to bring their children for treatment. Children are given nutritious supplementary food and medical care to bring them back to health. In 2011 Concern expanded its nutrition programme to the capital, Mogadishu, to help address the urban nutrition crisis.

With limited health facilities, the majority of women give birth at home with the **assistance of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs)**. Our nurses provide training to TBAs about safe delivery practices and provide them with basic tools such as sterile gloves, combatting the perilously high rates of maternal mortality.

Pregnant and lactating women are also given **micro-nutrients, de-worming and malaria treatment** as well as information on **safe delivery** and on **child feeding and child care** practices.

In the primary schools we support, Concern also operates a nutrition programme that includes **community de-worming** programmes. To address the underlying causes of malnutrition, we are implementing a **community conversations** programme which looks at community values and behaviours surrounding children under five years as well as care of the pregnant women.



Nutrition staff examine a child at a community nutrition centre in Lower Shabelle. Abdi-Rashid Abdulle, 2009

Mothers in the IDP camps of Mogadishu's Hodan district are now able to seek **health care and advice** for their children thanks to Concern's new **Community Nutrition Centres**, addressing the urban nutrition crisis in Somalia's capital. In 2011, Concern established three nutrition centres in Mogadishu.



Focus group discussion at Concern-supported Jabuuti school in Mogadishu. Abdulkadir Ibrahim, 2010



A community field assessment between Concern staff and farmers in Gabiley, Somaliland. Phil Moore, 2010

PARTNERSHIPS

Our approach is based on partnership with communities, local NGOs and regional organisations to further our mission to eliminate extreme poverty.

Our primary partners are the communities in which we work. Working closely with them, we ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to transform their lives. Communities dedicate time and resources to our programmes, and help us to design, implement and monitor them.

We assist with the creation of community-based organisations such as Community Education Committees, Water and Sanitation Users' Committees, Flood Prevention Committees and Farmers' Field Schools. Enabling decision-making and participation by those affected by development initiatives leads to a greater and more sustained commitment to projects, their implementation and ultimate benefits.

We also work with four local NGOs, contributing to their development and assisting effective links between them and the extreme poor. In Lower Shabelle, our partner *Bani'adam* improves water and sanitation provision to rural communities. In Gedo, *Lifeline Gedo* is reaching remote communities with emergency assistance. *GREDO* is developing water infrastructure in Bakool. And in Mogadishu, *Youthlink* ensures that poor children affected by the conflict receive the support they need.

Bringing together people, organisations and institutions to pool knowledge, skills and resources, we link communities with national and international research and development institutions, providing them with technical support and knowledge.



Concern staff participate in an ICRISAT organised workshop in Somaliland. Phil Moore, 2010

Our **partnerships** with **ICRISAT**, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, and **SATG**, the Somali Agriculture Technical Group, have helped farmers in Lower Shabelle through their research on **crop diversification**, trialed by our Farmers' Field Schools.



STORIES OF CHANGE

FIM | **WOMEN'S SELF HELP GROUPS** »

Enabling Self-Reliance

Maryam Caruth, 2010



Amina Aden Abdia is a 32-year-old mother of five children, and a member of the Alla-Aamin women's self-help group (SHG) in Muruqmaal, a village in Lower Shabelle. Concern has given these women's SHGs money for rotating cash grants which they distribute to their members. This affordable finance, along with skills and business training, allows the women to lift themselves out of poverty, becoming pioneers in the private sector of their village.

For Amina, this meant that she could triple the land she cultivated, with different, more lucrative crops. Not only did her profits increase, but it meant that she was not forced to supplement her income

through other, time-intensive and often dangerous activities. Before, she says, her harvest was "never enough to feed my family and give them their basic needs for medicine and clothing".

Through her entrepreneurial spirit, Amina has wisely reinvested her profits, buying an ox-cart that she now rents to local farmers. Through a second grant from the SHG, she further expanded the land she cultivated, whose profits allowed her to open a small shop in the village, changing her status to a business woman.

"I never dreamed this would happen in my life" she says, now able to send two of her children to elementary school in a nearby town. "I am paying the expenditure of my children and food for them."

FIM IN EMERGENCIES | **CASH RELIEF** »

Adding Choice to Displacement

Described as the world's capital of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the 30km stretch of land between Mogadishu and Afgoye town is now home to over 400,000 IDPs. Concern's cash relief distribution directly assists conflict-affected families whose capacity to help themselves has been severely reduced by the protracted civil war in Mogadishu.

Hawa Ahmed Hassan, 35, and her eight children fled Mogadishu after mortars and artillery shells "fell like rain" around their home, injuring her eight-year-old son. They left with only a bundle of clothes on their back, and now live in a shelter made of sticks, rags and bags in an overcrowded camp along the Afgoye Corridor.

Her husband was also injured by mortar shrapnel. Hawa now does everything: standing in long-lines for aid, fetching water, cooking and performing other household chores. "Things become doubly difficult in IDP camps" she says.

Since being selected for the cash relief, Hawa says she can "buy different types of food, medicine, meat and milk for the children" as well as paying back debt.

She describes the humanitarian aid in the camp as never sufficient, particularly for large families such as hers; the cash interventions have finally given her family food security.

Hawa, like many other beneficiaries, enthuses about the sense of dignity that comes with a cash-based intervention. Having never before visited a remittance company, or seen a \$50 note, she says "it feels great to rub shoulders with those who have relatives outside of the country and [who] regularly receive money from abroad".



Hawa sits with her family in their make-shift shelter in the Shareco IDP camp. Concern Worldwide, 2007

"It feels great to rub shoulders with those who have relatives outside of the country and [who] regularly receive money from abroad"

— Hawa Ahmed Hassan

Street-Kid to Inspiring Student

Concern's **Child Support project** assists **children affected by conflict** through a holistic child support package that entails **psycho-social support** to those traumatised by the conflict, **formal and non-formal education**, **recreational activities** and **family support**.

Hussein Mohamed's father was paralysed during the civil war. The oldest of nine children, Hussein was forced to take to the streets to find an income to feed his family. Rummaging through a market in Mogadishu, he would collect left-over pieces of khat – the leaves of a plant used as a stimulant – selling them to those without the means to buy fresh bundles. Life on the streets left him vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, but it meant that Hussein could help feed his family with this meager income.

Concern's community outreach workers got to know Hussein on Mogadishu's streets and invited him to take part in our non-formal education (NFE) programme. He also began to frequent our partner Youthlink's centre, providing him with a safe-space in which he could participate in recreational activities.

After three months of basic numeracy and literacy lessons in our NFE classes, Hussein progressed to formal education in Ablal primary school. Such fee-paying schools are normally out of reach to families such as Hussein's, but through a partnership with

Concern, offers places to NFE graduates. Despite the intensifying conflict in Mogadishu, Hussein decided to remain at school and complete his grade eight exam, progressing to secondary school with further support from Concern.

In 2009 he became the first member of the family to graduate from secondary school, becoming a role model to local, underprivileged children. He is now studying for a B.A. at the Somali Institute of Management and Administration Development, and is such a source of inspiration to others.

“ I plan to establish a child protection project that advocates the rights of Somali children, especially those who lack the opportunity of education among the poor households



Overcoming the odds

Our nutrition programme deals with the devastating impact that malnutrition has on the young in poor communities. Cognisant of the fact that malnutrition cannot be resolved in isolation, Concern's nutrition programme in Lower Shabelle is part of a multi-sectorial and holistic response to poverty reduction, encompassing WASH, Education and FIM.

Like many mothers in Somalia, 28 year-old Muumina Aden struggles with the double burden of caring for her five children as well as working to provide food for her family. The small income she has from the little work available does not provide her children with the nutritious diet they need.

Her dire situation is exacerbated by the long, hot *jilaal* dry season, when work as a labourer dries up and food becomes scarce. The *jilaal* of 2010 was particularly harsh – with so little to eat, Muumina's children became too weak to fight off disease. Her two youngest children fell gravely sick, losing weight and becoming severely dehydrated through their illness.

Muumina had neither the money nor the means to take her children to the doctor. She learned that her children were suffering from severe acute malnutrition from a Concern-trained community nutrition team-leader. The team immediately referred three year-old Farah and two year-old Mahad to an outpatient therapeutic site. Here, Muumina learned how to treat her children and how to prevent malnutrition in the future.

After six weeks of treatment, her children are strong and healthy. “Before [the] Concern nutrition programme in my village, I wouldn't have been able to save my three children” she says.



Muumina feeds her children “Plumpy Nut”, a Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food, after they were diagnosed as suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Abdi-Rashid Abdulle, 2010

“ Before [the] Concern nutrition programme in my village, I wouldn't have been able to save my three children.

— Muumina Aden



Five year old Najma Yonis in Mogadishu's Shabelle IDP camp, where she has lived her entire life. Phil Moore, 2011

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CREDITS

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