

A close-up photograph of a person's hands cupped under a stream of clear water. The person is wearing a dark-colored t-shirt with the 'CONCERN worldwide' logo printed on the sleeve. The background is a blurred, light-colored wall.

CONCERN
worldwide

**CONCERN WORLDWIDE'S APPROACH TO
WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)**

1. INTRODUCTION

“ Globally, diarrhoeal diseases are the second leading cause of death among children under five.¹ The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 842,000 deaths from diarrhoeal diseases could be prevented each year by improved water, sanitation and hygiene.² While impressive progress has been made globally, in 2015, 663 million people still lack access to improved drinking water sources and 2.4 billion people do not have access to improved sanitation facilities.³”

Concern Worldwide is a non-governmental, humanitarian organisation dedicated to the reduction of suffering and working towards the ultimate elimination of extreme poverty.

Concern works in 27 of the poorest countries in the world. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) activities form a key part of Concern’s work in humanitarian response, recovery and longer term development interventions.

In 2014, our WASH interventions reached over 2 million people. From a total organisational expenditure of €125 million, approximately €22.5million was spent on improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene promotion.

Concern’s global strategic objective for the WASH sector is closely aligned with the sixth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): “to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.”

Overall, Concern seeks to improve access and wellbeing in relation to WASH activities and to support national governments in service delivery.



*See footnote

Concern’s approach to WASH programming is based around two fundamental pillars. The first is a consideration of the full complexity of the system involved in WASH services. Concern considers that addressing any one component, for example water storage without considering use, will not lead to better health and well-being for the poorest communities. The second important aspect of Concern’s approach is community engagement. Our approach is founded on dignity and respect, listening to people, putting them at the centre of their own development. This enables Concern to deliver WASH services that are based on sustainable community ownership.

This document provides an overview of Concern’s work in WASH. It outlines challenges for the poorest relating to water, sanitation and hygiene services, what we do to address these challenges, how we work and the impact that has been achieved in improving access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene promotion.

Subsequent sections discuss the particular importance of gender perspectives in WASH programmes; describe Concern’s WASH work in humanitarian emergencies, and how we integrate WASH interventions with other programmes to contribute to broader improvements in health, education and livelihoods of the extreme poor.

¹ Walker C. and al. *Global burden of childhood pneumonia and diarrhoea*, The Lancet. 2013, P. 1407

² http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/jmp-2015-key-facts/en/

³ <http://www.unicef.org/wash/>

*Photo: Girl pumping water, Boya Village, CAR. Concern has rehabilitated 40 water sources in the region. Photographer: Arjan Ottens (2015)

2. WHERE WE WORK

Concern implements WASH programmes in 22 countries. The selection of country is based on a global analysis of poverty and vulnerability, which is followed by a more detailed analysis of national needs. In recent years Concern has been working increasingly in fragile states in areas where the capacity of government to deliver public services is often very low.

In some countries Concern directly implements programmes, in others we use a partnership approach. Concern is also involved in a number of multi-agency consortia to allow us to expand the reach, impact and sustainability of our WASH interventions.

Depending on the needs of the specific contexts within these countries, programmes may be either **humanitarian** response, which focus on immediate lifesaving activities, **recovery** or longer term **development** work to address the root causes of extreme poverty.



The size of Concern's spend on WASH activities in 2014 varies from country to country. In total we spent €22.5 million on such activities during the year, reaching 2 million people at an average cost per person of €11.25.

At a Glance: Concern's 2014 WASH Activities

IMPACT

- **People Reached: 2 Million**
- **Countries Reached: 22**
- **Cost of Programmes: €22.5 Million**
- **Cost Per Person Reached: €11.25**

OUTPUTS

Boreholes, hand-dug wells, gravity fed water systems, spring protection, latrine construction (communal blocks, schools, health centres, household), rainwater harvesting tanks, water management committees, trained hygiene promoters, social behaviour change communication packages.

3. OUR APPROACH

3.1 ACCESS TO WATER

“ ” *Sub-Saharan Africa did not meet the MDG (Millennium Development Goal) target in 2015...319 million people are without access to improved drinking water sources.⁴*

In many of the contexts where Concern is working, access to safe water is a huge challenge. People are obliged to walk long distances to collect water from unprotected water sources. Even if the source is protected, the risk of contamination during collection and storage is high. The associated burden of labour and health risks weigh heavily on the most vulnerable.

Developing Infrastructure to Improve Access: Tailored Solutions

The first stage in improving access to safe water is to establish, **in consultation with the community**, the most appropriate structure. Where there is already a natural spring, Concern will support the community to protect the source. In other contexts, Concern will carry out surveys to analyse the distribution of ground water, the soil and rock structure to determine the best location to drill new boreholes to allow communities to access water irrespective of the season. In many cases, communities themselves will already have dug wells, and Concern provides support to fit hand pumps which seal and protect the well, making collection easier and the water safer. Concern will also provide guidance on management of the service (for example, through introduction of user fees) to ensure that everyone, including the poorest, has access to safe water.

When constructing new water sources, Concern consults with women and girls (who are often the primary collectors of water) to determine the location of new water points to ensure they are in convenient, safe places. Concern also carries out water quality testing on all water sources to ensure the water reaches safety standards.



In 2013, Concern supported the construction or rehabilitation of 1,748 boreholes and 401 hand dug wells were fitted with hand pumps.



Jimmy Aboulia pumps water at V.E.M. Primary School, Allen Town, Sierra Leone. Photographer: Michael Duff (2014)

⁴ http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/jmp-2015-key-facts/en/

Sustainable Community Ownership

As outlined in our organisational Mission Statement, Concern's overall intent is that the improvements achieved through our work last beyond the life of any particular programme. This is particularly important in the WASH sector where evidence in recent years has highlighted the problem of hand pumps or other infrastructure falling into disrepair. To avoid this problem, Concern invests heavily in working with the community to promote ownership and enhance skills for future management. There are three main approaches used to promote sustainability:

1. Establishing Community Institutions

Concern supports the establishment of Water Management Committees (WMCs) made up of locally elected community representatives to manage and oversee the maintenance of water sources. The WMCs are also responsible for mobilising community members to participate in the construction work for improvement of the water sources by contributing local labour and materials.

2. Training and Capacity Building

It is important that members of the WMCs and other community representatives have sufficient skills to maintain water sources and carry out hygiene sensitisation work. Concern provides training in the operation and maintenance of water sources as well as basic management tools such as planning, monitoring and financial management.

3. Working with National Governments

In fragile states, there is rarely strong government infrastructure or the capacity to deliver WASH services. Nonetheless, to enhance sustainability, Concern works to strengthen the capacity of local authorities and national governments whenever possible. The type of work Concern does with such institutions will vary from one context to another. Where capacity is strong Concern's support may involve technical advice and advocacy on policy issues, while in other areas it may be training or the provision of resources to help government extension services to work more effectively.



In Tanzania, 94% of water structures supported by Concern are still operational five years after installation.

Spare Parts and Maintenance Research in the Democratic Republic of Congo

One of the biggest challenges to sustainability in the WASH sector is recognised as the maintenance of infrastructure. Data from Sub-Saharan Africa has shown that over a third of hand pumps are not functioning only a few years after implementation. A key cause of this has been identified as lack of access to spare parts for repair and maintenance. In 2013, Concern carried out research into the supply of spare parts in DRC. The study examined bottle necks linked to capacity and costs throughout the supply chain from manufacturers in India to end users in the WMCs in Katanga. This approach exemplifies Concern's commitment to developing an in depth understanding of the problems within such systems and working with communities to find long term solutions. The full report is available online from Concern Worldwide.

3.2 ACCESS TO SANITATION

“ ” 2.4 billion people – more than one third of the global population – live without basic sanitation facilities.⁵

Studies have shown that methods of disposal of excreta have a huge influence on child survival.⁶ Open defecation is one of the main causes of diarrhoea, which results in the deaths of more than 750,000 children under age 5 every year.⁷ Achieving improvements in sanitation facilities for the safe disposal of faeces and waste is a crucially important public health issue for communities where Concern is working.



In 2013, Concern supported the construction of 4,341 household latrines and 413 communal latrines.

The complexity of changing defecation practices in communities is a widely documented issue. Concern's WASH programmes promote the construction of latrines through training and support with materials, as well as community mobilisation techniques such as **Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)** to encourage good sanitation practice. In most cases, Concern first works with the community to trigger demand for a solution to open defecation practices. Subsequently, Concern programme teams support construction of **demonstration latrines**, working closely with community members to explain aspects of safe, economic and hygienic latrine construction. Using the demonstration model as an example, households are then encouraged to build latrines for their own families or neighbourhoods.

In some cases, depending on community priorities and needs, Concern may also provide sanitation kits, support vector control and the establishment of solid waste pits to improve the environmental hygiene for the whole community. Community members are often at the forefront of proposing innovative, locally based solutions, such as the reinforcement of pit latrine walls to make them last longer or by making adjustments to latrine shelters to offer better privacy and security for users.



A community worker lines and reinforces a latrine wall with local materials in Katanga, DRC.
Photographer:
Chaungo Barasa (2013)

⁵ http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/jmp-2015-key-facts/en/

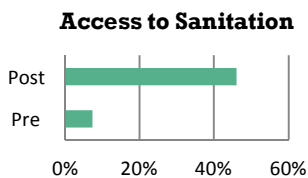
⁶ <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/sanitation.shtml>

⁷ <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/sanitation.shtml>

From Global Good Practice to Tailored Approaches

Changing practices linked to defecation requires not only supporting the provision of latrines and waste disposal infrastructure, but also working closely with communities to change knowledge, attitudes and behaviour around sanitation practice. Globally, there are two 'models' identified as good practice for participatory actions linked to sanitation and hygiene promotion.

In Tahoua, Niger, access to sanitation among targeted communities increased from 7.4% to 46% over a two year Concern programme.



Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) is an approach that focuses largely on addressing open defecation behaviours in rural communities. The aim of CLTS is to prompt community reflection and discussion on open defecation. The second approach: **Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST)** adopts a staged approach using participatory tools, from problem identification and analysis to planning and selection of appropriate solutions linked to the water, sanitation and hygiene situation in the community.

These approaches have been used with varying degrees of success across different contexts. Some observations have found that while CLTS has worked well in parts of Asia, it is not so easily accepted in sub-Saharan Africa. To reflect our global experience that models like CLTS and PHAST are complementary rather than unilateral approaches, Concern has developed a mixed community mobilisation response combining both approaches. This exemplifies Concern's conviction that there is no simple solution that can be applied across the board and techniques and models must be adapted to the realities of local contexts in order to be effective.

Urban Sanitation in Liberia: Rethinking Latrine Design

Three out of four Liberians living in urban areas do not have access to improved sanitation facilities.⁸ Concern has just completed the pilot phase of a European Union funded Urban Sanitation Project seeking to improve environmental and personal health in urban slum areas in Monrovia.

The project has developed a unique type of communal latrine that is fitted with a bio-digester which produces bio-gas. The gas can then be used as cooking gas or converted into electricity that can light up a community without adequate access to power. A programme review has highlighted that a key issue with this type of latrine design is that a good level of technical knowledge is required to maintain the facility. Although ultimately the intention is that the management of such facilities would be handed over to the Monrovia City council, sustainability will also depend on the technical know-how of those maintaining the facility locally. For this reason, in subsequent phases, strong emphasis will be placed on the training and technical know-how of these teams.

Finding innovative solutions is a key part of Concern's approach, however it is important that solutions are tried and tested before being scaled up. Concern will continue to gather evidence on the effectiveness of this and share recommendations with national and international stakeholders in the next phase of the programme.

⁸ WHO/UNICEF, Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, Estimated on the use of water sources and sanitation facilities, Liberia (2012, updated April 2014).

3.3 HYGIENE PROMOTION

“ ” ...Studies suggest that regular hand-washing with soap at critical times can reduce the number of diarrhoea bouts by almost 50 per cent.⁹

The adoption of safe hygiene practice is essential to the achievement of lasting health improvements and thus an integral part of Concern's WASH programmes. Change in the practice of washing hands has been proven to be one of the most effective techniques in reducing diarrhoea. The first step in changing behaviour is to increase knowledge. However, evidence also shows that although people may learn various hygiene messages, this doesn't automatically result in a change of behaviour, and improvements to hygiene practice.

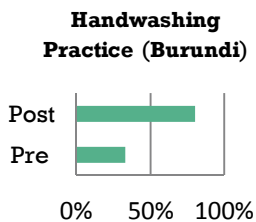
Understanding Social Behaviour

Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) is an approach to changing people's behaviours or practices which focuses on addressing the many different factors that may influence an individual's and society's behaviours. SBC aims to capture as many of these factors as possible, including individual perceptions, cultural norms, the opinion of family members and peers, and the broader physical environment in which people live or physical access to materials such as soap. Research tools such as barrier analysis are used to gain an in-depth understanding of the determinants of particular sanitation behaviours. Gathering this information at the outset of a programme allows the team to develop tailored project activities to address the specific barriers and to also leverage the potential motivators of positive practices.

Developing a Behaviour Change Strategy

To effectively change behaviours, Concern's programmes often include several interventions at multiple levels to reflect the many and varying influences on peoples' practices. Generally, SBC strategies adopted by Concern will include multiple communications activities to raise knowledge about the link between diseases and hygiene behaviours, as shown in the following image. Once key messages and target audiences have been identified based on the research, suitable communication channels are selected. Reflecting the diversity of influential actors for a household in any given community, multiple channels of communication are used, such as: household visits, group discussions, radio broadcasts or theatre performances.

In the Concern Burundi programme the percentage of households washing their hands with soap after toilet use increased from 33% to 80%.



Behaviour Change Communication in Syria

Working with Syrian refugee families in Lebanon, Concern uses games and songs to teach children about handwashing practices. Through our use of SMS, social media, leaflets, posters, radio interviews, and school visits Concern's hygiene promotion messages reached over 300,000 people in 2014.

⁹ http://www.unicef.org/wash/index_hygiene.html



Sample Behaviour Change Communication Images: Expanded Impact Child Survival Programme Concern Worldwide Rwanda 2012

To be effective, SBC strategies rarely rely on communicating information alone. Most programmes also develop additional activities targeting specific behaviours. For example, a programme may include training of community health workers in the use of hygiene promotion techniques where research has indicated that this is necessary if more caregivers are to seek hygiene advice.

Elsewhere, if a lack of facilities for handwashing is highlighted as a key obstacle to behaviour change, then a programme may work with schools' clubs to construct handwashing stations made from locally available materials (as shown in the photo below). In some programmes, Concern uses a combination of UV light and germ lotion in our 'Wash and Glow' kits as part of demonstrations to raise awareness of safe handwashing practice.

Marco Martoni (14) and Saada Issa (13) washing their hands with a 'tippy tap' at Kigarama Primary School, Ngara District, Tanzania. Photograph: Jennifer O'Gorman (2012)



4. WOMEN, GIRLS AND WASH

Access to safe water, adequate sanitation facilities and information on good hygiene practices affect women in different and often significantly more challenging ways than men in many of the contexts where Concern works. This is an essential consideration in the design and implementation of all WASH programmes if we are to ensure women and men experience the intended impact of programmes in a similarly beneficial way.

In sub-Saharan Africa, women and girls often hold exclusive responsibility for household water collection and storage because of social gender norms. Recognising this, Concern ensures that women are involved in decisions related to the location and improvement of water infrastructure. This can be achieved for example, by requiring equal representation of women and men in local Water Management Committees (WMCs). The presence of women on WMCs reduces the risk that the location of a new water point will exacerbate the burden of water collection for women and girls in the community. The WMC can also be used as a discussion forum to challenge some of the gender norms and to highlight the negative impacts that the labour burden can have on women and girls.

Elsewhere, the particular needs of women and girls for sanitation facilities must also be carefully considered within WASH programmes. For example, in some contexts where Concern works with displaced or conflict affected communities, women are consulted extensively in the programme design process to ensure that latrine facilities meet requirements for privacy and safety, particularly in situations where the risk of violence is high. In many contexts where Concern works, the issue of menstrual hygiene is not widely discussed, yet represents a huge barrier for school attendance among girls. Ensuring adequate WASH facilities in schools and highlighting this as an important issue that the community can address are important features of Concern's programmes in many countries.

Finally, the importance of targeting women with hygiene promotion and health messaging to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates is widely recognised. However, Concern also recognises the significant role men play in influencing and implementing decisions around caring practices and thus ensures that hygiene promotion messages also target men.

Reducing the Burden of Transporting Water for Women in Katanga, DRC

Apoline Ilunga lives in the Katanga province of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). For Apoline, transporting water from an open dug well that was located around 700m from her home used to involve a 30 minute trip each way. She did not use a latrine and did not have a strong knowledge on the health impacts of poor hygiene practices. Since the implementation of Concern's WASH programme in 2013, Apoline has access to safe water from a borehole equipped with a hand pump located 250m from her home, and it now takes her 15 minutes to carry water. Through a combination of sanitation activities, Apoline has also learned about the importance of good hygiene practices.

5. WASH AS A HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

“ ” *Unless adequate water and sanitation services are quickly provided to emergency-affected children and their families, disease and death will follow.¹⁰*

Recent years have seen an unprecedented demand for humanitarian assistance as a result of the conflicts in Syria, CAR and South Sudan, natural disasters in Haiti and the Philippines and the outbreak of Ebola in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. In such contexts, diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infection, measles, malaria and malnutrition remain the most common causes of death. The delivery of lifesaving WASH resources, in these contexts is an important part of Concern's emergency response work.

In 2014, Concern responded to 33 emergencies and provided humanitarian assistance to over 2.85 million people.

The priority in an emergency situation is to ensure the provision of clean water to vulnerable populations. In many countries Concern has worked with local partners to organise shipments of clean water through water tankers while a more permanent solution is established.

While provision of potable water is critical at the beginning of an emergency, Concern's response incorporates a strong focus on the prevention and control of diseases. This is established through the recruitment and training of hygiene promoters, and the development of WMCs when possible to ensure ownership and care of the water systems.

Hygiene Promotion in Bentiu, South Sudan

The fighting that erupted in Juba, the capital of the Republic of South Sudan in 2013 quickly spread to other states of the country. More than 700,000 people were displaced by the conflict and unable to meet their basic needs, leading to a major humanitarian crisis. An assessment of the initial situation observed widespread open defecation, limited access to clean water, no waste management and low levels of knowledge on diarrhoeal diseases and hygiene practices.

Concern's WASH intervention started in early January 2014 and involved the distribution of soap, jerry cans, buckets and hygiene materials, as well as construction of latrines, safe water distribution, and hygiene promotion. One of the key points of learning from the programme was the importance of the role of hygiene promoters in supporting improvements to hygiene practice around the camps. Hygiene promoters were responsible for activities such as: highlighting the problem of diarrhoeal disease and how to prevent it; promotion of hand washing stations; and performing a hygiene promotion play performed in front of people queuing on the distribution days.

The programme team have highlighted the importance of this work in maintaining the health of the displaced population as they continue to be affected by the ongoing violence in the country.

¹⁰ http://www.unicef.org/wash/index_emergency.html

Humanitarian Standards

The humanitarian imperative to intervene in a manner that maintains the dignity of an affected population is at the forefront of Concern's approach to programming. In line with the International Red Cross Code of Conduct, we design our programmes in consultation and agreement with affected communities and local authorities, and seek to ensure that we build on the capacity of these communities and deliver programmes that enhance their resilience to future disasters.

Concern has been certified by the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) since 2009. This means we have specific steps integrated throughout our programme cycle linked to information sharing, participation, and complaint response. Concern's humanitarian response programmes also use the SPHERE standards as key performance measurement indicators to ensure compliance with international good practice. These standards guide the quality of WASH interventions in an emergency context, outlining for example minimum water quantities per household and the minimum number of accessible latrines at institutions and public places in a disaster situation.

Members of Concern's "Burial Team 7" attend the home of a 44-year-old woman, who it's suspected died of Ebola, in the New England area of Freetown, Sierra Leone. Management of victims' remains was an important aspect of the sanitation and environmental health aspect of the Ebola response
Photograph: Kieran McConville (2014)



Concern's Ebola Response

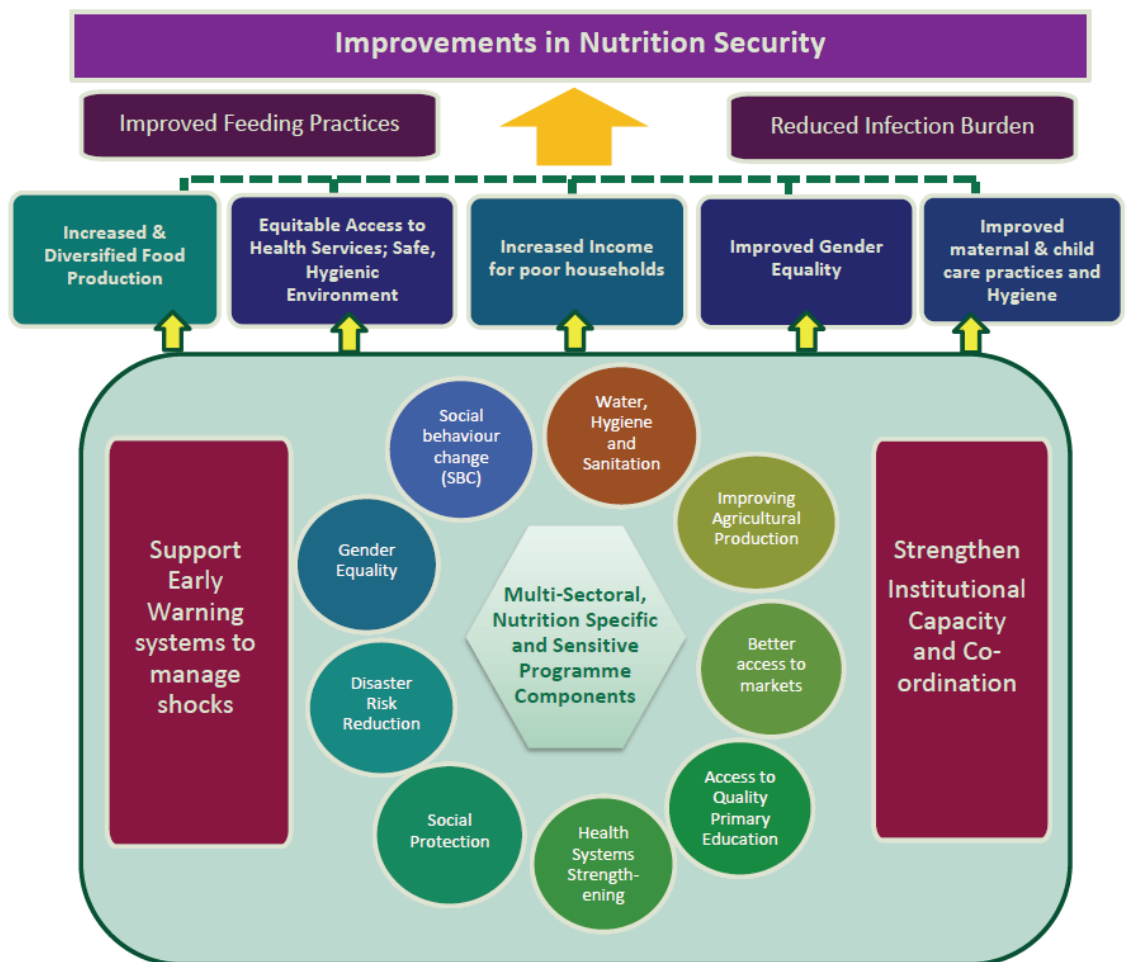
In Sierra Leone, Concern carried out awareness raising activities for Ebola prevention and treatment among 186,000 people. This increased public knowledge of Ebola symptoms and prevention methods by at least 54 per cent. In Lofa County, Liberia, we coordinated 26 local partners in tackling Ebola. We established county and district task forces to increase community awareness and prevention. Much of this work reinforced our local sanitation and hygiene work. This work contributed to these districts having some of the lowest levels of Ebola in the country.

6. INTEGRATING WASH WITH OTHER SECTORS

Concern’s approach to WASH recognises the need to improve integration with other sectors, such as health and nutrition, education and livelihoods. We seek to ensure that, with better integration, WASH programmes are more cost-effective and sustainable, and will show increased impact on the overall health status and well-being of communities and individuals.

Health and Nutrition

Undernutrition is the underlying cause of 45 percent of all deaths of children under the age of five, leading to more than three million deaths per year.¹¹ Poor access to clean water and sanitation greatly contribute to high rates of undernutrition. As the diagram below demonstrates, Concern’s prevention of undernutrition framework which originated from UNICEF’s causal framework of undernutrition, highlights that a multi-sectoral approach is required to sustainably reduce morbidity and mortality in children. This includes addressing food security, child caring and feeding practices, health and water & sanitation services as well as economic aspects of the household and equality.



¹¹ [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(13\)60937-X/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(13)60937-X/abstract)

Integrated Programming in Practice in Eastern Chad

Since 2013, Concern has been implementing an integrated programme aimed at reducing malnutrition rates in Eastern Chad. In a country such as Chad where malnutrition remains endemic, improving water, sanitation and hygiene practice in households and health care facilities is essential to tackle malnutrition. Concern's intervention, Community Resilience to Acute Malnutrition (CRAM), involves a high level of coordination between different sectors including WASH, Health and Nutrition, Livelihoods and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

At the midpoint of the programme, the impact on health status was assessed through the analysis of the number of diarrhoea cases registered in health centres supported by Concern. The figure dramatically decreased from May 2014 when 15 boreholes, drilled as part of the programme, became fully functional, and following general hygiene promotion and diarrhoeal disease prevention activities. The peak of diarrhoea usually occurring during the rainy season was absent in 2014. Programme data also showed a reduction in the Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) rate. These preliminary positive results will be further monitored for the remaining period of the programme.

Education

Concern's education programmes work to ensure the various factors necessary for access to quality education are addressed. Concern works to integrate WASH into schools by providing safe water sources; supporting construction of separate latrines for girls and boys; and frequently supporting hygiene clubs where students and teachers are taught health messages that they disseminate to other students and their families. Combining WASH activities within education programmes is particularly important for girls. In many countries, research shows that a lack of facilities to manage menstrual hygiene at school is a significant barrier to attendance for girls resulting in poorer learning outcomes.¹²

Livelihoods

Concern has been supporting the livelihoods of the poorest and most vulnerable people in developing countries for over 40 years. Put simply, "livelihoods" means a person's ability to earn a living. In many of the contexts where we work, our main focus relates to agricultural production and keeping livestock. WASH is integrated across Concern's livelihoods and agriculture programmes using Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) approaches. In our work with smallholder farming communities, low-cost Rainwater Harvesting Systems are introduced to supply water for soil cultivation and livestock management. By providing separate water facilities for animals, particularly in water constrained areas, the risk of contamination of the household water supply is reduced.

Other Concern' activities include the setting up of a system whereby households can use waste water for vegetable gardens reducing the labour time required to look for water for this important source of nutrients for the household.

¹² [http://www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/WASH_in_Schools_Empowers_Girls_Education_Proceedings_of_Virtual_MHM_conference\(2\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/WASH_in_Schools_Empowers_Girls_Education_Proceedings_of_Virtual_MHM_conference(2).pdf)

7. FUTURE PLANS FOR WASH

In the next five years, Concern intends to extend the scale of our programmes to reach more people in countries affected by extreme poverty, conflict and natural disaster. Our WASH programming will remain crucial to the achievement of the global objective of poverty reduction and humanitarian response.

Across our countries of operation, both current and new, we will continue to invest in quality programmes to improve access to water and sanitation, and to promote the uptake of lifesaving hygiene behaviours, focussing on effective solutions to the problems facing the extreme poor. At the same time, we will adopt innovations that are proven to deliver improved WASH outcomes and we will leverage these across our programmes. In order to achieve long-term impact, we will continue to develop sustainable approaches to water and sanitation management and hygiene promotion at the community level, as well as working closely with national and district governments in WASH service delivery.

In the coming years, we will focus on generating robust evidence and learning regarding ‘what works’ in WASH in order to contribute to wider systemic changes in the WASH sector. In particular, programmes will analyse in further detail the links between WASH and nutrition issues, and we will establish monitoring systems which are able to generate information on the sustainability of structures beyond the life time of programme implementation. This information will be shared with key stakeholders to contribute to systemic change.

In the different contexts where Concern operates, we will continue to work closely with communities to understand the complexities of the challenges that are faced. Building on this human-centred approach, we will continue to design and deliver programme activities that achieve positive and sustainable impacts for the extreme poor. Our focus on community ownership and interventions that are effective and contextually appropriate will remain the key hallmarks of Concern’s WASH activities.

**Women walk through contaminated flood waters in the displacement camp in Bentiu, South Sudan where Concern is providing clean water and nutrition services.
Photographer: Crystal Wells (2014)**



The projects referenced in this document are delivered in partnership with DFID, ECHO and Irish Aid.



Republic of Ireland

52-55 Lower Camden Street
Dublin 2
T +353 1 417 7700
F +353 1 475 7362
E info@concern.net

Northern Ireland

47 Frederick Street
Belfast BT1 2LW
T +44 28 9033 1100
F +44 28 9033 1111
E belfastinfo@concern.net

England & Wales

13/14 Calico House
Clove Hitch Quay
London SW11 3TN
T +44 207 801 1850
F +44 207 223 5082
E londoninfo@concern.net

Korea

Chunji building, 2F, 374-1,
Seogyo-dong, Mapo-Gu,
Seoul, Korea, 121-894
E junmo.lee@concern.net

USA

355 Lexington Avenue, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10017
T +1 212 5578000
F +1 212 5578004
E info.usa@concern.net

Website


www.concern.net

Charity number

CHY 5745

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