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Introduction

Evaluations are only as good as the level of information, analysis and learning they provide the end user. In the period 2005 to 2008, Concern conducted or commissioned 22 evaluations of its emergency programmes and opened them up to the critical eye of other stakeholders – donors, governments, the UN, beneficiaries, and partners. This is in keeping with the organisational commitment to high standards in projects, programmes, policies and practices, and an acknowledgment of the primacy and usefulness of the evaluation approach in reaching and maintaining high standards.

Concern is also part of a humanitarian aid system, that many describe as being in a state of flux, and unable to effectively organise, communicate and collaborate within itself, a system in dire need of reform. This has been borne out in a number of external evaluations covering large scale emergencies, specifically in Darfur, the South East Asian tsunami and the South Asia earthquake response, where disjointed coordination, weak contextual analysis and poor accountability have been particularly highlighted.

It would be impossible to look at Concern's emergency responses over the last four years 2005 – 2008, without considering a number of broad issues and areas that have a great bearing on how we and the wider humanitarian community currently work and operate. This report is set against the backdrop of this wider emergency response environment and is divided into two parts:

- a review of humanitarian action over the last four years which considers the response environment, climate change, the security environment, humanitarian reform, humanitarian financing and emergency response and the military
- a meta evaluation of Concern emergency response over the last four years

This report is the continuation of a process of organisational learning from Concern's emergency responses. An original meta evaluation of emergency response was first conducted in April 2001, covering the period 1990 to 2000, the findings of which underpinned the development of the *Approaches to Emergencies paper*. A second meta evaluation of significant emergency response was carried out in April 2005, covering the period 2000 to 2004.

It provides an analysis of emergency response evaluations that took place within Concern's countries of operations between 2005 and 2008 and offers a broader range of analysis than earlier meta evaluations as it includes: internal project and programme evaluations; lessons learnt reviews; technical appraisals carried out or commissioned by Concern; real time wrap-up exercises; and feedback reports from Emergency Unit deployments. It also includes a number of external evaluations that are relevant to Concern's emergency projects or programmes, along with pertinent literature related to the humanitarian aid system and humanitarian interventions.

It has specifically examined and considered the approach, effectiveness, impact, take-up, and benefit of the projects or programmes implemented and evaluated. These have been assessed against the key humanitarian external performance standards for humanitarian disaster relief assistance, offered by the Red Cross Code of Conduct, Sphere and People in Aid, and have incorporated and been shaped around the following DAC principles – timeliness, relevance, appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness¹.

It has closely examined what are considered to be the emergency response success factors, general to the whole humanitarian aid system, along with the main difficulties and challenges, and has attempted to identify any positive or negative trends or patterns that have emerged.

Finally, it has identified key organisational and programme learning, identified gaps and made appropriate recommendations for improving future emergency responses.

In compiling this report, the review and meta evaluation considered a total of 34 evaluation reports (22 internal and 12 external) and covered emergency response projects or programmes in 15 countries. Nine of the countries evaluated were in Africa, and six in Asia, including the three tsunami-affected countries. A full list of evaluations appears in Annex I.

¹ *Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies* – OECD/DAC, 1999

Concern's Emergency Unit –July 2009

Countries: Sudan (Darfur), Niger, Malawi, Ethiopia, DRC, Kenya, Zambia, Somalia, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, tsunami-affected countries (India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia)

External Agencies²: DANIDA, ALNAP, DEC, TEC, UNSG, DFID and NAO

The evaluations broadly break down into the following categories and types:

- 22 of the evaluations were carried out by Concern or commissioned by Concern on behalf of donors and specifically looked at Concern projects or programmes
- 12 of the evaluations were external and looked at the overall humanitarian aid system response in a number of large scale emergencies
- 8 of the evaluations were tsunami specific – Concern (4) and external (4)
- 4 of the evaluations were Darfur specific – Concern (2)and external (2)
- 4 of the evaluations were Kashmir earthquake specific – Concern (2) and external (2)
- 2 of the Concern evaluations were real time head office wrap up meetings
- 3 of the evaluations were commissioned by Concern on behalf of ECHO funded projects
- 3 of the evaluations were carried out by the DEC
- 3 of the evaluations were carried out by or on behalf of other donors – DFID, Irish Aid and a consortium of donors including Irish Aid
- 5 of the Concern evaluations were nutrition or CTC programme specific
- 3 of the Concern evaluations were cash transfer programme specific

² **DANIDA** – Danish International Development Agency; **ALNAP** – The Active learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action; **DEC** – Disaster Emergency Committee; **TEC** – The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition; **UNSG** – Office of the United Nations Secretary General; **DFID** – UK Department for International Development; **NAO** – UK National Audit Office

1.0 Review of Humanitarian Action

1.1 The Response Environment

The period under review has been characterised by a combination of new and ongoing complex emergencies which are multi-faceted in nature and complicated to address, and more than 1,500 natural disaster events - a small number of which have been massive in scale and impact and global in terms of their response. The humanitarian aid system itself has come under increasing stress to deal with the increased frequency of events and the sheer number of people affected.

The same period has seen a significant attempt by the international humanitarian community to strengthen and improve its capacity to deliver on increasing natural and complex disaster events in terms of coordination, cohesion, funding and accountability. Following an extensive period of interagency review, dialogue and reflection, the UN humanitarian reform process was rolled out and the cluster approach and a revamped CERF were introduced³. At the same time, the European Union has been slowly moving towards greater harmony, developing and refining its own EU member state consensus on the delivery and funding of humanitarian aid.⁴

Data from the IFRC⁵ and UNISDR⁶, show there have been 1,539 natural disaster events worldwide in the period 2005-2008, affecting more than 714 million people. Approximately 365,178 people have lost their lives, and an estimated \$510 billion of damages have been caused. Over 50% of the annual global natural disasters were caused by flooding – over 80% of which took place in Asia, rising to 98% in 2008.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
No. of natural disaster events	440	423	405	321	1,589
Population affected – millions	161.4	140.3	201.3	211	714
Population killed	88,844	23,839	16,679	235,816	365,178
Damage – billions \$	228.6	36.8	63.5	181	509.9

It has been a little more difficult to get accurate and comprehensive data on complex emergencies and the number of people affected in countries in conflict and political crises.

According to the *Conflict Barometer*⁷, an annual review of global conflict, between 2005 and 2008, the number of annual global political crisis events rose from an annual estimate of 249 to 345. The number of high intensity violent conflicts and wars rose from an annual estimate of 24 to 39, with Africa, Asia and the Middle East accounting for over 80% of the major conflicts and wars.

³ Detailed information on the UN Humanitarian reform Process is available from their website: <http://ocha.unog.ch/humanitarianreform/>

⁴ Detailed information on the EU Humanitarian reform Process is available from their website: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/consensus_en.htm

⁵ World Disaster Report 2008– International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, pages 193-211

⁶ 2008 Disasters in Numbers – United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction citing CRED, the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, January 2008

⁷ Conflict Barometer – Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, University of Heidelberg, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Political Conflicts	249	278	328	345
High Intensity Conflict/War ⁸	24	35	31	39
Africa	6	16	10	12
Asia	7	9	9	12
Middle East	7	8	9	9
Americas	3	1	3	2
Europe	1	1	0	4

With the exception of the short war between Russia and Georgia in 2008, the Lebanon/Israel conflict in 2007, and the ongoing long term dispute between Israel and the OPT (Occupied Palestinian Territories), all of the high intensity conflicts and wars have been conducted within the boundaries of national states.

Between 2004 and 2007⁹, it is estimated that an average of 250,000 people a year lost their lives in armed conflicts throughout the world – 50,000 from violent causes and 200,000 from malnutrition and preventable disease that resulted from the effects of war on populations. These estimates are very conservative and based on official figures only, and it is believed that the real figures may be three to four times that number. 75% of the conflict related deaths have taken place in just ten countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, Sudan, Somalia, DRC and Colombia.

1.2 Concern Emergency Response

In the period under review, Concern has responded to emergencies in 33 countries. Some of the emergency responses have been relatively small and localised and have been relatively short in duration. Others in complex emergency situations, like Darfur, Somalia and DRC, have become multiannual with year on year support being provided to IDPs. With the exception of two of the countries affected by the South East Asian tsunami and Cyclone Nargis in Burma/Myanmar, all occurred in countries where Concern had a prior presence. An estimated 9.7 million people have been directly assisted and the organisation has spent in excess of €107.5 million on humanitarian assistance programming¹⁰.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
No. Of Countries	23	21	19	20	33
Population Affected – million	48.508	44.464	38.767	23.740	155.479
Population Assisted – million	2.107	1.785	2.134	3.676	9.702
Expenditure – € million	31.803	27.98	21.079	26.712	107.574

See Annex II for a complete country and region breakdown.

Recurrent conflict, drought, floods and the effects of the global food crisis have been the main causes of emergencies in Africa, with the Horn of Africa representing the greatest occurrence and frequency of these hazards. Year on year, Concern has responded to significant emergencies in all of its countries in the Horn,

⁸ Countries experiencing high intensity conflict and war in 2008 include: **Africa** – Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Sudan, Chad, Somalia; **Asia** – India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Thailand; **Middle East** – Iran, Iraq, Israel/OPT, Lebanon, Yemen, Afghanistan, Turkey; **Americas** – Colombia, Mexico; **Europe** – Russia, Georgia

⁹ Data on conflicts and conflict related deaths are taken from Global Burden of Armed Conflict, The Geneva Declaration Secretariat, September 2008.

¹⁰ Data on Concern emergency response 2005 – 2008, is compiled from information submitted by Concern fields to the Overseas Division and compiled by the Emergency Unit and MAPS Coordinator for use in annual reporting.

where spending on emergencies has more than doubled between 2005 (€6.12 million) and 2008 (€13.77 million). The Horn represented over 50% of all Concern emergency response spending in 2008.

Cyclones, earthquakes and floods were the predominant cause of disasters in Asia, with three very significant disasters accounting for approximately 35% of the total Concern emergency response spend over the four year period in review:

South East Asian tsunami	2005-2006 spend	€22.1 million
Pakistan earthquake	2005-2006 spend	€ 7.5 million
Bangladesh Cyclone Sidr and floods	2007-2008 spend	€ 8.5 million

Of the total estimated 155.5 million people affected by disaster and conflict in Concern countries of operations, the vast majority were settled populations. There were approximately ten million IDPs, most of whom were located in the tsunami-affected countries, Uganda, Darfur, DRC, Chad, Somalia and Kenya, and a small number of refugees (approximately 6,700 Chadian refugees in Darfur and 90,000 Burundi refugees in Ngara, Tanzania) who have been receiving ongoing humanitarian support from Concern.

Concern's humanitarian interventions covered the whole spectrum of services and material support, including: CTC; supplementary feeding; general food relief; food for work; cash for work; food and cash transfers; revolving loans; water and environmental health; seeds and tools; shelter; NFIs; camp management; infrastructure rehabilitation; house construction; capacity building of local partner NGOs; and education.

1.3 Climate Change

In recent years, the effects of global climate change have become startling, with massive variations in weather patterns that have resulted in a huge rise in natural disaster events: flooding; hurricanes in the Atlantic; cyclones in the Pacific; and earthquakes. The productive capacity of whole regions is being reshaped, often exacerbating existing scarcities of food, water and energy, and coastal populations, especially in Asia, are under increasing threat from rising sea levels.

Climate change factors are now beginning to jeopardise the security of states and undermine the response capacities of national governments. This is contributing to social and civil conflict, massive urbanisation, higher population displacement and large numbers of economic refugees and migrants, especially in developing countries.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC¹¹, the consequences of global warming and green house gas emissions are having a devastating impact on the environment:

“Climate changes affect crop productivity through changes in temperature, rainfall, river flows and pest abundance. Droughts and floods are becoming more frequent. Tropical diseases such as malaria are experiencing a wider range of transmission. Extreme weather events such as high intensity hurricanes in the Caribbean and typhoons in the Pacific are becoming more likely. Changes in river flow already threaten

¹¹ Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report, Summary for Policymakers – Fourth Assessment Report, IPCC November 2007

hydroelectric power, biodiversity, and large scale irrigation. Rising sea levels in the coming decades may inundate coastal communities and drastically worsen storm surges”¹².

The prognosis is particularly bad for the developing regions of Africa and Asia, which are especially vulnerable due to their dependence on agriculture, high population growth, weak infrastructure and limited capacity to adapt to environmental pressures and extremes. Some of the more significant projected regional impacts cited by the IPCC are:

Africa

- By 2020, between 75 and 250 million people will be exposed to severe water stress.
- By 2020, yields from rain fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50% in some countries. Agricultural production, including access to food, in many countries is projected to be severely compromised. This will further adversely affect food security and exacerbate malnutrition.
- By 2080, an increase of 5-8% of arid and semi-arid land in Africa is projected under a range of climate scenarios.
- By the end of the century, projected sea level rise will affect low lying coastal areas with large populations. The cost of adapting to this could amount to 5-10% of GDP.

Asia

- By 2050, freshwater availability throughout Asia, especially in large river basins, is projected to decrease significantly.
- Coastal areas especially heavily populated mega delta regions, will be at greater risk of flooding from the sea and rivers.
- Endemic morbidity and mortality due to diarrhoeal disease associated with floods and droughts are expected to rise sharply.

Since being established in 1988, the IPCC has sought to project some of the outcomes that can be attributed to climate change and what they might mean for vulnerable populations and developing regions of the world. Two things stand out clearly from a large number of studies that have been analysed as part of their fourth assessment, in 2007¹³:

1. Climate change will lead to a massive rise in the numbers of people who will not be able to survive living where and how they do now. These are being referred to as new climate or environmental refugees or migrants.
2. Climate change is adding considerable pressure to existing fragile and unstable states in the developing world, especially those where people are living under poor governance and where there is increasing risk of social and civil unrest leading to increased violent conflict.

¹² “The Climate Adaptation Challenge” – Jeffrey Sachs Address to the Global Humanitarian Forum, Geneva, 11 October 2007, cited in Making Sense of Climate Change, Natural Disasters and Displacement: A Work in Progress – Elizabeth Ferris Lecture to Calcutta Research Group Winter Course, 14 December 2007.

¹³ More than 75 studies and 29,000 pieces of observational data have been used in the production of the IPCC fourth assessment report of November 2007

In 2007, according to the UNHCR¹⁴, there were 67 million refugees and IDPs globally - 16 million refugees, 26 million conflict affected IDPs and 25 million natural disaster affected IDPs. The vast majority of refugees are hosted by neighbouring countries and over half of them reside in urban areas.

Set against the backdrop of unprecedented and dramatic shifts in the world's population, both in terms of sheer numbers, 9.1 billion by 2050, compared to 6.8 billion in 2009, and the greatly accelerated rate of growth of people living in urban centres, it is predicted there could be as many as 200 million climate change migrants by 2050¹⁵. This scenario would place huge additional pressures and strains on the carrying capacity of large parts of the world, including the more developed countries that will have to foot the lion's share of the costs associated with such massive movements of people.

International Alert and SIDA¹⁶, the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency, have identified 46 countries, home to 2.7 billion people, in which the effects of climate change interacting with economic, social and political problems are creating a high risk of violent conflict. They identify a further 56 countries, home to 1.2 billion people, which could face great difficulty taking the strain of climate change and face a high risk of political instability that could easily lead to violent conflict.

The International Crisis Group¹⁷ has identified four areas where climate impacts can and are resulting in increased violence and conflicts:

1. Diminishing access to water, land, or returns on the use of land could increase competition for resources and in turn lead to violence.
2. The same declining access to resources could cause people to move in mass numbers – "environmental refugees" – potentially destabilising neighbouring areas.
3. Increased climate variability – in the form of drought, flooding, cyclones – can produce economic shocks, reducing employment opportunities and increasing recruitment to armed groups, in turn increasing the capacity of those groups to wage war.
4. Environmental migration, not just to neighbouring states, but to the global North, could strain already fragile relations between North and South – in turn compromising efforts to strengthen dialogue on many issues that demand a genuinely global response, including security issues like responding to terrorism and mass atrocity crimes.

The potential for greater insecurity and conflict is having far reaching implications not just for vulnerable populations in countries experiencing complex emergencies but for the aid agencies who are trying to assist them and their personnel.

¹⁴ 2007 Global trends – Refugees, Asylum seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless persons, UNHCR, June 2008

¹⁵ Climate change and forced migration: observations, projections and implications, Oli Brown, UNDP Human Development Report Office, Occasional Paper 2007/17,

¹⁶ A Climate of Conflict – International Alert and SIDA, February 2008.

¹⁷ Conflict Potential in a World of Climate Change, Address by Gareth Evens, President, International Crisis Group, to Bucerius Summer School on Global Governance 2008, Berlin 29 August 2008.

According to the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG), who have been following patterns and trends in violence against aid workers, for a number of years, 260 humanitarian aid workers were killed, kidnapped or seriously injured in violent attacks in 2008, and the 2008 fatality rate for international aid workers exceeds that of UN peacekeeping forces¹⁸. Key findings of the 2009 update include:

- Attacks against aid workers have increased sharply since 2006, with a particular upswing in kidnapping
- Surges in attack rates were seen especially for NGO international staff and UN local contractors
- The three most violent contexts for aid work – Sudan (Darfur), Afghanistan and Somalia – accounted for more than 60% of violent incidents and aid worker victims
- Attacks on aid workers in the most insecure contexts were increasingly politically motivated, reflecting a broad targeting of the aid enterprise as a whole
- Despite major strides in security management, aid organisations face significant dilemmas in certain threat environments, with short term adaptations often compromising longer term security

1.4 Humanitarian Reform

In 2005, The World Bank estimated that 1.4 billion people in the developing world (one in four) were living on less than \$1.25 a day¹⁹, an indicator of absolute poverty. More recently, in 2008, the FAO and WFP estimated that the number of people going hungry in the world was projected to rise to 1.02 billion in 2009 (an increase of nearly 100 million on 2008 figures), nearly all of whom were living in developing countries²⁰. High food prices and a global economic slowdown were being blamed for the rise, and according to the World Bank.... *rising food prices, declining yields, increased demands for bio fuels and high fuel prices, are not just short term in nature and effect but, will likely persist in the medium term not stabilising before 2015*²¹.

According to many aid and UN agencies, in recent years, the humanitarian aid system has itself fallen into crisis requiring much needed and radical reform, with a much greater emphasis placed on prevention rather than stand alone response, this being considered both cheaper and more effective. The central issue has not just been about providing more aid, but about providing different aid and the need to protect the productive capacity of populations at risk before a disaster strikes, the very essence of the disaster risk reduction approach. Many agencies' own analysis forecasts continued elevated food prices, the unpredictability of fuel prices, the likely increase in number and severity of natural disasters, accelerated population growth, changing demographics, increased urban poverty, and an end to the pastoralist's way of life in Saharan Africa.

In December 2008, IFRC, reporting on the food crisis in the Horn of Africa stated that *“large areas of the Horn of Africa are now facing a state of humanitarian emergency with at least 17 million people requiring urgent food and other humanitarian assistance over the coming months. A crippling drought combined with soaring food prices are seriously jeopardizing the livelihoods of millions of people in both rural and urban*

¹⁸ Providing aid in insecure environments: 2009 Update – HPG Policy Brief 34, April 2009

¹⁹ Global Purchasing Power Parities and Real Expenditures, 2005 International Comparison Programme, IBRD/World Bank, August 2008

²⁰ 1.02 billion people hungry, FAO news room, 19 June 2009 <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/20568/icode/>

²¹ Rising Food Prices: Policy Options and World Bank Response , World Bank 2008

communities who already live on the margins of survival due to conflict, displacement and chronic poverty"²².

In 2005, the then Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Anan, called for widespread changes in the way humanitarian emergencies were managed on the back of the international community's response to the South East Asian tsunami and the Darfur crisis, and a perception that humanitarian responses were not meeting the needs of affected populations, and varied considerably from crisis to crisis. The reform agenda he put forward centred on the need for improved leadership and coordination to be shown by the United Nations, in what he termed "*the imperative of collective action*"²³ and centred on three key areas:

- More predictable human and financial response capacity
- Strengthened field coordination structures
- Predictable right of access and guaranteed security for humanitarian workers

The subsequent Humanitarian Response Review (HRR), carried out for OCHA²⁴, concluded that humanitarian assistance being provided was not good enough, and identified a number of key areas in which improvement was needed: coordination between humanitarian actors; accountability to beneficiaries; levels of preparedness, including surge capacity to respond to new crisis; sectoral gaps; and a weak Humanitarian Coordinator system. The review made 36 recommendations, central to which were the need:

- for greater accountability to beneficiaries, donors and national and local authorities
- for the humanitarian community to work collectively towards an inclusive system wide coordination system
- to establish a lead organisation and sector structure
- to strengthen the IASC at central and field level
- for greater engagement with donors to ensure a more predictable funding base

The most important outcome of the HRR was the establishment of the cluster approach aimed at providing leadership in identified sectoral gap areas and to develop global surge capacity for speedier and more accountable emergency response, and improve field level coordination and prioritisation.

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)²⁵ was renamed, restructured and re-launched in early 2006, as the key mechanism to ensure more predictable emergency funding, on a global level. The fund, which is only available to UN agencies, has an operating target of \$500 million per annum, with two-thirds of the money to go to sudden onset emergencies and the remaining third earmarked for neglected crisis. In the

²² Report on the Horn of Africa food crises – International Federation secretariat, IFRC, Nairobi, Kenya 7 December 2008

²³ In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all – Report of the Secretary General, 12 March 2005

²⁴ Humanitarian Response Review – UN OCHA, August 2005

²⁵ The **Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)** is a humanitarian fund with a grant component of up to \$450 million and loan component of \$50 million. It was officially launched in New York on 9 March 2006. In December 2005, the General Assembly upgraded the Central Emergency Revolving Fund – a loan facility of \$50 million established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1991 under resolution 46/182 – by adding the grant element thereby establishing the current CERF.

period March 2006 to December 2008, a total of \$1,137 million was contributed to the CERF by a total of 105 nations and eight corporations, with three countries, UK, Netherlands and Sweden contributing over 50% of the total. Ireland contributed over \$72 million.

Also in 2006, a number of country level funding mechanisms were launched where the scale of emergency response was of a very high magnitude and the time-frame running into multiple years. Allocations of these funds are overseen by the UN appointed Humanitarian Coordinator or the Emergency Response Coordinator:

- The Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) operates in Sudan, CAR and DRC, and is accessible to both NGOs and UN agencies. In DRC the CHF is known as the “Pooled Fund”
- The Emergency Response Fund (ERF) operates in Ethiopia, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, and Myanmar. While primarily a UN funding mechanism, it has been accessed by NGOs in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, the ERF is also known as the Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF)

In Sudan, DRC, Ethiopia and Somalia, these country level funds have raised a total of \$996 million for disbursement, in the period 2006 to 2008.

Other key areas of UN reform included the strengthening of humanitarian partnership and coordination in the field through a revision of the roles and responsibilities of the Humanitarian Coordinator position and OCHA, and the promoting of the relationship with the wider humanitarian community through the IASC model at both central and field level.

ICVA²⁶ in their analysis of the process that led to the adoption of the cluster approach, highlighted a number of key omissions of the HRR, namely, that it only considered the capacity of international organisations and they did not consider national and local response mechanisms. Although NGOs and NGO consortia were consulted as part of the HRR, observations and recommendations from the NGO perspective were not comprehensively addressed whilst considering the approach. Many NGOs felt the process was too hurried and nine clusters were initially formed, with UN agencies assigned the role of leading most of the clusters (IFRC took the lead role in emergency Shelter). While the UN saw the cluster approach as a genuine means of improving the way the humanitarian system works and ensuring greater accountability, the experiences to date have been very mixed.

In the response to the South Asia earthquake, the first time the cluster approach was applied in response to a sudden onset emergency, it is claimed in an IASC real time evaluation²⁷, that the cluster approach successfully provided a single and recognisable framework for coordination, collaboration, decision making and practical solutions. However there were criticisms that there was inconsistent understanding of the approach, *ad hoc* participation, and an early start to recovery was assigned a low priority in the overall response. Action Aid, in their analysis of the interagency experience of working with clusters in Kashmir²⁸, found a number of shortcomings and described the pilot as “shambolic” despite good intentions. They reported the number of sub-clusters and working groups growing out of control with a high level of confusion amongst NGOs and UN personnel alike as to what the whole approach was about, very varied

²⁶ What is All This Cluster Talk? talk back –ICVA Special Issue Humanitarian Reforms Volume 7-3 October 2005

²⁷ Real Time Evaluation Cluster Approach – Pakistan Earthquake – IASC February 2006

²⁸ The Evolving UN Cluster Approach in the Aftermath of the Pakistan Earthquake – Action Aid International May 2006

performance from cluster to cluster, and little inclusion of local organisations whose contextual input was vital. At a meeting of the Somalia Humanitarian Response Group in Nairobi in May 2006²⁹, many similar challenges to the cluster approach were observed in the Somali context aggravated by too few operational agencies on the ground. In November 2007, the IASC commissioned an evaluation³⁰ of how the cluster approach had performed in its first two years of use. The evaluation looked at eight chronic humanitarian crises and six rapid onset emergencies, where the cluster model had been applied and found that:

.....despite a troubled early rollout process that caused significant confusion and some lingering ill will, there is evidence that the cluster approach has resulted in some systemic improvement in coordinated humanitarian response. Progress was uneven across country cases, and some clusters have performed better than others. In most cases improvements were driven solely by the clusters in the field, with little or no support from the global clusters, which had not yet completed or implemented the bulk of their capacity projects, due in part to late receipt of funding. There are weaknesses within the approach as it is currently defined, particularly in the crucial Provider of Last Resort (POLR) stipulation, and there is no disputing the additional workload it has generated. Overall, however, the weight of evidence points to the conclusion that the costs and drawbacks of the new approach are exceeded by its benefits for sector-wide programming and the new approach has begun, slowly, to add value. The approach thus merits continuation and expansion.

In June 2008, the IASC clarified that the responsibility for acting as POLR rests fully with the cluster lead for the particular sector concerned. They stated categorically that *where necessary and depending on access, security and availability of funding, the cluster lead, as provider of last resort, must be ready to ensure the provision of services required to fill critical gaps identified by the cluster*³¹. It is important to note that this important proviso has yet to be put into effect.

By the end of 2008, there were eleven clusters³² and four cross cutting issues³³, with a UN agency as the lead or co-lead in all of the clusters and all but one of the cross cutting areas, "Age" which is lead up by Help Age International. Humanitarian Coordinators had been appointed to 26 countries³⁴ and the cluster approach was being implemented, or had been used to respond to major new emergencies, in 28 countries³⁵.

Three years on, the reaction of the aid community to the UN reform process has been a mixed bag with critical engagement by many NGOs and outright rejection by some of the whole process. MSF have been a major critic, citing the fact that the UN cannot provide independent and untainted leadership and coordination, as it will ultimately subordinate humanitarian considerations for political and security ones, especially in complex emergency situations, and where a distancing from the UN system might be the more appropriate direction to be taking.

²⁹ Summary of Clusters – Somalia Humanitarian Response Group PowerPoint Presentation May 2006

³⁰ Cluster Approach Evaluation – Joint Research, Evaluation and Studies Section, OCHA, November 2007

³¹ Operational Guidance on the Concept of "Provider of Last resort" – IASC Task Team endorsed by the IASC Working Group, Geneva, June 2008

³² 11 Cluster Units – agriculture, camp coordination/camp management, early recovery, education, emergency shelter, emergency telecommunications, health, logistics, nutrition, protection, water sanitation and hygiene

³³ 4 Cross Cutting Issues – age, environment, gender and HIV/AIDS

³⁴ 26 Countries with Humanitarian Coordinators – Afghanistan, Burundi, CAR, Chad, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Liberia, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Sudan, Timor Leste, Uganda, Zimbabwe

³⁵ 28 Cluster countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, CAR, Chad, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Pakistan, Somalia, Tajikistan, Uganda, Zimbabwe

It is widely perceived that the focus of the reform process so far has been on the UN rather than the wider humanitarian community and to date has not assumed the mantle of a “global process”. Many NGOs feel co-opted into the process rather than included as genuine partners, which is especially disheartening considering the fact that the UN *modus operandi* in humanitarian response is to work exclusively through NGO partners.

The European Commission has also been going through its own process of review, reflection and reform, seeking greater clarity and coherence across the European Union in relation to how its aid budget is spent. When the contributions of each of the Member States is added to that of the EU, the EU is the world's biggest humanitarian aid donor with expenditure in 2007 in excess of €700 million (out of a total EUODA spend of €46.1 billion). This review process culminated, in late 2007, with a policy statement, the “European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid”³⁶, which focuses on an emergency response approach aimed at complementing, and bringing added value to, existing bilateral policies of member states and other humanitarian donors. According to the EU³⁷, the Consensus sets out a common vision and practical approach for its aid programme focusing on common objectives, shared principles and better coordination.

1.5 Accountability

It has been long recognised, that accountability within the humanitarian aid system was poor and the quality of work and inputs were often inadequate. Greater upward and downward accountability was necessary and important, both in terms of obligation to donors and beneficiaries and to ensure greater transparency. Various instruments, codes and standards of practice for the provision of humanitarian assistance have subsequently been developed by the humanitarian aid system to embed and mainstream accountability throughout all aspects of humanitarian action. This commitment is reflected in both the *Code of Conduct* and the *Humanitarian Charter*:

- *We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources*³⁸.
- *We expect to be held accountable to this commitment (to minimum standards) and undertake to develop systems for accountability within our respective agencies, consortia and federations. We acknowledge that our fundamental accountability must be to those we seek to assist*³⁹.

Throughout the humanitarian sector, efforts have been made to ensure greater transparency and coherence in accountability. A number of initiatives and networks have been developed, over the last decade or so, in an attempt to establish a broad process of learning and collaboration, build consensus and training opportunities and introduce a system of approaches for regulation and accreditation. Among the ones with which Concern has engaged are:

- ALNAP – The Active learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action 1997

³⁶ The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid – Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission 2008/C 25/01 – 30 January 2008

³⁷ A European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid: working together to help people in need, EU News 187/2007 - 18 December 2007

³⁸ Principle 9 – Code of Conduct of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response 1994

³⁹ Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response – The Sphere Project 2000

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- MANGO – Management Accounting for Non Governmental Organisations 1999
- One World Trust – The Global Accountability Project 2003
- HAP-I – The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership - International 2003
- The Good Enough Guide – The Emergency Capacity Building Project 2007

In July 2006, the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) report, in the aftermath of the South East Asian tsunami, stated that *at the time the evaluation was conducted, the public accountability of the international efforts toward intended beneficiaries appeared virtually non-existent.*

Later that year, Bill Clinton, the UN Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, in his NGO Impact Initiative Report to the UN Secretary General, stated that *INGOs must consistently embrace organisational practice that promotes accountability to local communities. The INGOs should conduct “accountability audits” based on established standards (such as those of the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership – International). These audits should examine how organisational policies and practices promote transparency, enable participation and evaluation, and include complaint and response mechanisms for beneficiaries.*

The Humanitarian Accountability Project⁴⁰ (HAP) was founded in 2003 as a Swiss association and is a movement of NGOs with a vision of creating a humanitarian system that champions the rights and the dignity of its intended beneficiaries. HAP defines accountability *as the means by which power is used responsibly.*

Signatory agencies seeking HAP certification must fulfil various qualifying criteria – including a commitment to providing humanitarian assistance on an impartial basis – and adhere to a number of principles of accountability:

- to respect and promote the rights of legitimate humanitarian claimants
- to state the standards that applies in their humanitarian assistance work
- to inform beneficiaries about these standards, and their rights to be heard
- to meaningfully involve beneficiaries in project planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting
- to demonstrate compliance with the standards that apply in their humanitarian assistance work through monitoring and reporting
- to enable beneficiaries and staff to make complaints and to seek redress in safety
- to implement these principles when working through partner agencies

Concern became a member of HAP in 2007 and is in the process of applying the HAP standard across the organisation, covering both humanitarian and development contexts with a view to seeking certification in 2010.

⁴⁰ More detailed information on the HAP approach is available from their website: <http://www.hapinternational.org/>

1.6 Emergency Response and Donor Funding

Donors increasingly seem to be carrying out their own evaluations of how their funds are used in humanitarian interventions. It appears they are becoming more systematic and consistent in looking for good practice in donor financing, management and accountability, promoting standards and enhancing implementation and lessons learning.

It is worth noting that nine of the evaluations reviewed for this meta evaluation were produced at the behest of either Echo or the DEC as part of their project agreement with Concern, or as a lessons learning/good practice exercise for assessing how specific donor funds were used in a general emergency response context.

- Concern commissioned three external evaluations on behalf of ECHO to assess the performance and impact of ECHO funded projects in Katanga, DRC (2007), in Bey Region, Somalia (2007) and in West Darfur, Sudan (2008)
- DEC commissioned three external evaluations covering the use of DEC funds in tsunami-affected countries (2005), Sudan - Darfur (2006) and Niger (2007)
- In 2005, Irish Aid commissioned an evaluation to look specifically at Irish NGO funding streams in the tsunami response
- In 2005, five donor agencies, Irish Aid and DFID along with the Swedish, the Danish, and the Dutch development agencies, commissioned an evaluation to assess the overall effectiveness and impact of their funding in Afghanistan, covering the period 2001 to 2004
- In 2007, DFID commissioned an evaluation to monitor the use of DFID funded food aid, cash and nutrition interventions, in response to the Kenya drought, in 2005 and 2006

In the Afghanistan donor evaluation⁴¹, the five donors contributed a total of €791 million over the period 2001 to 2004 for humanitarian aid and reconstruction, the majority of which was channelled through UN agencies, the Red Cross and government sponsored military initiatives including Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The donors relied heavily on international organisations and NGOs with substantial Afghan experience for advice and background information. Irish Aid channelled most of its funding through Irish NGOs and was the only donor of the five not to have established a diplomatic mission in Kabul or to support PRTs. As a result, it was perceived to have had a considerable lack of influence with the Afghan government compared to the other donors.

The DEC is able to generate substantial amounts of funding for disbursement through their respective members. The Concern allocation from DEC appeals is currently fixed at 3%, as measured by the DEC Indicators of Capacity (IOC). Allocations above 3% can be made if some DEC members do not take up their full share and surplus funds are available. Allocations below 3% can also take place, where the total of pooled funds available for disbursement fall below the overall sum of the funds generated by the appeal. Concern has received £11.72 million over the last five DEC appeals, which represents 2.4% of overall DEC funds generated⁴².

⁴¹ Afghanistan - Joint Evaluation of Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance – DANIDA 2005

⁴² Figures obtained from DEC evaluation reports, and Concern annual accounts for the countries in question

Emergency	Total DEC Funds - £	Concern Allocation - £	Concern Allocation - % of total funds
SE Asian tsunami – 2005	390,000,000	8,000,000	2.0%
S Asia earthquake – 2005	44,000,000	1,080,000	2.4%
Darfur and Chad – 2005	13,600,000	450,000	3.3%
Niger & Sahel – 2005	32,000,000	1,652,843	5.2%
Cyclone Sidr – 2007	9,800,000	538,000	5.5%
Total	489,000,000	11,720,843	2.4%

The South East Asian tsunami was unparalleled in the amount of funding it generated globally and in Ireland. According to the 2006 TEC evaluation⁴³, an estimated \$13.5 billion in international aid was generated globally including more than \$5.5 billion from the general public in developed countries. Total funding generated equated to over \$7,100 per person affected, which was in stark contrast to other big emergencies in Africa and Asia, where funding generated is rarely more than a few tens of dollars per person affected.

In 2005, DANIDA, in its review of international funding for tsunami relief, an evaluation undertaken on behalf of Irish Aid⁴⁴, found that the Irish NGOs raised an unprecedented \$129.5 million for tsunami relief, of which only 8% came from non private sources. This was considered extraordinary. The evaluation cited the Concern announcement on January 15th 2005, where it halted its tsunami appeal and encouraged the public to donate to other emergencies such as the Darfur crisis.

1.7 Emergency Response and the Military

Military forces, national and international, are engaging in humanitarian work with greater frequency and with very mixed results. While they have a “surge capacity” that many humanitarian agencies do not possess, especially in the early stages of a major emergency response, how they operate and to what ultimate agenda or purpose, has created major anxieties across the humanitarian aid system.

The DANIDA evaluation in Afghanistan, in 2005, found that three of the donors, the British, the Danes and the Dutch, had channelled part of their humanitarian assistance through the military and, as such, had not followed Good Humanitarian Donorship principles and guidelines because the donors had provided support to military as well as humanitarian objectives. According to the evaluation, *permitting military considerations to determine humanitarian development action challenged the independence, neutrality and impartiality of aid delivery*. The evaluation report found that, with the introduction of the PRT concept, the various guidelines on the use of military and civilian assets in disaster relief and complex emergencies had been bypassed, and humanitarian agencies were no longer the ones to invite the military in to support humanitarian operations, as prescribed by the guidelines⁴⁵. The report went on to state that the *PRTs had defined the provision of humanitarian assistance as an integrated part of the military mandate, were not well prepared and coordinated, had no system whatsoever for needs assessment and no knowledge of how to do one, were poorly staffed in terms of development skills and were not cost effective*.

⁴³ Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami – The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition 2006

⁴⁴ Tsunami – Review of International Funding for Tsunami Relief – DANIDA, 2005

⁴⁵ Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies – MCDA Consultive Group, March 2003 and the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief - Oslo Guidelines, MCDA Consultive Group, Revision 1, November 2006

In the aftermath of the South East Asian tsunami, military resources played a prominent role in filling capacity gaps⁴⁶. The US relief operation in Indonesia was its largest operation in the region since the Vietnam War and in an unusual concession the US government agreed that their military would operate unarmed when on Indonesian soil. NGO-military relations were cordial at best with the military perceiving the NGOs as ineffective and self promoting, and NGOs were critical of the perception that the US military were just trying to assuage Muslim opinion, and the Australian military of trying to rebuild relations with Indonesia after the role they played in the secession of East Timor. The involvement of international military was relatively short-lived with the US gone within a month and others winding down their engagement within three months, a deadline set by the Indonesian defence ministry. The US military involvement was costed at approximately \$250 million including an estimated cost of \$3 million per day for the aircraft carrier that headed up the fleet that responded. A major criticism of the military included that their contextual awareness was not strong and they prioritised high profile VIP visits over the delivery of aid.

Highland and remote populations affected by the South Asia earthquake in 2005, proved extremely difficult to access and with winter looming it was a race to get relief assistance to the affected population quickly, and the Pakistan military with their helicopter capacity (supplemented with US helicopters deployed from Afghanistan) was able to focus on getting tents into these highland areas to ensure people had some shelter over winter. *In the early part of the response, the approach of the military was to air drop supplies without any real targeting or distribution structures in place. Efforts were subsequently made by relief agencies to preposition people on the ground to receive the tents and ensure a more equitable distribution*⁴⁷.

1.8 The Emergency Response Team – ERT

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) was established in August 2006, to enhance Concern's emergency response capacity by ensuring there was a team available with considerable emergency experience that could deploy to new emergencies at 24 hours' notice to rapidly identify and establish interventions, either directly or through partners. While it was accepted that the capacity to deploy experienced staff was fundamental to the organisation's ability to establish an effective response, it was evident from previous responses that there were critical and sustained gaps in Concern's ability to deploy people in key technical and support functions, who could establish, and then sustain, emergency responses. The ERT includes programme director and coordinator functions and technical experts in nutrition, HR, administration, finance, and environmental and civil engineering.

The ERT was designed to complement existing emergency response staffing mechanisms – primarily the Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU). The RDU has been extensively used in a number of major emergency responses over the years and has served Concern well, when required. However, the short-term nature of their deployments (a maximum of six weeks) has meant that the RDU function has not been well suited to sustained engagement. While responding to new emergencies is the primary function of the ERT, team members also undertake evaluations, contribute to training workshops, or support function-related work being undertaken within the organisation.

⁴⁶ Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami – The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition 2006

⁴⁷ Evaluation of the Concern Pakistan Programme's response to the earthquake of 8th October 2005 – Dominic Crowley, Concern, April 2006

Between September 2006 and December 2007, there were 33 ERT deployments totalling slightly more than 200 weeks in 13 countries. Three countries - Chad, North Sudan and DRC - represented more than 50% of the total deployments in that time. In the first nine months of 2008, the ERT deployed for 72 weeks to 11 countries with Ethiopia, Kenya, Myanmar and Niger representing the majority of the deployments.

1.9 Emergency Response and Alliance2015

The South East Asian tsunami response afforded Alliance2015 a very useful opportunity to cooperate and collaborate both at head office level and in the field. It was felt by the Alliance Emergency Working Group⁴⁸, meeting in March 2005, that established procedures for information sharing at head office level had worked well and initial head office cooperation had contributed to the establishment of interventions at the field level. Support on the ground from established Alliance members in Sri Lanka and Indonesia had benefited other Alliance members who were responding to the tsunami in those countries. However, there was a general feeling that cooperation of Alliance members on the ground did not mirror the level of cooperation at head office level and some confusion existed amongst members as to where the primary point of coordination should be, at the head office or in the field. The working group identified a number of models for response, including joint intervention, material and logistic support on the ground, and remote funding support.

In 2005, the Concern tsunami evaluation wrap up report⁴⁹ pointed out the usefulness of Alliance partners in identifying potential partners in Sri Lanka, but also raised questions over the appropriateness of doing joint Alliance assessments unless there are realistic plans for establishing joint interventions.

In 2006, the Concern tsunami evaluation report⁵⁰ (which focused on the response in Sri Lanka and Indonesia) again raised the question of collaboration with the Alliance, stating that there was confusion in the first week on the ground in Aceh over whether GAA and Concern should conduct a joint assessment. In the end, each agency conducted their own assessment and collaboration amounted primarily to sharing information and office space in the early days of the intervention.

In 2008, in response to the Burma/Myanmar Cyclone Nargis emergency, Concern provided funding support to GAA and CESVI. The Government of Myanmar had placed restrictions on agencies who were not already present in the country and Concern took an early decision not to try to become operational, seeking other ways to provide humanitarian support. In addition to the funding provided, Concern agreed to deploy four members of the ERT and one member from the logistics unit on secondment to CESVI, as they had been unable to get visas for the long-term staffing they had recruited for the response, and to channel donations in kind to CESVI. This secondment provided a much needed surge capacity of experienced emergency personnel. However, the collaboration presented a number of problems for both organisations on the ground to do with respective organisational culture and practice and the difficulties of trying to mount a major emergency response in a country that placed so many restrictions on movement, communications and staffing.

⁴⁸ Minutes of Alliance Emergency Working Group Meeting – GAA Head Quarters, Bonn 16 March 2005.

⁴⁹ Wrap up meeting to discuss the Tsunami response – Concern Dublin, 1st April 2005.

⁵⁰ Report on the Mid Term Evaluation of Concern Response in Indonesia and Sri Lanka to the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 26th 2004 – Martin Crill and John Kilkeny, 26 April 2006.

In December 2008, the Concern evaluation of the joint CESVI/Concern response⁵¹, found that *the emergency response was ambitious in terms of number of activities and range of sectors and the intervention was very successful in terms of outputs achieved given the constraints of time.....that the scale of the disaster and the constraints to an effective and rapid response were many, complex and severe. Seconding five Concern ERT staff to CESVI for short, asynchronous periods inevitably brought with it conflicts borne of disparities of administrative procedure, expectation, experience, management style and personality, as well as ownership.*

Despite the problems on the ground the collaboration was considered a success, as neither agency could have mounted a response on its own and the joint operation also provided an opportunity for Alliance member PIN to provide support. Alliance members in Myanmar now meet on a regular basis which was not the case before the cyclone.

The Myanmar experience was the first time Concern has intervened in a major emergency in this way and there are a number of useful lessons for the Alliance and Concern to take on board. Chief amongst these is that, despite the problems on the ground, the collaboration was a success. However, questions have been raised in regard to how the relationship worked between respective Alliance head offices and the field and to what extent agreed procedures, systems and frameworks for emergency response have stood up to the Myanmar test.

2.0 Emergency Response – Meta Evaluation

2.1 Quality and Nature of the Evaluations

In the period under review, Concern has conducted or commissioned 22 evaluations of its emergency programmes. These have been largely limited to the big emergencies that have taken place or have been undertaken to look at a specific programme approaches, or have been in part fulfilment of a particular donor requirement. Roughly half of the Concern countries that have carried out an emergency response in the period 2005 to 2008 have **not** followed up with any subsequent evaluation.

The quality of the evaluations has been generally good and in some cases excellent, in terms of content and approaches used. The formats and types have varied considerably depending on whether the scope of the evaluation was narrow or broad, the style and experience of the evaluation team, the subject matter they were covering - technical or general, project or programme, Concern specific or overall context/disaster specific, and the intended final audience - Concern, or the humanitarian response community in general, or a specific donor like ECHO or DEC, or a group of donors which was the case in a number of joint evaluations. The variety of format is to be encouraged as long as it produces the desired outcome in terms of charting the progress of the intervention, assesses the overall effectiveness and impact, and produces analysis that feeds realistically and critically into institutional learning and future programming, whether at an organisational or humanitarian system wide level.

⁵¹ A Rapid Evaluation of the CESVI/Concern Emergency Response to Cyclone Nargis, Myanmar – Martin Crill, December 2008

To assist the emergency response evaluation process, Concern has developed a set of standard guidelines to help fields think through the evaluation planning process and produce evaluation terms of reference that contain criteria appropriate to the emergency and the context⁵².

The majority of the Concern-led evaluations, and all of the external evaluations, have been relatively systematic in their application and use of common humanitarian criteria to guide their work, namely the Red Cross Code of Conduct, Sphere standards and the extended DAC criteria. A combination of timeliness, relevance, impact, effectiveness and efficiency were central to most of the evaluations reviewed, with targeting, participation, staffing, coordination, monitoring, decision making, partnership and LRRD common areas of focus in many. Most of the evaluations, especially the more formal ones, include findings and conclusions and all made recommendations that appear valid, relevant and appropriate to the scope of the respective pieces of work.

A number of the Concern-led evaluations, with a very narrow focus, e.g. reviewing a particular approach like CTC or cash transfers, were very economical in providing information or analysis outside the immediate scope of the piece of work in hand. This created difficulties for the reader to place the particular approach within the context of the wider emergency.

The Concern-led evaluations have increasingly included references to protection, accountability to beneficiaries, and the Programme Participant Protection Policy, especially in the more complex working environments.

While staffing has often been discussed and commented on, there has been little mention of People in Aid - Code of Best Practice in Concern-led evaluations. Only the DEC and the TEC evaluations considered People in Aid as part of their overall evaluation criteria.

In terms of cross cutting issues, equality and gender are often alluded to but rarely are any other cross cutting issues mentioned including HIV/AIDS - unless they formed part of the actual programme intervention.

It is interesting to note that the quality and format of the three DEC evaluations included in this review differed considerably in terms of content, information and analysis, even though the same evaluation criteria would apply to them all. This demonstrates how important is the experience of the evaluation team to the overall quality and ultimate value of an evaluation. It is also to be noted that the DEC will no longer conduct *post facto* evaluations of a response, as it has been decided that a number of DEC member organisations should, on a rotating basis for each appeal, conduct separate external evaluations of their response and place the evaluation reports in the public domain.

Organisational wrap up meetings have provided Concern with an opportunity to review the degree of organisational coherence evident at the home office level at the time of the scaling up of an emergency response, from the perspectives of decision making, staffing, communications, HR, marketing and fundraising. This approach appears very effective in highlighting early on what has worked and not worked, and its inclusive process has led to the identification of clear actions to be taken to ensure we are better prepared for the next emergency. Unfortunately, it is important to note that while organisational wrap up

⁵² *Evaluating Emergency Responses – towards good practice*, Concern Emergency Unit, February 2009

meetings have taken place on five occasions⁵³ none has occurred since 2006 and, of over 55 action points that came out of the combined meetings only 36 have clearly been followed through to completion. No wrap up meetings took place following the significant emergency responses by Concern to the Darfur crisis in 2004, Cyclone Sidr in 2007, Cyclone Nargis in 2008 or the Ethiopia food crisis in 2008.

2.2 External Evaluations – a synopsis of relevant issues and findings

There have been a number of significant external evaluations conducted following the major emergencies in Darfur, South East Asian tsunami, South Asia earthquake, Cyclone Sidr and Cyclone Nargis. These evaluations provide an important insight into how the collective humanitarian aid system has performed.

Darfur Crisis⁵⁴

A distinguishing feature of the Darfur crisis has been the lateness and inadequacy of the humanitarian response. It was so slow to get off the ground that MSF described the response as representing a “systematic failure” within the humanitarian community. At the time of the Darfur crisis, there was a great preoccupation with the south Sudan peace process and a general unwillingness by the international aid community to risk derailing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, by pressing Khartoum too hard on the Darfur issue. It was almost a year after initial flare ups in Darfur that the humanitarian aid system began to respond.

There were huge problems associated with establishing the extent of the need and then monitoring the overall situation, due to the vast geographical spread of the region and a very fast moving humanitarian situation that was frequently creating new displacement. Information was very scarce as the Government of Sudan placed major restrictions on the movement of agencies in and out of the region. Eighteen months into the crisis, agencies were still experiencing considerable difficulties gaining control of the situation, and evaluations suggested that agencies were unequal to the task they faced. There was little evidence of scenario planning, and consolidation of previous achievements seemed to override the pursuit of good planning and the improvement of service quality.

The Darfur crisis was described as a crisis in protection, and was characterised by extensive violence against women and reports of rape in villages that had been attacked and in the areas surrounding IDP camps, where women went to collect firewood. No UN agency had a clear mandate for the protection of IDPs and many NGOs identified the protection of civilians as a top priority but were not at all clear as to how they should go about it or how it fitted into their mandates. However, NGO vulnerability to expulsion from Darfur, a government threat ever hanging over their heads, resulted in many of them being very cautious in publically pressuring Khartoum to end abuse.

In Darfur, almost all actions could be interpreted by the government as ‘political’ and this was extremely difficult to manage. All agencies were particularly concerned about speaking out on political issues and themes – causes to the conflict, the role of international military forces, economic sanctions etc., as this would have been perceived as possibly jeopardising their neutrality and threatening their operational presence in the country. In addition, official bureaucratic requirements and restrictions applied by the Government of Sudan to aid activity, were formidable and not to be underestimated. Aid work was

⁵³ Iraq 2004, Bam earthquake 2004, South East Asian tsunami 2005, Niger 2005 and South Asia earthquake 2006

⁵⁴ Content drawn from: Darfur Lessons Learnt – Review of Humanitarian Action, ALNAP 2005, and North Sudan Evaluation – DEC, 2006

politicised by being concentrated largely in government controlled areas and showed a distinct bias in favour of people in these areas, not through intent but through circumstances.

The UN required a designated lead agency to provide camp coordination and management and when UNHCR was unable to fulfil this role, UNOCHA approached NGOs to manage the various camps and thirty-nine NGOs (with various degrees of experience in camp management) took up the challenge for an estimated 1.4 million IDPs.

Experience has shown that where state actors are strong but not particularly sensitive to humanitarian concerns, then assertive international coordination of humanitarian assets and interests is particularly crucial. It was important that the UN and donor agencies be assertive and the relief agencies be disciplined, all supported by a robust coordination mechanism. A strong central coordination nexus was, by all accounts, not present throughout the Darfur crisis, with little attempt to balance comparative advantages and weaknesses between different agencies, and the UN centric system of coordination left many sectoral and geographic gaps. This did however lead the NGOs to coordinate strongly amongst themselves, especially those working in the same sector or geographic location. Stronger NGOs provided very effective leadership, assistance and support to weaker NGOs, leading to the establishment of strong systems of collaboration, coordination and cooperation in the three Darfur states.

Many of the international staff brought in by agencies were young and inexperienced and over half of them were on their first overseas mission. Aid had been disproportionately targeted at the non Arab and non nomadic population and there was partiality in targeting and programming. This had a negative impact on stabilisation in Darfur and peace and reconciliation efforts. The lack of quality information and analysis of the situation in Darfur cut across all areas and was one of the biggest impediments to informed planning and effective action. This affected and diminished the quality of the work being done and ultimately increased costs.

Implementing agencies appeared seized with the need to measure up to agreed professional standards in the discussion on Sphere, the Code of Conduct, and the attention paid to mid course corrections in policies and programmes. However, there was little evidence that beneficiaries were effectively engaged in the management of matters that concerned them directly. There was a tendency to interpret Sphere standards as absolutes rather than as indicators, a situation that was very evident in the IDP camps, where agencies deferred action or were unwilling to expand programmes unless they could meet 'minimum standards'. This represented a strategy of humanitarian containment rather than humanitarian action on behalf of humanitarian agencies.

South East Asian Tsunami⁵⁵

The tsunami had an overwhelming human and physical impact. A total of 223,492 people lost their lives and 43,320 were listed as missing. 400,000 homes were destroyed, 1.4 million people lost their source of livelihoods, and more than 3,000 miles of roads and 118,000 fishing boats were damaged or destroyed. The disaster caused an estimated \$10 billion in damages in barely 24 hours and an estimated \$13.5 billion in international aid was generated globally.

⁵⁵ Content drawn from: Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami – The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC), 2006, and Clinton Report on Tsunami 12 Months On, October 2006.

The resources in NGO hands exceeded the sums available to the UN agencies and the host governments and this created an environment marked by competition rather than cooperation. According to the World Bank, *the periphery had moved to the core with NGOs commanding resources of over 2 billion dollars reversing the usual gap filling role and making them the core of the relief and rehabilitation efforts, the actors coming to the tasks with differing styles, mandates and levels of effectiveness.* As such the onus was on the individual agencies to coordinate with others working in their target area.

Few international agencies tried to halt fundraising when 'targets' were reached and the generous funding available not only exceeded the absorption capacity of an overstretched humanitarian industry, but also led to the proliferation of actors with insufficient experience and competence, and established actors venturing into activities outside their normal areas of expertise. The relative excess of funding was a disincentive to assess, coordinate or apply the results of the collective assessments. Governments and international agencies failed to ensure that funding was needs based. Imbalances, non needs driven motivations, and inadequate monitoring were evident. The allocation of funding was fairly evenly split between relief and recovery and did not reflect the reality that recovery needs were by far more important.

Exceptional international funding provided the opportunity for an exceptional international response. The pressure to spend money quickly worked against making best use of local and national capacities. International agencies frequently appeared to fail in the modest objective of informing affected people in an accurate, timely and comprehensive way.

Affected communities complained that NGOs only dealt with village officials and that poorer people were marginalised. In some cases NGO programmes appeared to strengthen those who were better off or more articulate, e.g. fishermen who possessed boats, while marginalising those who had few assets, notably women and the poor. There was limited participation of the affected population and local authorities and communities were often brushed aside.

Recovery is context and location specific rather than time bound and can take place alongside relief efforts. In many cases recovery efforts were unduly short term in approach and based on a poor understanding of the local contexts. Many agencies did not possess the recovery skills to be effective.

There was evidence of poor coordination amongst actors – the proliferation of agencies made coordination more expensive and less effective. The availability of generous funding reduced agencies' need to coordinate, and the perceived need for quick and tangible agency specific results fuelled competition for visibility, beneficiaries and projects.

Huge numbers of agencies on the ground resulted in huge numbers of assessments, with little evidence that the assessments conducted influenced joint or collective decision making, and were mainly for the agencies' own needs. Assessments were poorly coordinated and conducted with little involvement of affected communities in either collection or validation of assessment data. There were few standards of assessment quality or approaches which resulted in an uncoordinated and duplicative scramble for data that was often ill defined and rarely shared. It was not surprising that this led to gaps, inappropriate aid and duplication of the aid effort with some sectors and assessable geographic areas receiving a lot of focus and other areas little or none.

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There was a huge number of response actors – affected population themselves, national authorities and military, and international agencies and military.

- In one location in India, Nagapattinam district, over 150 NGOs registered with the local authorities and an equal number worked there unregistered.
- 180 international NGOs registered in Banda Aceh along with an estimated 430 local NGOs and over half of the 183 national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the world contributed with relief support and teams.
- At one stage in 2005, there were 22 medical NGOs working in one part of the west coast of Banda Aceh, 95 international organisations working on shelter projects, and more than 60 international agencies claiming to be working in the Aceh education sector.

The proliferation of agencies led to:

- Increased load on the affected population, coordination structures and local authorities
- Increased costs due to replicated offices and overheads
- Duplication and confusion of efforts
- Competition between agencies
- Increased risks of inappropriate aid
- Increased risk to the quality of the response and reputation of the humanitarian community

There is no doubt that the quick response by NGOs and donors resulted in a livelihoods crisis being averted due the use of cash in relief and recovery efforts and the job opportunities that the response created. By the middle of 2006, over 100,000 new homes had being built and thousands more were in the pipeline. 400 schools were under construction and children went back to school very quickly. In Sri Lanka, it was reported that over 70% of affected households had regained some kind of steady income and over 80% of damaged fish markets, boats and equipment had been rehabilitated. Within six months of the disaster, more than 500,000 tsunami-affected people in Aceh had a solid roof over their heads although most were living with host families, and an estimated 70,000 still remained under canvas.

While there was general satisfaction reported amongst affected populations for the assistance received during the initial stages of the tsunami response, there was disenchantment and growing frustration as expectations over recovery were not met in a timely fashion, and a perception that promises made were not honoured. This was especially the case with regard to house and boat construction.

- In one case a consortium of 25 agencies and donors (including 10 Red Cross Societies) committed to building 50,000 housing units in Aceh as part of the reconstruction efforts. By February 2006, fourteen months after the tsunami, they had collectively only started the construction of 500
- An estimated 40% of boats provided in Aceh were expected to be unusable within 12-18 months due to poor quality

South Asia Earthquake⁵⁶

Approximately \$1.49 billion was raised for the relief phase of the emergency response to the South Asia earthquake. The speed of the response was considered impressive due to the fact that much of the affected area was entering the Himalayan winter which can be very severe, much of it in highland and remote regions and difficult to access. The majority of funding to NGOs was for the relief phase and agencies found it difficult to secure funding for reconstruction and recovery projects. Most reconstruction funding was channelled directly to the Pakistan government and a number of NGOs felt that the period of recovery could have been shortened had they been able to more easily and readily access longer term funding.

The primary focus of the relief operation was to meet the basic needs of an estimated 3.5 million people affected by the earthquake. The majority of relief agencies concentrated their work on populations that had remained in their villages, some of which were isolated and high up in the mountain and accessible only with military air support. The active cooperation and coordination of the military authorities with UN agencies, donors and NGOs was crucial to the success of the relief effort. The government recognised early on that not only had they not anticipated a disaster of this magnitude, they did not have the structures in place to adequately respond.

NGOs recognised that that the situation required cooperation with the military and the use of military logistics and equipment ensured affected populations, in remote areas, could be quickly reached, due to the imminence of winter. Many NGOs acknowledged the importance of the role of the military, especially in the first weeks after the disaster.

The cluster model was used for the first time in response to a sudden onset emergency in the earthquake response and although it was not fully developed, nine clusters were formed. A number of NGOs felt the cluster system improved coordination and geographic coverage and was instrumental in improving cooperation amongst the various actors. Where the cluster approach let itself down was that it was new and not fully formalised and did not have established procedures. Sectoral clusters were only as good as their leadership, and coordination and cooperation within that cluster. It was strongly perceived by a number of agencies that some cluster leads put the interests of their own agency ahead of the interest of the wider cluster, rendering the cluster ineffective and disjointed. It took eight weeks for the shelter cluster to recommend a standard for temporary shelters, by which time many NGOs had started distributing materials based on their own designs and according to their preferred standards. The nine clusters were replicated at both national level and in a number of locations in the field. NGOs with a multi sectoral programme found themselves expected to attend multiple cluster meetings, with the result that some meetings could not be regularly attended or junior NGO staff were sent. National and local NGOs were often excluded from the meetings as the language of the meetings was English. It was felt that the cluster system of coordination much more benefited the UN agencies in their dealings with government than benefited NGOs. Overall the cluster system was seen by NGOs to represent a small step forward.

While many agencies had plans in place for responding to rapid onset emergencies, it appeared that no NGOs had specific plans for dealing with a disaster of this type in a terrain of this type. NGOs recognised the need to be better prepared in terms of:

⁵⁶ Content drawn from: The UK's Response to the South Asia Earthquake, UK National Audit Office, 2008, and Perceptions of crisis and response: a synthesis of evaluations of the response to the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, ALNAP, 2008

- Establishing dedicated response teams to provide important specialist expertise and knowledge
- More robust mechanisms for drawing on staff from other programmes through human resource registers and rosters. A number of NGOs already had these structures and mechanisms in place at the time of the earthquake but many did not
- Emergency response strategies and manuals to provide guidance on the processes to be followed in the aftermath of a disaster
- Greater preparedness at country level and contingency planning for specific types of disasters in a given country, training of staff and partners at country level, and building up contingency stocks or knowledge of availability of emergency supplies locally and regionally

NGOs with programmes already in Pakistan were well placed to assess the situation in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, utilising local staff and partners, and making use of local contacts. Two UN-led interagency assessment teams were deployed immediately after the earthquake.

The lion's share of relief assistance was in the form of shelter and shelter kits which needed to be delivered quickly. NGOs initially settled on winterised tents but demand soon far outstripped supply and many struggled to find suitable materials. One NGO had planned to distribute 30,000 winterised tents but ultimately was only able to procure 5,500 of the right quality, the balance being tents of a lesser quality that were distributed with an add-on winterisation kit.

Some NGOs switched early on to shelter kits based around galvanised iron sheets over a wooden frame. This proved very appropriate and successful as communities would be able to use the shelter materials at a later stage when they were in a position to rebuild their own homes on a more permanent basis.

There was strong evidence that NGOs engaged well with communities and beneficiaries in order to ensure that interventions were in line with needs. Many agencies followed up initial assessments with participatory appraisals that ensured interventions were culturally appropriate, addressed community needs in addition to individual household needs, and identified the most vulnerable groups affected by the disaster, including women and the elderly.

Cyclone Sidr⁵⁷

Nine million people lost their homes and their livelihoods when cyclone Sidr came ashore along the southern coast of Bangladesh in November 2007. Coastal and river embankments were breached and low lying areas were flooded causing extensive damage. The financial cost of the disaster was estimated at \$1.7 billion and half of the districts in the country were affected.

Bangladesh has a relatively well established and experienced disaster response mechanism. Local government with assistance from the military, initiated search and rescue services and along with national and international agencies began distributing relief within three days. The speed of the response was notable and the relief assistance was appropriate and timely. DEC member agencies collectively assisted some 325,000 households. Donor funding was quickly mobilised and ECHO, DFID and OFDA along with DEC made funding available very quickly.

⁵⁷ Content drawn from: Bangladesh Cyclone Appeal – Report to Supporters, DEC Secretariat, February 2008

Some NGOs and their partners had disaster risk reduction activities in the affected areas which included components of emergency preparedness and disaster management, and these communities fared better than others in dealing with the approaching cyclone, disseminating early warning messages and evacuating whole villages.

Neither the government nor humanitarian agencies were prepared for two significant high intensity back to back disasters. National preparedness planning was based on one high intensity and one low intensity emergency event occurring in any given year, and the country was already dealing with severe flooding in central Bangladesh that was affecting an estimated 10 million people. When the cyclone hit, most response agencies had to re-direct staff from other programmes to create the surge capacity required.

The shift from relief to recovery proved difficult for many agencies due to gaps in experienced staff and poor transition planning. Livelihood and housing recovery programmes experienced delays in getting off the ground. For many affected families, livelihood restoration was far more important than house reconstruction, and many who received government housing grants invested them in livelihood activities with a view to getting to the house building at a later stage.

There appeared to be greater understanding and awareness of the importance of accountability to beneficiaries compared to past emergency responses in Bangladesh, and many agencies built into their response mechanisms for providing information to beneficiaries through consultation and messaging.

2.3 Concern Emergency Response – how have we done

The following DAC criteria and definition of terms⁵⁸ have being used to separate out the performance of the Concern emergency programmes, whose evaluations are included in this report. Timeliness has been added separately to gauge the speed of the response or programme scale up.

Relevance	The extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor
Appropriateness	The tailoring of the activity to local needs and increasing ownership, accountability, and cost effectiveness accordingly
Effectiveness	Has the project been implemented in such a way as to give the best price for the attainment of the desired standards?
Efficiency	The degree of uptake/usage by the beneficiaries. Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – achieved as a result of inputs. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving an output, to see whether the most efficient approach has been used

The following data and content is drawn from the 22 Concern emergency programme evaluations that were carried out between 2005 and 2008. See Annex I for a complete reference by year and by country.

Timeliness

In the case of the South East Asian tsunami response, there was very timely deployment of senior and experienced Concern staff to both Sri Lanka and Indonesia which, in the case of Sri Lanka led to rapid

⁵⁸ *Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies* – OECD/DAC, 1999

decisions in terms of programme content and approach. In Sri Lanka, the primary partner was selected and a programme outlined within a week. In Indonesia, only one Concern person was sent on the initial assessment, as a joint assessment with GAA was initially intended and did not fully materialise, and it was quickly acknowledged that this was not good enough. As mentioned earlier, collaboration with the Alliance partners already present in Sri Lanka facilitated a more timely response there, and GAA was instrumental in getting Concern quick introductions to potential partners. In Indonesia, there were no agencies present in Aceh prior to the tsunami and once Concern was up and running there, the programme was able to provide a timely response to the second earthquake that took place on the island of Simuleu, in March 2005. The India tsunami evaluation report considered their response to be timely and the DEC report considered the initial response in all three countries to have been carried out quickly.

In the South Asia earthquake response, the Concern wrap up meeting suggests that the CD and her experience was critical in the timing and quality of the response and that head office needed to allow time and space for the programme to effectively assess the problem, and decide on the level and type of response, without any undue pressure from Dublin. The subsequent evaluation highlighted the impressive speed of deployment of programme staff to carry out the initial assessment and the quality of analysis, and understanding and application of humanitarian principles and practice.

In Ethiopia in 2006 and again in 2008, there were difficulties in scaling up an emergency response and delays in becoming operational. In 2006, an Emergency Unit deployment reported that assessments were carried out in Afar region in March but that programmes did not get off the ground until June. In 2008, another Emergency Unit field trip questioned why an emergency response did not begin sooner when it was clear that the *Belg* had failed, that a major problem existed, and an assessment had been done in SNNPR highlighting the loss of harvest and emerging patterns of rising food prices and reduced food availability on the market. Despite this information, there was a lag of some months before decisive action was taken.

The response to Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh in 2007 was quick and decisive. Concern has a long history of responding to emergencies in Bangladesh, has established a strong reputation with donors and government, and developed a strong capability through partnerships, at both national and district level, throughout the country. Comprehensive procedures existed within the country programme for triggering a response, which resulted in timely assessments and clear guidance on mobilising resources, financial and human. The day after the cyclone, Concern sent a rapid assessment team to the worst affected areas. A more detailed assessment was undertaken a few days later. Three days after the cyclone, Concern submitted a proposal to ECHO to cover emergency food and non food needs for 26,000 families to complement Concern's own funds, and those of Irish Aid. Distributions in this first phase emergency response were completed by 27th November, 12 days after the event. The first phase was immediately followed by a second phase emergency response along previous lines. While the programme was very timely in its relief phase activities, it struggled to come to grips with the recovery side of the programme in a timely fashion. This was assessed to be due to the high demands placed on the programme in delivering emergency relief, and difficulties in determining where best and how best to position the programme and their partners in the recovery process, especially with regard to shelter and housing, livelihood support, livelihood restoration and cash for work schemes.

In Burma/Myanmar, Concern took a decision very quickly not to try to become operational and to concentrate on supporting Alliance2015 members which had a prior presence in the country. The evaluation reported on the many and complicated constraints imposed by the government of Myanmar, which delayed

and hampered access, assessment, staffing, and delivery. This resulted in a very untimely response and took the CESVI programme a number of months to carry out their intended distributions. However, the CESVI experience was not considered to be any different to other agencies operating in the country at that time.

Relevance and Appropriateness

In responding to the South Asian earthquake, the Pakistan programme team was able to establish relationships with partners quickly. The response played to its strengths and stayed away from the provision of general health assistance and focused on meeting the other key needs identified in the assessments, namely, food and non food support, shelter, and public health support. The programme recognised capacity limitations and tailored the focus appropriately to where there was a need in remote areas and a prior relationship with partners. Early on, the programme recognised issues associated with winterised tents and shifted to providing shelter kits which included corrugated galvanised iron roofing sheets that could be used later for the rebuilding of permanent homes.

The Bale emergency response in southern Ethiopia in 2005, demonstrated that the programme had a certain capacity to implement emergency response anywhere in the country and showed that the Ethiopia Ministry of Health had the capacity to implement CTC in an emergency context. However, the Afar emergency response in Ethiopia in 2006, was considered to be less relevant and appropriate as the primary assessed needs of the people were water and animal fodder. Nutrition was not prioritised by the interagency assessment, yet that was the programme that Concern proceeded with. Concern had at that time very limited experience of working in pastoralist areas of Ethiopia, and the Afar response was extremely difficult to programme and implement. While it was recognised that nutritional indicators were poor and a nutrition intervention would have a certain impact, it was also recognised that it might prove difficult to get buy in from the local population who were nomadic in nature and extremely mobile. Coupled with this, there was little or no government health infrastructure in place, the preferred delivery mechanism for the nutrition programme.

In 2008, Concern once again found themselves implementing a major emergency response in Ethiopia. The 2008 drought and food crisis proved a very difficult context to operate in, especially as the government of Ethiopia was unwilling to acknowledge the extent of the problem and had only limited capacity to respond. There was also an almost complete failure of the food aid pipeline. The programme was scaled up and expanded extensively stretching the organisational capacity to the limit. The focus on nutrition and the provision of seeds and other planting materials was appropriate, as Concern is a key nutrition player in the country and was able to redeploy experienced and qualified staff to new programme areas, and recruit additional staff to fill new positions. Good nutrition sector interagency coordination, and rapid assessments, helped inform priority areas for intervention, and programming decisions were taken in a coordinated fashion.

The Kenya drought response in 2006 sought out partners who were local to the highly affected areas and, in partnership, were well placed to implement an appropriate programme mix, covering nutrition, general food, livestock fodder support, water and environmental health, and drought resistant seeds.

At the same time in Somalia, the programme sought to work directly in partnership with whole communities, ensuring the delivery of emergency interventions which were in synch with the complex community clan structures, and allowing for the uncertainty of security and access. The programme focused on areas with

little agency presence and focused on water and environmental sanitation, agricultural support and nutrition which were appropriate. The nutrition component of the programme was implemented cross border from Kenya in partnership with the Gedo Health Consortium (GHC), who had prior presence in the Gedo region. The GHC benefited greatly from Concern being able to provide key technical support to their emergency scale up, and the Somali programme was able to benefit greatly for working through an established structure that enjoyed a degree of acceptance in the Gedo region.

The India tsunami response began by supporting fishing communities in coastal districts, but shifted their focus early, when it was recognised that this particular sector was receiving a disproportionate amount of attention from other agencies, and began supporting more marginalised communities and sectors, namely farmers and agricultural workers, salt pan workers, and dalit communities who had lost their housing. An initial relief phase followed by a two year rehabilitation phase was planned in partnership with 14 local NGOs providing food and non food relief and shelter inputs. The focus and coverage of the programme changed a number of times in response to changes in the local response context, and agencies that were providing relief. The initial relief phase lasted six months and, after this, the programme was revised to better fit the requirements of the targeted communities, a total of 141 villages in 8 districts. Targeting was based on assessed needs in the affected areas with a primary focus on areas and peoples that were neglected by the mainstream response. These are also areas and people that were neglected by the longer term development process and some of the interventions carried out in the rehabilitation phase were considered to be difficult to sustain without a significant investment by government in coastal agriculture and salt industries.

The tsunami emergency programme worked through partners in Sri Lanka, and implemented directly in Indonesia. Each response was considered appropriate to its own setting and both programmes did well in terms of geographic choice of programme locations, avoiding the inter-agency competition that appeared to exist in more accessible and higher profile areas. However, planning the emergency through rehabilitation stage was considered poor and fragmented in Indonesia and it was that follow up assessments could have been done much better, especially as the programme proceeded, to provide more informed and clear programming options. The rehabilitation programme was assessed to be little more than a broader version of the relief programme, without a clear sense if this was the right approach. In both countries, there were rehabilitation and recovery projects that were considered developmental in nature but highly time bound in duration. This led to uncertainty at community level as to what ultimately might be achieved, and how long Concern might stay around.

In 2007, Concern DRC provided a programme of support to returnee IDP households in Katanga. This programme included food, resettlement kits, agricultural inputs and a roads and schools rehabilitation programme that included a cash for work component. The interventions were based on good initial assessments and targeting by experienced Concern staff, and an integrated programme approach was adopted with a number of donors quickly coming on board, in addition to Concern's own funds. The programme was revised and adapted a number of times to more clearly reflect the numbers of IDPs and returnees receiving assistance. The relief aspects of the programme were considered highly appropriate and relevant, as IDPs returning to their villages would face severe food shortages in the first months after their return. Due to a functioning local market system, the roads rehabilitation and cash for work provided much needed local cash income and improved market access. The seed part of the agricultural package was less well received however as the target beneficiaries were not used to planting maize and had a preference for groundnuts and rice, crops that were apparently out of synch with what the UN FAO was recommending at that time. The

planning was considered ambitious, but unfortunately many of the activities had to be delivered in the rainy season and this proved a nightmare to accomplish, and led to long delays in delivery, frustration and a number of poor programme decisions, central of which was the decision to ask a sizable number beneficiaries to come and collect their NFI inputs, a journey that took some up to a week to accomplish.

Providing emergency assistance through cash transfers has been considered a very appropriate delivery mechanism in a number of countries where Concern has responded to emergencies: Malawi in 2006 and 2007, Zambia in 2007, and Kenya in 2008. This approach, which has become more widely used by Concern, allows beneficiaries to determine their own priorities, meet their own identifiable basic needs in emergencies, and helps to protect livelihoods. The Kenya programme went a further step and delivered part of their cash transfer by mobile phone, a pioneering, innovative and safe way to deliver cash to a rural area.

In almost every major emergency response over the last four years, Concern has included a cash for work component, whether it was debris to be removed as in the South East Asian tsunami response and the response to Cyclone Sidr, or where there was an infrastructure rehabilitation project component like building schools in Katanga, or water provision in the Bay Region of Somalia. Cash for work has proved very appropriate in providing a much needed income boost to a local area and stimulating local markets, as well as the direct benefit to the households involved. It is especially relevant in targeting women.

In Darfur, it was recognised that the operating environment was one of the most complex and difficult to plan for and programme appropriately. A number of lessons learnt reviews have highlighted the success of the programme in meeting basic needs, but have raised anxieties over the programme's ability to move beyond the emergency context, when given the opportunity. It has been suggested that the programme, which has been in operation since 2005, has struggled to properly get to grips with linking its emergency work with longer term livelihoods work. The programming in Darfur, with the exception of some protection focused livelihood activities at IDP camp level, has been perceived to be weak in coming up with an appropriate livelihoods strategy, that is both achievable and realisable in the local context, and specific to the distinct geographic areas in Darfur where Concern has been implementing its various programmes.

In responding to Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh in 2007, Concern brought in skilled national staff from other programme areas to support national NGO partners in the affected areas, and provide much needed additional capacity in assessment and programme planning. This led to appropriate targeting within the affected areas and an emergency response that was tailored to the needs identified. The recovery programme considered livelihood factors and targeting criteria were considered to be appropriate and included loss of house, loss of assets, loss of livelihood and not receiving assistance from any other agencies. Vulnerability criteria were also applied. Households that had suffered a death or injury, especially a key income earner, and female headed households, were considered for programme inclusion.

The operating environment placed huge demands on the Burma/Myanmar programme of response, in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, both logistically and through government placed restrictions. Allowing for this, the response was considered appropriate in terms of location, design, content and targeting. Targeting was considered far from easy and the programme targeted blanket distributions through a combination of village survey, and in consultation with village leaders, and partial distributions were targeted through extensive village consultation. Given the contextual constraints that were in place, the targeting appeared rational and an appropriate beneficiary group were reached. The NFIs that were distributed were very relevant to the

needs of the people, especially plastic sheeting, blankets and kitchen sets. The programme was perceived to have done well to recognise, early, the importance of prompt support to livelihood restoration, and the decisions to distribute agricultural inputs and fishing nets were well reasoned, and the methods of distribution appropriate.

The Camp Management programme in West Darfur, was developed to fill a key humanitarian gap, that of coordinating humanitarian assistance and service delivery in a camp setting for tens of thousands of IDPs. The programme essentially provided consensus building without authority, and adopted an approach that required striking a delicate balance with the government of Sudan on one side, IDPs on the other, and the humanitarian agencies in between. Engaging IDPs in this way was considered, within the Darfur context, to be very appropriate and relevant, as the mechanism allows for service delivery gaps to be identified and filled, and provided a structure for problems within the camp to be raised and solutions found.

Effectiveness and Efficiency

The South Asia earthquake response was considered effective because the programme was working through partners that were already identified, with Concern providing capacity support to them as required. The response itself was assessed to be of a very high standard and cost efficient. The majority of the inputs were sourced in country or regionally, no international personnel were deployed or recruited, transport costs were kept to a minimum and international charters were avoided. This led to a very high budget spend on direct costs. There was strong adherence to humanitarian codes of practice and standards and the programme engaged well with coordination forums and clusters. The shelter cluster failed to early on standardise a shelter package, which left agencies much to their own devices and the content of shelter kits varied greatly as a result. The programme struggled to get donor funding and backing in the first six months of the response from some of the traditional emergency donors and there is a sense that more could have been done to secure ECHO, OFDA and DFID funding. Irish Aid and a successful DEC appeal enabled Concern to move quickly, and more than 40% of the €7.3 million budget came from general donations.

In the India tsunami response, the programme made its presence felt both in terms of the assistance and the support it provided through its relief and rehabilitation interventions, but also in how it strengthened partners and their capacity to deal with this kind of disaster. Overall programming was considered to be of good quality and interventions were consistent with Red Cross Code of Conduct and Sphere standards. Beneficiaries, communities and partner organisations participated in programme design and implementation, and the programme focus and coverage changed a number of times to reflect changes in the response and rehabilitation context. Attempts were made to integrate HIV/AIDS and gender into all the programme interventions, although some of the partners were much more successful than others, mainly in the area of HIV sensitisation with communities. While the programme was successful in creating and strengthening institutions amongst the target communities that could contribute to longer term development opportunities, it was suggested that this might prove difficult to sustain, as these were areas of long term development need and neglect, and the government of India was not focused on coastal agriculture and long term sustainability of the salt pans. While coordination with other agencies and government was considered good within the relief phase, communities and local partners were going to require significant ongoing support in lobbying government, and advocating for greater government engagement in these sectors, to bring about real and sustained impact.

Similar to India, the Sri Lanka and Indonesia tsunami responses were commended for their dedication to quality work, and Concern was seen by others as a serious agency in both countries. While overall coordination was considered to be generally poor and without strong leadership, and left to those agencies who actually valued the need, the Concern programme coordinated and cooperated fully with what mechanisms did exist, even though their effectiveness was limited. The level of coordination achieved in Sri Lanka was considered to be much higher than in Indonesia. From the outset, the programme in both countries was guided by the Red Cross Code of Conduct and there was strong adherence to Sphere standards throughout. HIV/AIDS sensitization was considered within programmes and in Indonesia social protection issues were identified and a social advisor was brought in to carry out some profiling work, and assist with the roll out of the Programme Participant Protection Policy. In both country programmes, systems support functions were set up quickly and effectively.

The Concern response to the South Asia earthquake was considered both impressive and ambitious and carried out to a very high standard which met the identified needs of the affected populations. The programme engaged well with the wider response community and representation at coordination meetings was strong and consistent. Concern encouraged partner agencies to attend the coordination meetings. Humanitarian standards of performance and codes of practice were strongly in evidence, and the programme was very active in applying the lessons of previous emergency responses. The need for air assets to access remote areas, and the decisions by some agencies to deploy high numbers of international staff and fly large consignments of relief items in from Europe, made this response very costly for some response agencies. However, compared to the wider response, the Concern programme was considered very cost effective. Procurement was done locally and regionally. Head office logistics supported the procurement of winterised tents in Pakistan and the programme did not have to rely on costly charters from Europe. According to the DEC evaluation, DFID funded 77 international charter flights for DEC members at a cost of over £4 million. The high cost of international staff was also avoided as the programme was fully implemented through partners, supported by existing national staff on the ground. As a result, 97% of the programme budget was spent on goods and services.

Some components of the Katanga IDP programme response were considered very effective, but others less so. The problem was less to do with content and quality and more to do with delays and problems associated with delivery and some planning shortcomings. Lack of experienced staff on the ground and a poor understanding of the local context led to some of the problems in planning. It was considered an oversight to plan an ambitious programme that depended so much on long distance transport, when the rainy season was due and the roads would become impassable. Some of the agricultural inputs, especially certain seeds, were not appropriate and, as such, were not widely or well used by the beneficiaries. The programme had to cut out two months of its planned three month food ration. This was not ideal, especially as part of the food was to be used as a seed protection ration. The decision to ask beneficiaries to travel a distance of 70-160 km roundtrip to collect NFIs that could not be transported due to impassable roads was a very poor one. Some beneficiaries took a full week to make the trip and had to use part of the package in payment of transport or for someone to go on their behalf. This decision undermined the acceptance and good will built up by the programme up to that point, and the majority of beneficiaries strongly disapproved of the action but felt they could not do anything about it.

On a more positive note, the roads and bridge rehabilitation programme, although slowed and delayed due to the rainy season, was very popular and effective. Another example of good use of cash in emergency

situations, although there was a perceived lack of equity amongst those who were benefitting with only a few villages using a system of rotation so more people could benefit. Very few women participated in the cash for work programmes although they had expressed a strong willingness to be included. Shifting the transport of relief items from truck to bicycle was a very practical and sound approach. This move was both cost efficient and effective and enabled the programme to overcome its transport impasse. As the bicycles were being rented locally, it also provided for an additional cash injection into the local economy.

A number of CTC interventions: in Niger; Somalia; Ethiopia; Darfur; and Kenya; have been very effective in terms of emergency response and reaching malnourished children and their mothers. However, a number of responses have thrown up similar issues and problems. Coverage and community mobilisation have been hampered in many places by the over reliance on a poor or almost nonexistent health infrastructure, under resourced and over stretched health workers, and, in some cases, access to communities to do follow up, in some of the more complex programme areas. The absence of strong national nutrition protocols for dealing with nutritional crisis and poor prioritisation by government and the need to integrate nutrition into long term government health programmes was evident in a number of countries. A number of Concern programmes have been trying to tackle these issues over the last few years with varying degrees of success and are now working closely with government ministries of health to strengthen nutrition protocols and practice. Kenya, Ethiopia and Niger are three good examples of emerging strategic partnership with the national government in this regard.

Providing cash transfers instead of food or non food items as part of an emergency response has proved very effective and cost efficient where local markets are functioning and security risks can be managed. Concern programmes in Zambia, Malawi and Kenya have all successfully implemented emergency programmes that have included a large component of cash transfers. This practice is still relatively new in a number of Concern fields, and, with the exception of Malawi, the country programmes were using this approach for the first time. There is a strong commitment and recognition within the organisation that there is much to learn and replicate from the experience. The programmes were very well monitored and reported on. Every intervention that included a significant cash transfer component was evaluated fully or scrutinised closely from a lessons learning perspective. Malawi has had two very successful cash transfer programmes and there is strong evidence that the second programme, in 2007, built on the experiences of the first which took place in 2006. Adjusting the amount of cash transfer in line with prevailing food prices in local markets and household size, to reflect adult equivalents, are two examples of the Malawi programme taking on board the lessons of the cash transfer trial programme of the year before. Very good opportunities were provided, on days when the cash was distributed, for programmes to provide key messages related to the effective use of the cash and community sensitisation on HIV/AIDS.

Considering the humanitarian aid community in Bangladesh was already responding to the massive flooding in the centre of the country, when Cyclone Sidr hit the south coast, Concern and the wider response community did extremely well to move quickly and effectively to mobilise resources and scale up the response. There were strong mechanisms already in place for coordination at national level, and the cluster system was adopted very early on, but for rehabilitation and recovery only. Coordination was less effective in the affected coastal areas and only the shelter cluster ever met outside the capital city. This led to some confusion in coordinating the relief phase and many agencies distributed different types of food, shelter and NFI kits in similar areas, and were paying different rates for their cash for work projects. Although local coordination structures were weak and limited, the Concern programme made every effort to coordinate with

local authorities and agencies operating in the same geographical area, and, on a number of occasions, took the lead and organised interagency coordination meetings. The relief and recovery programme was implemented in partnership with national NGOs who had a prior presence in the affected areas and knew the lie of the land and their respective constituent groups. This proved very effective in the relief phase, however, the programme then appeared to struggle to create enough capacity to implement the relief phase, while at the same time developing a recovery programme and making informed decisions accordingly. This situation was not unique to Concern and a number of agencies found the transition to recovery a difficult proposition. The programme was considered to be extremely effective in how it consulted communities in all stages of the decision making process and made them aware of their entitlements, and rights during distributions.

2.4 Having an Impact – organisational learning and room for improvement

A number of the evaluations of the Concern emergency responses have shown a progressive tendency to learn and innovate based on experiences from previous emergencies, e.g. Malawi FACT 2006 and DECT 2007, and to meet head on the challenges faced by the field and head office when scaling up or mounting a response. The acknowledgement that each emergency brings its own distinct set of challenges that require a tailored response is increasingly evident, as is the determination and commitment to do well on behalf of those affected by crises. There is also evidence of a growing willingness to be adaptable, flexible, and responsible in the way the organisation works and makes decisions. The early decision to stop taking money for the South East Asian tsunami appeal, and to try to redirect public opinion to other less publicised emergencies, is a very good example of this.

As would be expected, there are a large number of factors that have influenced the speed of Concern's emergency responses and the scaling up of activities. Chief amongst these has been the availability of experienced and qualified staff to get on the ground, gather the information and make informed decisions quickly. In countries where Concern had no prior presence, e.g. Sri Lanka and Burma/Myanmar, good use of the Alliance2015 partners was made as a local contact source. With a few exceptions, staff and partners in a number of countries, especially those who are experiencing more frequent and cyclical emergency situations, are getting quicker and more skilled in emergency response as a result of their frequent exposure to emergencies and external technical and systems support they are receiving from Concern through the expanded Emergency Unit since the establishment of the ERT.

At best, Concern's emergency responses are getting many things right. They include the right staff getting on the ground quickly and having the experience to carry out quality assessments, target appropriately, and contribute to informed decision making, which leads to relevant and appropriate interventions that are implemented effectively, either directly or through partners.

Enough of these "best" characteristics are evident in the evaluations to suggest that the organisation is proficient in responding to emergencies, especially in terms of approaches and working in partnership, enhanced and sometimes innovative programming, adherence to standards and codes, achieving good practice and greater accountability, and having real impact on the lives of people affected by the disasters Concern has responded to. In the four years under review, nearly **ten million people** have benefitted directly from Concern's emergency interventions.

Concern is increasingly using cash over material inputs, where conditions are appropriate, and in every instance in which cash has been used, the impact has been very high. While cash for work has been used widely in Concern emergency programmes for many years, the use of cash transfers over food or non food assistance is relatively new to the organisation and is proving very effective in providing people with real choice, and creating a multiplier effect by stimulating the local market economy. The concept of transferring cash by mobile phone to people in emergency situations is innovative and when used in Kenya, ensured a degree of coverage, access and security previously lacking in cash transfers.

Concern is opting to implement emergency response programmes through partners with greater frequency and greater effect, especially in countries where there are existing programmes. This way of working brings additional challenges in terms of capacity building having to go hand in hand with emergency assistance delivery, but the benefits can be significant and cost efficiencies can be achieved, as was seen with the South Asia earthquake response. National partners can benefit greatly from the capacity and financial support that these associations usually bring. Communities can benefit from the knowledge that they are dealing with some of their own, be they members of a partner organisation or Concern national staff, which can enhance communication, information sharing, participation and programme acceptance.

In new emergencies where there is no prior presence, the organisation is showing a progressive tendency to go and seek out potential partners, be they national or international NGOs with a comparative advantage within the local context.

Emergency response programmes are demonstrating good adaptive practice in overcoming obstacles and constraints they encounter on the ground be they tight government controls and restrictions, very insecure operating environments or logistical and physical access constraints. The decision to accept military air transport to reach the high and remote areas of Kashmir affected by the earthquake, to ensure NFIs reached the affected populations before the onset of winter, were sound and sensible. The secondment of ERT personnel to Cesvi in the Myanmar cyclone response was fraught with its own set of problems, yet the programme was successful and both agencies and the overall alliance appear to have benefited from the experience. In Katanga, DRC, the emergency response virtually ground to a halt in the rainy season and trucks could no longer get through to the affected areas and the programme switched from trucks to bicycles to transport relief as a practical solution to a major problem.

There is evidence that Concern is cost conscious and proactively seeks out ways to be cost efficient without compromising the integrity and performance of the response. Working through suitable national and international partners can avoid the cost and constraints of large scale international staff recruitment and in country support. Appropriate national and regional procurement of relief and recovery inputs can reduce or eliminate costly international charter flights as was the case in Concern's response to the South Asia earthquake.

There is still plenty of room for improvement and a number of areas where Concern emergency response programmes could do much better and demonstrate greater consistency.

The value and importance of evaluations is recognised throughout the organisation in terms of identifying lessons learnt and assessing programme quality and achievement. Yet, roughly half of the emergency

responses have not been evaluated⁵⁹, and a number of organisational wrap up meetings have not taken place following significant emergencies in Darfur (2004/5), Cyclone Sidr (2007), Cyclone Nargis (2008), and the Ethiopia food crisis (2008).

While the overall quality of evaluations has been generally good, a number of them, especially those that have been very narrow in scope, looking at a particular sector or approach, have been relatively inconsistent in the evaluation criteria they have adopted or followed. Greater consistency in the use of established evaluation criteria⁶⁰ and greater reflection on the wider context of the emergency would reveal much more about overall programme achievement and quality. The more formal evaluations have paid much greater heed to the extended DAC criteria, the Red Cross Code of Conduct, Sphere Standards, the People in Aid Code of Best Practice, the HAP principles and the Programme Participant Protection Policy.

The recruitment and continuity of staff in emergency programmes has been a major cause of worry throughout many of the emergencies. The ERT has created an additional surge capacity and depth of experience that can be swiftly deployed in new emergencies and has routinely provided support and advice to existing country programmes, and plugged key human resource gaps for short periods when required.

However, the absence of senior programme staff in a number of major emergencies, either through a high turnover or not being able to fill positions in a timely manner, has coincided with periods or episodes of poor or disjointed programming:

- In Indonesia during the South East Asian tsunami response, 42 international staff were deployed or recruited. 26 of them spent less than six months on the programme. Of the 14 international staff who arrived in the first month, only four of them had any programming responsibility. Four Country Directors were deployed in the first five months.
- In Sri Lanka, 23 international staff were deployed or recruited. 15 of them spent less than three months on the programme.
- In Katanga, in 2007, the area coordinator position was filled by three different people in the first five months. The first two came from the RDU and stayed six weeks. The third came from the ERT and stayed three months. It took from August 2007 to January 2008 to recruit an area coordinator.

A number of evaluations reported that monitoring systems were weak or poorly constructed. In many cases this was put down to capacity weaknesses in partners, sheer volume of work in the relief phase, or the absence of experienced programme staff on the ground to establish appropriate mechanisms in the first place.

A number of evaluations reported that programmes experienced difficulty in making the transition from relief to recovery. Staff and capacity gaps were again mentioned as a major factor in this, along with poor or fragmented planning based on a poor or incomplete analysis and understanding of the recovery and local livelihoods context.

⁵⁹ It is acknowledged that a number of emergency responses included in this review were carried out in 2008 and there may be plans to evaluate them in 2009.

⁶⁰ See Concern guidelines *Evaluating emergency responses – towards good practice*, Concern Emergency Unit, February 2009

Many of the emergency response programmes have struggled to integrate cross cutting issues into their programme planning and design. It was remarked in a number of evaluations that, with the exception of basic HIV/AIDS sensitisation to large groups of people on distribution days, there was very little success in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS, gender and equality into the programmes.

Programmes that were implemented through partners generally included a component of capacity building for the partners in the overall programme design. The amount of capacity building support offered to partners differed greatly from programme to programme and was largely based on the Concern capacity available and accounting for funding received rather than tailoring specific types of support based on assessed partners' needs. Disaggregation between stronger partners and weaker partners was often lacking.

A small number of evaluations suggested that the programme had not optimised institutional donor funding available in a particular emergency, from one or more of the traditional Concern donors. Irish Aid and ECHO were by far the most frequent donor partners cited, along with DEC in countries where the DEC launched an appeal. DFID and OFDA funding were far less accessed.

A number of nutrition and CTC lessons learnt reviews have highlighted difficulties with scaling up an emergency response in programmes where partnership or integrated programme approach with government already exists, and the trade off between prompt response which might require significant Concern input, and the impact on long term integration and sustainability. Difficulties have also been experienced with attempts to establish robust community mobilisation mechanisms, and this has impacted on coverage and case follow up.

2.5. Measuring Up To Previous Meta Evaluations⁶¹

Concern's emergency response programmes continue to do well and/or show progress and improvement in a number of areas, when compared to the previous meta evaluations:

- With few exceptions, and allowing for factors that are in control of the organisation, emergencies continue to be responded to in a timely fashion
- Again with few exceptions, programmes and sectoral choices have been appropriate and not overly ambitious
- The programmes have been well targeted and there is good evidence of beneficiary participation and consultation in programme design
- With few exceptions, the organisation continues to demonstrate sound decision making and follows good practice. Notable amongst these is the organisations decision to stop taking money from the public in the tsunami appeal where they felt they had enough to programme effectively
- The programmes are actively seeking out engagement with partners, national and international, with increased frequency, where it is considered appropriate and can bring added value
- Good and steady progress has been made in rolling out the Programme Participant Protection Policy in emergency situations
- Good and steady progress has been made in establishing early financial and logistic systems, supported by updated manuals and personnel from the Logistics and Emergency Units (including the ERT)

⁶¹ Analysis of emergency evaluations – a discussion paper, Emergency Unit, April 2001; Analysis of emergency evaluations – an updated discussion paper, Emergency unit, April 2005

- In a number of countries, good progress has been made to prepare more effectively for shifting into emergency mode and scale up, in terms of programme staff, partners and procedures
- In countries where Concern does not have a presence, good use has been made of Alliance2015 partners in responding to emergencies in terms of mutual financial support, material and office support and secondment

However, a number of challenges that have been previously highlighted continue to persist:

- Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in emergencies is a central part of the organisation's intervention strategy and approach and continues to pose a challenge in terms of how to programme effectively in emergencies.
- Likewise, programmes have struggled to include other cross cutting issues such as gender and equality in their emergency programmes, with any real consistency.
- The organisation has still not found a clear voice in advocacy and there are a number of areas where Concern could speak out, especially with regard to the UN: weak or ineffective coordination mechanisms in a number of emergency responses; hugely deficient WFP rations in Ethiopia food crisis in 2008, that rank amongst some of the worst ever seen; more periodic breaks in UN supplementary food and RUTF food pipelines; UN cluster agency leads taking responsibility as provider of last resort, especially in complex emergencies like Darfur; and again in Darfur, the unacceptable and unresolved issue over who has responsibility for the IDPs in camps, OCHA or UNHCR.
- Timely recruitment and retention of international staff remains a serious problem.

2.6 Recommendations for More Effective Emergency Response

Evaluations and lessons learnt reviews are of immense value and importance to the organisation and partners, and every opportunity to learn from every emergency response situation needs to be taken. Concern must be more systematic and consistent in ensuring all emergency responses are evaluated in a timely fashion and in a way that is appropriate to the scale and type of emergency. Budget provisions must be made for this piece of work.

Organisational wrap up meetings should take place at head office after every significant emergency response. Outstanding action points from previous wrap up meetings need to be brought to a successful conclusion and their outcome communicated appropriately.

Greater attention needs to be given to evaluation criteria to ensure programme effectiveness and quality can be easily discerned. Special attention must be given to beneficiary accountability within the evaluation terms of reference.

Emergency response programmes need to be more systematic and consistent in their approach to mainstreaming cross cutting issues in emergencies, especially HIV/AIDS, gender and equality. How to move this forward remains a considerable challenge to the organisation.

Greater practical guidance needs to be provided when planning to work with partners in emergencies, especially in the area of appropriate and tailored capacity building.

Review of Humanitarian Action and Emergency Response Meta Evaluation, 2005 – 2008

Concern's Emergency Unit –July 2009

Annex I – Emergency Response Evaluations 2005 – 2008

Emergency Response Evaluations and Real Time Reviews – 2005

Country	Title	Agency
N Sudan	Darfur CTC Lessons Learnt	Concern
Tsunami	Concern Wrap Up	Concern
Niger	Emergency Nutrition CTC Programme 2005	Concern
Afghanistan	DANIDA Joint Evaluation of Humanitarian & Reconstruction Assistance	DANIDA
N Sudan	Darfur Lessons Learnt – Review of Humanitarian Action 2005	ALNAP
Tsunami	Tsunami Crises Response & Lessons Learnt	DEC
Tsunami	Review of International Funding for Tsunami Relief	DANIDA

Emergency Response Evaluations and Real Time Reviews – 2006

Country	Title	Agency
Malawi	Food & Cash Transfers Project – FACT May 2006	Concern
Pakistan	Concern Wrap Up February 2006	Concern
Pakistan	Kashmir Earthquake Response April 2006	Concern
India	Tsunami Mid Term Evaluation April 2006	Concern
Tsunami	Tsunami Mid Term Evaluation April 2006	Concern
Ethiopia	Bale Emergency CTC Project 2005-6 Learning Review	Concern
DRC	Katanga Emergency Assistance to IDPs Phase 1	Concern
Horn of Africa	Emergency Unit Field Trip Report – July 2006	Concern
Various	Wrap up of Wrap up meetings – Pakistan, Niger & Tsunami July 2006	Concern
N Sudan	DEC North Sudan Evaluation	DEC
Tsunami	Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami	TEC
Tsunami	Clinton Report on Tsunami 12 Months On	UNSG

Emergency Response Evaluations and Real Time Reviews – 2007

Country	Title	Agency
DRC	Katanga IDPs October 2007	Concern
Kenya	CTC Emergency Response in Moyale 2007	Concern
Zambia	Emergency Flood Response December 2007	Concern
Malawi	Dowa Emergency Cash Transfer - DECT	Concern
N Sudan	Health & Nutrition Programme in W Darfur	Concern
Somalia	Review of Modified CTC in Gedo Somalia	Concern
Somalia	Bay Drought Response Project	Concern
Kenya	DfID Humanitarian Response 2005-6	DfID
Niger	DEC Evaluation - Niger (Sahel) Appeal	DEC

Emergency Response Evaluations and Real Time Reviews – 2008

Country	Title	Agency
Bangladesh	Emergency Unit Field Trip Report – January 2008	Concern
Ethiopia	Emergency Unit Field Trip Report – August 2008	Concern
India	Tsunami End of Programme Evaluation	Concern
Kenya	Kerio Valley Cash Transfer Pilot	Concern
Myanmar	Cyclone Nargis Evaluation	Concern
N Sudan	Strengthening Humanitarian Coordination – Camp Management	Concern
Mozambique	Flash Flood Response	Concern
Bangladesh	DEC Bangladesh Cyclone Appeal – Report to Supporters	DEC
Pakistan	The UK's Response to the South Asia Earthquake	NAO
Pakistan	Pakistan Earthquake – Review of Humanitarian Action 2008	ALNAP

Review of Humanitarian Action and Emergency Response Meta Evaluation, 2005 – 2008

Concern's Emergency Unit –July 2009

Annex II – Concern Emergency Response Programme 2005 – 2008

2005	Emergency Type	Numbers Affected	Response Type/Level	Expenditure - €
Tanzania	Regional Conflict	90,000 Refugees	90,000 - WEH, camp assistance	509,000
Uganda	Conflict	1.6 million IDPs	169,000 IDPs – WEH, NFI, seeds, tools	1,026,000
Burundi	Conflict, Drought	90,000 settled	22,000 - CTC	238,000
DRC	Conflict, Food Crises	1.6 million IDPs	9,000 - CTC	498,000
Total Central Africa Region	4 countries	3.380 million	290,000	2,271,000
Ethiopia	Drought, Food Crises	3.8 million settled	250,000 - CTC	771,000
Somalia	Conflict, Drought	900,000 settled & IDP	1,500 - NFI	10,000
N Sudan	Conflict, Drought	4.9 million IDPs	160,000 – NFI, WEH, shelter, camp management	3,479,000
S Sudan	Post Conflict, Drought	1 million settled & returnee	500,000 – CTC, NFI, seeds, tools, fishing equipment	1,277,000
Kenya	Drought, Food Crisis	122,000 settled	15,000 – seeds, tools	104,000
Eritrea	Drought, Food Crisis	2 million settled	34,500 – CTC, WEH, house repair	476,000
Total Horn of Africa Region	6 countries	12.722 million	961,000	6,117,000
Malawi	Drought, Food Crisis	4.2 million settled	25,000 – CTC, cash & food transfers,	1,010,000
Zambia	Drought, Food Crisis	2 million settled	5,000 – seeds, tools, rehabilitation	39,000
Zimbabwe	Drought, Food Crisis, Political	3 million settled	402,500 – food relief, NFI, shelter	620,000
Niger	Drought, Food Crisis	3 million settled	50,000 – CTC, NFI, WEH seeds, tools	2,189,000
Total Southern Africa Region	4 countries	12.200 million	482,500	3,858,000
Afghanistan	Floods	7,500 settled	7,500 – NFI	47,000
DPRK	Floods	17,000 settled	17,000 - WEH	94,000
Haiti	Hurricane, Floods, Drought	24,500 settled	24,500 – WEH, NFI	148,000
Total Worldwide Region	3 countries	49,000	49,000	289,000
Bangladesh	Floods, Fire	32,300 million settled	32,300 – cash for work, house reconstruction, NFI, food relief	450,000
Cambodia	Drought, Floods, Fire, Cyclone	330,000 settled	37,000 – relief food, housing materials, fishing equipment	110,000
Pakistan	Earthquake, Floods	3.54 million settled	130,000 – shelter, NFI, food relief, tools, WEH, cash, seeds	6,380,000
India	Tsunami, Floods	15 million settled	17,700 – boats, shelter, fishing equipment, cash for work	1,175,000
Total Asia I Region	4 countries	18.907 million	217,000	8,115,000
Sri Lanka	Tsunami	750,00 settled	67,500 – shelter, household kits, NFI, food relief, WEH, boats, fishing equipment, infrastructure rehabilitation	8,237,000
Indonesia	Tsunami, Earthquake	500,000 settled	40,000 – shelter, household kits, NFI, food relief, WEH, infrastructure rehabilitation	2,916,000
Total Asia II Region	2 countries	1.250 million	107,500	11,153,000

Total Concern Response 2005	23 countries	48.508 million People Affected	2.107 million Direct Beneficiaries	31.803 million Euro Expenditure
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2006	Emergency Type	Numbers Affected	Response Type/Level	Expenditure - €
Tanzania	Drought, Floods	97,500 settled	50,000 – seeds, tools	41,637
Uganda	Drought, Floods	N/A	1,500 – food relief, NFI	10,000
DRC	Conflict, Food Crises	310,000 IDPs	78,750 – food relief, NFI, seeds, tools, infrastructure rehabilitation	1,223,883
Total Central Africa Region	3 countries	407,500	130,250	2,271,000
Ethiopia	Drought, Floods	3 million settled	32,600 – CTC, food relief, NFI, WEH	954,000
Somalia	Conflict, Drought, Floods	2.7 million settled, pastoralist & IDP	223,000 – WEH, cash for work, NFI, infrastructure rehabilitation	716,000
N Sudan	Conflict, Drought	3 million IDPs	150,000 – CTC, NFI, WEH, shelter, camp management, education	3,264,643

Review of Humanitarian Action and Emergency Response Meta Evaluation, 2005 – 2008

Concern's Emergency Unit –July 2009

S Sudan	Post Conflict, Drought	1 million settled & returnee	186,000 – CTC, NFI, seeds, tools, fishing equipment,	1,234,986
Kenya	Drought, Food Crisis	10 million settled, pastoralist	43,500 – CTC	1,161,796
Eritrea	Drought, Food Crisis	1 million settled	30,500 – CTC, cash for work	321,000
Total Horn of Africa Region	6 countries	20.700 million	665,600	7,652,425
Malawi	Drought, Food Crisis	4.83 million settled	107,500 – CTC, cash & food transfers,	2,043,358
Zimbabwe	Drought, Food Crisis, Political	4.5 million settled	505,000 – food relief	1,128,445
Niger	Drought, Food Crisis	1.9 million settled	17,458 – CTC	2,612,879
Angola	Drought,	375,000	38,875 – seeds, tools	22,156
Total Southern Africa Region	4 countries	11.605 million	668,833	5,806,838
Afghanistan	Drought	2.5 million settled	10,230 – seeds, food for work, shelter	225,000
DPRK	Floods	94,000 settled	32,000 – house reconstruction, infrastructure rehabilitation	200,000
Haiti	Floods	2,000 settled	2,000 – WEH, NFI	380,000
Total Worldwide Region	3 countries	2.596 million	44,230	805,000
Bangladesh	Floods	1 million settled	80,000 – NFI, food relief	270,000
Pakistan	Earthquake, Floods	4.051 million settled	55,000 – shelter, NFI, food relief, tools, WEH, cash, seeds	1,152,000
India	Floods	3 million settled	20,000 – shelter	277,000
Total Asia I Region	3 countries	8.051 million	155,000	1,699,000
Sri Lanka	Tsunami	516,000 IDPs settled	70,300 – shelter, boats	3,714,311
Indonesia	Tsunami, Earthquake	771,500 IDPs	50,700 – shelter, household kits, NFI, food relief, WEH, infrastructure rehabilitation, seeds	6,031,019
Total Asia II Region	2 countries	1.287 million	121,000	9,745,330

Total Concern Response 2006	21 countries	44.646 million People Affected	1.785 million Direct Beneficiaries	27.98 million Euro Expenditure
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2007	Emergency Type	Numbers Affected	Response Type/Level	Expenditure - €
Niger	Food Crises	280,000 settled	45,000 – CTC	1,862,508
Tanzania	Regional Conflict	25,758 refugees	25,758 - WEH – food relief, NFI, Seeds, tools, infrastructure rehabilitation	286,083
DRC	Conflict	200,000 IDPs	47,500 – seeds, tools, food relief, infrastructure rehabilitation	2,163,238
Total Central Africa Region	3 countries	505,758	118,250	4,311,829
Somalia	Conflict, Drought, Floods	2.6 million	384,000 – WEH, cash for work, NFI, infrastructure rehabilitation	1,390,000
N Sudan	Conflict, Drought	2.2 million IDPs	236,000 – CTC,NFI, WEH, shelter, camp management, education	4,200,000
S Sudan	Post Conflict, Drought	2 million IDP, settled, returnee	28,750 – CTC, NFI, seeds, tools, shelter	703,882
Chad	Conflict	700,000 IDP, settled	38,000 – camp management, NFI	940,000
Kenya	Drought, Floods	3.5 million settled	57,250 – CTC, house reconstruction	1,478,000
Total Horn of Africa Region	5 countries	11.000 million	744,000	8,711,882
Malawi	Floods	10,000 settled	10,000 – cash transfers	600,000
Zimbabwe	Drought, Food Crisis, Political	150,000 settled	150,000 – food relief	618,978
Mozambique	Drought, Floods	150,000 settled	12,000 – NFI, Household kits, food relief	104,000
Zambia	Floods	107,750 settled	81,644 – seeds, tools, cash transfers,	404,820
Total Southern Africa Region	4 countries	417,500	253,600	1,727,800
Liberia	Floods	20,000 settled	20,000 – flood response	30,000
DPRK	Floods	89,000 settled	89,000 – WEH, infrastructure rehabilitation, shelter, seeds	144,000
Haiti	Hurricane, Tropical Storms	125,000 settled	7,750 – NFI,	603,000
Total Worldwide Region	3 countries	234,000	116,750	777,000

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Bangladesh	Cyclone, Floods	20.1 million settled	696,500 – NFI, food relief, shelter	3,343,520
Pakistan	Cyclone, Floods	2.5 million settled	75,000 – shelter, NFI, food relief, WEH	618,000
India	Floods	3 million settled	120,000 – food relief, NFI	1,563,518
Laos	Food Crisis	10,000 settled	10,000 – food relief	25,000
Total Asia Region	4 countries	26.610 million	901,500	5,550,038

Total Concern Response 2007	19 countries	38.767 million People Affected	2.134 million Direct Beneficiaries	21.079 million Euro Expenditure
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2008	Emergency Type	Numbers Affected	Response Type/Level	Expenditure - €
Niger	Food Crises	280,000 settled	10,501 – CTC	1,914,614
Tanzania	Regional Conflict	25,758 refugees	12,617 - WEH	286,083
DRC	Conflict	200,000 IDPs	14,282 – seeds, tools, food relief, infrastructure rehabilitation	978,931
Rwanda	Earthquake	5,500 settled	5,500 - NFI	38,176
Total Central Africa Region	4 countries	511,258	42,700	3,217,804
Somalia	Conflict, Drought, Foods	2.6 million	354,178 – WEH, cash for work, NFI, infrastructure rehabilitation	1,828,456
N Sudan	Conflict, Drought	2.5 million IDPs	302,783 – CTC, NFI, WEH, shelter, camp management, education	4,527,409
S Sudan	Post Conflict, Drought, Floods	2 million IDP, settled, returnee	7,973 – CTC, NFI, seeds, tools, shelter	466,702
Chad	Conflict	700,000 IDP, settled	54,489– camp management, NFI	1,493,994
Kenya	Drought, Post Election Conflict	2.5 million settled	686,854 – CTC, house reconstruction	1,623,374
Ethiopia	Drought, Food Crisis	6.5 million settled	1,417,043 – CTC, NFI, seeds	3,827,911
Total Horn of Africa Region	6 countries	16.8 million	2,823,320	13,767,846
Malawi	Floods	2,500 settled	1,250 – seeds	21,162
Zimbabwe	Drought, Food Crisis, Political, Cholera	500,000 settled	379,954 – food relief, WEH	1,504,947
Mozambique	Floods	100,000 settled	33,130 – NFI, Education kits	307,275
Total Southern Africa Region	3 countries	602,500	414,334	1,833,384
Haiti	Hurricane, Tropical Storms, Floods	650,000 settled	7,226 – NFI,	687,870
Total Worldwide Region	1 country	650,000	7,226	687,870
Bangladesh	Cyclone, Floods	2 million settled	114,414 – NFI, food relief, shelter, boats, WEH	5,163,584
Pakistan	Cyclone, Floods	200,000 settled	39,598– WEH, NFI	424,096
India	Floods	500,000 settled	120,000 – food relief, NFI, cash for work, seeds, shelter	1,080,743
Nepal	Floods	246,500 settled	10,766– WEH, NFI, Food relief	77,925
Timor Este	Conflict, Food Crisis	100,000 settled, IDPs	12,650 – food relief, shelter, NFI	19,735
Total Asia Region	5 countries	3.046 million	297,428	6,766,083

Myanmar	Cyclone, Floods	2.04 million settled	90,000– WEH, NFI, seeds, agricultural equipment, shelter, fishing equipment,	439,000
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Total Concern Response 2008	20 countries	23.740 million People Affected	3.676 million Direct Beneficiaries	26.712 million Euro Expenditure
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