



**Concern Worldwide**

**Policy Statement**

**December 2015**

## **Our Identity – Who We Are**

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

## **Our Vision for Change**

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

## **Our Mission – What We Do**

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

To achieve this mission, we engage in long term development work, build resilience, respond to emergency situations, and seek to address the root causes of poverty through our development education and advocacy work.

## Our Core Values

Built on our history and the voluntary, compassionate commitment of Concern's founders:

**We focus on extreme poverty:** We are driven by a clear focus on eliminating poverty in the most vulnerable places and responding to humanitarian crises.

**We believe in equality:** People are equal in rights and must be treated with respect and dignity.

**We listen:** Listening and partnership are key to empowering the poorest and most vulnerable to transform their own lives.

**We respond rapidly:** People affected by disasters are entitled to have their most basic needs met through rapid, effective, and principled responses.

**We are courageous:** Taking necessary risks, balanced with sound judgement, allows us to work in the most challenging contexts.

**We are committed:** Going the extra mile to support communities in times of need and in the face of very difficult operating environments.

**We are innovative:** Finding effective solutions requires innovative thinking combined with a pragmatic approach.

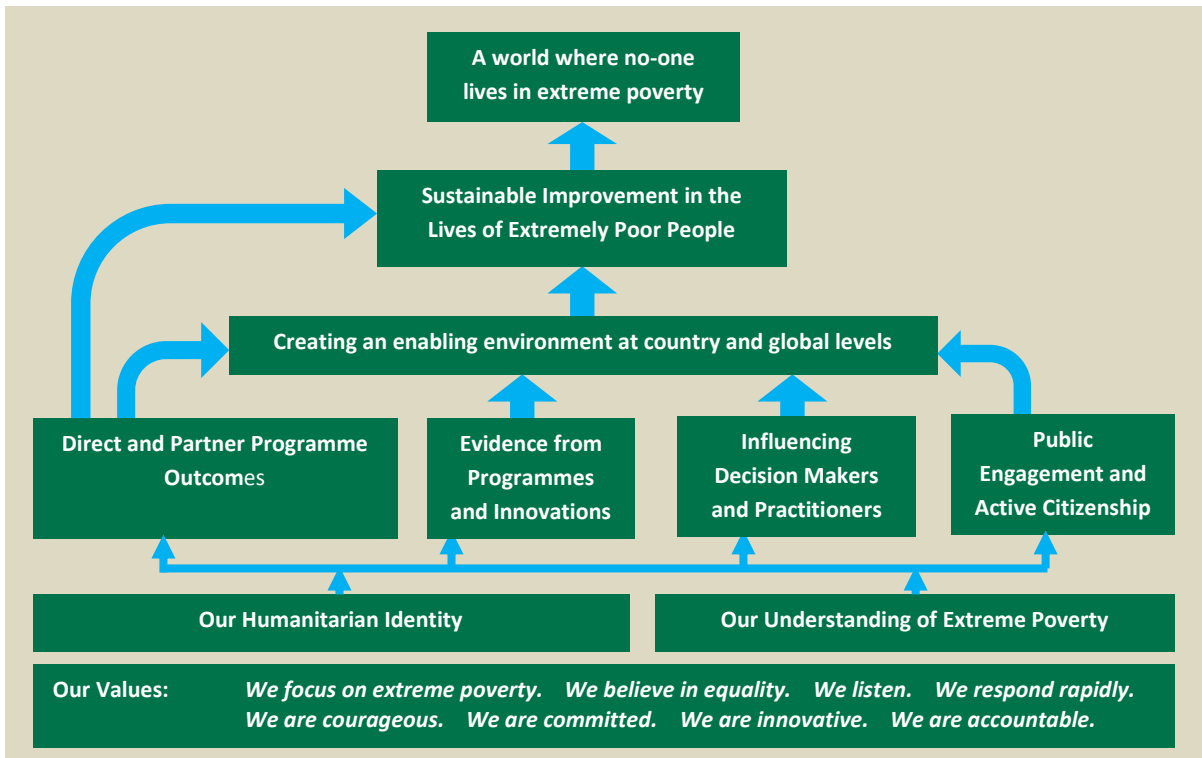
**We are accountable:** Accountability and transparency are central to all of our actions and use of resources.

## Our Purpose and Role

The Memorandum and Articles of Association of Concern Worldwide state that the purpose of the organisation is the "relief, assistance and advancement of people in need in less developed areas of the world".

Much has changed between 1968 when Concern was founded and 2015, the year the international community adopted the Sustainable Development Goals. While most of our programme focus will remain on humanitarian and development programmes overseas, we will also seek to address the root causes of extreme poverty and humanitarian crises through advocacy and active citizenship work and these will be considered programme interventions. In this way, we will seek to engage the people of both donor and recipient countries more fully in the struggle against extreme poverty globally.

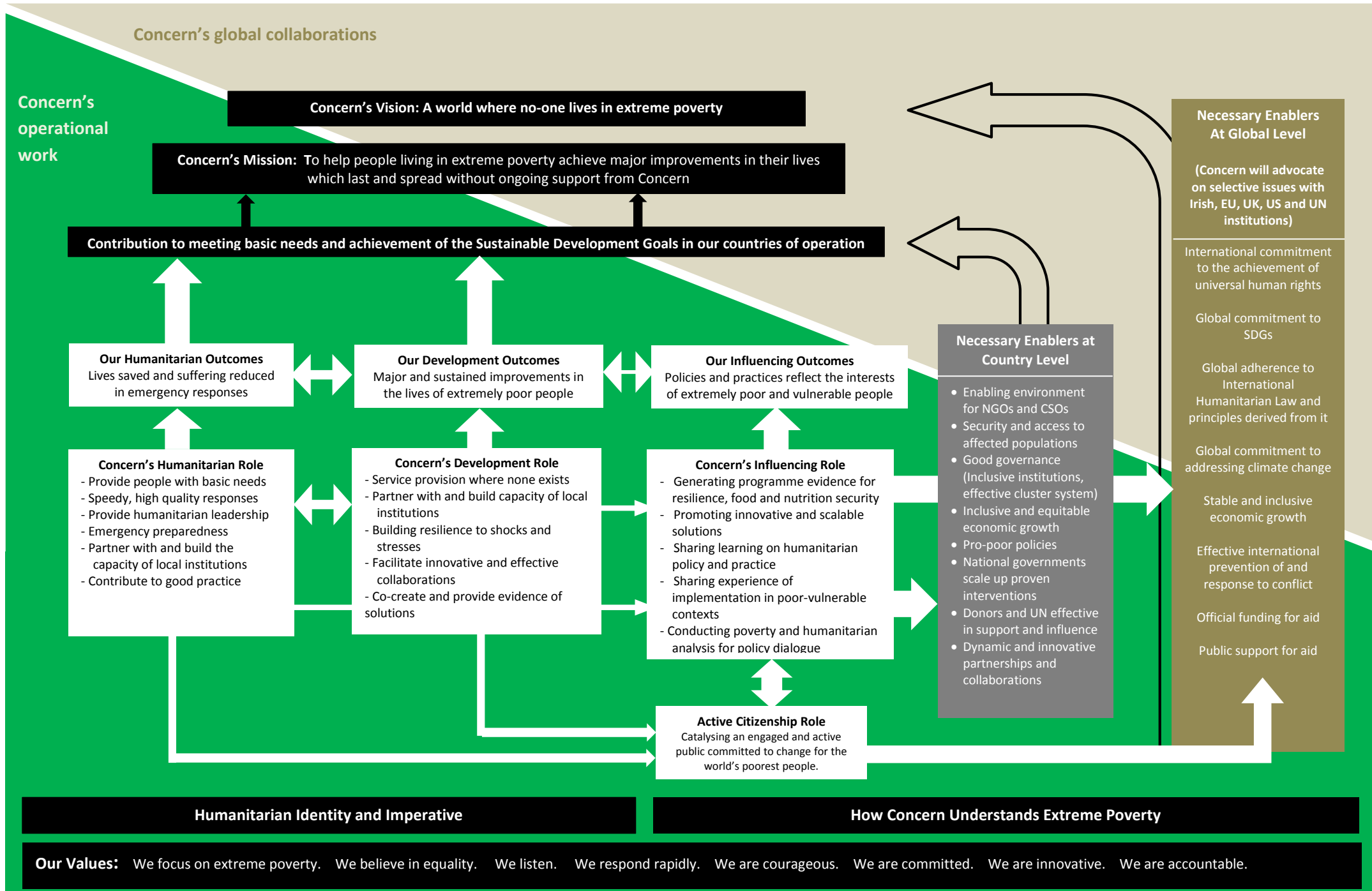
Concern's understanding of how we can achieve our Vision and Mission is articulated in the Theory of Change (below and in more detail in Annex 1) acknowledging that ours is one of many contributions necessary to achieve change, sustainably and globally.



### Foundations for the Achievement of Concern's Vision and Mission

(Simplified version of Concern's Theory of Change in Annex 1)

**Annex 1. Concern Worldwide: Theory of Change, 2015**



## Narrative with Theory of Change:

1. Concern's identity as a humanitarian non-governmental organisation means that we have the duty to respond to emergencies. We will advocate for changes necessary to solve the problems faced in humanitarian contexts and to prevent crises from occurring or deteriorating.
2. Concern's mission is to help people living in extreme poverty achieve major improvements in their lives which last and spread without ongoing support from Concern.
3. Concern can deliver direct benefits to those we wish to assist but these may not be sustained in the face of population growth, regular disasters, growing inequalities, climate change, resource scarcity, poor governance and volatile or weak economies. We know that we can effect real change at community level and are able to build capacities of government and civil society actors at roughly district level. Getting national change is much more difficult and this is where donors and UN agencies have greater focus and capacity than Concern. However, Concern has a responsibility to bring innovative, context-rich solutions to the national table and to influence the policies and practices of government and ensure that extremely poor people are heard and supported.
4. The main locus of our work will be developing countries, with a special emphasis on poor-vulnerable states and contexts. Concern targets countries and areas within countries using its own "Poor-Vulnerable Index" which applies our own definition of extreme poverty to contextual analysis. The index comprise a range of indicators under the three key components of extreme poverty, namely lack of assets or lack of a return on existing assets; inequalities; and risks and vulnerabilities. These are the countries and areas within countries where Concern feels it can make the biggest difference. However, we respond to major emergencies *wherever* they occur and this includes responses in Middle-Income Countries.
5. Concern recognises the inter-connectedness of the modern world and that the long roots of extreme poverty and human-derived as well as climate-driven disasters are now global and regional as well as national. The policies of rich and powerful countries and blocs of countries and the behaviours of consumers globally impact on developing countries. There are many complex issues linked with extreme poverty. Concern does not have the capacity to address them all, even indirectly. However, it is important to analyse those most pertinent to our work and to work with others who have the capacities to make a difference in these areas. Our mission statement commits us to address, to whatever extent possible, the immediate and long-term needs and rights of our programme participants or target group, and this is why Concern carries out advocacy and active citizenship work. We will use the advocacy tactics we believe will be most effective in delivering change.
6. To achieve our mission, we have to work with others. To make the deeper and long-lasting change required to sustain the progress we make at district level and below, we work with others or work in coalitions and networks to gain more influence over change. We need diplomats to solve conflicts; we need the private sector to get economies working. Our role is to feed these people the realities of implementation and of what is happening on the ground. We need new and innovative collaborations to address poverty. We will seek, by working with diverse actors, to co-create solutions for the poorest communities.
7. The economy matters. The political economy matters even more. Economic growth is the driver of a country's development and we know that as economies grow, in general, poverty indicators improve. Given that inequality remains a huge issue in many middle-income and developing countries, economic growth has to be inclusive of the poorest. Concern focuses on economic and social rights because these come closest to the basic needs of people. But our interventions have to understand the local context and the power dynamics that drive inequalities.