

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Concern Worldwide is an international humanitarian organisation committed to eliminating extreme poverty. Concern began working in Bangladesh in 1972 and today provides emergency and development support across the country. Recognising the contributing role of disasters on extreme poverty, it has been using disaster risk reduction (DRR) across programmes since the late 1990s to reduce risk, to great effect. While it has over a decade of DRR experience it has very little to share its approach; this report is therefore designed to document how Concern reduces risk in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has a history of disasters, and residents today faces risks related to tropical storms, flooding, erosion, water pollution including salinization and arsenic contamination, drought, and violence. These risks have disproportionate impacts on the extreme poor, whom often live in areas and engage in activities that have higher risk, and have fewer assets with which to cope with risks when they occur.

As Concern understands the links between extreme poverty and disaster risk, it devotes considerable efforts at reducing risk, using assessment, preparedness, mitigation, advocacy, and measurement as risk reduction tools. Its approach is holistic, treating DRR as part of broader development challenges rather than as a stand-alone activity, and working to address the social, political, economic, human, natural, and physical factors contributing to risk. The work is especially focused on building a broad governmental and non-governmental institutional base of stakeholders committed to risk reduction, a task that Concern works toward at micro, meso, and macro levels.

Concern's activities can be summarised within the five priority action areas found in the Hyogo Framework for Action, the global UN framework for DRR:

How Concern contributes to the Hyogo Framework for Action	
Action area	Concern's contribution to HFA per action area
1 prioritize DRR in governance at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work through and support community, union, upazilla, district, and national DMCs with the DMC institutionalisation model, including the implementation of community risk analysis and development of risk reduction action plans • Improve community participation in DRR by linking communities to higher level structures across levels • Host and participate in workshops and conferences with the objective of building a supportive DRR enabling environment • Facilitate the development of issue area consortia and alliance to advocate for DRR including the local and national char alliance • Advocate to members of parliament directly for improving DRR and developing pro-poor policy
2 identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the most risky contexts and critically analyse the causes and solutions to risk through the contextual analysis process • Assess risk using participatory approaches found within the community risk analysis • Conduct resilient livelihood assessments for char areas • Support flood and storm early warning systems, including local level information dissemination

<p>3 use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety at all levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use participatory and bottom up strategies to raise awareness over risks and instil communities with a sense of agency to reduce risk • Implement DRR in schools programme that uses students as household and community agents of change for reducing risk • Provide national NGO partners with extensive training on DRR and DRM • Test and validate innovative approaches to reduce risk including ward level DMCs and climate smart community based climate smart adaptation models • Build a body of evidence on risk reduction practice through formal and informal measurement techniques • Share good practices across the organisation and with government and civil society partners
<p>4 reduce underlying risk factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to reduce environmental degradation by promoting forestry co-management, planting of erosion resistant grasses, alternative sustainable livelihoods, and other forms of NRM. • Reduce extreme poverty through long term livelihood development including livelihood training and small grants to improve livelihoods • Support hazard resilient livelihood activities, both on and off farm • Integrate DRR measures across programming including emergency response, post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation, and development • Utilise cash for work and improve beneficiary ability to access social protection as cash based social protection mechanisms and provide pavement dwellers with • Supplement basic health and education services for the extreme poor living in poverty pockets • Support direct small-scale structural measures that reduce risk by raising structures, improving water points, constructing bridges, paths, and embankments, and supporting disaster resilient building construction • Address social inequalities by placing women in key leadership positions in programmes, supporting downwards accountability to beneficiaries through the complaint response mechanism
<p>5 strengthen preparedness at all levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve organisational preparedness through the <i>preparedness for effective emergency response process</i> • Improve partner preparedness by providing regular preparedness training and helping to develop contingency plans • Create a country wide organisational response network by developing partnerships with 35 national NGOs for emergency response • Help households and communities develop preparedness plans • Support the development flood and cyclone household preparedness stocks

Concern's approach to DRR has a number of strengths, some of the main ones being:

- *Clearly identifying the extreme poor*
- *Integrated approach to programming*
- *Developing programming based on context rather than administrative division*
- *Considering risk across all work and addressing risk with a variety of interventions*
- *Working through existing government and civil society structures*
- *Using national advocacy to build support for local areas and local interventions for national advocacy*
- *Developing cross-country emergency response capacity and responding to emergencies when needed*
- *Addressing climate change impacts through community based adaptation by integrating DRR for promoting resilience*

The report concludes by offering lessons learned and recommendations for Concern, its partners, and the Bangladeshi government.