



INVESTING IN CHANGE

KENYA CYCLONE IDAI ETHIOPIA

AMBASSADOR
NEWSLETTER

June 2019

CONCERN
worldwide

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Dear Concern Ambassador,

It all started with one emergency response in one country in 1968 and continues today in 25 countries, where we are reaching over 20 million of the world's poorest people because of you. After 50 years, we remain committed to responding where the needs are most acute and immediate. Your support enables us to identify creative solutions to tackle extreme poverty and respond quickly to disasters that never make the news. Last year alone, we responded to 66 emergencies, both large and small, across the world.

2018 was a year of celebration for Concern

Worldwide as we marked our 50th anniversary and saw record-breaking fundraising results. In the US, you made this work possible with a year of extraordinary generosity, increasing funding by 20% and raising millions of dollars for our mission. We received an incredible response to our end-of-year appeal, the Concern 50 Fund. Thank you for your continued generous support. The Ambassador community is as vital as ever – and growing.

Still, we face the reality of a world in turmoil. More people are displaced than ever before, and 815 million men, women and children around the world go to bed hungry each night. We refuse to accept this reality and need your help now more than ever.

Our goal is to grow to a \$50-million organization by the end of 2020 – an ambitious goal, but our anniversary year reminded me that boldness backed by a relentless focus on results is in our DNA. Together, with you, we can build on this success and grow our resources to respond quickly wherever, whenever, and however we are needed.

In this newsletter, we have highlighted a few programs your support has made possible and I can assure you that your generosity is changing lives every single day. I ask that you help us in spreading the word to those in your life who share this vision of a world without poverty. We are always happy to share more stories of the impact you are making. Please don't hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for continuing to strengthen our foundation – our work would not be possible without you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen A. Kelly".

Colleen Kelly
CEO, Concern Worldwide US

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2018



In **Sierra Leone**, we increased crop yields by 282% and reduced crop loss by 25%



In **Burundi and Rwanda**, we reduced the "hunger gap" (the months during which families do not have enough to eat) by 38%.



In **Malawi**, Concern's Graduation program has been so successful that the initiative is being used to develop government policy.



In **South Sudan**, the number of households in which women are consulted in key areas of household decision-making increased from 16% to 45%.



In **Afghanistan**, we increased the number of girls attending school from 68% to 80%.



In **Niger**, we increased access to clean drinking water from 9% to 37%.



COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS, BIRTH REFERRAL AGENTS, AND HEALTH EXTENSION WORKERS POSE FOR A PHOTO WITH DARA BURKE, VP OF INDIVIDUAL GIVING AT CONCERN WORLDWIDE US; COLLEEN KELLY, CEO OF CONCERN WORLDWIDE US; MARY ANNE RAMER, CONCERN AMBASSADOR; AND JOAN CARROLL, CONCERN US BOARD MEMBER AT SONGA HEALTH FACILITY IN MARSABIT, KENYA.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND, SKIN IN THE GAME

An Ambassador Story

By Mary Anne Ramer

No matter how many Nat Geo, “Nova,” “Nature,” or Richard Attenborough-narrated documentaries you’ve seen, nothing beats visiting a new country for the first time. For qualified Concern Ambassadors, nothing beats visiting one of the 25 countries where Concern serves with Concern leaders and in-country staff giving you an in-depth picture of its people, its environment, and its needs.

In July of 2018, I had the privilege and huge enjoyment of visiting Concern’s programs in Kenya, along with Concern CEO Colleen Kelly, longtime Concern Board Member Joan Carroll, and Dara Burke, Concern’s VP of Individual Giving and a resident of Kenya in her childhood.

Our intrepid quartet, which I dubbed the Gang of Four, had a jam-packed, whirlwind eight days in country, planned and executed by Country Director Amina Abdulla and her veteran staff. The itinerary ranged from Lunga Lunga, the largest “informal settlement,” i.e. slum, in Nairobi, to the high desert drought-wracked county of Marsabit in the northwest of the country near the Ethiopian border.

Whether in Kenya’s capital or far into rural acres of subsistence farmers, goat and camel herders, and the on-the-hoof bovine assets of the Maasai, we visited programs

and facilities that highlighted the scope of Concern’s service – from health centers that concentrate on mother and child care, to urban and rural schools that provide much needed basic educational tools, to community development programs that give residents the knowledge and negotiating skills they need to insure that the county government gives them what they want and need, rather than what the politicians think they should have.

Throughout all our visits, I was most impressed by the ability of average Kenyans, and especially women, to forcefully but gracefully present the realities of their daily lives while at the same time offering us a vision of a future that will be smarter, healthier, and more politically powerful due to the work of Concern.

But, our trip wasn’t all work. Woven Into our schedule were visits to wildlife parks, elephant and giraffe sanctuaries, and countryside alive with herds of zebras, water buffalo, and many species of antelopes.

So my advice to all Concern supporters is to raise your level of giving until you can qualify for one of these trips. Until you have boots on the ground and skin in the game, you won’t fully realize just how vital your contributions are.

Mary Anne Ramer is the executive director of the Spark Fund, which by the end of 2018 had contributed a total of \$1,020,000 to Concern.



JILLO ARERE, 5 YEARS OLD, LIVES IN TARI ADHI, MARSABIT, KENYA, WHERE CONCERN HAS BEEN PROMOTING THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS MODEL. PHOTO: KIERAN MCCONVILLE/CONCERN WORLDWIDE

CYCLONE IDAI: A TALE OF 2 RESPONSES

By Kieran McConville



WORKERS UNLOAD BUNDLES OF BLANKETS AND BEDDING FROM A TRUCK DURING A DISTRIBUTION IN NDEJA, MOZAMBIQUE, WHICH WAS HARD HIT BY CYCLONE IDAI IN MARCH 2019. PHOTO: TOMMY TRENCHARD/CONCERN WORLDWIDE

A behind-the-scenes look at Concern's response to Cyclone Idai earlier this year gives a good insight into how we deal with emergencies in different contexts.

With gusts of 175mph and 48 inches of rain, Idai slammed into Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe on the night of March 14th, leaving nearly 1,000 dead and affecting over 3 million people.

Concern has a base in Malawi, and Country Director Yousaf Jomezai quickly secured approval to mount an emergency response. The country team has a dedicated Humanitarian Program Officer and emergency plan. Within a few days, truckloads of essential household and shelter items all sourced within the region were on their way to the affected areas for distribution to families left homeless by the flooding.

"Cash will also be a key part of this response," Yousaf explains. "Because markets continue to function, we have decided to distribute some funds directly. This means families can buy what they need and the money will stay within the local economy." It's an efficient and effective way to deliver aid.

Across the border in Mozambique, things were a little more complicated. Concern ceased operations there in 2017 to concentrate on more fragile states, but we maintain strategic partnerships throughout the world for just such an eventuality. In this case we are working with Cesvi, an Italian organization with a base in the worst affected area of Mozambique.

"Tens of thousands of acres of nearly matured crops were destroyed and many houses simply disappeared," according to Kieran McConville of Concern U.S., who was on the ground soon after the cyclone. "Reaching those in need has been very challenging for the team."

When a disaster happens in a country where Concern has no existing presence, Concern draws on members of its "Surge" and Rapid Deployment teams to staff the response. On this occasion, specialists from the UK, Ireland, Chad, and the US joined up with Mozambique-based partners to get assessment and relief operations under way as soon as possible.

Pre-positioned emergency supplies (tarps, blankets, soap, buckets, etc.) were flown from warehouses in Dubai and transported by truck to the center of the country, while the team worked with UN agencies to source food and seeds for distribution to remote communities.

There was and continues to be urgent need for assistance to the survivors of Cyclone Idai, the worst storm to hit southern Africa in living memory. Because it struck during the "hungry season", the time when food supplies have run out and the new harvest is not yet in, people were already weak and vulnerable. Losing the harvest has been nothing short of catastrophic. The recovery process will be long and difficult.

In any emergency situation, time is of the essence. Thanks to your incredible generosity and immediate response, Concern has raised over \$100,000 in the United States alone. Your money is being spent wisely. Thank you!



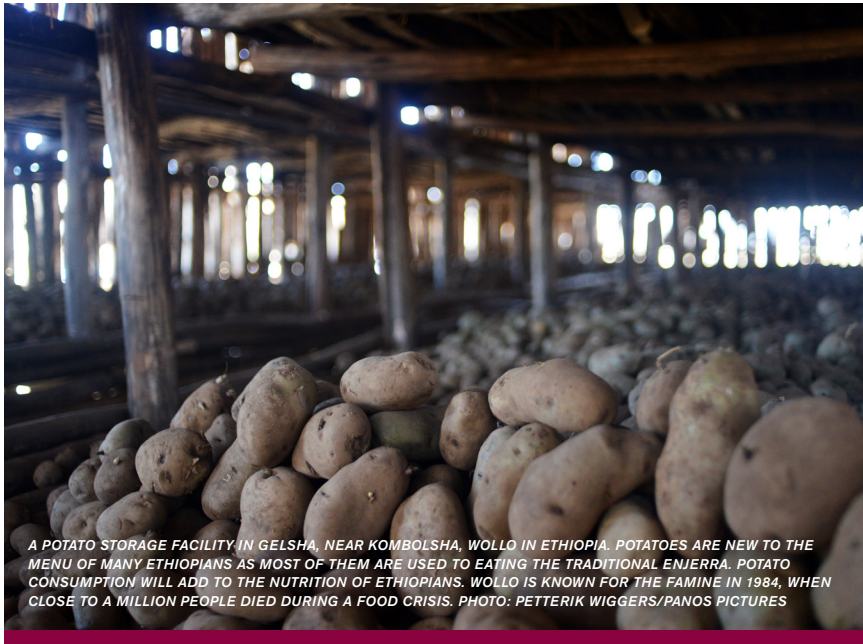
LUISA JOSEF HAS RECEIVED FOOD, SEEDS, AND OTHER SUPPLIES FROM CONCERN IN NDEJA, MOZAMBIQUE. "THE CYCLONE DESTROYED OUR HOME...WE LOST EVERYTHING - OUR FOOD, OUR CLOTHES, EVEN THE CROPS IN OUR FIELDS. WE HAVE BEEN SUFFERING HERE, BUT NOW WE'RE STARTING TO REBUILD. WE WILL PLANT THESE SEEDS, AND IT WILL HELP US TO START AGAIN." PHOTO: TOMMY TRENCHARD/CONCERN WORLDWIDE

BELITA ANDRADE, A 22-YEAR-OLD MOTHER OF TWO CHILDREN, AND HER NEIGHBORS PICK UP THEIR CONCERN EMERGENCY SUPPLIES BOXES. THESE SUPPLIES ARE MUCH NEEDED – AFTER CYCLONE IDAI FLOODED HER HOME, BELITA FLED TO A DISPLACEMENT CAMP WITH ONLY A FEW BELONGINGS. PHOTO: GAVIN DOUGLAS/CONCERN WORLDWIDE



IN ETHIOPIA, A DRAMATIC SUCCESS STORY

By Kieran McConville



A POTATO STORAGE FACILITY IN GELSHA, NEAR KOMBOLSHA, WOLLO IN ETHIOPIA. POTATOES ARE NEW TO THE MENU OF MANY ETHIOPIANS AS MOST OF THEM ARE USED TO EATING THE TRADITIONAL ENJERRA. POTATO CONSUMPTION WILL ADD TO THE NUTRITION OF ETHIOPIANS. WOLLO IS KNOWN FOR THE FAMINE IN 1984, WHEN CLOSE TO A MILLION PEOPLE DIED DURING A FOOD CRISIS. PHOTO: PETTERIK WIGGERS/PANOS PICTURES

Concern recently received confirmation of an Irish success in the fight against hunger when four districts in one of the poorest and most remote parts of Ethiopia were found by a joint UN/Ethiopian government body to no longer be in immediate need of humanitarian assistance. This dramatic improvement is the first since this hunger “hotspot classification” measurement system was introduced in 2000. The hero? What is known locally as the “Irish” potato.

This humble spud, introduced by Concern into the country's drought-prone northern highland regions of South Wollo in Amhara in 2007, is thriving where other crops have failed. Credited with a major drop in food shortages and improvements in the local economy, it thrives at altitudes of nearly 2 miles above sea level, where visitors can struggle to breathe.

“Initially, potato farming was a hard sell,” according to Concern's Eileen Morrow. “Families here were used to eating barley and they were dependent on it for their livelihoods. We decided to focus on younger generations and eventually we managed to convince 16 young farmers to pilot potato farming on small plots of land – and now the entire region is reaping the awards.

Ali Assen was one of the first to take to the tubers. “We were eating two meals a day for six months and going hungry for the other half of the year,” he says. “Now we have three meals a day, every day of the year. We lived in a one-room hut and now we live in a two-floor house. I have an ox, two cows, three horses, and a herd of goats.”

Barley in the South Wollo fetches 2,600 Ethiopian Birr (\$90) per acre, while one acre of potatoes can sell for up to 25,000 Ethiopian Birr (\$860), nearly ten times as much. “Our experience in South Wollo shows that aid works and can dramatically improve people's lives,” says Eileen.

The potato, of which there are over a thousand varieties, is the fourth most produced food crop on the planet after rice, wheat and maize. At Concern, our goal is to find the right solution, not the most glamorous, and this is an example of a good idea succeeding in a community. Your Concern helped to make this huge success out of “small” potatoes!



ALI ASSEN ALI ON HIS FARM 12,000 FEET UP IN THE HIGHLANDS OF SOUTH WOLLO, ETHIOPIA. ALI HAS BEEN PARTICIPATING IN A CONCERN-SPONSORED PROGRAM THAT ENCOURAGES FARMERS TO LOOK AT ALTERNATIVE CROPS. AFTER HIS THIRD YEAR, HE HAS MORE THAN TRIPLED HIS OUTPUT OF POTATOES, PRODUCING 6.1 TONS WITHIN A YEAR. PHOTO: KIERAN MCCONVILLE/CONCERN WORLDWIDE

IMPACT OF THE AMBASSADOR COMMUNITY

The Ambassador program provides committed supporters with personal and in-depth access to the work of Concern.

As an Ambassador, your support greatly increases our capacity to create and implement long-term solutions to extreme poverty and gives us the ability to:

- *Respond quickly to disasters that never make the news*
- *Support programs in places that typically receive little donor attention*
- *Spur innovation and take thoughtful risks that increase the effectiveness of our work*

BENEFITS OF THE AMBASSADOR COMMUNITY

Each level also receives all the benefits of the preceding levels.

THE HUMANITARIAN CIRCLE

\$5,000–\$24,999

- *Subscription to the Ambassador newsletter*
- *Invitations to program presentations and exclusive Ambassador gatherings*
- *Recognition in the annual report*
- *Direct access to Concern staff*

THE TRANSFORMATION CIRCLE

\$25,000–\$49,999

- *Direct access to Concern's program experts*
- *Lunch with a senior team member*
- *Opportunity to visit a country Concern supports*

THE INNOVATION CIRCLE

\$50,000–\$99,999

- *Lunch with the CEO*
- *Private dinners with visiting field staff*
- *Opportunity to visit a country Concern supports with a senior team member*

THE LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

\$100,000+ PER YEAR

- *Lunch with the Board Chairman and CEO*
- *Private dinners with visiting country directors*
- *Opportunity to visit a country Concern supports with the CEO*
- *Custom benefits to reflect your interests*

Cover photo: Esime Jenaia, a lead farmer for conservation agriculture, at her farm plot with neighbor Esnat Kasimu in Chituke village, Mangochi, Malawi. Concern has been carrying out conservation agriculture programming in Malawi since 2012. Photo: Kieran McConville/Concern Worldwide

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