



# **STRONGER TOGETHER**

COVID-19 | A REVOLUTION TURNS 20

**AMBASSADOR  
NEWSLETTER**

JUNE 2020

**CONCERN**  
worldwide

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



This is a singular moment in our history: the unstoppable social upheaval that has resulted from the killing of Mr. George Floyd, and long legacy of racist violence and injustice, set against a raging global pandemic. It's a moment of urgency, but also of empathy. Our pain and sorrow provide a small sense of what it is to live through the chronic complex emergencies that are the persistent reality in the countries where we work.

It is not the moment to take a single step back in our shared fight against poverty and injustice around the world.

You've continued to invest in Concern because you are both deeply compassionate and results-driven, and we are an organization with a track record of transforming compassion into action. We're committed to doing whatever it takes, especially in the face of disasters that would have once seemed unimaginable: the Biafran famine, famines in Ethiopia and Somalia, the Haiti Earthquake, the Ebola epidemic, and now, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our impact results from an equal focus on preparedness and response, foresight and immediate mobilization. Results-driven compassion and action is also the spirit in which you support us. It's how your generosity drives impact in our pandemic response:

**Preparedness:** We began to mobilize in December and January, as soon as the warnings of a global pandemic grew louder. Fortunately, in many of the 23 countries where we work, COVID-19 has not yet struck at scale. Nevertheless, our teams are working around the clock, educating, raising awareness, strengthening hygiene and sanitation infrastructure, and pre-positioning supplies. All of this activity is driven by lessons learned in our recent fights against Ebola in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Response:** In countries where COVID-19 has taken greater hold, like Turkey and Syria, we're providing essential frontline health and hygiene supplies, coordinating with medical responders, ensuring de-stigmatization, and working with government and institutional donors to launch larger-scale action.

We're also preparing for the global hunger crisis that is likely to result from the interruption of agriculture, markets, and supply lines.

We need unrestricted, general operation support dollars now. Please consider sending in a multi-year pledge: It's the essential resource we need to prepare for crisis at scale, and respond at scale. Increase your annual gift, if you can, give online, or send in a contribution for those all-important major fall fundraising events that COVID-19 may well force us to postpone.

As you know, there is no more powerful investment you can make.

With deepest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen A. Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Colleen Kelly  
CEO, Concern Worldwide US

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2019



We responded to **102 EMERGENCIES** in **21 COUNTRIES**, reaching **11.5 MILLION PEOPLE**.



In **MALAWI**, we reached over **100,000 PEOPLE** affected by Cyclone Idai with emergency supplies, seed distribution, and cash transfers.



We reached over **10 MILLION** people with health and nutrition assistance – including malnutrition screening and treatment for almost 100,000 women and children in **SOUTH SUDAN**.



Over **1 million** people benefitted from our education programs, and we achieved school attendance rates as high as 99% in parts of **KENYA**.



Our emergency response to drought and instability brought lifesaving assistance to over 270,000 internally displaced and other marginalized groups in **SOMALIA AND SOMALILAND**.



Overall, we reached **14.9 MILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS** through our programs.



## COVID-19: CONCERN IN THE FIGHT

Right now, COVID-19 is the leading news story all over the world. But the pandemic is affecting different countries — and different communities — in markedly different ways.

In the absence of comprehensive testing, the truth is that nobody really knows how deeply COVID-19 has embedded itself in the poorest countries. However there is one thing we know for certain: This is a catastrophe in the making for the world's most vulnerable people.

### SUPPORTING WOMEN AND GIRLS DURING COVID-19

Women are often on the frontlines of health care, carry much of the responsibility for caring for their own families, and face greater loss of income during a lockdown. Mothers are more likely to go hungry when food resources are tight, and girls are regularly pulled out of school to help look after younger children. Both women and girls are also more likely to experience gender-based violence.

In the US, the COVID-19 crisis has led us to postpone our Women of Concern luncheons, which generate vital funds each year to create stronger, more resilient, and more equitable societies. In their place, we have launched the **Fund for Women and Girls** to ensure that the hard-won gains we have made towards gender equality are not lost. **Please email Annie Marsh Ryerson at [annie.ryerson@concern.net](mailto:annie.ryerson@concern.net) to learn more or visit [concernusa.org/women](https://concernusa.org/women) to make a gift in support of this critical work.**

The pandemic has overwhelmed health systems in some of the globe's wealthiest countries. The threat is far greater in countries like the Central African Republic, where there are just 3 ventilators for 5 million people, or the Democratic Republic of the Congo (15 ventilators for 90 million). But as Concern's Director of International Programs, Anne O'Mahony points out, "for the poor, the numbers of ventilators is irrelevant — they will never get near one."

The good news is that some the most effective ways to halt the disease's spread are neither expensive nor complicated. Drawing on lessons learned during our Ebola responses in West Africa and the DRC, our teams took immediate action to deploy two of the most critical defenses: accurate information and essential hygiene resources. "Posters, radio ads, loudspeakers, and community sensitization, along with soap, clean water, and protective equipment for health workers, are our weapons of choice," says Concern's Kirk Prichard.

Displaced populations are especially at risk. COVID-19 has now been confirmed in the world's biggest refugee camp, where nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees live in close quarters. Our team there was ahead of the curve, distributing extra food and nutrition supplies to help those we work with weather Bangladesh's national lockdown. We've also worked with our extensive network of community volunteers to spread simple and accurate messaging about the virus, combatting false rumors circulating through unofficial channels.

## LOCUST SWARMS THREATEN TO DEEPEN HUNGER CRISIS

An invasion of highly destructive Desert Locusts struck East Africa this year, consuming crops vital for the survival of millions. Billions of eggs are now hatching across Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya. Concern's Kenya country director Amina Abdulla warns: "With this, you could see the numbers [of people hungry] tripling as a result of the damage caused by the locusts."

Spraying is the most effective way of dealing with locust infestations, but COVID-19 has interrupted that work. Concern is working to provide cash and seeds for those affected, to help buy food and to replace damaged crops.

These actions have been replicated across all 23 countries of operation: Throughout the Middle East, we've distributed tens of thousands of hygiene kits. Across Africa, we've installed hundreds of new handwashing stations and distributed large consignments of soap. In Haiti, our team in the dense slums of Port au Prince has been distributing hygiene supplies and community education. We are also providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to frontline workers where we can.

But beyond the immediate crisis of COVID-19 looms an even greater threat: the prospect of economic collapse and widespread hunger. The UN has warned of impending famine and estimates that the number of people dependent on food aid could double in 2020. To ensure that ongoing poverty-reduction programs are protected, our US team is actively canvassing institutional donors for additional funds to deal with the oncoming crisis, and working with country teams to put together new proposals for funding.

"It's vital that we move quickly and decisively to ensure that all of the amazing success we have achieved together over recent years is not eroded by the fallout from COVID-19," says Concern US CEO, Colleen Kelly. "We must protect that investment and stand shoulder to shoulder with the communities we serve."



## A HEALTH REVOLUTION TURNS 20

**20 years ago, Concern played a key role in developing an approach that would go on to revolutionize child nutrition and save millions of young lives around the world.**

By the end of the 20th century it was clear that in-patient care for malnourished children — the standard at the time — was simply not working. Over 6 million children a year were dying from causes linked to malnutrition. Staffing treatment centers with trained, around-the-clock personnel was difficult and expensive. Recovery rates were low, partly because mothers, under pressure to return home, often withdrew their children before treatment was complete. What caregivers needed was a treatment that could be demonstrated by a professional, but administered at home.

The stakes were high: These children were so vulnerable that any product that was not 100% safe — or able to be improperly administered — might prove more deadly than malnutrition itself. Many people in the health and development community were skeptical that such an approach could ever work. But when French pediatrician André Briend sat down to breakfast one morning and noticed his family's jar of Nutella, inspiration struck.

The key was to give children a high amount of calories in a small dose. A peanut-based therapeutic food would be easy to produce in the countries with the highest rates of malnutrition, and making it oil-based would prevent spoiling, giving the product a long shelf-life. After much experimentation and testing, Plumpy'nut, a ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), was born. Mothers could now bring their children to a clinic, have them screened for malnutrition, and (if needed) be sent home with a course of treatments that were portable and stable enough to be stored in even the harshest of conditions.

When a famine swept through the Horn of Africa in 2000, it threatened millions of Ethiopians. Concern, in partnership with research organization Valid, was allowed to set up a pilot program to test the new treatment model. We called it Community Therapeutic Care, later to be renamed Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition, or CMAM.

At the time, a 10% mortality rate among children being treated for malnutrition was considered aspirational. The norm was often 20 to 30%. For children taking part in the CMAM pilot in Ethiopia, mortality rates were 4.5% — far below what anyone had dared to think possible.

Concern followed up with a larger program one year later in Darfur, Sudan, where we treated 25,000 acutely malnourished children and achieved similarly positive results. By 2007, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the World Food Programme issued a joint statement recognizing the protocol as a best practice, setting into motion a transformative approach that is now the global standard of care.

And we're not done innovating yet. As we've rolled out this approach across the globe, we've noticed patterns — in many places, the number of children needing treatment for acute malnutrition peaks predictably during specific months. We realized that if these surges could be modeled and prepared for, millions more young lives could be saved. We began to adapt the CMAM model in 2012 — using surprisingly simple techniques easily adopted by local clinics — resulting in what is now known as CMAM Surge, an approach we've been rolling out across the world.

**As the world celebrates the 20th anniversary of CMAM and the millions of lives saved, we can't wait to find the next innovation that will save millions more!**



# IMPACT OF THE AMBASSADOR COMMUNITY

As an Ambassador, your support greatly increases our capacity to create and implement long-term solutions to extreme poverty, and respond quickly to urgent humanitarian needs. You ensure that our strong staff go to the hardest to reach places to make sure that no one is left behind.

The COVID-19 pandemic is truly an unprecedented global challenge, but it is poised to have a catastrophic impact on the world's poorest countries, where health and social protection systems are vastly under-resourced to meet a crisis of this scale. We are committed to stay and deliver vital assistance to those who need it most—drawing on our 50 years' of experience and work during outbreaks like Ebola to train and equip teams to respond, reaching people with frontline aid and preventative support.

The next 3 months will be critical, as the frontiers of the spread of COVID-19 extend deeper into lower income nations, and the secondary effects of lockdowns and disrupted food supply chains deepen.

**We need your support now more than ever. If you're in a position to help, we hope you'll make a contribution at any level meaningful to you. Please see the envelope enclosed for additional information or email Annie Marsh Ryerson at [annie.ryerson@concern.net](mailto:annie.ryerson@concern.net) for assistance.**

You can give a gift online at [concernusa.org/give2020](https://concernusa.org/give2020)

## BENEFITS OF THE AMBASSADOR COMMUNITY

The Ambassador Program provides committed supporters with personal and in-depth access to the work of Concern. Each level receives 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 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 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 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

## LEAVE A LEGACY

All of us want to imagine a brighter future — not just for our families, but for everyone around the world. As a Legacy Partner, you can leave a lasting gift that empowers future generations by including Concern in your estate planning. We will handle your planned gift, including a bequest and gifts of life insurance or retirement plans with the utmost care and respect. **Please email [Dara Burke](mailto:dara.burke@concern.net) at [dara.burke@concern.net](mailto:dara.burke@concern.net) or visit [concernusa.org/legacy](https://concernusa.org/legacy) to learn more about how you can include Concern in your estate planning.**

**CONCERN**  
worldwide

**CHICAGO**  
332 South Michigan Ave.  
9th Fl.  
Chicago, IL 60604

**NEW YORK**  
355 Lexington Ave.  
16th Fl.  
New York, NY 10017

**LOS ANGELES**  
10586 West Pico Blvd,  
#139  
Los Angeles, CA 90064

[www.concernusa.org](https://www.concernusa.org)