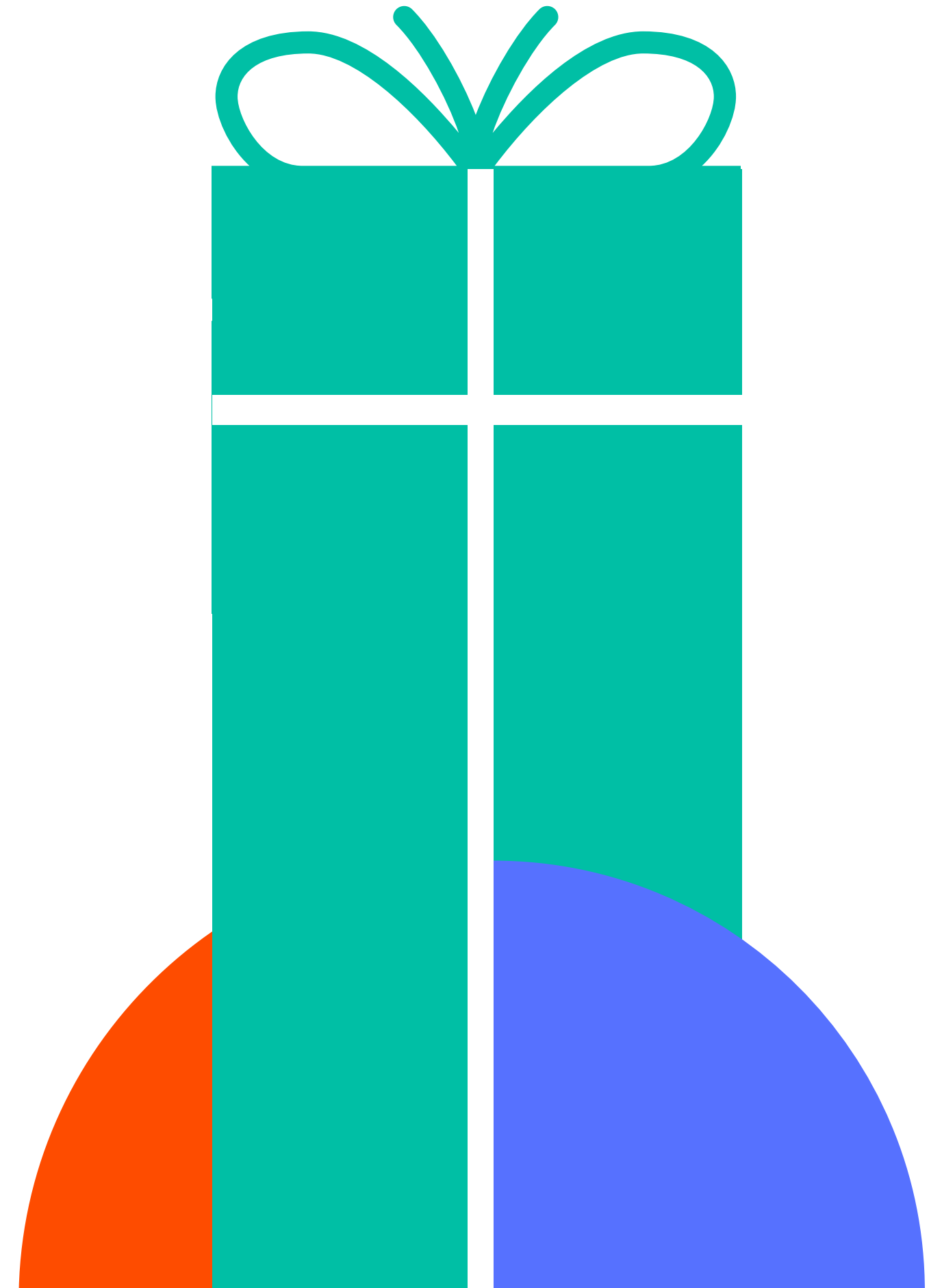


Charity Gifts 

**Increase charitable income  
with an alternative gifts site**

A guide from  System**Seed**





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- Introduction
- Why alternative gifts?
- Considerations
- Winning elements
- A case study: Concern Worldwide
- How to get started

# Introduction

Alternative gifts, sometimes called 'good gifts' or 'ethical gifts' are gifts that provide something to the clients of a charity. For example, you can give a gift to your friend of a pair of socks to be provided to a homeless person in need, or a mosquito net for a child in a malaria-stricken area.

This sort of gift-giving is becoming more popular. Many gift recipients don't feel the need for more physical items for themselves, and gift-givers like to understand the impact of their charity donation.

In this guide, you'll learn why you should be offering alternative gifts through your not-for-profit organisation, and how to do it.



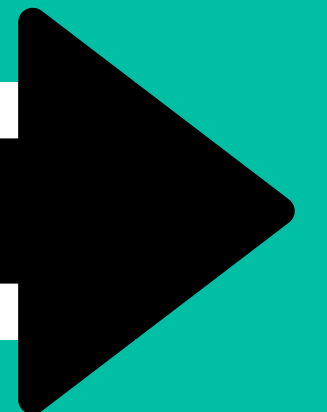
# Why alternative gifts ?

As a not-for-profit organisation, fundraising is always going to be an important issue.

Grant applications and campaigning for donations take time and resources, but they aren't the only way to generate new income for your organisation.



*6 Reasons why you should use alternative gifts*





## REASON 1

# Ongoing income

Having your own online shop for alternative gifts that contribute to your work can provide your not-for-profit with ongoing income.

Your alternative gifts site is open for business 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and does not rely on telemarketing, direct mail or street collections to generate revenue.





## REASON 2

# Proven results

Not-for-profits around the world, including our long term client Concern Worldwide, have seen significant revenue generation from alternative gifts.

Concern have seen their gifts purchase conversions rise to an incredible 15% during the pre-Christmas shopping season.





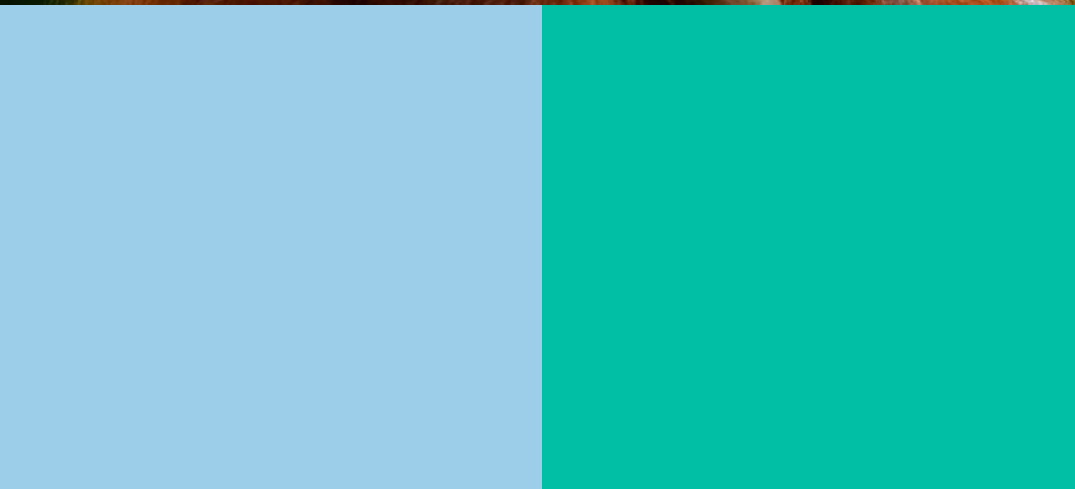
## REASON 3



# Low overheads

Once an alternative gifts site is set up, it runs itself. Apart from a little technical support and hosting fees, very little management is required to keep the site working smoothly.

This is in contrast to the amount of overhead effort that is required for many other income-generating campaigns that not-for-profits rely on.





## REASON 4

# No/low production costs

Many charities and not-for-profits sell physical gifts and branded items to raise funds and these can be good income creators.

However, there are large cost outlays in acquiring stock, getting it branded, storage, and postage materials and fees. With alternative gifts, you can keep costs very low by offering email gifts and/or a printable gift certificate.

Should you wish to add a physical element, adding a posted gift card is an easy and low-cost addition. Cards are inexpensive to source, store and mail, so this makes your alternative gifts a cost-effective option - even with a physical card in the mix.





## REASON 5



# Fast turnaround

With alternative gifts you can set up both a gifts site and individual gift items very quickly.

Whereas calendars and other physical products take a long time to design, create, print and ship, alternative gift creation can be completed in a few hours (including design) rather than several weeks.



## REASON 6

# Appeal to last minute gift buyers

Whether due to an unexpected occasion, forgetfulness or a spur-of-the-moment decision, there will always be last-minute gift buyers who will be happy to send an alternative gift to get something to the right person on time.

By offering online ordering and email delivery of your alternative gifts, you can benefit from last-minute gift hunters and maximise your donation revenue.





# Considerations

What to bear in mind when planning your alternative gifts site



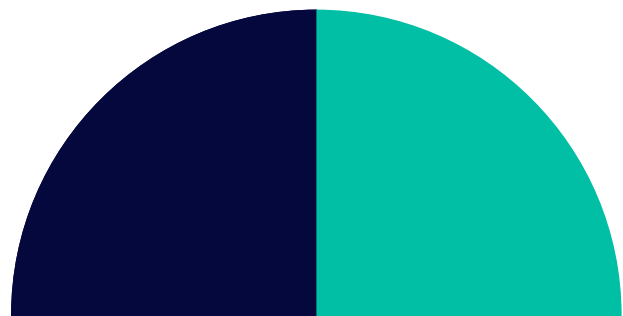
## CONSIDERATIONS

# Your cause

Is your cause right for alternative gifts? It probably is, but you may need to get creative. The public are now used to seeing gifts for international development charities, such as fruit trees, or chickens.

### GIFT SUGGESTIONS:

- **Animals:** Specialist baby food for orphaned orangutans or a radio scanner for tagged rhinos
- **Disability:** A taxi ride for a person with restricted mobility or a braille book for a blind person
- **Education:** A textbook or literacy lessons for a child
- **Elderly:** One hour of telephone support or a hot meal delivered to an elderly person
- **Environment:** A tree planted in an area of soil erosion or a litter picking kit for field workers
- **Homelessness:** A pair of socks or a sleeping bag
- **Human rights:** 30mins of legal support for a political prisoner or a witness recording of a human rights protest
- **Medical:** A vaccination or solar panels for an off-grid clinic
- **Mental health:** An hour of therapy time or a training course for a volunteer
- **Refugees:** Cookware for a family in a refugee camp or a life-jacket for a refugee child travelling by sea
- **Sanitation:** Water purification tablets or a composting toilet





## CONSIDERATIONS

# Your audience

Alternative gifts are a way to raise funds from previous and new donors. Consider what you know about how and why your donors contribute to your cause.

Think about things such as how affluent they are and the most frequent amounts donated to give you a price range for your gifts. Also, consider the topics of campaigns that you usually see the most interest in.

You should tailor your selection of alternative gifts to appeal to your audience and their budgets.



## CONSIDERATIONS

# Your IT set-up

The type of website, hosting and support may affect how your alternative gifts sales should be set up, and you also have to consider how you fulfil gift purchases.

Our alternative gift sites can be set up as completely stand-alone entities on a subdomain of your current website.

If you already have a storage and shipping process for physical gift items that supporters can buy from you, adding a physical gift card option will be easier. However, offering only email gifts or DIY printing for gift certificates means you don't need to think about storage and shipping at all.





## CONSIDERATIONS

# Payment options

How are people going to purchase gifts from you? When buying online, different buyers prefer different payment options.

Credit/debit card and PayPal are the minimum payment methods that most people expect. However, newer options such as Apple Pay are gaining traction.





## CONSIDERATIONS



# Time & resources

How are you going to implement your alternative gifts site? Consider not just the technical set up of the site, but also site design, gifts creation (including emails, downloadable gift certificates and product descriptions and thumbnails), site hosting, ongoing technical support for the site.

If you want to add a physical gift card, how is their design, purchase, and shipping going to be managed?

Find out if you have these skills in-house and the time to implement them, or if you will need outside help.



## CONSIDERATIONS

# Bespoke or SaaS

With a bespoke or custom-created site, you will have the most control over the design and functionality of your alternative gifts shop. However, costs are typically higher.

A SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) tool can be cheaper, but the functionality can also be limited and you may have to employ complex workarounds to achieve your objectives.

An optimal solution for many is a fixed-price set-up with good initial functionality, which can also be customised on request. This is what we offer at SystemSeed.





## Considerations

# Wedding lists

Consider making it easy for people to request alternative gifts for their special occasions, such as weddings, anniversaries or even funerals.

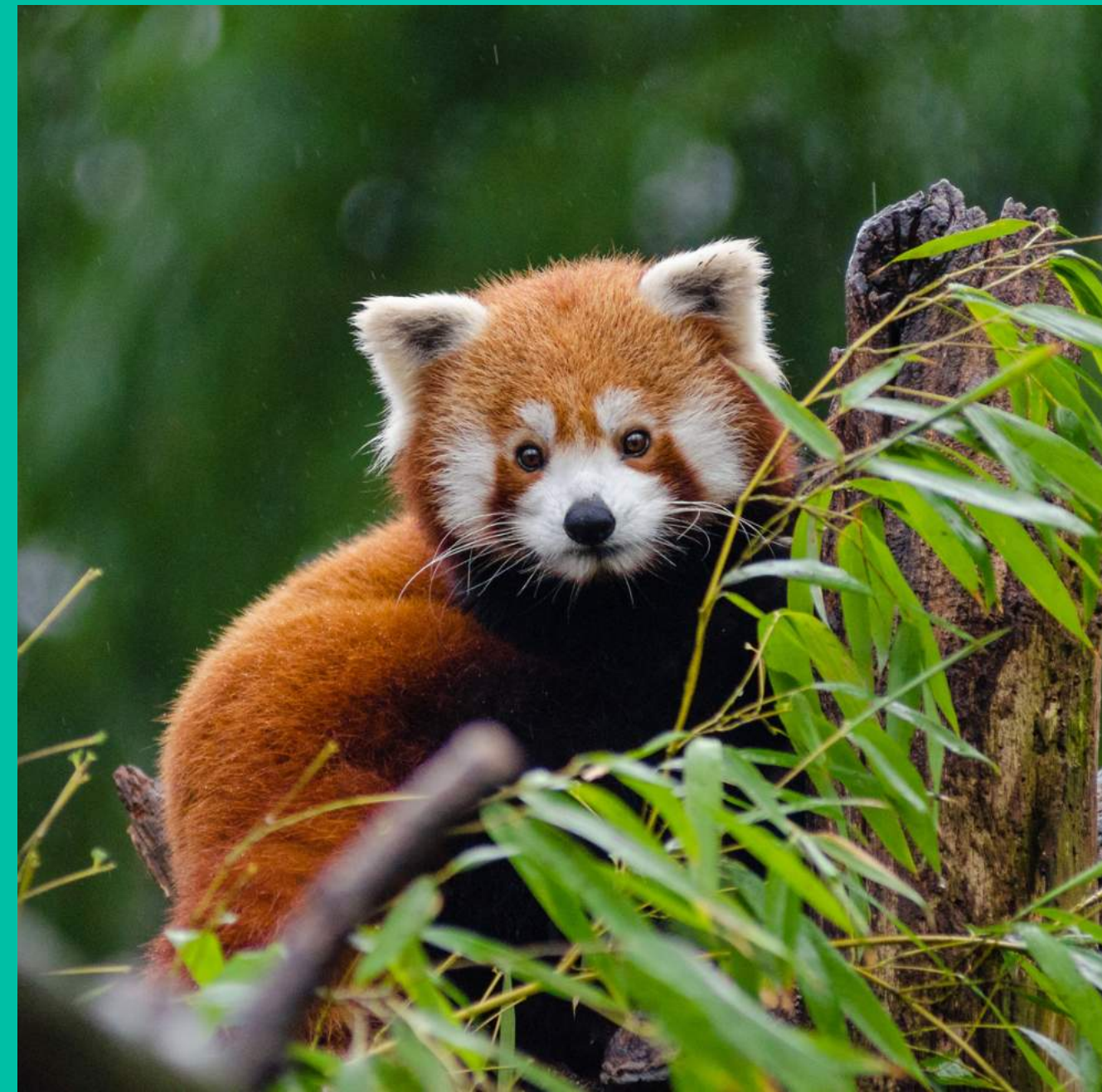
A gift list or specific donation request is quite common for these big life events. If you are able to add this functionality to your alternative gifts sites could provide a good boost in revenue.





# Winning elements

What to include to make your alternative gift site a success



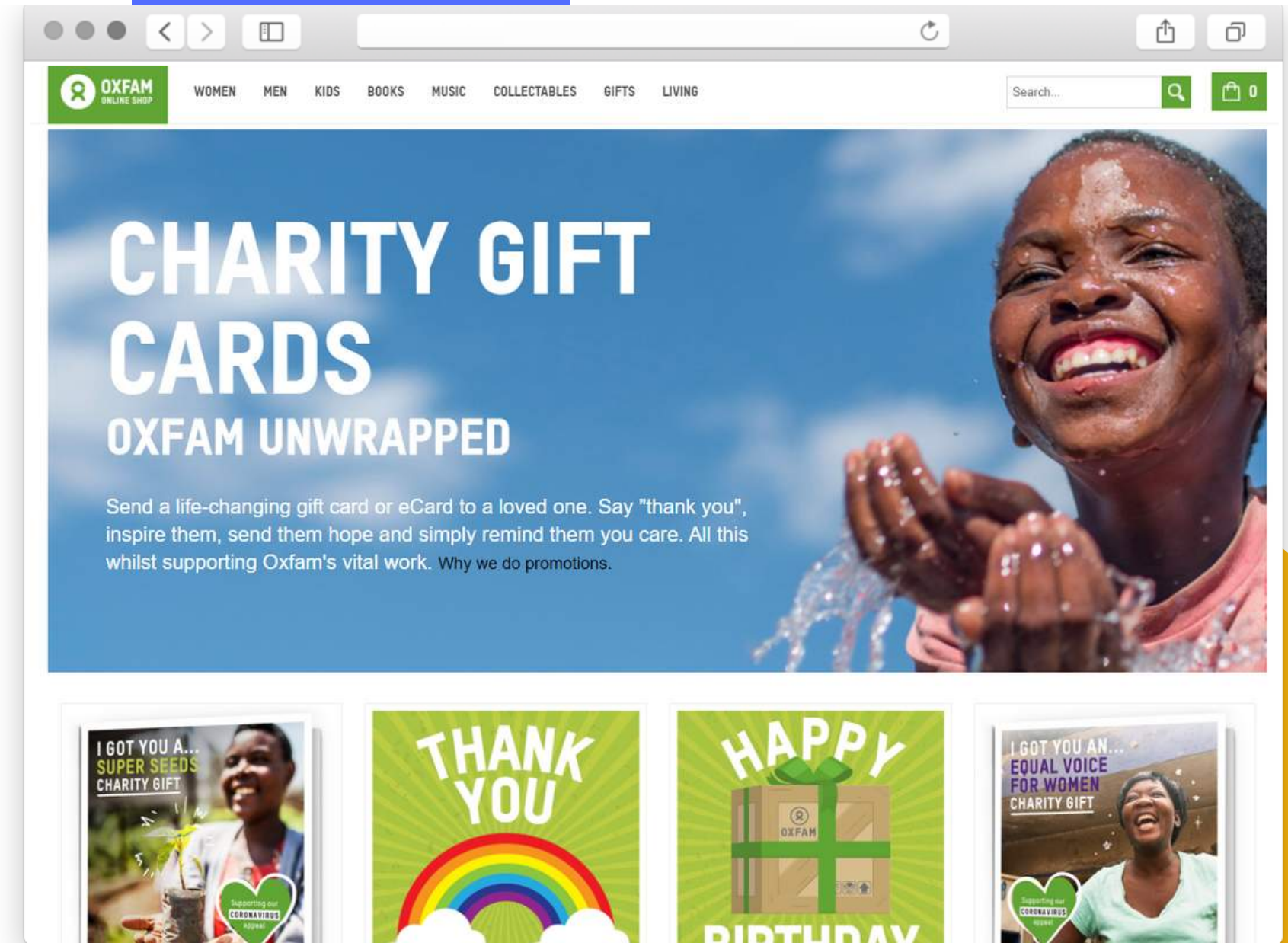
Winning elements

# First impressions

Your alternative gifts site should look great and provide an excellent user experience (UX).

This means visually drawing your site visitors in and making it easy for them to see the gifts available and how to buy.

Your gift site homepage is the first thing that most people will see so put some effort into getting it right.



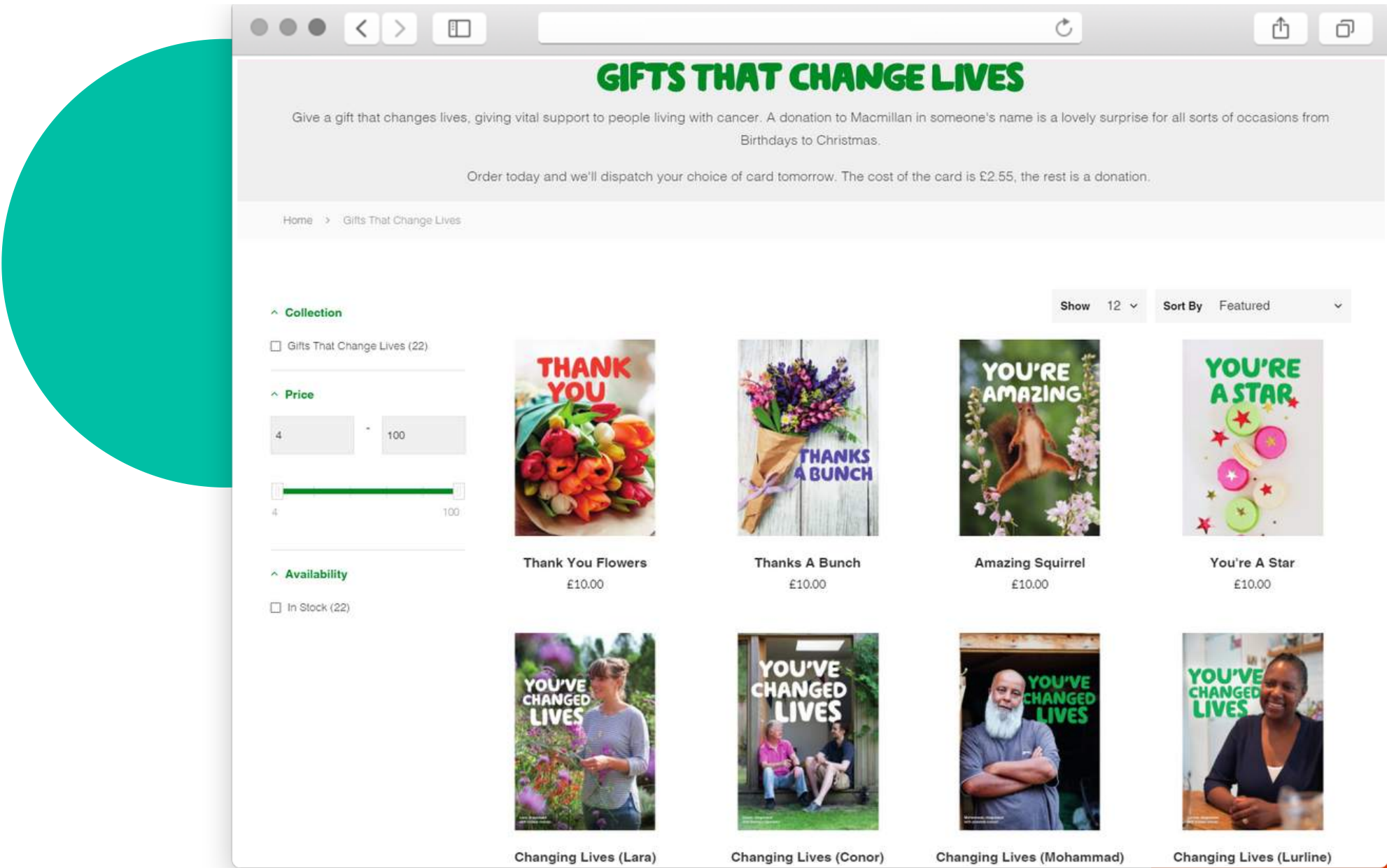
Oxfam charity gifts homepage



Winning elements

# Optional occasion cards

Offering different e-cards or physical cards based on special occasions helps make an alternative gift feel more meaningful to the recipient and more appropriate to the gift giver.



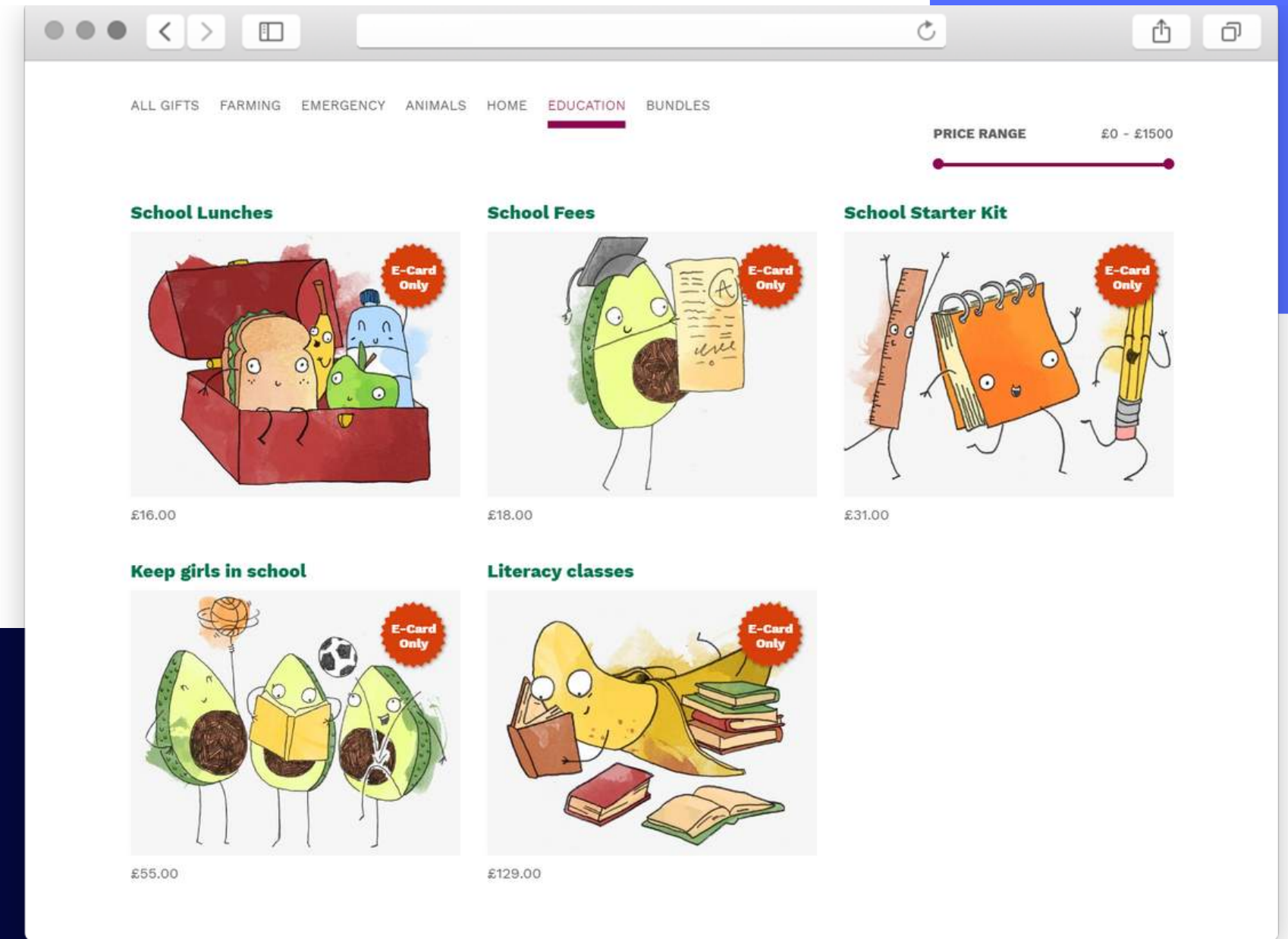
Macmillan card selector

## Winning elements

# Pricing variety

Offering a range of price points for alternative gifts means that gift-givers will be most likely to find a gift within their budget.

Displaying a price range also gives gift-givers an indication of a useful amount, and can nudge the intended gift spend up above what the person might give as a standard donation.



Concern Worldwide education gifts

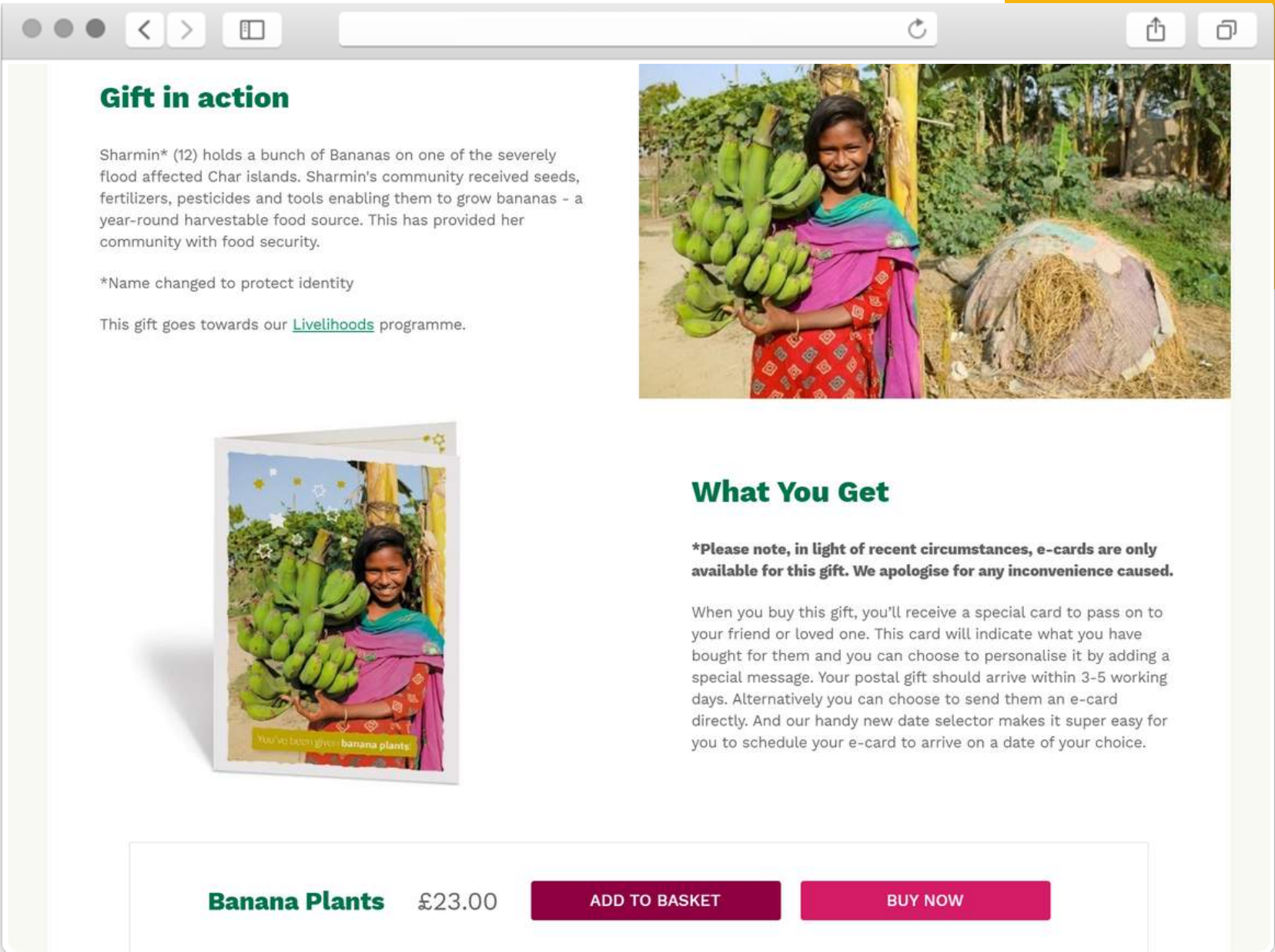


# Winning elements

# Impact stories

Show visitors to your site the difference that your gift will make. This builds trust and creates a greater emotional connection for the gift-giver.

Use an image of a person and tell the story of an individual who has benefited from the specific gift the visitor is looking at.



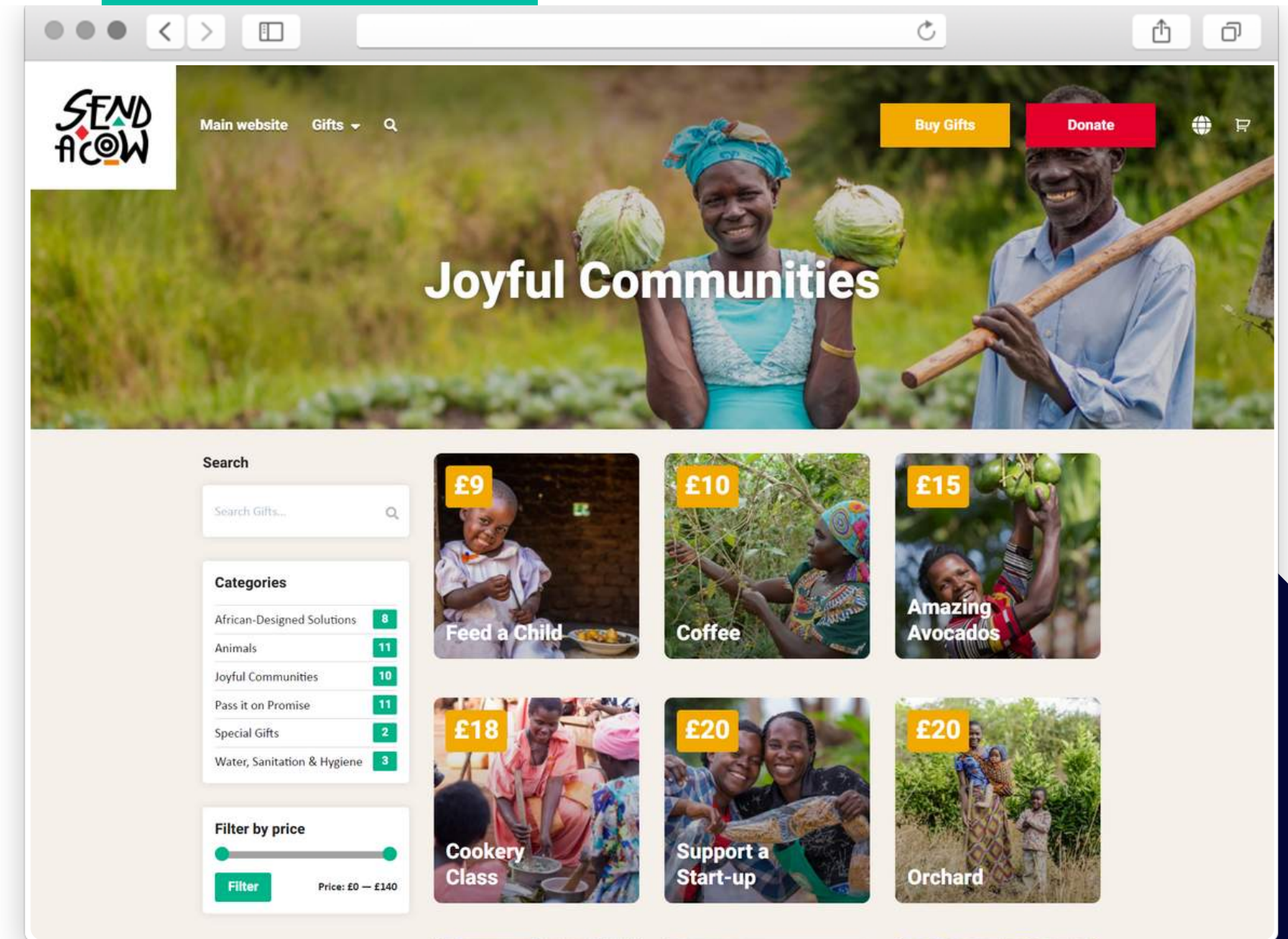
Concern Worldwide gift detail

Winning elements

# Engaging images

Use good photography of people on each gift listing, especially cute kids and animals.

Buyers like to see positive images that show the benefit of their gift and it increases engagement and sales.



Send A Cow gifts page

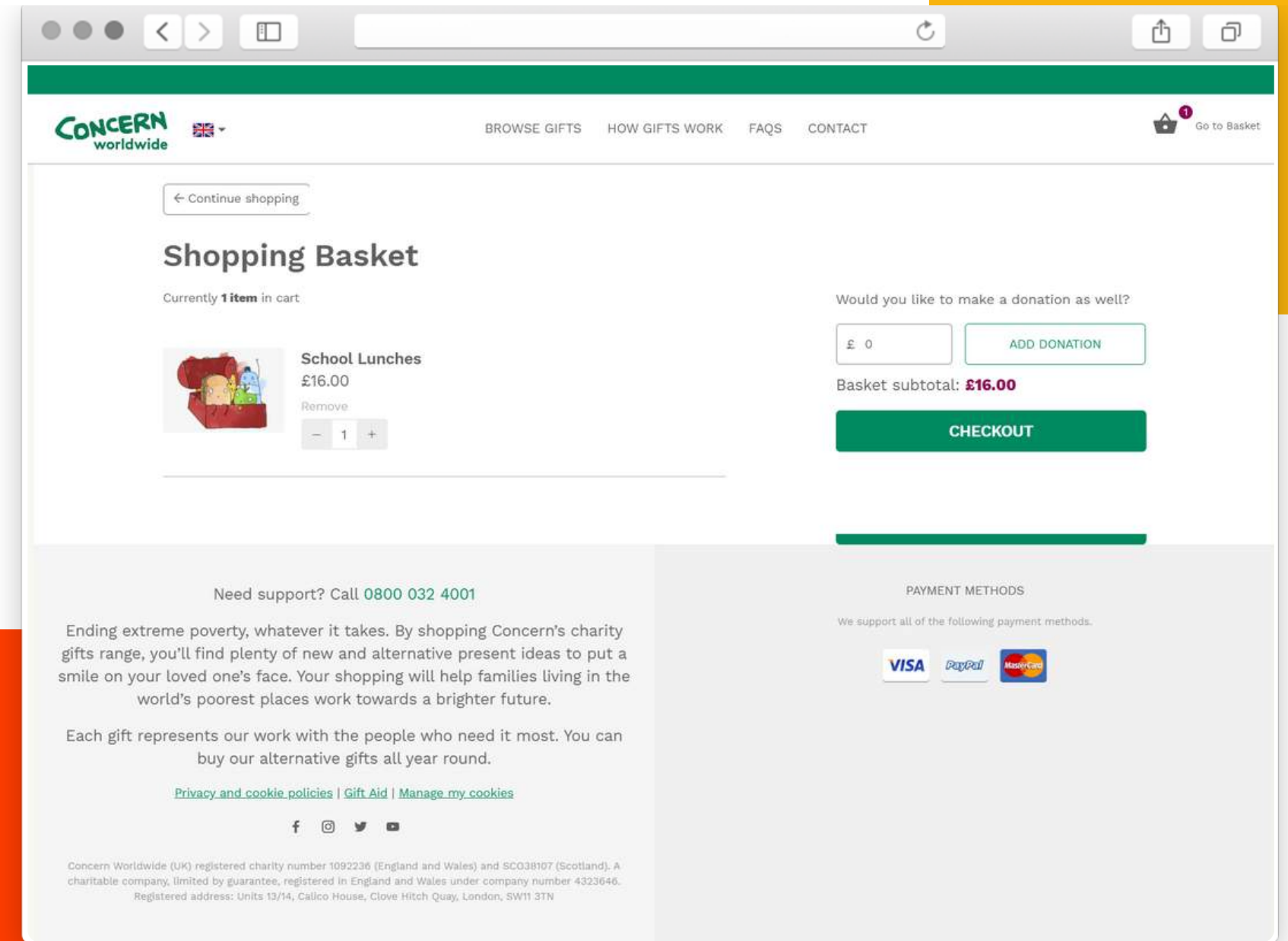


Winning elements

# Optional donations

When tipping and making charity donations, many people will round up and amount to the nearest five or ten.

Offer gift-buyers the opportunity to add an optional donation to their gift purchase and increase your donation revenue.



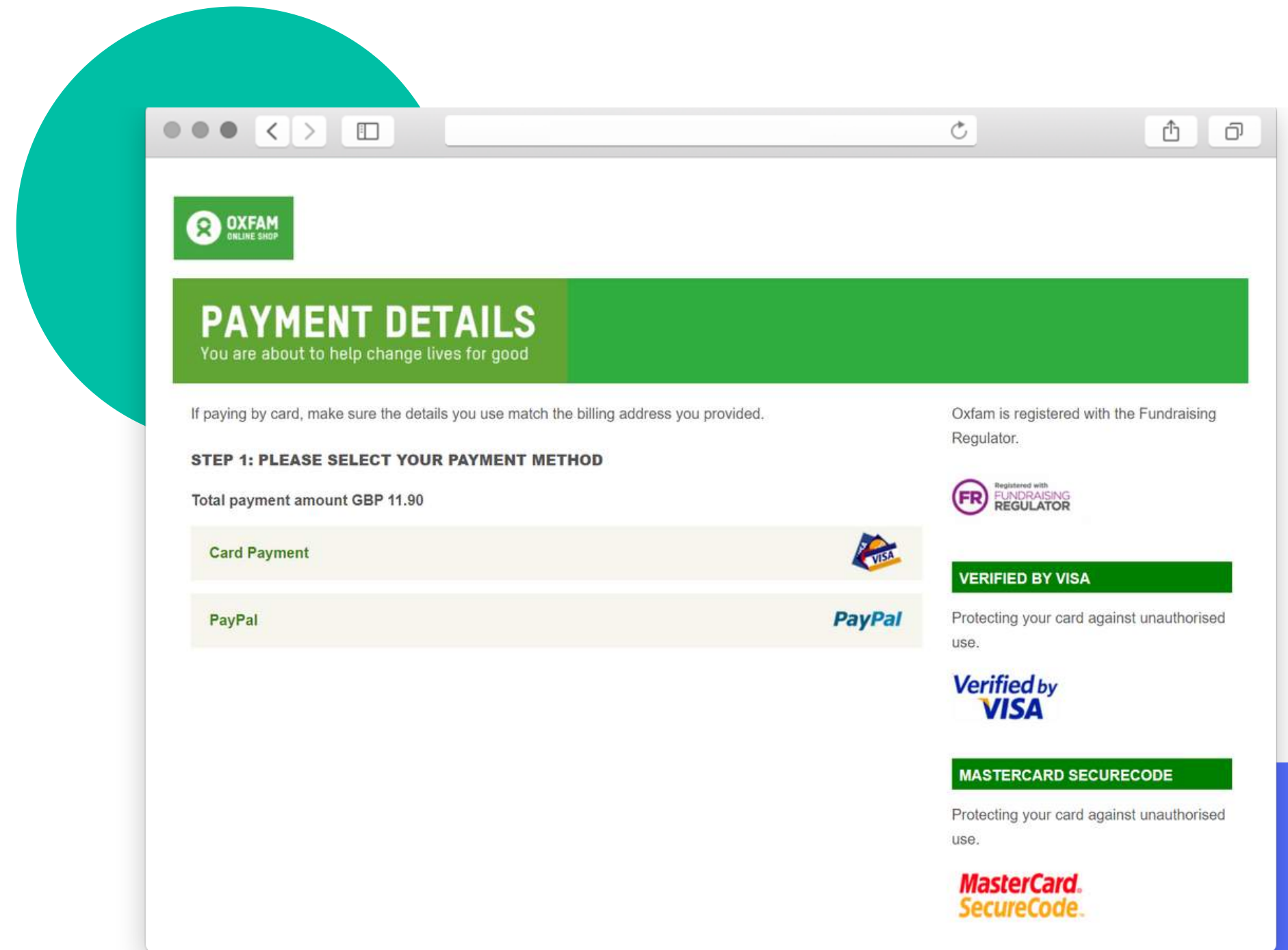
Concern Worldwide checkout screen

Winning elements

# Easy payment processing

Try to keep the ordering and payment process short, easy to use, and offer a choice of payment options.

This is about the user journey through your payments process, as well as how it looks and the opportunity for gift buyers to use their favourite payment method.



Oxfam payment selection screen

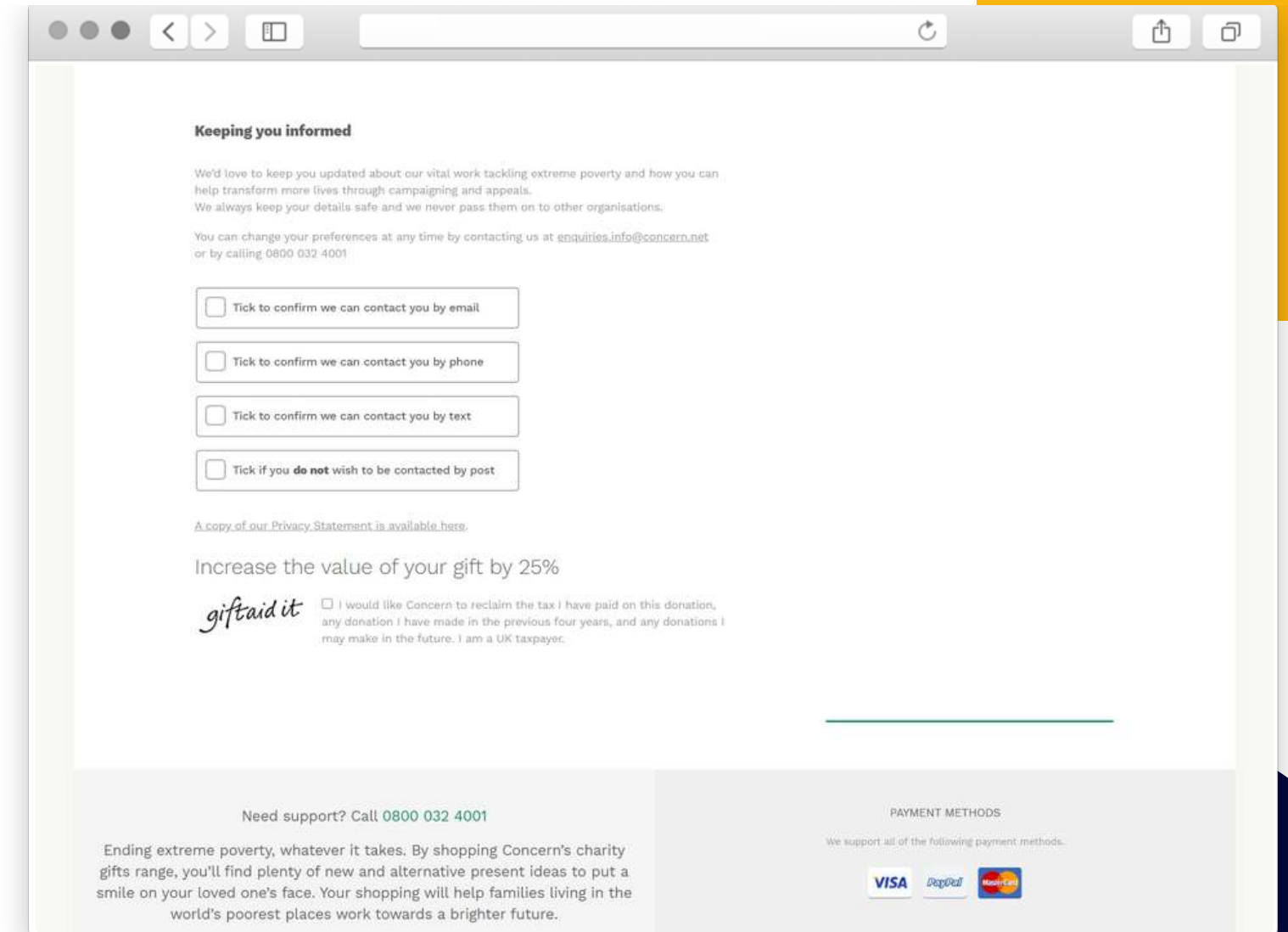


Winning elements

# Data collection

Think about the information that you can collect at checkout and how you can use it whilst complying with GDPR and data protection best practices.

During a gift purchase you will be asking for the buyers' name, address, email and phone number. If you also ask for permission to keep in touch at the same time, you can promote your work and future campaigns to the buyer again.

A screenshot of a web browser displaying the checkout page of Concern Worldwide. The page is titled "Keeping you informed" and contains several sections. The first section, "Keeping you informed", explains that the organization would like to keep the user updated about their work tackling extreme poverty and how the user can help transform more lives through campaigning and appeals. It states that details are kept safe and never passed on to other organizations. It also provides a link to change preferences at any time by contacting them at enquiries.info@concern.net or by calling 0800 032 4001. Below this, there are four checkboxes: "Tick to confirm we can contact you by email", "Tick to confirm we can contact you by phone", "Tick to confirm we can contact you by text", and "Tick if you do not wish to be contacted by post". The second section, "Increase the value of your gift by 25%", features the "giftaid it" logo and a checkbox for users who would like Concern to reclaim the tax they have paid on this donation, any donation they have made in the previous four years, and any donations they may make in the future. It also states that the user is a UK taxpayer. The third section, "Need support? Call 0800 032 4001", provides a phone number for support. The fourth section, "PAYMENT METHODS", lists the supported payment methods: VISA, Debit, and Mastercard. The page is designed with a clean, white background and a light green accent color.

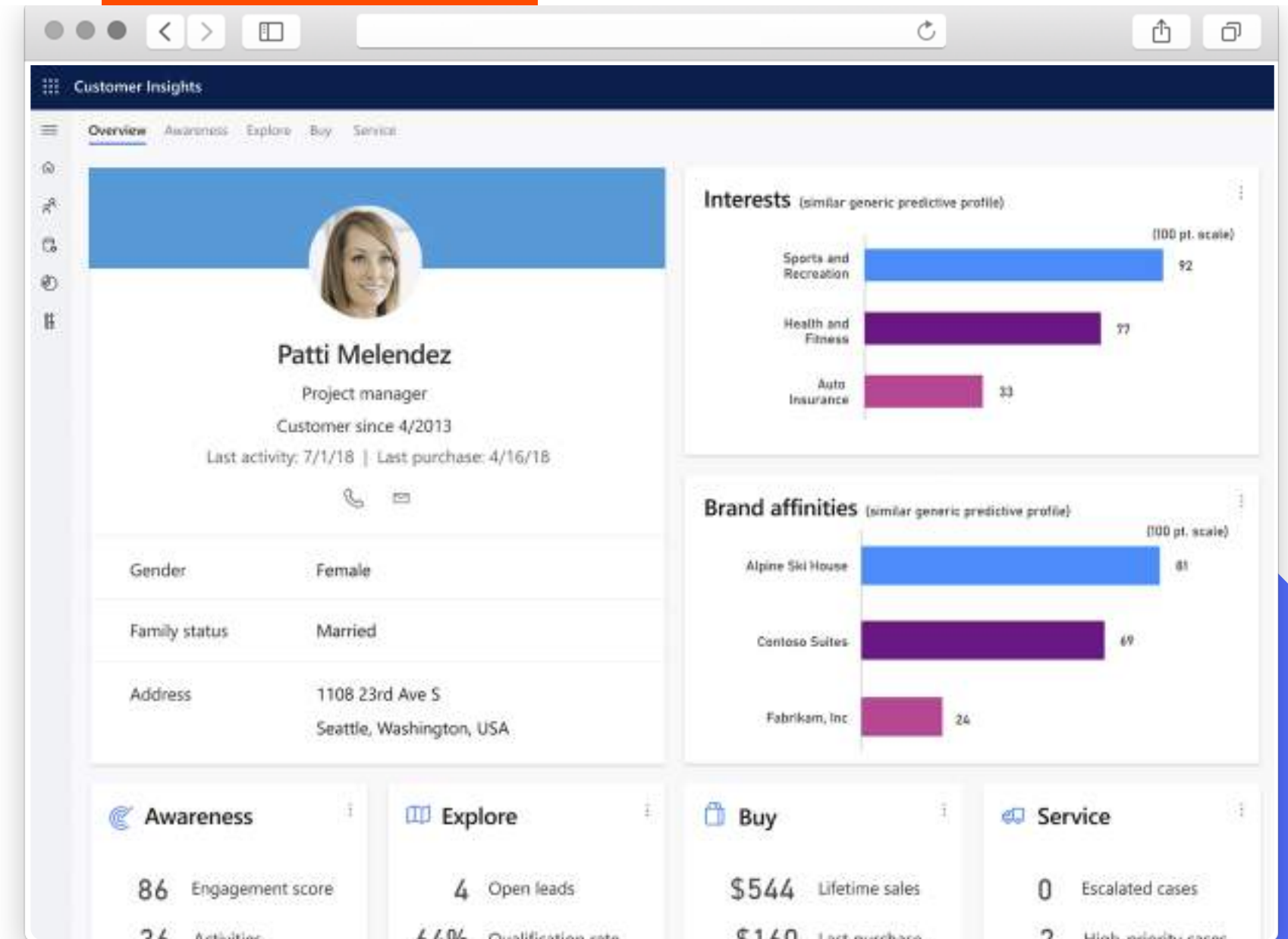
Concern Worldwide contact options

Winning elements

# CRM connections

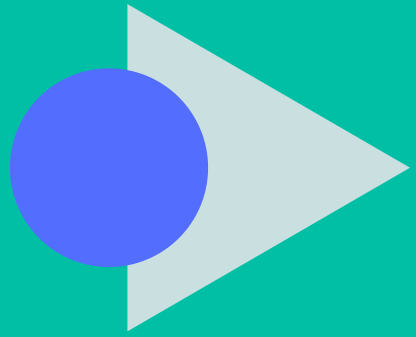
If you have a CRM (Customer Relationship Management system) such as Salesforce or Microsoft Dynamics, connect it to your alternative gifts site. This will make it easier for you to track their purchase history and other engagement activities.

We created an open-source module to connect Drupal sites with Dynamics NFP 365 and have used it to connect our client's gift sites to their CRM accounts.



NFP365 customer insights





# A case study: gifts.concern.net

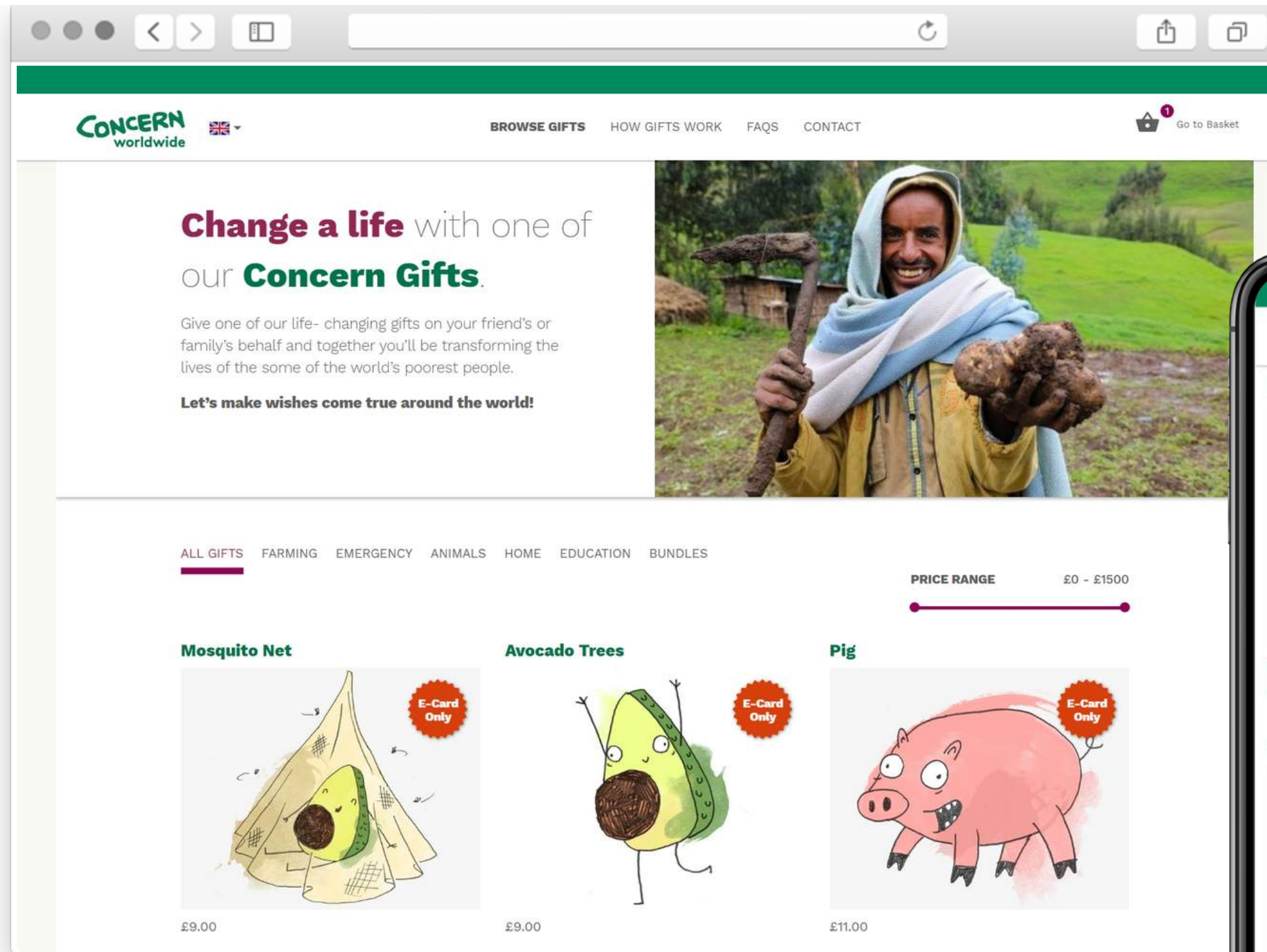
SystemSeed has been working with Concern Worldwide for ten years, and this includes designing, developing and maintaining their alternative gifts site



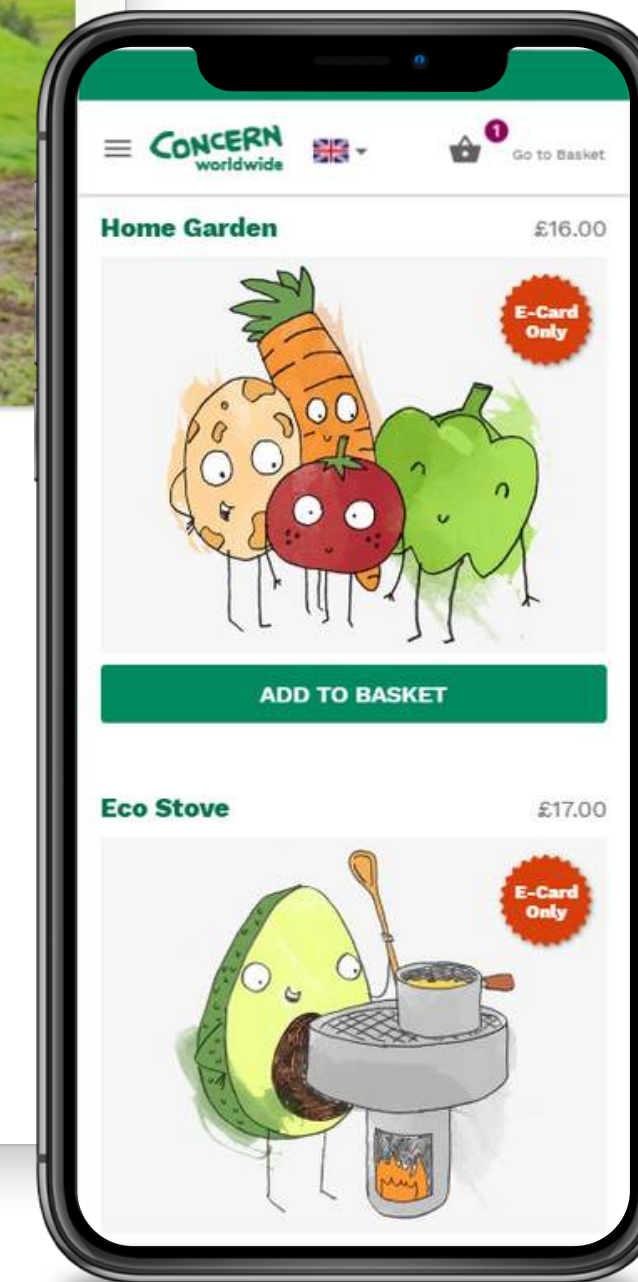
<https://gifts.concern.net>



# Case study



Concern gifts homepage on laptop and mobile





## Case study



*System Seed's delivery of gifts.concern.net, our online ethical gifts website, has meant huge improvements to the user experience, security, backend architecture and content editing of the website.*

*System Seed provide a high quality, responsive service to Concern Worldwide and are totally focused on understanding and delivering on requirements.*

Niamh O'Bryne - Digital Projects Manager, Concern Worldwide



## Case study

# Gifts with cards

### Government-level technology

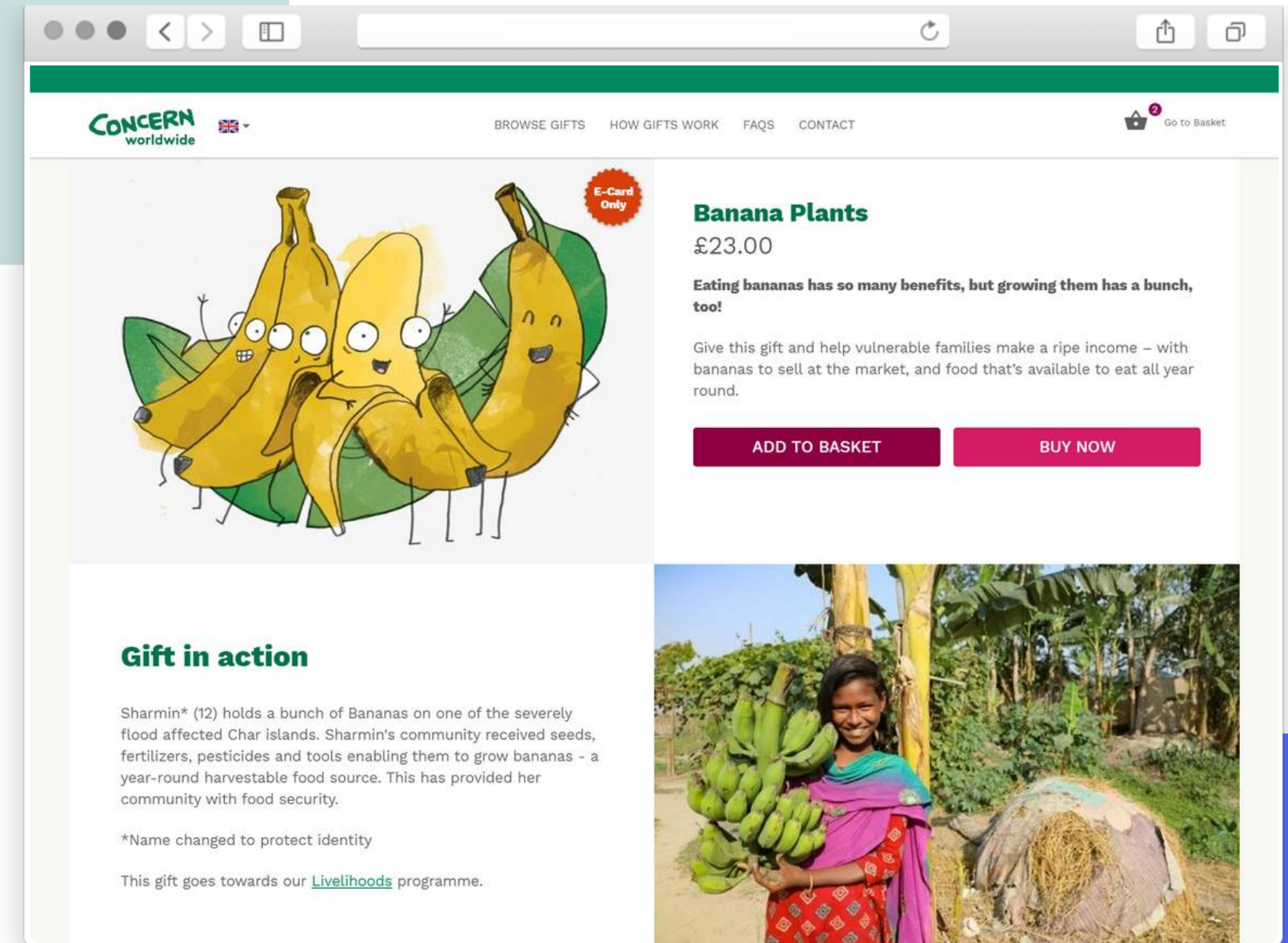
We built the site in Drupal for optimal security, robustness, and ease of use for content editors.

### Categories and filters

The Concern gifts site offers buyers the choice of browsing all gifts, filtering by price range, or viewing by category of gift type.

### Physical or e-cards

For each gift purchased, buyers are invited to add a personalised card with an option of a physical card or email card.



Individual gift page



## Case study

# Payments & data

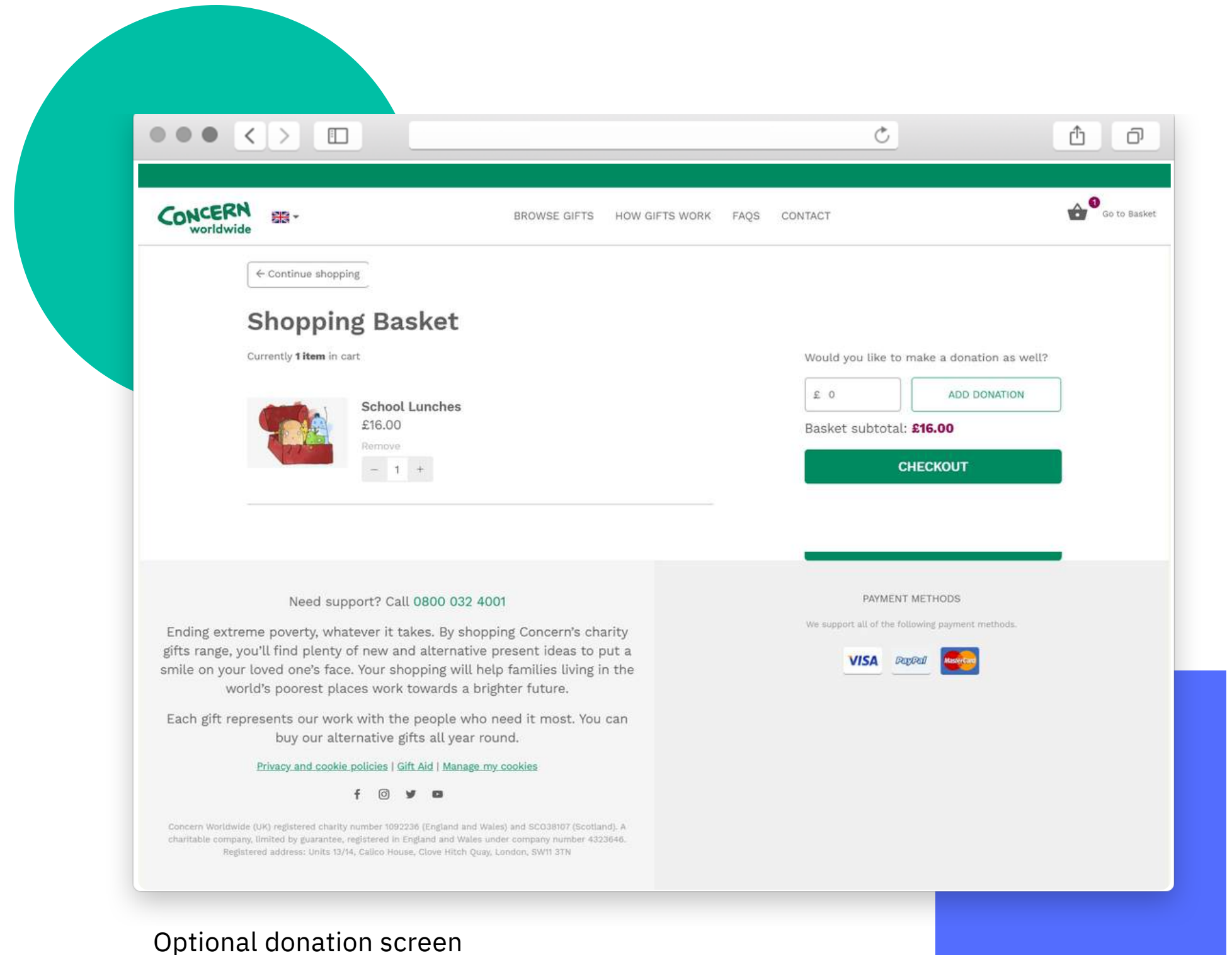
### Multi-purpose checkout process

Payment options are PayPal or credit card (via Stripe), and buyers are asked to:

- Add an optional donation
- Gift Aid their purchase, and
- Give permission for the organisation to contact them in their choice of manner

### CRM integration

This information is directly imported to the Concern CRM through our integration module.



Optional donation screen

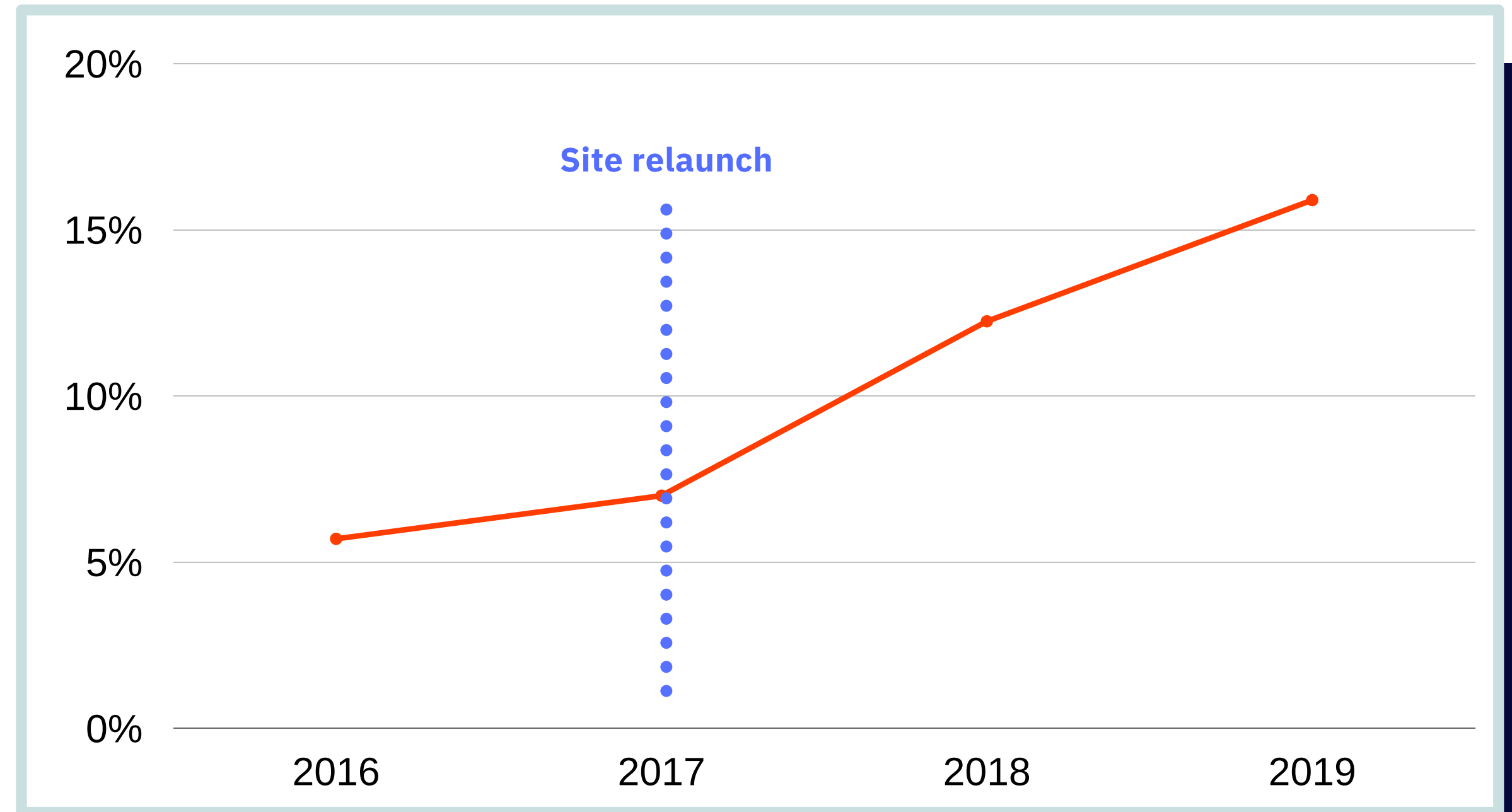
## Case study

# Results

Concern Worldwide has seen **gifts conversions increase to almost 16% at Christmas** since we relaunched it in 2017.

Conversions and revenue have continued to grow through 2020.

Despite the global pandemic and recession, **2020 revenue is up 115% year-on-year.**



gifts.concern.net conversions - Christmas season sales



# Get your own gift site

## Easy implementation

- ✓ **Specialist implementation**  
Get in touch with SystemSeed. You can email [gifts@systemseed.com](mailto:gifts@systemseed.com) or call Anthony on +34 675 074 059.
- ✓ **Low entry pricing**  
For \$20,000 we can set up your alternative gift site with no ongoing licence fees to pay (customisation at extra cost).



✉ [gifts@systemseed.com](mailto:gifts@systemseed.com)

☎ +34 675 074 059

## About SystemSeed

SystemSeed helps high-impact organisations achieve big ambitions through technology.

We offer complete strategy, design, build, support and hosting to not-for-profits and NGOs.

We won the Best Social Impact Website and Website of the Year at the 2019 Splash Awards for our work with Concern Worldwide.

Learn more at [systemseed.com](https://systemseed.com).

