



**AGENDA
FOR HUMANITY**
5 CORE RESPONSIBILITIES
24 TRANSFORMATIONS



Annual Report on World Humanitarian Summit Commitments - Mercy Corps 2016



Stakeholder Information

Organisation Name

Mercy Corps

Organisational Type

NGO - International

City and Country where Headquartered

Portland, United States of America

Focal Point Name

Anissa Toscano

Region

Global

Twitter ID

@mercycorps



1B Act early

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Mercy Corps commits to actively use early warning findings to identify, address, and defuse critical risks before they deteriorate into intractable conflicts by using preventive diplomacy tools such as good offices, peace and development advisors, groups of contact and mediation.	Operational	Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflicts
Mercy Corps commits to conduct and share the learning from at least three major studies on countering violent extremism in complex crises by 2018.	Operational	Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflicts

Core Commitments

Commitment	Core Responsibility
Commit to act early upon potential conflict situations based on early warning findings and shared conflict analysis, in accordance with international law.	Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflicts
Commit to make successful conflict prevention visible by capturing, consolidating and sharing good practices and lessons learnt.	Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflicts

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

Violent extremism extends many of today's humanitarian crises as we have seen in Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and Nigeria. To address violent extremism, Mercy Corps realized we needed to understand better what drives it and what works to mitigate it. Our goal was to have both donors and implementing agencies use more evidence based approaches in addressing this problem.

Achievements at a glance

We completed two studies: "Critical Choices," which provides Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) impact evaluation data on Somali youth's propensity for violence, and "Gifts and Graft," which explores Boko Haram's recruitment mechanisms. We also have presented this work in multiple fora in Washington DC, Lagos, New York, and London.

How is your organization assessing progress

We track the number of CVE research products as a primary indicator of our progress. We also measure the number of learning events, including presentations, panel events, round tables, and private briefings with governments and donors. Finally, our Policy and Advocacy and Communications teams track the number of times that our research is referenced in official testimonies, news articles and op-eds, and policy papers.

Challenges faced in implementation

Each complex crisis creates ongoing challenges. For example, in Nigeria, rising food scarcity and increasing humanitarian needs make research and conflict prevention more difficult; in Jordan and Mali, changing conflict dynamics have caused delays for both programs and related studies.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

We are planning to publish two more CVE studies and a synthesis piece. We are also working in Niger, and later Burkina Faso, to create a set of tools to identify vulnerability at the community level with regard to CVE. These tools will help practitioners advance their ability to focus on the communities most at risk of violent extremism. We are also planning on giving talks or hosting events in Paris, Tunisia, Nigeria, DC, London, and Ottawa.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Act early ,



what would it be

As an industry, we need to continue to question the conventional wisdom of why people join violent extremist groups, and how they extend today's crises.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Specific Initiatives

- The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action The Inclusion Charter

Agenda for Humanity

- 1D - Develop solutions with and for people



1C Remain engaged and invest in stability

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Mercy Corps aims to mainstream peace-building, conflict mitigation, and governance work to break cycles of conflict and fragility and build resilience in a majority of humanitarian responses by 2020.	Operational	Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflicts

Core Commitments

Commitment	Core Responsibility
Commit to address root causes of conflict and work to reduce fragility by investing in the development of inclusive, peaceful societies.	Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflicts

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

Violent conflict is a dominant characteristic of today's humanitarian crises. In Syria, South Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, and Ukraine, violent conflict and the resulting loss of lives and displacement shapes the crisis and frames the humanitarian response. Waiting until the emergency phase ends may compound and extend the crisis, turning it into a protracted one. In these instances, we cannot wait until the relief phase is over to begin addressing the cause of the crisis. Additionally, we must invest in preventing these conflicts and subsequent crises from starting.

Achievements at a glance

Mercy Corps is developing tools for our country teams in Syria, CAR, and South Sudan to analyze the root causes of conflict. We advocated for the conflict prevention transfer authority to be passed from DoD to DoS to increase conflict prevention funding.

How is your organization assessing progress

We are tracking how much donor money we are able to use for conflict management and prevention programming, particularly in the midst of a crisis. We are conducting robust evaluations of our conflict prevention and management programming in Nigeria, Myanmar, CAR, Mali, Jordan, and Iraq.

Challenges faced in implementation

As much of this work is done in the most insecure places, ability to gain access has delayed implementation of programs, strategy workshops, and trainings. Divided pools of money between humanitarian and peace building make it difficult to do both types of programs simultaneously. Finding staff who have experience with both humanitarian and development work also makes hiring for this type of programming challenging.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

We will work with our CAR team and the Middle East regional team on their root causes strategies. We also will do a case study of the Gaza and Nigeria teams on how to implement both humanitarian and development programming simultaneously. Lastly, our Policy and Advocacy team is leading efforts on increasing conflict prevention funding in both the US and Europe.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Remain engaged and invest in stability , what would it be

We can prevent conflict and address conflict in the midst of a crisis, if given the flexibility.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Specific Initiatives

Commitment to Action: Transcending the humanitarian - development divide The Peace Promise



Agenda for Humanity

4C - Deliver collective outcomes:
transcend humanitarian-development
divides



3A Reduce and address displacement

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
By 2020, Mercy Corps commits to use displacement data to better predict crisis onset, design crisis prevention programming, and position humanitarian assistance to contribute to greater resilience in the face of repeated shocks.	Operational	Leave No One Behind

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

The challenges of providing operational security support remotely necessitated the development of new and innovative tools to understand local conflict and humanitarian conditions in opaque and fluid environments. Subsequently, the Humanitarian Access Team (HAT) expanded to collect, synthesize, and analyze the relationship between conflict, needs, geopolitics, and community-level socio-cultural dynamics. In essence, the HAT is a research team that uses quantitative and qualitative data to inform programmatic and strategic decision-making, whether that be predicting future conflict and displacement or understanding and mitigating conflict and programmatic risk.

Achievements at a glance

In Beirut, the HAT forecast conflict in Eastern Ghouta, prepared scenario-based contingency planning, and led a working group to initiate an inter-INGO humanitarian response. In North Syria, the HAT worked with Palantir to mitigate risk by overlaying conflict incident data with Mercy Corps' operational footprint, and building risk assessment algorithms.

Challenges faced in implementation

As is commonly the case throughout the humanitarian sector, the HAT is stretched incredibly thin. Training competent analysts requires devoted financial resources, which are currently lacking.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

Future conflict is likely to look much like Syria: opaque, fluid, not permissive, and increasingly fragmented. Live contextual analysis is vital in an environment where shifting conflict, displacement, and needs occur. In order to better meet the conflict analysis needs of the region, the HAT will expand in 2017.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Reduce and address displacement, what would it be

The HAT would benefit greatly from an institutional donor or a single grant to allow it to expand systematically while maintaining relevant and high-quality products.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Keywords

Innovation

IDPs

Agenda for Humanity

1B - Act early



3F Enable adolescents and young people to be agents of positive transformation

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Mercy Corps develops evidence-based approaches to reduce the vulnerability of youth to joining violent extremist groups by decreasing youth exposure to violence, promoting inclusive governance, and addressing youth grievances.	Operational	Leave No One Behind
Mercy Corps ensures that female and male adolescents are meaningfully participating in the design, delivery, and monitoring of aid projects, and empower them to advocate at the local and national level on decisions impacting their lives.	Operational	Leave No One Behind
Mercy Corps will aim to provide 10 million youth between the ages of 15-24 with access to socio-emotional programming, non-formal and informal education, and safe and equitable livelihood opportunities by 2020.	Operational	Leave No One Behind

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

Mercy Corps takes a resilience approach to humanitarian aid and development and believes that with 1.8 billion young people (10-24 yrs) in the world, the potential to steer communities toward resilient futures lies in how well we prepare, partner with and propel young people into peaceful and productive participation. If we do not work with this age group in a focused manner, we will never build truly transformative capacity. Mercy Corps made this commitment to hold ourselves and others accountable to developing, tracking, and reporting on targeted and integrated programming with young people.

Achievements at a glance

- Created two initiatives to build internal/external capacity to engage adolescent boys and girls.
- Currently reach over 4.5 million youth (15-24 yrs) through our programs.
- Produced a report showing that in Somalia, a combination of education and civic engagement resulted in a decrease in both participation and support for political violence.

How is your organization assessing progress

Internally, Mercy Corps is pushing The Compact for Young People (core action five) which states the need for industry-wide adoption of sex- and age-disaggregation of program data. Mercy Corps has established agency-wide sex and age reporting requirements and has initiated an internal review to improve the quality and consistency of collecting and analyzing sex- and age-specific data. We have established an internal program design guide with recommended indicators to assist with program design alignment with internal design standards.

Challenges faced in implementation

First, internal data collection and management systems are in need of standardization to accurately report on progress. Much of our data is based on census or other population-based estimates. Further guidance for program teams is needed to improve collection of age-specific data, especially at the household level. Donors should require sex- and age-disaggregated data to monitor impact and track funding for youth. Second, the lack of agreed upon metrics and funding targets that measure and promote more direct youth engagement in design, implementation, and evaluation of program activities and in advocacy efforts limits humanitarian actors' ability to encourage transformational engagement.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

We will scale efforts that built the capacity of 25% of our countries to identify and program with at-risk adolescents. We will revise agency-level assessment and resilience analysis tools to incorporate the vulnerabilities of youth and identify capacities to enable



them to build resilient communities. Also planned for 2017 is an initial investment and pilot of a youth-centered approach to youth engagement in programming and community participation. Internally, we will improve the consistency and quality of collecting and analyzing sex- and age-disaggregated data. We will continue to serve as a member of the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Enable adolescents and young people to be agents of positive transformation , what would it be

To effectively engage adolescents and young people as agents of positive transformation, the humanitarian system and national/local governance structures must establish and monitor aggressive funding targets for programming that partners with young people, and require sex- and age-disaggregation of program impact data to improve the gender- and age-responsiveness of programs.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Keywords

- Gender Social protection

Specific Initiatives

- Education Cannot Wait The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action



4A Reinforce, do not replace, national and local systems

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Mercy Corps aims to scale up cash in 25% of its humanitarian assistance by 2018.	Operational	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need
Mercy Corps commits to contribute expertise and legitimacy to the WEF-facilitated Shaping Principles for Public-Private Collaboration in Humanitarian Payments, encourage others to do the same, and aim for the final principles to be broadly adopted in its own operations. It will use the principles to continue to accelerate the increase of responsible payments as an effective humanitarian programming modality, as appropriate.	Policy	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need
Mercy Corps commits to design and implement, in collaboration with partners new ways to effectively coordinate cash programming and break down sector silos.	Operational	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need
Mercy Corps commits to design and implement, in collaboration with partners, minimum standards and best practice in risk analysis and management, protection analysis, data protection and privacy, and working with financial services.	Operational	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need

Core Commitments

Commitment	Core Responsibility
Commit to a new way of working that meets people's immediate humanitarian needs, while at the same time reducing risk and vulnerability over multiple years through the achievement of collective outcomes. To achieve this, commit to the following: a) Anticipate, Do Not Wait: to invest in risk analysis and to incentivize early action in order to minimize the impact and frequency of known risks and hazards on people. b) Reinforce, Do Not Replace: to support and invest in local, national and regional leadership, capacity strengthening and response systems, avoiding duplicative international mechanisms wherever possible. c) Preserve and retain emergency capacity: to deliver predictable and flexible urgent and life-saving assistance and protection in accordance with humanitarian principles. d) Transcend Humanitarian-Development Divides: work together, toward collective outcomes that ensure humanitarian needs are met, while at the same time reducing risk and vulnerability over multiple years and based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors. The primacy of humanitarian principles will continue to underpin humanitarian action.	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need
Commit to increase substantially and diversify global support and share of resources for humanitarian assistance aimed to address the differentiated needs of populations affected by humanitarian crises in fragile situations and complex emergencies, including increasing cash-based programming in situations where relevant.	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need Invest in Humanity

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

Cash transfers, where appropriate, have long been Mercy Corps' preferred response mechanism in humanitarian contexts.



However, we wanted cash transfers to be more mainstreamed and institutionalized in order to normalize their use and ensure consistent program quality and impact. In addition, we want to improve ability to reach scale, with accompanying efficiency and effectiveness gains. Finally, Mercy Corps wanted to capitalize on the opportunity to reduce the negative impact of humanitarian responses on markets, and increase linkages to longer term economic self-reliance and recovery programming.

Achievements at a glance

- Started cash programs in Haiti and northern Uganda
- We were the primary NGO contributor to the WEF Principles on Public-Private Cooperation in Humanitarian Payments
- Joined the ERC consortium to encourage uptake of multi-purpose cash assistance
- Mercy Corps' ELAN released a report on use of prepaid cards in humanitarian programs
- Cash programming is at least 15% of all humanitarian assistance
- In Greece our CTP programs reached over 20% of the refugee/migrant population in the country

How is your organization assessing progress

Mercy Corps has changed our financial tracking to better calculate and report out on the volume of humanitarian programming that is cash based, disaggregated by cash methodologies. Mercy Corps is committed to tracking the percentage of our humanitarian assistance that is cash programming, along with other organizations in the Grand Bargain.

Challenges faced in implementation

Changes in some donors' guidelines and approaches are endangering Mercy Corps' ability to deliver impactful cash programming with a consistent, high standard. Continuing logistical challenges on the ground, where cash programming is regularly implemented in remote low infrastructure environments, make it difficult to reach all of the potential advancements in scale, efficiency, and impact. The complex, multisectoral nature of humanitarian programming makes it challenging to separate out cash transfer programming and calculate reliably its contribution to overall humanitarian programming.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

We will build towards greater institutionalization of cash programming across Mercy Corps, including hosting CaLP trainings and supporting initiatives like the Fritz institute training materials for operations staff. We will roll out additional internal toolkits and SOPs to ensure cash is systematically considered in response analysis and program design. We will continue to engage with initiatives like the Collaborative Cash Delivery (CCD) Platform, ERC grants, and CaLP that contribute to the broader industry approaches and uptake of cash programs. Mercy Corps will complete our internal process to reliably and routinely report on the cash transfers portion of humanitarian programming.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Reinforce, do not replace, national and local systems , what would it be

Cash programming is delivered in diverse contexts, with huge differences in infrastructure availability, beneficiary capacity, and security. In the push to reach scale and efficiency, we cannot lose our ability to be responsive to beneficiaries and nimble to react to changing circumstances, or we risk losing our program impact.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Keywords

- Cash Refugees

Specific Initiatives

- Grand Bargain



4C Deliver collective outcomes: transcend humanitarian-development divides

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Mercy Corps commits to build on its action research agenda for adaptive management and navigating complexity by field testing adaptive approaches in five response settings by 2018, and undertaking a major study on the operational implications of an adaptive approach.	Policy	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need
Mercy Corps commits to design and implement, in collaboration with partners, new ways to ensure the humanitarian system creates, shares, and uses appropriate assessments and analysis at crisis inception and throughout the response that informs appropriate decisions about program modality and design.	Operational	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need
Mercy Corps commits to develop a collaborative, multi-stakeholder Technology for Development (T4D) Innovation Lab, to focus on specific humanitarian priorities and the technology solutions needed. The T4D Innovation Lab will focus on alignment of priorities, leveraging skills and technology from member organizations and promoting and scaling innovative solutions - with a sharp view on humanitarian impact through innovative collaborative technology.	Operational	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need

Core Commitments

Commitment	Core Responsibility
Commit to a new way of working that meets people's immediate humanitarian needs, while at the same time reducing risk and vulnerability over multiple years through the achievement of collective outcomes. To achieve this, commit to the following: a) Anticipate, Do Not Wait: to invest in risk analysis and to incentivize early action in order to minimize the impact and frequency of known risks and hazards on people. b) Reinforce, Do Not Replace: to support and invest in local, national and regional leadership, capacity strengthening and response systems, avoiding duplicative international mechanisms wherever possible. c) Preserve and retain emergency capacity: to deliver predictable and flexible urgent and life-saving assistance and protection in accordance with humanitarian principles. d) Transcend Humanitarian-Development Divides: work together, toward collective outcomes that ensure humanitarian needs are met, while at the same time reducing risk and vulnerability over multiple years and based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors. The primacy of humanitarian principles will continue to underpin humanitarian action.	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need

Achievements at a glance

(In reference to Commitment 3) Mercy Corps launched a TechHub with 600 members. External experts have been leveraged for cyber security (South Sudan), human centered design (Gaza 2020) and drone use for emergency response assessment. Completed an initial concept note for a Community Development Platform to enable two-way communications, community self-resilience



building, and advocacy and mitigation against local community friction.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

(In reference to commitment 3) In partnership with the International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps will extend Refugee.Info to additional countries and regions to increase reach from 142,000 in 2016 to 500,000 in 2017 in 7 countries. In May 2017 at the ICT4D Conference, Mercy Corps will share a report on Beneficiary Registration and Distribution Tracking. In summer 2017, Mercy Corps intends to pilot the Community Development Platform.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Keywords

Innovation

Refugees