

Grand Bargain in 2018:

Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: Mercy Corps

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Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2018?

Mercy Corps demonstrated a strong commitment to the **localization** workstream in 2018. During that year, 28% of all subawards expenditure under humanitarian programming was by local organizations,¹ totalling \$9,061,639, and 8.3% of direct program and subawards expenditure for humanitarian programming was to local organizations. Syria is one of the country programs where Mercy Corps has made a particularly strong commitment to localization. In 2018, Mercy Corps Syria partnered with over 8 local organizations (i.e. organizations having their headquarters located within Syria) and an additional 26 Syrian -led NGOs based in the Syria response region. Through Mercy Corps' capacity building programs, including through the ISHA (Investing in Syrian Humanitarian Action) program, local partners receive remote coaching, mentoring, training and ongoing support to strengthen their capacity in financial, operational, and programmatic areas.

Mercy Corps made significant progress within the **cash** workstream, with cash programming representing approximately 50% of the humanitarian aid provided by the agency. Cash transfer programming values in 2018 totalled \$26,694,658 in cash and \$13,495,967 in vouchers. Mercy Corps' rollout of new account codes in 2018 facilitated better tracking and reporting of the total amount of cash distributed. Internally, Mercy Corps strengthened capacity in cash programming through its "Making Markets Work in Crisis" approach, which builds upon the foundations of good cash programming to drive economic recovery and resilience in complex crises. Internally, Mercy Corps also introduced a new policy on minimum standards in cash transfer programming, which will improve program quality. Mercy Corps coordinated with other agencies as a member of the Collaborative Cash Delivery (CCD) Network and as an active participant in coordination mechanisms at country and global levels.

Question 2: Please explain how the outcomes/results will lead to long-term institutional changes in policy and/or practice.

With respect to **localization**, Mercy Corps' final evaluation of the ISHA (Investing in Syrian Humanitarian Action) program will contribute to lessons for humanitarian agencies about how to empower local actors in humanitarian responses, both in Syria and in similar contexts.

Under the **cash** workstream, Mercy Corps' accuracy in reporting will continue to improve due to the use of new account codes. Cash transfer program quality will also improve through the implementation of the minimum standards, which set a benchmark for quality implementation within the organization and are accompanied by a more dedicated quality assurance process to support and track adherence to the standards. Mercy Corps also expects to see improvements across the sector, as the CCD Network, led by CARE, pilots a data sharing template and guidance in CCD collaborations in Ethiopia and Colombia. This template and guidance will facilitate safe, effective and timely data sharing between CCD members. Previous pilots have informed the development of the model, contributed to streamlining cash delivery and pooling of resources including common payment platforms, shared staff, joint beneficiary databases, and other improvements.

¹ As paid from Mercy Corps country offices and US headquarters

Question 3: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment² in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results).

Within Mercy Corps' work with **local partners**, gender equality is highlighted in several key programs. Mercy Corps' GirlSPARKS unit has been working with grassroots practitioners to build their capacity to find the most marginalized girls, deliver girl-focused solutions and use a systems approach to tackle the intersecting issues between gender norms and girls' participation in programs. This has resulted in an increase in self-reported confidence; ability to assess whether girls are active participants in programs; changes in program design/implementation that incorporate girls' voices and meet their needs; an increase in program budget for activities to meet girls' needs; and an increase in program buy-in and number of allies within communities.

In the area of **cash** programming, Mercy Corps has contributed to the development of a Toolkit for Optimizing Cash-based Interventions for Protection from Gender-based Violence, in collaboration with WRC and IRC. Internally, Mercy Corps' Cash Transfer Programming Minimum Standards Policy includes a standard which explicitly requires gender analysis and gender sensitive needs assessments. Ongoing support, resources and tools are provided to ensure this standard is meaningfully met and leads to more gender sensitive programming.

Question 4: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments? Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other workstreams.

Mercy Corps has mainstreamed the humanitarian-development nexus most prominently through strengthening its analysis work. In Somalia and Northeast Nigeria, Mercy Corps conducts analysis of market, conflict, and environmental systems, and brings in both humanitarian and development teams to develop longer-term strategies for action. In Northeast Nigeria, Mercy Corps is combining strategic risk and resilience assessments with in-depth humanitarian analysis that supports day-to-day decision-making.

Mercy Corps also promotes management structures in its country teams that encourage greater linkages between humanitarian and development strategy and approaches. In places like Iraq and Northeast Nigeria, connections within Mercy Corps' program management structure as well as regular joint review and reflection meetings support ongoing collaboration between humanitarian and development teams.

² Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).