

Grand Bargain in 2021: Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: Mercy Corps

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Grand Bargain in 2021

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 2021?

Mercy Corps' commitment to Cash and Voucher Assistance continues to align with the Grand Bargain's Core Commitment in Work Stream / Priority 3. Mercy Corps continued to make progress in terms of scale and quality, with our cash programming representing 52% of the humanitarian aid provided by the agency. Cash transfer programming values in 2021 totalled \$47m in cash and \$16m in vouchers. Cash and voucher assistance continued to be one of Mercy Corps' strategic pillars in its response to COVID-19. Many of our country programmes pivoted to, scaled up, or started multi-purpose cash assistance to respond to the humanitarian needs caused or exacerbated by COVID-19. Our Cash Transfer Programming Minimum Standards Policy explicitly requires gender analysis and gender sensitive needs assessments for all cash programming.

A significant, tangible, outcome resulting from Mercy Corps' commitment to transparency is our ongoing improvement in publishing data to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) network. Through training, socialisation during onboarding of new hires and active participation in communities of practice dedicated to NGO accountability, Mercy Corps continues to add to its list of country programs regularly submitting information to IATI.

Question 2: Briefly explain how the outcomes contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling Work Stream / Priority 7 & 8 (quality funding).

Mercy Corps continues to work on improving the quality of our engagement with local partners. In terms of quality funding, support to local organizations paid from Mercy Corps country offices and US headquarters for 2021 was as follows: 17% of subaward expenditures under humanitarian programming went to local organizations, totaling \$7,625,241. 25% of multi-year humanitarian programming prime awards included subawards to local organizations.

Question 3: Briefly explain how the outcomes contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling Work Stream / Priority 2 (localisation and participation).

Mercy Corps reached over 50.4 million program participants in 43 countries in fiscal year 2021. Many of these participants were reached in highly participatory, community-driven areas of work - for example, Mercy Corps worked with 7.2 million participants in governance and peacebuilding programs, 4.8 million participants in employment programming, or 5.9 million in public health programming. 80% of all Mercy Corps programs operate at least three channels for participant and community feedback. 100% of Mercy Corps countries include at least one feedback channel. The majority of Mercy Corps cash and voucher programs are informed by multiple participatory assessments, including needs assessments and gender assessments. Mercy Corps partnered with over 760 local partners in fiscal year 2021 across all our programmes.

LOCALISATION & PARTICIPATION CASE STUDY: NEPAL - Mercy Corps' Building Hope Along the Karnali River Basin (Bhakari) activity, focuses on meeting immediate needs and building food security for vulnerable and socially excluded households in Karnali River Basin. The goals of the Bhakari program are being met through established partnerships with national partners SAPPROS, Rupantaran, and NTAG,

The Humanitarian Learning Pathway (HLP) targets team members working on MC country programs, and it promotes the inclusion of team members who are closer to the communities where we operate. We seek to include a wide variety of countries as well as diversity in terms of department (e.g., programs, operations, finance) and gender. We focus on team members with 0-3 years of experience, which opens up this opportunity to more people who may not have had access to other capacity strengthening programs. Some of the content from the Humanitarian Learning Pathway has been adapted recently for use as a training of trainers for team members in Myanmar to learn about humanitarian essentials so they could be prepared to train local partners. By providing partners with this training as well, we help promote more equal partnerships.

Mongolia Sunset:

For more than twenty years, Mercy Corps enjoyed long and fruitful partnerships with civil society and the Government of Mongolia. For over two decades, we supported impactful projects in the livestock, education, and governance sectors, providing \$60,000,000 assistance over the years. Mercy Corps partnered with key government agencies and ministries to implement projects in almost every province in the country and partnered with the civil society and private sector actors with livestock actors up and down the value chain to stimulate livestock production, strengthen livestock related value-chains, increase market information, and access, and create opportunities for economic diversification.

Mercy Corps recognized that local stakeholders - under the leadership of the government, the innovative thinking of the private sector, and the tireless work of civil society- are the true drivers of development in Mongolia. As such, we determined that it was time to phase out- or sunset- our programs there, ceasing our operations in May 2021. We see this as part of a natural progression in development work- and something to be celebrated! We are proud of our two decades of innovative, impactful, influential programming, and we are proud of the contributions we made to enable stronger development outcomes in rural Mongolia.

Grand Bargain and cross-cutting issues

Question 4: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment¹ in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard?

In 2021, Mercy Corps continued to promote gender equality in its humanitarian programs by encouraging gender analysis from design phase through implementation. Our Cash Transfer Programming Minimum Standards Policy explicitly requires gender analysis and gender sensitive needs assessments for all cash programming. In 2021, Mercy Corps completed a four-module gender equality and social inclusion in emergency food security curricula to help teams conduct gender and inclusion analyses, integrate findings into program design, and ensure strong gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation. This curriculum has been translated into French and was introduced to peer agencies through a virtual session in December 2021.

¹ Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

Mercy Corps is also committed to emphasising the importance of gender equity, and social inclusion (GESI) principles; one hundred team members from across headquarters and country offices are part of our GESI Champions Community of Practice. Mercy Corps also has continued to experience strong interest in the country-level Gender, Diversity and Inclusion diagnostic process, with 28 country teams at various stages of the process. Finally, we are currently implementing our agency-wide Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) strategy which will orient country teams to internal program quality standards and begin a process of targeted support to key countries to model alignment with the strategy.

Question 5: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments?

Mercy Corps demonstrates a commitment to the nexus through its resilience in protracted crisis approach. As outlined in Mercy Corps' [vision](#) for working towards resilience in protracted crises and conflict settings, Mercy Corps has focused on making progress towards operationalizing key humanitarian - development - peace nexus principles through the following initiatives:

1. **Strategy:** In our agency-level Strategy 2030, committing to frame technical approaches in terms of the humanitarian-development nexus for Mercy Corps' work in four prioritised outcome areas, and inclusion of the nexus principles in regional strategies in Mercy Corps' Africa Region.
2. **Operationalizing:** Developing and testing organisational (operational) models for proof-of-concept in three strategic country programs towards aligning our ways of working behind a collective impact model;
3. **Research:** Our agency resilience research and learning agenda is adapted to include the humanitarian - development - peace nexus.

Question 6: Has your institution taken any steps towards improving risk sharing with its partners? If so, please describe how.

Mercy Corps operationalizes better sharing of risks by:

1. Established risk management guidelines for activities that prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) This includes guidance to help donors understand what activities and approaches within this space contain high risk and outline what approaches, and activities Mercy Corps will not engage in.
2. Finalisation of a digital conflict sensitivity toolkit designed to increase knowledge and skills as well as generate capacity sharing conversations related to Do No Harm/conflict sensitivity with local actors - including local organisations and community members.
3. Release of [DRC case study](#) on the use of Crisis Analysis by humanitarian/ development/ peace practitioners to improve resilience-informed decision-making in conflict settings provides actionable recommendations for how to improve application of risk analysis.
4. In response to safeguarding risks in programming co-implemented with partners, Mercy Corps created a new position- Partner Accountability Advisor- focused specifically on strengthening safeguarding efforts with our subrecipient organisations. This builds our own capacities around vetting and monitoring our subrecipient organisations, while also strengthening partners' understanding of, capacities in, and commitment to safeguarding so that, together, we can centre the safety, well-being, and perspective of survivors at the core of our efforts. We

are currently piloting this approach in various regions and with various types of partners with a goal to roll it out across the organisation in FY 22/23.

RISK SHARING CASE STUDY: MYANMAR – After finalising safety and security standard operating procedures (SOPs) and socialising amongst our team, we responsibly shared and discussed these procedures, and the assessed risks the SOPs are designed to address, with our partners. This engagement and sharing of resources builds a relationship based on trust that facilitates ongoing communication of safety and security risks that could impact our programs, while supporting partner development of their own processes for safety and security risk management (e.g., movement tracking, etc.).