

我國與非政府組織「美慈組織敘利亞分部」(Mercy Corps Syria)合作賑濟敘利亞震災計畫

第一季執行報告摘要

- 一、報告期間：本(112)年3月16日至6月15日。
- 二、背景概述：本年2月6日敘利亞北部發生強震，震災區為敘國長期衝突地區，資源本已匱乏，人民生活困頓，震災使當地狀況雪上加霜，造成約172萬人流離失所，災民收容中心擁擠且缺乏維護，國際援助亦因邊境管制、道路毀損、網路中斷等因素，難以送達災民手中，美慈組織敘利亞分部為當地第一批立即回應災民緊急需求的組織，於災後隔日即開始積極救援與發放物資。
- 三、執行情形：在包括我國等各方的支持下，強震後至今美慈組織已向至少1,800個家庭，共3萬6,000名災民提供緊急援助，其中由我國資助的援助計畫，執行情形依項目分述如下：
 - (一) 「供水、消毒暨衛生」(Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, WASH)計畫：該計畫包括「垃圾清運」、「污物清理」、「水箱」、「供水暨消毒設施復原」及「供水設施暨水井維護營運」等子項目，美慈組織正根據當地需求及技術評估結果，規劃供水及衛生設施重建作業，並持續維護現有供水設備營運；本計畫迄今總計已嘉惠1,073個家庭，共6,452名災民。
 - (二) 「庇護所」(Shelter)計畫：為確保災民的尊嚴，該組織持續運用我國援款，提升庇護所生活品質，目前正於7

個營地，設置隔熱帳篷，並改善通往供水及衛生設施的道路狀況，另協助修繕受震災影響最嚴重的5個社區內房舍；此外「美慈組織」已取得敘國官方單位許可，將接續推動災區學校及衛生設施的復原工作。

- (三) 「烘焙坊糧食安全及恢復生計」(Food Security and Livelihoods Rehabilitation of Bakeries)計畫：經實地評估，美慈組織擇定就4間烘焙坊展開修復工作，並預計於完工後提供烘焙坊小麥、酵母及麵粉等材料，嗣由烘焙坊生產麵包後，以優惠價格提供社區內的災民；另該組織正進行市場評估，規劃提供60家供應商資金補助、業務訓練及輔導。

- (四) 「多目標現金援助」(Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance)計畫：為協助受災戶儘快恢復正常生活，該組織計劃提供1,000個家庭金錢援助。目前已有801個受災家庭完成登記，擬自本年6月至11月間提供符合受補助資格的家庭援助金。



Delivery of water trucking service in camp in NWS, May 2023. The support of the people of Taiwan enabled Mercy Corps to serve 6,452 individuals in earthquake-affected areas with water trucking, garbage collection, and desludging.

Taiwan's Support to the Northwest Syria Earthquake Emergency Response Plan

Summary Report

15 June 2023

PREPARED FOR: The People of Taiwan

PROJECT LOCATION: Northwest Syria - Earthquake Response

REPORTING PERIOD: 16 March 2023 - 15 June 2023

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Background

At 4:17 am local time (1:17 GMT) on 6 February 2023, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake originated in southeastern Turkey. Seismically significant aftershocks continued after the initial earthquake and caused further severe damage to buildings and infrastructure. The earthquake led to catastrophic damage in several cities and sub-districts in Northwest Syria (NWS), where thousands of buildings were destroyed, and over 8,000 people lost their lives. Within 48 hours of the initial earthquake, Mercy Corps launched its emergency relief response in NWS.

Mercy Corps Syria's internal Crisis Analytics unit (CA – SYR)¹ summarized the context in which the earthquake took place in a recent report: "Syria [had] been suffering from a series of compounding crises that have worsened the humanitarian situation in the country. The 12 years of conflict [had] nearly decimated the country's infrastructure costing more than \$117 billion in material damages and more than 400,000 lives lost. The Syrian pound [had] depreciated by more than 105% in the [previous] year, reaching an all-time low of 7,250 SYP per USD. The steep decline in the national currency [had been] accelerated by structural issues in the Syrian economy, including decreasing foreign currency revenue streams, sanctions, low foreign currency reserves, and rampant corruption in state institutions. When the earthquake hit on 6 February, people in the northwest found themselves having to live through one of the worst natural disasters this century. The humanitarian situation was already desperate: The availability of shelter was a significant issue, with approximately 1,720,000 people (almost half of the area's population) living in informal camps. These camps are often overcrowded with less than 29m2 of living space available on average per person. Moreover, 76% of camps [did] not have proper camp management in place to coordinate and monitor humanitarian assistance, disseminate information [or] maintain infra-structure."²

Context Update

In the month after the earthquake, pre-existing constraints to humanitarian access in NWS were exacerbated. The only UN-sanctioned border crossing, Bab al Hawa, was inoperable for several days due to damage to roads leading to the border and the earthquake inflicted massive damage in Gaziantep in southern Turkey, the hub for the NWS humanitarian response, significantly complicating logistics and straining emergency response capacity. Access and supply issues were resolved relatively quickly.

With the support of our trusted corporate, foundation and institutional partners, including the support from the Taiwanese people, Mercy Corps has now delivered emergency assistance to over 36,000 people impacted by the earthquake. From the outset of the earthquake until end of May, Mercy Corps has provided nonfood items (NFIs) to around 1,800 families displaced by the earthquake, distributed close to 3,349 hygiene kits targeting those in collective centers and camps, cash assistance to 58 families enabling those affected to use their limited resources towards other needs, and WASH services to 133,665 individuals. Additionally, Mercy Corps remained the sole provider of clean water and basic water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services in 98 camps in NWS.

¹ As of 5 May 2023, the Humanitarian Access Team (HAT) is now known as Crisis Analysis – Syria (CA – SYR). This rebrand is to reflect Mercy Corps Syria alignment with Mercy Corps' Global Crisis Analysis ecosystem and its multi-thematic, multidisciplinary approach to research, assessment, and analysis in Syria. [CA-SYR](#)

² CA-SYR, "The Turkey-Syria earthquake, an overview of the 6 February earthquake and its impact on Northwest Syria", February 2023.

The operating environment has been challenged by increasing health and infrastructure risks and growing competition for resources and political influence from armed factions. Anecdotal evidence of aid diversion surfaced from different parties to the conflict and inter-communal tensions increased amid strained socio-economic conditions, leading to localized outbursts of violence. Citing aid imperatives and exploiting the governance vacuum that followed the disaster, certain armed factions also sought to expand their influence by momentarily seizing territory from opponents, particularly in Northern Aleppo.



Damage to Market in NWS after the earthquake. A camp in NWS is targeted for WASH under this project supported by the people of Taiwan. Even before the earthquake, NWS was a location where many displaced individuals were already residing; needs were exacerbated following the earthquake.

Frontline activity, which was recorded at historically low levels in the direct aftermath of the earthquake, gradually recovered to ordinary levels around the Idlib pocket, marked by multiple infiltration attempts and shelling from the Government of Syria (GoS) and Organized Armed Groups (OAGs). Regarding security, many reports indicated that criminal activity – including armed raids, violent disputes, kidnappings, theft, and looting – has increased as criminal elements exploit widespread uncertainty and chaos in the wake of the earthquake. Notably, this includes theft and looting of aid trucks. In April, there were at least two incidents where humanitarian actors were targeted in Northern Aleppo.

In May, Idlib governorate witnessed an increase in demonstrations against local authorities, which spiraled into several arrests and growing demands for the release of detainees. Most of these protests occurred at night, which limited authority surveillance. Furthermore, women appeared to play a significant role in these resistance movements, leading most daytime protests. Albeit unusual, these protests remained localised and did not cause significant disruption.

Security incidents have not yet affected Mercy Corps' project delivery; however, further fluctuation in the security environment and socio-political upheavals may pose challenges to humanitarian access in the coming months.

Project Goals and Objectives

Mercy Corps began the implementation of the project supported by Taiwanese people on 1 March 2023. Mercy Corps proposed to implement the following activities in both camp and host community contexts, depending on the needs of the communities served:

- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):
 - Water trucking and provision of tanks: provide 5,077 individuals, 1,015 households, with 35 liters of water per person per day for 9 months and install 200 water tanks
 - Collect garbage and de-sludge: provide 1,000 households with services for 9 months
 - Rehabilitate water and sanitation infrastructure along with operation and maintenance for water stations and boreholes.
- Shelter:
 - Build 166 dignified shelter units for 166 households.
 - Provide site preparation services to 300 households.
 - Rehabilitate 200 shelters.
 - WASH & Shelter rehabilitation in three schools and three health facilities.
- Food Security & Livelihoods (FSL):
 - Rehabilitate three bakeries.
 - Provide wheat, yeast, and flour to three bakeries.
 - Provide subsidized bread distribution for three communities
 - Support 60 vendors with cash grants, business training, and coaching, with an average of \$1,500 cash grant per vendor.
- Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA): Distribute MPCA to 1,000 households for 6 months.



Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding to undertake the emergency response efforts supported by the people of Taiwan.

Project Update

Mercy Corps submitted an update on the activities undertaken with funds committed by the Taiwanese people on 15 March, and has been able to carry out the activities mentioned in that report. During this reporting period, Mercy Corps finalized the food security and livelihood SoPs and tools, identified fourteen camps and five communities to receive WASH, Shelter, FSL, and MPCA services, and registered 801 households to receive cash. Within this reporting period, Mercy Corps served 6,452 individuals with water trucking, garbage collection, and desludging.

1. Project Start-Up

Project startup included identifying locations, revising Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs), and recruiting program staff in NWS and Amman. During the start-up phase, Mercy Corps changed its original plan of working in collective shelters to targeting camps that had an increase in needs due to increased numbers of earthquake-affected households in camps. Following principles of humanitarian intervention and to avoid causing community tension, Mercy Corps then offered blanket assistance to these camps.

Location identification

Mercy Corps began by establishing locations in camps and communities hosting earthquake-affected families and identified locations for most WASH (water trucking, garbage collection and desludging in camps), Shelter (assessments), FSL (identification of bakeries), and MPCA activities (registration and distribution in communities). Some activities including dignified shelter are pending technical needs assessment findings and/or local authorities' approval. Mercy Corps anticipates approval in July.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Revision

During the location identification and obtaining the necessary approvals from local authorities, Mercy Corps revised its food security and livelihood SoPs and tools to facilitate project implementation. SoPs are regularly revised for projects where we will implement in new locations or new stakeholders, target groups, or actors. SoPs are designed to be a guiding tool for the implementation team to know exactly which steps to follow to ensure quality project implementation. SOPs also clarify roles and responsibilities between the internal various teams engaged in the project implementation.

Legal discussions on Mercy Corps' ability to undertake rehabilitation activities

For specific activities such as the rehabilitation of boreholes, water stations, schools, and health facilities, because Mercy Corps Syria receives funding from the US Government, the Mercy Corps legal team had to undertake additional checks to ensure compliance with US Government regulations regarding working with "prohibited parties", to ensure that after rehabilitation activities are handed over to local authorities, Mercy Corps is not providing assistance that would go to the SSG, HTS, or any other prohibited party. The result of this need to ensure we are following similar processes with all donors is that we are also ensuring a responsible handover for activities that we implement in NWS.

When the grant began, Mercy Corps had been working on approvals to work on WASH infrastructure and was in the final stages of approvals. Mercy Corps prioritized this review and approval at the time of the earthquake and fortunately received internal approval in late-May 2023 and began engaging immediately in NWS to coordinate with local authorities and other actors to implement the activities.

Recruitments

Recruitment was a major focus of the start-up as Mercy Corps recruited about 30 team members in NWS, and Amman, Jordan, to support the implementation of this project, funded by Taiwanese people. Most of the positions have now been recruited, but Mercy Corps is still in the process of recruiting some final positions for activities that will take place in the remaining project period. Mercy Corps recruited in parallel to taking steps to identify locations and revise SoPs.

2. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Mercy Corps was able to work through challenges and identify camps hosting earthquake-affected families to support them with the proposed WASH services. Mercy Corps then obtained local authorities' approval to work in the camps as shown in the table below. Mercy Corps received approval to work in seven camps starting in late March and began delivery by early April and May in all camps.

These camps were provided with water trucking, garbage collection, and desludging in the reporting period. During the reporting period, Mercy Corps also assessed the locations and conditions for provision of water tanks, rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities, and operations and maintenance of water stations and boreholes and began needed coordination with the WASH Cluster to plan to implement the activities.

Locations of WASH activities			
Region	Camp	Approval received on	Date of service delivery start
NWS	Camp 1	27 March 23	2 April 23
NWS	Camp 2	27 March 23	2 April 23
NWS	Camp 3	29 March 23	4 April 23
NWS	Camp 4	29 March 23	4 April 23
NWS	Camp 5	29 March 23	4 April 23
NWS	Camp 6	4 May 23	7 May 23
NWS	Camp 7	4 May 23	7 May 23

The table below shows the number of households and individuals who arrived after the earthquake. 124 households arrived after the earthquake in the seven camps, a total of 655 individuals. This brought the total number of individuals in these camps to over 1,000 households and almost 6,500 individuals.

Number of earthquake-affected households and individuals in camp receiving WASH activities				
Camp	Total HHs	Total individuals	HHs arrivals after earthquake	Individuals arrivals after earthquake
Camp 1	197	1,274	10	55
Camp 2	128	709	9	45
Camp 3	165	834	6	32
Camp 4	100	500	10	49
Camp 5	287	1,750	29	174
Camp 6	100	625	32	160
Camp 7	96	760	28	140
TOTAL	1,073	6,452	124	655



Water Trucking in NWS, June 2023. Water trucking is distributed to camps that have a significant influx of individuals who have been displaced due to the earthquake.

Water Trucking

Since starting water trucking delivery in the seven camps across NWS, Mercy Corps has provided 1,073 households (6,452 individuals) with 35 liters of water per person per day (l/p/d) as per WASH Cluster guidelines. This is a total of 92,455 water barrels. Mercy Corps provided the water trucking service through local contractors under Mercy Corps' Master Service Agreement (MSA). Mercy Corps followed the water quality protocols by conducting 167 free residual chlorine (FRC) tests at the household level with a result of 100% being above or equal to 0.2mg/l and 176 at the water truck level with 100% above or equal to 0.5mg/l. In addition, Mercy Corps conducted 36 bacterial tests where all the samples were not contaminated. These tests satisfy the standard of testing and water quality.

Garbage Collection

Mercy Corps provided garbage collection services through local contractors in the selected camps and reached 1,073 households (6,452 individuals). The contractors collected the garbage from collection points or bins within camps based on a weekly schedule, usually carried out one to three times each week based on each camp's need, size, and population. The sub-contracted truck removed the collected garbage to pre-identified dumpsites away from camps and residential locations, in coordination with the local councils. Mercy Corps conducted weekly spot checks on the contractors' garbage disposal to ensure their commitment to dispose in the approved landfills. No illegal disposal was reported or observed.



Garbage Collection in NWS, June 2023, supported by the people of Taiwan.

Desludging

Through local contractors, Mercy Corps provided emergency desludging services in six of the seven selected in NWS. A total of 133 septic tanks were desludged, transported, and disposed in approved locations, reaching 547 households (3,228 individuals). Mercy Corps did not conduct desludging services within one camp because there was no desludging needed for the septic tanks within the camp. Mercy Corps conducted weekly spot checks on contractors to ensure the disposal occurred in the approved locations by the local council. No illegal disposal was reported or observed. Through engaging casual laborers, Mercy Corps ensured that the wastewater was chlorinated.



Desludging in NWS, June 2023, supported by the people of Taiwan.

Water Tanks

On 25 May 2023, Mercy Corps conducted water tanks needs assessments to capture the needs across the seven camps. Accordingly, Mercy Corps will distribute 51 2 meters cubed (2m3) capacity water tanks that will be shared between three to four households as per the WASH Cluster's guidelines, and 85 1m3 capacity water tanks that will be shared between one to two households. Mercy Corps will begin procurement in June 2023, and will then distribute the tanks in the summer months.

Rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities

After obtaining local authorities' approval to collect data, Mercy Corps launched a technical needs assessment at the end of May to capture non-operating water and sanitation facilities that were affected and damaged by the earthquake. In parallel, Mercy Corps began coordinating with the WASH Cluster to identify water and sanitation facilities in need of repairs.

Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of water stations and boreholes

Mercy Corps commenced with a needs assessment at the end of May to capture which water stations and boreholes that are not operational as per the WASH Cluster shared gap database and gained the needed approvals from the local authorities to conduct data collection exercises. The results of the assessment will provide Mercy Corps with the status of the necessary items required for the stations and boreholes to keep operating to ensure the continuous operation of the water stations and boreholes.

3. Shelter

Dignified Shelters

Mercy Corps used the Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) conducted on 16 February 2023 to assess needs following the earthquake as a baseline to select the most vulnerable camps for dignified shelter interventions. In April, Mercy Corps launched a detailed technical assessment for dignified shelter, to collect information that would allow us to target households in the 98 camps that are currently benefiting from Mercy Corps' WASH activities through other programs. Following the technical assessment, Mercy Corps faced several challenges in finalizing locations: Housing, Land and Properties (HLP) constraints, securing landowners permission, and social tensions amongst residents within the camps. Mercy Corps intends to implement a project that is sensitive to these issues and still complies with the NWS Shelter & Non-Food Items (SNFI) Cluster's guidelines. At the time of reporting, Mercy Corps is exploring camps that still have a high percentage of households and individuals affected by the earthquake that lost their homes, as well as vulnerable families displaced due to the 12 years of conflict in Syria.

Site preparation

In April, Mercy Corps assessed the site preparation needs of the 98 camps that are currently benefiting from Mercy Corps' WASH activities through other programs. Mercy Corps selected the seven amongst the most vulnerable camps located in NWS, in which to implement site preparation and flood prevention. Selection criteria considered previous flood records within the camps, number of tents in need of insulation and roads which needed gravelling, and HLP rights considerations. In May, a contractor then began gravelling the main roads and the sub-roads that led to WASH facilities of latrines, communal water tanks, and insulating tents. In March, the Early Recovery Cluster then announced that the debris removal needs in NWS were met by the NWS Civil Defense. Therefore, Mercy Corps will not plan to implement debris removal in this project and site preparation activities will only include road gravelling and tent insulation.



Two months after the earthquake, Mercy Corps interviewed Adel Abdo, who was living in one of the 98 camps in which Mercy Corps provides services. He was disabled due to the earthquake and lost his house. He now lives in a tent with his family in a very uncomfortable way. They only have four latrines for 60 tents. Adel said: "We used to be afraid of the conflict, now we are afraid of remaining poor and living in a tent for the rest of our lives." Mercy Corps, with the support of the people of Taiwan, is working to provide dignified shelter and rehabilitate shelters so that Mr. Abdo can have improved and dignified living conditions.

Shelter Rehabilitation

In April 2023, in coordination with the SNFI Cluster, Mercy Corps launched an assessment for community selection for the shelter rehabilitation activity, to identify the most vulnerable communities affected by the earthquake and avoid overlapping with other organizations. Mercy Corps also conducted security assessments and obtained safety and security team clearances to start the initial community assessment, identified five communities as the most affected by the earthquake, and obtained the local authorities' approval to start shelter rehabilitation. Shelter rehabilitation included light and small repairs, according to the SNFI cluster guidance.

Accordingly, in the five identified communities across NWS, Mercy Corps conducted a detailed assessment and focus group discussions (FGDs) with the local councils in the targeted communities in May. These FGDs were to obtain the vulnerability criteria that assessed the shelter damage level, the ratio of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to the total population, the number of shelter units in need of rehabilitation relative to the overall target, and the presence of other shelter actors within the community. As a result, Mercy Corps selected a community in NWS, and proceeded with advertising the intervention in public places to ensure equal access and guarantee a fair selection process in coordination with the local councils and community leaders.

After completing the registration period, which took place between 18-20 May, Mercy Corps received the registration list from the local councils. 527 households had registered, which showed a high level of interest from community members. In June, Mercy Corps began the detailed assessment and developed a bill of quantities (BoQ) to apply Mercy Corps' damage and vulnerability criteria. Following the shelter unit assessments and after applying the scoring selection criteria, Mercy Corps will select and target the 200 most vulnerable shelter units that pass the selection criteria. Mercy Corps will begin the procurement process in July and will then rehabilitate the shelters.

Rehabilitation of Three Schools and Three Health Facilities

During the reporting period, Mercy Corps registered with the Education Cluster and with the Health Cluster to coordinate and engage with the health and education actors in exchanging knowledge within the sector, while awaiting the Mercy Corps legal team's approval to proceed with the rehabilitation process. Accordingly, Mercy Corps started assessing locations where the health facilities and schools were affected by the earthquake and need small to medium rehabilitation works. As mentioned, Mercy Corps has received approval to proceed with rehabilitation in targeted locations and is currently facilitating bilateral discussions with health partners such as Relief International and with education partners, to check their interest in the handover process to ensure that the schools are continuously operated.

4. Food Security and Livelihoods

Rehabilitation of Three Bakeries

In May 2023, Mercy Corps conducted an assessment of 21 bakeries in 11 communities in NWS. Out of the 21 bakeries, six were identified as in need of rehabilitation. Mercy Corps' field engineers conducted technical assessments in the last two weeks of May to identify the detailed rehabilitation needs for each bakery, as well as the impact of the earthquake on the bakeries. As a result of this technical assessment, a BoQ was generated for each bakery.



Bakeries play a vital role in resilience and their rehabilitation is necessary to meet food needs and to prevent livelihoods collapse. The bakery above was one of those selected for rehabilitation for the project supported by the people of Taiwan. On the right is a picture of a wall damaged in the earthquake; without being fixed, it will be dangerous for employees to continue operations.

Mercy Corps convened a selection committee in the first week of June and selected the following four bakeries for rehabilitation support in NWS. After finalizing the selection process, in June, Mercy Corps initiated the procurement process to select one or more contractor(s) to conduct the rehabilitation works, which is expected to start during June 2023 and end in July 2023.

Provision of Wheat, Yeast, and Flour to Three Bakeries

During the reporting period, Mercy Corps engaged with the FSL Cluster and the Bread and Bakery Technical Working Group (TWIG) to ensure that the interventions complied with cluster recommendations and standards. Based on the Cluster's feedback and technical guidance, Mercy Corps launched the wheat flour and yeast procurement, which is currently in process.

Subsidized Bread Distribution for Three Communities

Mercy Corps originally proposed that the three bakeries supported with rehabilitation work would also be provided with flour, wheat, and yeast. Ultimately, Mercy Corps identified four bakeries that will benefit from the package (rehabilitation support, as well as wheat flour and yeast support). In return, these bakeries will sell bread to earthquake-affected communities at subsidized prices; the calculation of the subsidized bread will be defined according to the calculation provided by the FSL and Early Recovery and Livelihood (ERL) Clusters.

Support 60 Vendors with Cash Grants, Business Training, and Coaching

During the reporting period, Mercy Corps launched a procurement process to select training service providers. This procurement process is expected to be finalized in the summer. Mercy Corps staff in NWS are also running a market assessment to identify and select the businesses that will be supported.

5. Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance

Based on the FSL Cluster's gap analysis, and the analysis of locations affected by the earthquake, Mercy Corps decided to intervene through MPCA in NWS. In May, Mercy Corps' FSL team registered 801 households in NWS g. Once this exercise was completed, Mercy Corps' Performance and Quality (PaQ) team conducted a verification exercise which covered 30% of the registered HHs. The selection of participants will be finalized mid-June, and the first round of distribution will be organized late-June. In parallel, Mercy Corps will continue the registrations to reach the target of 1,000 households.

Accountability and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

During the reporting period, Mercy Corps carried out activities to ensure accountability and proper monitoring and evaluation of the project in all of the activity areas:

- **WASH:** In June, the PaQ team started conducting the WASH Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) activities in the targeted areas to check on the quality of the interventions and share the results of the monitoring activities to the program team.
- **Shelter:** In May, the PaQ team planned for the MEL activities that will be conducted during the shelter activities implementation. This includes site visits and monitoring activities. The PAQ team will be reporting on the monitoring activities results in the next report.
- **FSL:** In May, Mercy Corps PaQ team conducted a verification process for a sample of the initially registered participants, 30% selected, and 30% non- selected to verify the accuracy of the data collected and the validity of the selection results and evaluate data collection quality. The verification was conducted to a total of 247 registered participants. The verification results indicated that the selection process done by the program team was successful and can be relied on to proceed with the assistance process.

- **Community Accountability Response Mechanism (CARM)**

CARM is a channel for all community members to provide feedback, suggestions, complaints, and concerns, in a manner that is safe, confidential, transparent, and accessible, enabling Mercy Corps to respond and make any necessary programmatic or safeguarding adaptations and to ensure the safety, security, and empowerment of project participants. Under this project, the CARM activities have taken place throughout implementation: conducting information sessions and monitoring in the distribution areas, distributing leaflets to advertise the CARM channels, and encouraging the affected households and communities to report their feedback, suggestions, and complaints.

Challenges and Responses

The major challenge during the reporting period was balancing immediate needs on the ground with the need for responsible start-up with processes established by Mercy Corps relating to HR and legal review, as well as needed humanitarian coordination, consultation and liaison with communities and local authorities. A number of these challenges, which resulted in delays to specific activities, are described in more detail in the sections above. Mercy Corps pivoted to prioritizing operational needs from the earthquake starting in March and dedicated additional resources to recruit about 30 additional team members across offices inside Syria. Legal review for engagement in specific infrastructure rehabilitation did take longer than expected, unfortunately, resulting in delays in implementation-related processes, in particular the rehabilitation activities mentioned above.

Mercy Corps has taken a holistic and integrated programmatic approach to earthquake service provision and activity implementation. This means that each element of each project fits into a whole package for affected communities. Mercy Corps was able to ensure basic needs and services progressed, both under this project and with funding from other donors while we made progress on other planned activities. The flexibility that this approach offers allows Mercy Corps to balance both short and medium-term interests of communities and contribute to a more sustainable recovery from the earthquake impacts.

Mercy Corps managed the project adaptively and made the following adjustments to planned activities. These changes remain within the scope of the approved project:

- **WASH:** Due to the challenges faced in identifying locations, to avoid social tensions within the targeted camps, Mercy Corps targeted camps with both directly affected by the earthquake through displacement or loss of income and those who were previously conflict-affected families. All individuals in the targeted areas have been affected by increased needs of the population post-earthquake.
- **Shelter:** Due to the challenges faced identifying locations where dignified shelters could be built, and after gaining approvals from the local authorities to proceed with implementation, Mercy Corps is exploring alternative locations where we can support both earthquake- and conflict-affected participants. In addition, Mercy Corps will not undertake debris removal within the site preparation activity since the ERL Cluster later announced that the debris removal needs in NWS were met by the NWS Civil Defense. Therefore, the site preparation activities will only include roads gravelling and tents insulation.

Mercy Corps has made an effort to implement within the timeframe proposed originally for the project (1 March 2023 - 30 November 2023). However, due to the delays mentioned above, Mercy Corps plans to request a no-cost extension (NCE) to complete activities proposed. We anticipate that the timeline needed to deliver the activities and meet the project's targets would be 31 March 2024, and would appreciate a dialogue and guidance on the best process for extending programming.

Activities Planned in the Next Reporting Period

The following activities are planned, which will be carried out until the end of the project:

- **WASH:** Mercy Corps will continue providing water trucking, garbage collection, and desludging services in the seven targeted camps and will distribute 51 of 2m³ water tanks, and 85 of 1m³ water tanks by the end of June/beginning of July 2023. Additionally, Mercy Corps will initiate the rehabilitation and Operation & Maintenance (O&M) support of water stations.
- **Shelter:** Mercy Corps will finalize the identification of locations for the dignified shelters, rehabilitation of three schools and three health facilities, water, and sanitation infrastructure, as

well as the O&M of water stations and boreholes activity. The site preparation works are planned to be completed by the end of June. The rehabilitation of 200 shelters will start in July.

- **FSL:** Four bakeries are planned to be rehabilitated by the end of July. Mercy Corps will then provide the wheat, yeast, and flour for the rehabilitated bakeries by the end of July or early August. Mercy Corps will simultaneously deliver business development training to 60 vendors which will start in early July and start developing the support plans and distribution of the cash grants financial support by end of July or early August.
- **MPCA:** Mercy Corps will distribute the first round of MPCA (\$100 per household, as per the NWS Cash Working Group's guidelines) to 801 households in June and will continue until the end of November. Also, Mercy Corps will finish registering the remaining 199 households in order for them to be able to receive the MPCA.
- **Coordination:** Mercy Corps will continue coordinating with the NWS WASH, SNFI, FSL (including the Bread and Bakery Technical Working Group), Health, and Education Clusters.
- **MEL:** Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning activities will continue both during the project to monitor ongoing achievements, after specific activities to measure immediate effect, and after projects activities concluded, evaluate the full effect of the project. The PaQ team is working with the program team on developing and finalizing PaQ tools required to monitor the planned services mentioned above that are yet to be completed. Mercy Corps' PaQ team will verify the registered FSL and MPCA participants, using a sample of 30% of registered households. The verification results will be shared with the program team to identify participants who will benefit from the FSL and MPCA activities. The PaQ team will then conduct WASH Post-Distribution Monitoring for the WASH activities and with the FSL component participants to check on the quality of the bread and other services provided.



Ibrahim Mustafa Haq Ahmad, far left, lives in a community targeted for assistance under the project. He was interviewed by Mercy Corps staff in NES about his experience; at the time the family was sleeping in the tent on the right side of the picture. When asked about his biggest needs, he said they were "Good ceiling in a house and some basic materials. Fans, solar panels, and a battery. I need work. Do it to buy what my kids need." With the generosity of the people of Taiwan, Mercy Corps will be able to help families like that of Mr. Ahmad.

About Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we partner to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within. Now, and for the future.

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