

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

期中執行報告摘要

- 一、報告期間：本(112)年 3 月 1 日至 8 月 31 日。
- 二、背景概述：本年 2 月 6 日敘利亞北部發生強震，造成當地近 8,500 人死亡，30 萬人流離失所。為協助受災家庭災後復原及建立社區韌性，美慈組織敘利亞分部啟動緊急人道援助作業，運用我國捐助的善款，配合災區實際需求，持續辦理各項援助工作。
- 三、執行情形：本案援助地區因持續受到武裝衝突、熱浪、霍亂疫情及行政阻礙等多重負面因素影響，相關援助工作面臨極大挑戰。本年 3 月至 8 月間，總計有 12,418 名災民因本賑濟計畫受惠，執行情形分述如下：

(一) 「供水、消毒暨衛生」(Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, WASH)計畫：

1. 在 7 個災民營區提供每人每天 35 公升之乾淨安全用水，總計有 1,134 個家庭、共 6,852 名災民受惠，並為 230 個家庭建置 104 個儲水槽，嘉惠 1,640 名災民；另提供營區「垃圾清運」及「污物清理」等服務。
2. 「供水設施復原」及「水井維護營運」項目部分，已完成前期評估及招標採購，預計自本年 9 月起開始施工。

(二) 「庇護所」(Shelter)計畫：

1. 為協助災民因應極端氣候變化、防範性別暴力及騷擾等問題，美慈組織計劃為災民建置兼顧尊嚴的庇護所，目前已完成道路改善及設置隔熱帳篷等準備工作，計有 5

個營區，共 138 戶家庭、678 人受益；另於本年 8 月起，針對 155 個符合受援標準的單元，進行修繕工作，預計於 10 月完工移交。

2. 另與「救援國際」(Relief International, RI)、SAMS、ATAA 及 PIN 等合作夥伴協力簽訂合作備忘錄，規劃自本年 9 月起，共同推動 3 所學校及 3 個醫衛設施的復原計畫。

(三) **「糧食安全及生計」(Food Security and Livelihoods)計畫：**

1. 本計畫原已擇定 4 間烘焙坊進行修復工程，惟因受當地行政機關阻撓，僅能就 3 間烘焙坊進行修復。本季進行 2 間烘焙坊之工程招標，並辦理麵粉、酵母及鹽等生產原料採購作業。
2. 為協助當地中小企業建構長期、韌性的經營能力，美慈組織規劃辦理創業訓練課程，目前已獲 2,600 名(其中 39%為女性)企業主報名，將遴選其中 80 名企業主參訓，並於結業後依據各企業主提交之商業計畫，繼續提供其中 60 名(50%須為女性)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：**

本年 6 月及 8 月，分別向 673 戶(共 3,957 名災民)及 958 戶(共 5,566 名災民)受災家庭發放緊急援助金

- (五) 美慈組織敘利亞分部於災區各處及援贈水塔等物資上標示我國國旗及英文與阿拉伯語並列之「Friendship From Taiwan」字樣，且於災民領取受援物資時，向渠等說明賑災計畫均出自台灣人民善心捐款，獲受援災民一致肯定與感謝。



February 2023, Northwest Syria. Farouk (alias) plays in a tree, on a sunny day in an IDP camp. Mercy Corps has been supplying the camp with water for years, but it has taken on added importance in the wake of the massive earthquake that struck the region on February 6, 2023. The people of Taiwan have been supporting families suffering from lack of food and water, money, livelihoods, and shelter such as Farouk and his family.

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

Mid-Term Narrative Report

September 15, 2023

PREPARED FOR: Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Taiwan - Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Jordan

PROJECT LOCATION: Northwest Syria - Earthquake Response

REPORTING PERIOD: March 1, 2023 - August 31, 2023

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Background and Project Goals

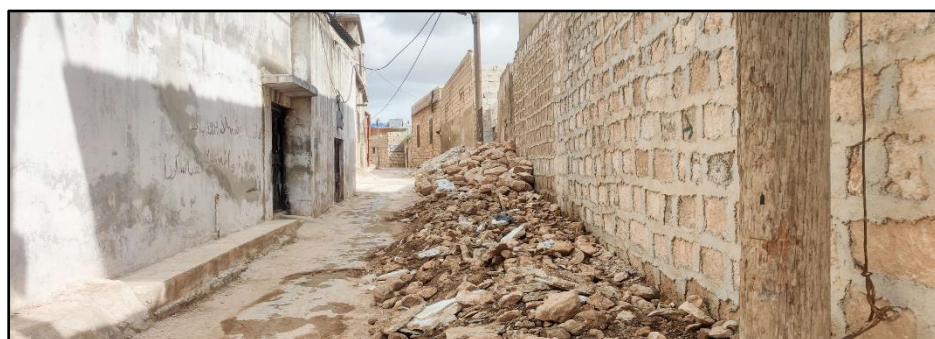
On February 6, 2023, a 7.8 earthquake struck Turkey and Northwest Syria. In Syria, approximately 8,500 people died and 300,000 people were displaced by the initial quake and aftershocks¹. Within days of the earthquake, Mercy Corps launched its emergency relief response, responding to critical needs with lifesaving humanitarian assistance.

Mercy Corps conducted rapid needs assessments in the first month of the response with incorporated information from clusters and partners to understand immediate needs and gaps. With the financial support received from the people of Taiwan, over the last six months, Mercy Corps has continued responding to immediate needs and designed and implemented programming to build longer-term recovery and resilience to support earthquake affected families and communities.

The project aims to deliver Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Shelter, Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL), and Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) support to affected populations. This includes:

- **WASH.** Water trucking and water tanks targeting 5,077 individuals (1,015 households) with 35 liters of water per person per day for 9 months; installing 200 water tanks; garbage collection and desludging providing 1,000 households with services for 9 months; and rehabilitation of water and sanitation infrastructure along with subsequent operation and maintenance.
- **Shelter.** Building 166 dignified shelter units for 166 households; providing site preparation services to 300 households; rehabilitating 200 shelters; and providing WASH and shelter rehabilitation in three schools and three health facilities.
- **FSL.** Rehabilitating three bakeries; providing wheat flour and yeast to three bakeries; providing subsidized bread distribution for three communities; and supporting 60 vendors with cash grants, business training, and coaching, with an average of \$1,500 cash grant per vendor.
- **MPCA.** Distributing MPCA to 1,000 households for six months.

This report details activities implemented by Mercy Corps Syria from March 1 to August 31, 2023, that were funded by the people of Taiwan and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Taiwan - Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Jordan. Because Mercy Corps submitted earlier reports with information on activities completed from 1 March to 15 June, it also has a separate section detailing accomplishments from 15 June to 31 August.



April 2023 - Northwest Syria. Many buildings across the Northwest have remained damaged or destroyed following the earthquake that struck the region in February.

Context Update

After the earthquake, Northwest Syria witnessed an unprecedented lull in fighting, but clashes gradually resumed and have since reached pre-earthquake levels of violence, which entail weekly airstrikes and

¹ International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation Situation Report 20 (April 2023)

indirect fire, such as shelling, by the Government of Syria into Idlib governorate. There was an increase in front-line incidents during the reporting period from March through August. This was mainly in the form of artillery shelling of the suspected Opposition Armed faction's site by the Syrian Government, as well as a total of 16 Government of Russia/Government of Syria airstrikes against the suspected Opposition Armed faction's site. During this time, 249 anti-Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) protests took place, and protests continued to increase in the context of the aftermath of targeted killings of HTS members in Idlib, internal reshuffling, and related internal arrests of senior HTS leaders. Protests have been largely peaceful and concentrated in Harim District, Dana area, and parts of Idlib City. In addition to affecting the residents of Northwest Syria, these events also pose security challenges to humanitarian actors on the ground, who are confined to frontline locations in some cases.

The windows of opportunity namely the February earthquake, the May Presidential campaign in Turkey, and the start of the second year of Russian invasion of Ukraine, for negotiations between major actors have not translated into negotiations, and the crisis in Syria remains in a political deadlock.

In terms of humanitarian need, six months after the earthquake, communities are still grappling with the profound impact of the earthquake, its aftershocks, and the humanitarian catastrophe that unfolded, which have compounded significant humanitarian challenges Syria had been facing before the earthquake. In July and August 2023, heat waves in Northwest Syria created difficult working conditions, adding to already difficult living conditions for the population. Health risks, in particular Cholera, continue to be a major concern, with water needs at their highest for many services during the summer months. Across the Northwest, 4.1 million people need humanitarian assistance in September 2023.²

The humanitarian apparatus is currently in limbo. In June, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) did not renew the cross-border resolution, which managed aid to Northwest Syria coming through Turkey. Despite a recently announced six-month agreement between the UN and Government of Syria to operate crossings through a "consent model", the lack of clarity on how the agreement will be operationalized and what might occur after it nears expiration has led to increased fears among the people of Northwest Syria, as well as humanitarian actors.

Project Update: 15 June - 31 August 2023

This section summarizes activities that took place since the previous reporting period. Elaboration on these activities is added to the Project Achievements sections below. Mercy Corps carried out the activities below between 15 June and 31 August 2023:

- **WASH. Mercy Corps has delivered daily water trucking, garbage collection, desludging services** continued since April 2023, including the period from 15 June to 31 August. To provide **water tanks**, after completing a needs assessment, Mercy Corps selected 200 households across 5 camps that did not have water tanks or had poor quality water tanks. Accordingly, in July Mercy Corps delivered 57 water tanks (1m³) to 97 households (618 individuals); and 47 water tanks (2m³) to 133 households (1,022 individuals). Mercy Corps also made progress on **rehabilitating water stations and infrastructure**. During the reporting period, Mercy Corps identified and conducted a technical assessment of one water station in need of repairs and prepared the respective Bills of Quantities (BOQs) to begin rehabilitation. Mercy Corps contracted the vendor and recruited the operators that will keep the station working for a period of three months to ensure that safe water is delivered to participants. Finally, Mercy Corps identified four water stations in need of **operation and maintenance**. Subsequently, Mercy Corps conducted a technical assessment of the stations and prepared the necessary BOQs to keep operating the

² North-west Syria | Situation Reports (unocha.org) accessed 9 September

stations. In August, Mercy Corps finalized the procurement process to contract a vendor to provide fuel and spare parts to the selected stations on an ongoing basis and is recruiting the operators to keep these water stations functioning.

- **Shelter.** In July, Mercy Corps completed **site preparation** activities, including road gravelling and tent insulation in five camps, benefiting 138 households (678 individuals). In July, Mercy Corps met with education partners (ATAA Humanitarian Relief Association (ATAA) and People in Need (PIN)) to discuss the technical assessments conducted by Mercy Corps and the subsequent **schools proposed for rehabilitation**. In August, Mercy Corps signed an MoU with ATAA and finalized the procurement process to start rehabilitation in September. In July, Mercy Corps met with a health partner Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) to discuss the **rehabilitation of three health facilities** affected by the earthquake in Northwest Syria. The MoU between Mercy Corps and SAMS was signed in August and rehabilitation work will start in September. Finally, Mercy Corps selected the community in Northwest Syria as the implementation site for **shelter rehabilitation** activity. In August, following a selection criteria and technical assessment, Mercy Corps identified shelter units with the level of need measured between intermediate and high, out of 155 of the most vulnerable shelters in the community. Accordingly, BOQs for shelter units were prepared, the procurement process was completed, and the rehabilitation process began in August.
- **FSL.** Mercy Corps was able to successfully identify locations, conduct technical assessments, develop BoQs, and launch procurements for **bakery rehabilitation**; and is currently tendering to be able to **provide wheat flour, yeast, and salt**. To support 60 vendors with **cash grants, business training, and coaching**, Mercy Corps is currently in the process of contracting with a training service provider.
- **MPCA.** In June, Mercy Corps distributed the first round of MPCA and the second round in August.
- **Accountability and Monitoring and Evaluation.** Mercy Corps carried out continuous Community Accountability awareness which presents a feedback mechanism for participants of the project, as well as Monitoring and Evaluation for all sectors. Highlights of assessments are in this report.



Mercy Corps staff deliver an awareness session on Community Accountability Response Mechanism (CARM) so vital feedback is received from participants who receive cash distributions in Northwest Syria August 2023.

Project Achievements: 1 March - 31 August 2023

This section details the programmatic activities implemented by Mercy Corps from March 1 until August 31, thanks to the support from the people of Taiwan. The total number of individuals who have benefited from the funding from the people of Taiwan is 12,418. This has been delivered through interventions in WASH, Shelter, FSL, and MPCA.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

As indicated in the Summary Report shared in June 2023, between March and May 2023, Mercy Corps obtained the Northwest Syria's local authorities' necessary approvals to implement WASH response in camps. Consequently, Mercy Corps provided WASH services to camps' residents starting between April and May; and continued throughout the reporting period.

The table below shows how many households and individuals arrived after the earthquake in the seven camps targeted which served as the basis for creating the targeted participants for this project. 1,189 additional individuals arrived in the camps, which brought the total number of individuals in these camps to 1,134 households and 6,852 individuals.

Locations of WASH activities and numbers of newly arrived people after the earthquake						
Camp	Approval received on	Date of service delivery start	Total HHs in camp	Total individuals	HH arrived after earthquake	Individuals arrived after earthquake
1	27 March 23	2 April 23	218	1,394	31	175
2	27 March 23	2 April 23	128	709	9	45
3	29 March 23	4 April 23	205	1,114	71	446
4	29 March 23	4 April 23	100	500	10	49
5	29 March 23	4 April 23	287	1,750	29	174
6	4 May 23	7 May 23	100	625	32	160
7	4 May 23	7 May 23	96	760	28	140
Total			1,134	6,852	210	1,189

Water Trucking

Since April (in five camps) and May (in two camps), through local contractors, Mercy Corps provided 156,772 barrels of water to 1,134 households (reaching 6,852 individuals) across three sub-districts in Northwest Syria. Water trucking will be delivered to those seven camps for at least eight months, and Mercy Corps will consider continuing the services for additional months, based on potential savings.

Due to the excessive heat affecting Northwest Syria over the summer months, and based on the WASH Cluster's guidance, Mercy Corps increased the daily number of liters of water provided to each camp residents by 5 liters (hence providing 35L/person/day instead of 30L/person/day) as of July 23.

Mercy Corps followed water quality protocols by conducting 1,529 Free Residual Chlorine (FRC) tests at the household level with a result of 100% being above or equal to 0.2mg/l and 1,420 at the water truck level with 100% above or equal to 0.5mg/l. In addition, Mercy Corps conducted 170 bacterial tests where all the samples were not contaminated. These tests satisfy the standard of testing and water quality.

Garbage Collection

Solid waste management in camps is vital in ensuring good hygiene practices and preventing the spread of rodent and insect-borne diseases. Many camps are not connected to sanitation networks, so the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) driven by the earthquake exacerbated the need for intervention.

Consequently, since March (in five camps) and April (in two camps), Mercy Corps provided garbage collection services on a weekly schedule in seven camps in three sub-districts, reaching 1,134 households

(6,852 individuals). Garbage collection services will be delivered to those seven camps for at least eight months. Mercy Corps will consider continuing the services for additional months, based on potential savings.

In coordination with local councils, garbage was moved safely to pre-identified dumpsites. Mercy Corps also conducted weekly spot checks on the contractors' garbage disposal to ensure their commitment to disposing garbage in approved landfills; no illegal disposal was captured.

Desludging

During the reporting period, Mercy Corps provided emergency desludging services in seven camps in three sub-districts through local contractors. A total of 579 septic tanks were de-sludged, transported, and disposed in approved locations, reaching 562 households (2,856 individuals). Desludging services will be delivered to those seven camps for at least eight months, and Mercy Corps will consider continuing the services for additional months if there are savings in other activities.

In parallel, Mercy Corps conducted weekly spot checks on contractors to ensure the disposal occurred in locations approved by the local council; no illegal disposal was found. Through its casual laborers, Mercy Corps ensured that all wastewater was chlorinated.

Water Tanks

Based on the needs assessment conducted across the seven camps to capture the needs of water tanks within the camps, Mercy Corps selected 200 households who did not have water tanks or had water tanks in poor condition in five camps. Mercy Corps initially assessed the needs across seven camps and aimed to distribute 85 1m3 water tanks and 51 2m3 water tanks. However, the local authorities did not approve the provision of water tanks in two camps due to fears of rising social tensions. Mercy Corps therefore distributed the following in July:

- 57 water tanks (1m3) to 97 households (618 individuals); and
- 47 water tanks (2m3) to 133 households (1,022 individuals).



Northwest Syria, July 2023 water tank distribution supported by the people of Taiwan.

Rehabilitation of Water Stations and Infrastructure

After obtaining local authorities' approval to conduct needs assessments within the targeted areas, Mercy Corps launched a technical needs assessment at the end of May to capture non-operating water stations and water and sewage networks that were damaged by the earthquake. In parallel, Mercy Corps coordinated with the WASH Cluster to identify locations in need of rehabilitation to avoid duplication of efforts with other organizations.

During the reporting period, Mercy Corps identified and conducted a technical assessment of one water station in need of repairs and prepared the respective Bills of Quantities (BOQs) to begin rehabilitation of

that water station. Mercy Corps contracted the vendor and recruited the operators that will keep the station working for a period of three months to ensure that safe water is delivered to participants.

The work is expected to start in September and will include rehabilitation of the network by replacing pipes, valves, connections and extending the current water network to reach further participants. Following the rehabilitation and maintenance of the water station and network, the number of households benefiting from the network will increase from 436 to 2,136. Along with the rehabilitation of the water station and its water network, Mercy Corps will be operating the water station for four months covering its operational costs.

Operation and Maintenance of Water Stations and Boreholes

During the reporting period, Mercy Corps identified four water stations in need of operation and maintenance. Subsequently, Mercy Corps conducted a technical assessment of the stations and prepared the necessary BOQs to keep operating the stations. In August, Mercy Corps finalized the procurement process to contract a vendor to provide fuel and spare parts to the selected stations on an ongoing basis and is recruiting the operators to keep these water stations functioning. The operation and maintenance of these water stations will start in September/October.

Water Stations in Need of Operation and Maintenance		
Station #	Number of Households	Number of Participants
1	1,700	8,550
2	1,600	8,000
3	2,000	10,000
4	1,400	7,000

Shelter

Dignified Shelter

On February 16, 2023, Mercy Corps conducted a rapid needs assessment which helped determine the most vulnerable camps affected by the earthquake in need of dignified shelter interventions. This was followed by a detailed technical assessment in April, allowing Mercy Corps to target households across 98 camps. Mercy Corps explored camps that host a high percentage of households and individuals affected by the earthquake, as well as vulnerable families displaced are 12 years of conflict in Syria.

Dignified shelters are shelter units that are designed specifically to provide adequate, safe, and private shelter in a protracted displacement context. They aim to address critical dignity and protection concerns, from the weather to issues such as Gender Based Violence (GBV), harassment, and other forms of violence, as well as to provide families with an alternative to prefabricated shelter. In Northwest Syria context, a dignified shelter has a longer lifespan than a tent.

Mercy Corps faced several challenges in identifying the locations: Housing, Land and Properties (HLP) constraints; securing landowners permission; and social tensions amongst residents within the camps where Mercy Corps did not have the financial capacities to cover the entire camp population. The Challenges section in this report details these issues. Mercy Corps implements in a way that is sensitive to

these issues and is in compliance with the Northwest Syria Shelter & Non-Food Items (SNFI) Cluster’s guidelines, while consistently ensuring that the intervention does no harm. While Mercy Corps had identified multiple applicable locations in various camps to conduct the dignified shelter intervention within them but were not able to identify them within the reporting period, Mercy Corps did obtain approval in September; this will be delayed in the subsequent report for this project.

Site Preparation

In July, Mercy Corps completed site preparation activities, including roads gravelling and tents insulation in five camps, benefiting 138 households (678 individuals). This activity was aimed at facilitating access to the camps, including shelter for individuals and trucks, including water trucks. It is also to prevent flooding in camps and communities and mitigates against weather conditions like heavy rains and snowfall.

The Mercy Corps team supervised, monitored, and provided daily technical support to the local contractors responsible for the activities. Mercy Corps also maintained the implemented works in cooperation with the camp managers to ensure their involvement in the continuous maintenance of the sites and, therefore, their sustainability.



Site preparation of roads within a camp with before and after images, which was completed in June 2023 and supported by the people of Taiwan.

Shelter Rehabilitation

Mercy Corps selected a community that had been affected by the earthquake as the implementation site for the shelter rehabilitation activity. In August and following scoring and selection criteria activities, Mercy Corps selected 155 of the most vulnerable shelter units in that community that could be eligible. After conducting a full technical assessment in the selected community, Mercy Corps identified the shelter units that had small to medium levels of damage by the earthquake as a target for this activity with the level of need measured between intermediate and high. Accordingly, Mercy Corps team prepared BOQs for shelter units, and in August, launched the procurement process. The rehabilitation process started in August, and the handover process is expected to take place in October.

Rehabilitation of Three Schools and Three Health Facilities

Mercy Corps registered with the Education and Health Cluster and became a permanent member of these coordination groups to coordinate the rehabilitation of schools and health facilities. Mercy Corps started assessing locations where health facilities and schools were affected by the earthquake and needed small to medium levels of rehabilitation work.

- **Health facilities.** In July, Mercy Corps met with health partner SAMS. Mercy Corps and SAMS signed an MoU in August, and the rehabilitation will start in September. Over the last six months, Mercy Corps has been in coordination with Relief International (RI) on an MoU that outlines how Mercy Corps would oversee a contractor to rehabilitate the health facilities that RI is operating. The MoU was signed in August, and the rehabilitation will start in September.
- **Schools.** In July, Mercy Corps also met with education partners ATAA and PIN and revised the technical assessments for the proposed schools that Mercy Corps field team conducted. In August, Mercy Corps signed an MoU with ATAA, and finalized the procurement process to start rehabilitation in early September. The handover of ATAA's schools is expected to take place in September. The MoU with PIN is currently being finalized.

Food, Security & Livelihoods (FSL)

Rehabilitation of Three Bakeries

Mercy Corps assessed 21 bakeries and selected four to be supported with rehabilitation works including structural improvements and equipment replacement/maintenance. However, in August, while Mercy Corps was finalizing procurement processes for rehabilitation, the local council rejected the list for various reasons (please refer to the Challenges and Responses section for more details). Consequently, Mercy Corps requested a new list of bakeries in need of rehabilitation from local authorities, and immediately started conducting technical assessments of some of those bakeries. Mercy Corps found two bakeries in need of support, and immediately began procurement processes, which will continue through September. Accordingly, the rehabilitation works will start in the selected bakeries in September. Mercy Corps expects to select the third bakery during September and start the rehabilitation works immediately.

Provision of Wheat Flour, Yeast to Three Bakeries

Based on our review of the FSL Cluster's guidelines, Mercy Corps clarified the contents of provision and included wheat flour, yeast, and added salt at a minimal cost, to ensure that bread could properly be provided to participants. This is also a change to the original proposed plan that included wheat separately from wheat flour. During the reporting period, Mercy Corps engaged with the FSL Cluster and its Bread & Bakeries Task Force. The high value tender advertised in early-June resulted in four applications. The tender was launched to identify suppliers who could provide Mercy Corps with 1) wheat flour, 2) yeast, and 3) salt, as only these three ingredients are necessary to bake nutritional bread. A grading committee will gather during September to select the vendors. Once this step is finalized, Mercy Corps will initiate the purchase orders in October, and provide the bakeries with the required amount of wheat flour, yeast, and salt. The distribution will be to the same bakeries which have been selected for rehabilitation.

Subsidized Bread Distribution for Three Communities

To ensure interventions complied with the FSL Cluster and Bread and Bakery Task Force recommendations and standards, Mercy Corps engaged closely with them. Based on their feedback and technical guidance, Mercy Corps launched the wheat flour, yeast, and salt procurement which is currently in progress (see the above activity for more details). The communities around these bakeries will benefit from subsidized bread distribution, providing some relief from the increased cost of food after the earthquake.

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

Mercy Corps has begun planning for longer-term resilience building activities including support to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through training and cash grants. A training course on developing business plans will be held for approximately 80 business owners. In the reporting period, Mercy Corps developed the scope of work for MSME training and requirements of the service provider and tendered. In the beginning of August, Mercy Corps selected Optimal Consultancy and Training company, and since then, Mercy Corps has been working with them on the training materials and content.

Mercy Corps developed outreach tools, digitalized them, and submitted all of them to the local authorities to gain approvals before beginning the intervention. Approval was received in mid-August and outreach began to business owners to encourage them to submit their interest in the training program. 2,600 business owners (39% of whom were women business owners) submitted their interest. In early September, Mercy Corps will pre-select the applicants. The technical training will involve coaching to improve the sustainability of businesses and help them to stabilize revenue and manage and adapt their business in the face of continuous and unpredictable challenges. This will help businesses to maintain or expand the availability, quality, diversity of food and other products in markets in response to needs.

After trainings, potential applicants will be requested to submit a business plan for Mercy Corps to evaluate and finalize the selection process. Through a competitive selection committee, Mercy Corps will select 60 businesses with a target of 50% businesses which are women-owned to receive a cash grant of 1,500 USD each. These cash grants will help businesses build their economic resilience in adapting to market shocks and currency instability. After receiving the grant, Mercy Corps will continue to provide business coaching to the vendors to support them in implementing their business plans.

Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)

Based on the FSL Cluster's gap analysis, and analysis of locations affected by the earthquake, Mercy Corps registered 801 households in one community outside a camp and four camps. Once this exercise was completed, Mercy Corps conducted a verification exercise which covered 30% of registered households.



A participant signs their name before receiving cash at a cash distribution in August 2023 in an earthquake-affected community. In this community, 570 households have received MPCA through the support of the people of Taiwan.

First round of MPCA

The selection of participants was finalized mid-June, and the first round of distribution was organized late-June. In parallel, Mercy Corps continued registrations to reach the target of 1,000 households.

Cash distribution data, Round 1 (June 2023)				
Location #	Received MPCA Households	Received MPCA Individuals	Did not receive Households	Total received + did not receive (HH)
1	470	2850	49	519
2	58	325	3	61
3	102	534	0	102
4	43	248	7	50
Total	673	3957	59	732

This data highlights that during the first round of assistance that was distributed the week before Eid Al Fitr which occurred in late-June, 673 families in total received assistance. There were two primary reasons why people did not receive assistance. Firstly, some participants did not provide the required documentation - these participants were given the opportunity to provide them before the second round, subject to completing necessary community validations. Secondly, some participants who did not receive cash assistance were unable to attend the distribution day for various personal reasons or prior commitments.



A cash distribution program takes place with the support from the people of Taiwan.

Second round MPCA

The table below shows the numbers of individuals to whom MPCA was distributed.

Cash distribution data, Round 2 (August 2023)				
Location #	Received MPCA - Households	Received MPCA - Individuals	Did not receive - Households	Total (HH)
1	540	3175	26	566
2	206	1245	5	211
3	65	357	1	66
4	93	490	20	113
5	54	299	1	55
Total	958	5566	53	1,011

Through the second round of distribution which took place in August, a total of 958 families received assistance. The reason behind the difference in numbers between the first and second round of MPCA distribution is related to the addition of one additional camp in the second MPCA distribution. The selection of this additional camp began in June after the first round of MPCA distribution after receiving a list of suggested camps from the local authorities, conducting an initial assessment, and obtaining approvals from the local authority to provide MPCA for camp residents.

Accountability and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Mercy Corps implemented various monitoring activities to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the activities implemented. Shelter and FSL M&E included site verification and validation of activities through visits and interviews. WASH and MPCA monitoring activities included the verification and validation of the selected participants; and the monitoring of activities (through Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) and Post Implementation Monitoring (PIM)). Outcomes of WASH and MPCA monitoring are highlighted below.

WASH

Mercy Corps conducted the following activities to assess the efficiency and quality of WASH interventions implemented:

- Water storage tanks handover process monitoring.** During the handover process of the water storage tanks, in July and August 2023, Mercy Corps collected observations on the efficiency of the process and obtained feedback from the 92 participants (6% males and 94% females) to whom the tanks were handed over. Key findings from the handover process monitoring were as follows:
 - All the respondents confirmed that they received the water storage tanks in good condition.
 - All the respondents confirmed that they were aware of Mercy Corps' Community Accountability Response Mechanism (CARM) after receiving awareness raising on it.
- Water tanks post installation monitoring.** In August, Mercy Corps conducted a post installation monitoring assessment after the installation of the water tanks with 55 participants (31% females and 69% males). The post installation monitoring was aimed at collecting feedback from the households on their satisfaction with the service and tracking any imperfections found in the tanks to be repaired by the contractor. Key findings from the assessment were as follows:
 - All the respondents were satisfied with the overall water tank quality.
 - All the respondents were satisfied with the overall service including the staff and contractors' behaviors, the time where the service was delivered, and the assistance was relevant to their needs.



Water tank distribution in Northwest Syria, funded by the people of Taiwan, July 2023.

3. **WASH services post intervention assessment.** From June to August, the team reached a sample of 43 participants (21% females and 79% males) who live in areas targeted by the project to conduct a WASH post-intervention assessment during the implementation of the main emergency WASH response services. Key findings from the survey results were as follows:
 - 100% of the 43 households confirmed they received water trucking services, and they revealed that they were satisfied with the quantity and quality of water assistance.
 - 97% of the 43 households confirmed they live in an area served with the desludging service and were all satisfied with the service.
 - 95% benefited from the waste management service, and all were satisfied with the service provided.

MPCA

Mercy Corps conducted different activities to measure the quality and efficiency of the MPCA provided to the earthquake-impacted households. The following monitoring activities were conducted:

1. **Data validation and verification of the selected households.** Mercy Corps carried out a verification and validation procedure for the households' data in two stages, immediately following registration and during the project's lifetime. Mercy Corps utilized the outcomes of both the verification and validation processes to determine whether to include or exclude participants from receiving MPCA assistance, criteria included: status as a Syrian IDP, living in an area impacted by the earthquake, and socio-economic vulnerability.
2. **MPCA distributions monitoring.** During the distributions of MPCA, both the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team and CARM team (who are the two units within Mercy Corps team) were present on site and conducted distribution monitoring assessment with 20% of female and male household members who attended the distribution and received the assistance. The distribution's monitoring findings in addition to the program's distribution learning outcomes were used by Mercy Corps to refine the distribution plans and procedures that were updated and improved throughout the distribution's rounds. One example of the improvements that took place in response to the distribution monitoring findings was changing one of the distribution sites that was reported to be lacking shade, which was necessary due to the hot weather.

3. **MPCA Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM).** Mercy Corps conducted 466 cash PDM surveys over the two rounds of MPCA, with 455 participants (63% males and 37% females) where some households were interviewed twice. The PDM aimed at measuring the quantity and quality of the MPCA and monitoring the impact of the assistance on the households by tracking different indicators such as the Food Consumption Score (FCS), food reduced Coping Strategies Indicator (rCSI), and Livelihoods reduced Coping Strategies Indicator (LrCSI). The mentioned indicators will be measured at two collection points: project midline and endline. General key findings from the PDMs were as follows:
- All the interviewed participants in the PDM confirmed that they received the allocated cash amount.
 - All confirmed that they are satisfied with the E-Cash assistance modality.
 - 64% of the interviewed respondents found the cash amount sufficient, while 36% found it insufficient.

Community Accountability Response Mechanism (CARM)

As of August 14, Mercy Corps received 213 instances of feedback and complaints (50 from females, 161 from males and 2 were unknown). The feedback and complaints were received via Mercy Corps' CARM channels which includes WhatsApp voice and text messages, face-to-face interactions with the CARM field assistants, feedback boxes and email. The most used CARM channel was WhatsApp text.

Feedback and complaints concerned the following sectors: 178 were related to MPCA; 28 were related to Shelter activities; and 7 were related to WASH activities.

Feedback fell within the following categories:

- Positive feedback: 19 items of feedback, including 11 requests for information.
- Request for assistance (MPCA, WASH and Shelter): 136 items of feedback.
- Minor dissatisfaction with activities: 45 items of feedback. These were related to objections to the selection criteria on the MPCA, WASH and Shelter services. To solve these issues, Mercy Corps changed its process and now receives the participants' lists from the local council or the camps' managers, and registers people who do not benefit from the services or receive assistance from other organizations.

Assessments and Analysis

Evidence has been drawn from an analysis from Mercy Corps' Crisis Analysis Syria unit (CA-SYR), our rapid needs assessments, needs assessments provided by other humanitarian actors and humanitarian response Clusters, and ongoing program monitoring. This on-the-ground knowledge produces quantitative and predictive analysis that has assisted forecasting and enabled adaptive and anticipatory programming in the Syrian post-earthquake context.

Rapid needs assessments informed planned rehabilitation of infrastructure and shelters, including roads and the provision of dignified shelter units in camps, and activities that improve accessibility within camps and provide long term stability for displaced families. Mercy Corps is planning a Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment in the Northwest, funded under a different project, that will inform ongoing programming.

Throughout the response, Mercy Corps has coordinated within the humanitarian Clusters and working groups to ensure a collaborative and cohesive response.

Crisis Analysis

Funded by support from the people of Taiwan, the CA-SYR products are delivered through a subscription service that publishes on its website (ca-syr.org), as well as in internal briefings for Mercy Corps team members and other humanitarian actors.³ CA-SYR published and presented a series of in-depth reports examining specific aspects of the post-earthquake landscape. These reports are shared on an ongoing basis and are now in their sixth volume. The titles published to-date are listed below. Mercy Corps encourages you to create an account through their website (ca-syr.org) to view these reports and be notified of new published pieces.



An Overview of the 6 February Earthquake and its Impact on Northwest Syria - February 2023

This situation report provides a preliminary overview of a week of events that transpired after the February 6 earthquake. Epicentered in southern Turkey, the quake devastated Turkish and Syrian communities, overwhelming local response, coordination, and governance actors. The report speculated that the death count was likely to sharply rise in northwest Syria as debris is removed, piece by piece.



A Taxonomy of Earthquake Driven Displacement in Northwest Syria - April 2023

Vol. 1 - This report aims to create a general framework through which IDP sites are understood by placing them in different categories and identifying their weaknesses. This report also aims to shed light on the differences between cohorts of IDPs and the shortcomings of weak existing governance modalities within certain IDP sites, before outlining the future trajectory of these camps should the status quo remain.



Post-Earthquake Electricity Review - May 2023

Vol. 2 - Northwest Syria faced the highest per capita losses to electricity infrastructure due to the earthquakes, compared to other areas in Syria affected by the disaster. The earthquake's financial and physical impact on the electricity sector is well documented. However, there is little data assessing the progression of electricity recovery and how electricity-related needs continue to shift three months on from the earthquake. Volume 2 aims to address these gaps by analyzing the rates and determinants of electricity consumption recovery across opposition-controlled areas of northwest Syria in the weeks following the February earthquakes.



Aid Governance in Northwest Syria - May 2023

Vol. 3 aims to identify how – if at all – the earthquake impacted governing actors' policies toward aid actors in Northwest Syria. This research aims to understand how the environment for local aid governance in Northwest Syria has changed since the earthquake. Through an assessment of processes, this report compares the bureaucratic environment for aid projects within areas controlled by the Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) in Idlib and the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) in northern Aleppo.

³ Briefings for donors are available by request. For more information, please contact Mercy Corps.



Post-Earthquake Cashflow Challenges in Northwest Syria - June 2023

Vol. 4 aims to better understand the earthquake's impacts on financial mechanisms in Northwest Syria and the implications of these delays on humanitarian needs. The research aims to identify the main barriers to accessing cash in northwest Syria following the earthquakes, and how different actors adapted to changing needs.



The Rubble Value Chain in Northwest Syria - July 2023

Vol. 5 aims to assess approaches for rubble removal, transfer, and storage in recent months, and the industries which have emerged around the process. The research is informed by insights from technical experts, traders, local authorities, and residents whose homes were damaged in the earthquake. While not exhaustive, it aims to identify the impacts of earthquake rubble on local communities more broadly in the months and years to come.



Contiguous Crisis: Turkish lira depreciation and markets in northwest Syria - September 2023

Vol. 6 In this sixth report in the Northwest Syria series, Crisis Analysis – Syria (CA-SYR) assesses the impact of recent depreciation of the Turkish lira on prices and purchasing behaviors in opposition-controlled areas of northwest Syria through a combination of statistical analysis and insight from residents, traders, and business owners.

Challenges and Responses

Mercy Corps faced challenges in several areas and worked to mitigate and learn from them.

Mercy Corps had to strengthen coordination with local authorities after dignified shelter startup faced issues to do with Housing, Land and Properties (HLP) constraints, landowner permissions, social tensions amongst residents within the camps, and proximity to the front line. For example, one suitable camp was just 4-5 km from the frontline where shelling was still taking place. In other instances, participants rejected the shift to live in dignified shelters due to fears that if the tents were replaced by dignified shelters, organizations would stop supporting those camps. Mercy Corps was able to work through these issues and identify suitable locations for dignified shelter.

Mercy Corps also did have to change locations of bakeries for rehabilitation and provision of subsidized bread. Out of the list of 21 bakeries received from the local authorities, Mercy Corps selected three for rehabilitation in May, based on an initial visit through the FSL-Cash team and technical engineering assessments. Mercy Corps launched the procurement process to identify a supplier to conduct the work in June, but at the same time, the local authorities rejected Mercy Corps' request for approval to rehabilitate those bakeries (several reasons were provided to Mercy Corps such as: the owner's personal financial problems, already receiving assistance from other organizations, etc.). As a solution, in August, Mercy Corps requested a new list of bakeries from the local authority and received a list of seven bakeries. Mercy Corps conducted the technical assessment, and two bakeries were selected, the purchase requests are in process, and Mercy Corps requested a new list to identify the third bakery.

Lack of proper documentation of participants at cash distributions is a major issue for all humanitarian actors, but the earthquake response had particular challenges because of the conflict-sensitive nature of the assistance combined with the rapid pace of the project implementation to respond to the earthquake. People who had lost their belongings sometimes used fake IDs, which had the potential to undermine the integrity of the distribution process, and lead to misallocation of resources. To address these challenges

- The verification and distribution teams committed to strict adherence to Mercy Corps Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Mercy Corps updated the verification process for the recurrent MPCA assistance to cover all registered potential participants to ensure that all participants benefit from the project.
- The FSL and Cash teams met frequently to refine strategies. These meetings allowed for the sharing of experiences, best practices, and strategies to mitigate the impact of fake IDs and inadequate documentation, reinforcing effectiveness and accountability of cash distributions.

Through the CARM channels, Mercy Corps received a complaint from residents in a village in Northwest Syria about Mercy Corps' shelter units' rehabilitation activity. As per the SNFI Cluster's recommendations, Mercy Corps is not rehabilitating shelter units that were affected from severe damage. However, residents whose houses were severely affected by the earthquake requested Mercy Corps to intervene. Mercy Corps visited the village and made clear to participants that Mercy Corps cannot rehabilitate the houses that are deemed unsafe for living, as per the SNFI Cluster's recommendations.

Activities Planned in the Next Reporting Period

The following activities are planned to be carried out:

- **WASH:** Mercy Corps will continue providing water trucking in the seven targeted camps with 35L/person/day, collecting wastewater and removing wastewater in the seven camps targeted; and initiate rehabilitating the identified water station and subsequently the operation and maintenance of the station.
- **Shelter:** Mercy Corps will coordinate with local authorities to install dignified shelters and continue shelter rehabilitation.
- **Rehabilitation** of three schools and three health facilities. Mercy Corps will launch the rehabilitation process in September.
- **FSL:** Bakery rehabilitation, provision of flour, yeast, and flour, and subsidized bread distribution and support to vendors will all continue in the next period.
- **MPCA:** Mercy Corps will continue distributing MPCA to around 1,000 families until January 2024.

Impact Story



Mr. Nasser (alias), seated at right, is being interviewed for this story. He is a project participant receiving Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance program in Northwest Syria. His home was damaged in the earthquake and struggled to afford basic necessities for his family. With the support received from the people of Taiwan, he received cash distributions from Mercy Corps allowing him to pay his debts for groceries and repair his home.

Mr. Nasser (alias) lives in a village in Northwest Syria and shares his home with his wife, son, daughter-in-law, and his two young children. Before the earthquake, Mr. Nasser's home was already in a dire state due to the impact of the ongoing conflict. He also struggles with physical disabilities with a disc-related condition and foot drop disease, impacting his ability to work and provide for his family.

The February 6 earthquake exacerbated these impoverished living conditions further. The earthquake caused severe damage across the village, including Nasser's family home. Livelihoods and businesses were forced to halt operating due to the earthquake damage, and the cost of food and emergency items dramatically increased, severely limiting access across the village to necessities. The uncertainty in being able to provide for his family and enduring the damage to his home had caused significant psychological stress for Nasser.

With the funding received from the people of Taiwan, Nasser received cash vouchers as part of Mercy Corps Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance program, which provides families with 100 USD per round to fulfill essential needs.

Nasser, along with other participants, had the freedom to choose how the cash vouchers were spent to meet his family's specific needs, which provided him with a sense of reassurance. Nasser used the cash from the first round of funding to settle his debts with a grocery store owner from when he could not pay for food, and purchased essential household items such as sugar, tea, cooking oil, and lentils. He has also been able to use the funding to begin repairs on his home, enabling him to maintain a dignified life and secure fundamental necessities for himself and his family.



Pictured above, Mr. Nasser receives the first installment of Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance of 100 USD. Mercy Corps has registered 801 households across Northwest Syria to receive this cash assistance.

The funding from the people of Taiwan has significantly improved the quality of life for many people like Nasser and their families who are receiving the support they need to recover and rebuild their lives. Thank you for your partnership in this critical work to bring help and hope to those who have been affected by the earthquake in Northwest Syria.

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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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