



Ethiopia/ S. Sheridan

MERCY CORPS' PEACE AND CONFLICT

Sector Approach

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Introduction

If as an agency we are to help communities move out of fragility to becoming more resilient, we need to address conflict in the places where Mercy Corps works. This document outlines Mercy Corps' Peace and Conflict approach. In the first section of the document, we discuss how conflict undermines development and why throughout our humanitarian and development work we need to address conflict. The next section delineates the core elements of our approach: preventing, managing, and reducing participation in conflict. The last section of the document connects conflict to disruptions in governance, economic, social and ecological systems (and often multiple systems at once). As a result, as an agency, we need to take an integrated approach if we are to tackle the root causes of the conflicts that affect the communities where we work.

The Link among Poverty, Conflict, and Fragility

Violent conflict is the leading cause of suffering and extreme poverty today. Earlier in 2016, the World Bank revisited the 2011 World Development Report on Conflict and revised its statement saying that conflict is not one of the drivers of suffering and poverty, but it is the primary driver. For example,

- › A country that has experienced major violence between 1981 and 2005 has an extreme poverty rate 21 percentage points higher than a country that did not experience violence.¹
- › Over 126,000 people were killed in organized violence in the year 2014, which is the highest fatality count in twenty years.²
- › In complex crises,³ most of which stem from conflict, the prevalence of undernourishment is 39 percent versus 15 percent among all developing countries.⁴
- › 43 percent of the 1.5 billion people living in extreme poverty are clustered in the 50 most fragile countries, which are often immersed in protracted conflict. Unless we focus foreign aid in these countries – this percentage is projected to rise to 62 percent by 2030.⁵
- › Currently there are 60 million people displaced—the highest number since World War II—largely due to war.⁶



› QUANTIFYING THE ECONOMIC COSTS OF CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

Decades-long violent conflict in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria between farmers and pastoralists—primarily over scarce natural resources—has devastated local communities and drastically reduced economic activity. Mercy Corps' econometric research found that relative peace between farmers and pastoralists in just four states would increase the Nigerian GDP by \$13.7 billion annually. On a household level, reduction in violent conflict would bring about an increase in income of about 210%.

That the economic impacts of relatively low-level conflict in the Middle Belt are so significant underscores the importance of comprehensive conflict prevention in order to create a foundation of long-term development in the communities we support.

Nigeria/ C. Delafield

1. World Bank. World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development. Washington: World Bank, 2011.

2. Erik Melander, 2015. "Organized Violence in the World 2015. An assessment by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program." Pg. 9

3. A complex crisis is "A situation with complex social, political and economic origins which involves the breakdown of state structures, the disputed legitimacy of host authorities, the abuse of human rights and possibly armed conflict, that creates humanitarian needs. The term is generally used to differentiate humanitarian needs arising from conflict and instability from those that arise from natural disasters." (ALNAP)

4. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4646e.pdf>

5. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-2015-9789264227699-en.htm>

6. <http://www.unhcr.org/558193896.html>

Violent conflict, which occurs because of a disruption in economic, ecological, governance and/or social systems, has significant impacts on development and wellbeing. It destroys infrastructure, disrupts trade, undermines livelihoods, impedes delivery of services such as education and healthcare, and distorts markets. Conflict also wears away at the social fabric within a country or region as a result of fighting between communities or between the state and its people, breaking social bonds and trust. Mass displacement due to conflict further erodes the social fabric. In short, conflict can erode the very relationships that help individuals and communities cope during a crisis, deepening this vicious cycle of extreme poverty and suffering. With the number of countries in conflict higher than at any point since World War II, there is fear that human suffering will only increase.⁷

Trends

Over the last couple of years, we have seen an increase in suffering in the most fragile of places, and these crises are extended due to violent extremist groups. At the same time, many countries in the world are on the precipice of transitioning into secure, productive, and just societies, though pockets of conflict and fragility limit development in these countries as well. Below we describe how these trends are affecting our work.

Complex Crises

Violent conflict is a dominant characteristic of the complex crises that are part of the ‘new normal’ for Mercy Corps.⁸ In places like Syria, South Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Central Africa Republic, and Yemen, violent conflict and the resulting loss of lives and displacement shapes the crisis and frames the humanitarian response. If we fail to systematically understand and address the root causes of the violent conflict driving these crises we will not achieve the transformative impact we seek, nor will we understand how to prevent future conflict. Much of Mercy Corps’ work in the midst of a complex crisis seeks to alleviate suffering by addressing the effects of conflict—e.g., food insecurity, protection and poverty. However, we must simultaneously seek ways to address the root causes of conflict—poor governance, inequality, climate change—in fragile states like Kenya, Myanmar, Tunisia and Niger, to prevent future conflicts and related crises. As delineated in Mercy Corps’ paper, [Addressing the Root Causes of Complex Crises](#), as an agency we are looking to find ways to address conflict earlier in these crises so that they become less protracted and do not reoccur.

Countering Violent Extremism

An element that is adding to the complexity of reducing conflict globally is the spread of violent extremism. Violent extremist groups, from Al-Qaeda to Boko Haram and ISIS are at the core of many of these conflicts, which are spilling across borders and spreading suffering, limiting our ability to reach development goals (or SDGs) in these most fragile of places. However, these groups are rarely present at the onset of conflict; rather, they arise from a mixture of heavy-handed security measures, governance failures, and human rights violations, fuelled by the lucrative political economy of modern wars. A key challenge that extremist groups pose in a conflict is their rejection of worldviews different from their own. In the near term, this impedes constructive engagement with humanitarian actors to access vulnerable communities, and in the longer-term, limits the ability of states and the international community to find a solution to end the conflict. In the next section, we delineate how preventing conflict, managing conflict and addressing the drivers that make young people vulnerable to recruitment, we contribute to reducing the ability of violent extremist groups from gaining traction within communities.

Transitional States

Additionally, even in countries that are more stable overall, there are pockets of fragility that limit their development. In urban Guatemala, where crime and gang violence run rampant, in rural Colombia, where communities and IDPs have had little access to services during the 51-year civil war, and in India, where the

7. <https://www.prio.org/Projects/Extensions/ConflictTrends/Graphs/?xitem=1095&handler=Project>

8. Not just for Mercy Corps. Conflict affected, post-conflict, or fragile countries receive over half of US foreign assistance. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnady739.pdf

continued dispute over the future of Kashmir leads to frequent eruptions of violence, we continue to see the effects of conflict—low economic investment, poverty, and food insecurity. We need to help improve security in these areas and increase equity, inclusion and participation—key principles of Mercy Corps’ Good Governance Framework⁹—so that these communities can achieve the gains felt by the rest of their fellow citizens and address the grievances that put these countries at risk for falling back into violent conflict.

Peace and Conflict Approach

To help communities and countries achieve and maintain development gains—including the Sustainable Development Goals¹⁰—and break out of a cycle of conflict and poverty, Mercy Corps builds the capacity of people and institutions to prevent and manage conflict, while also reducing participation in violent conflict and integrates these capacities into our development and humanitarian work. We see the following as critical to building resilience—1. by helping people build constructive capacities to recognize and respond to conflict rapidly and effectively, they will feel the effects of conflict less severely; and 2. by addressing the root causes of conflict, people will feel the effects of conflict less frequently. In doing so, we will contribute to alleviating suffering, extreme poverty and build a foundation for long-term development.

Our approach to peace and conflict is based on the following theory of change: If communities are a) more cohesive, b) key community leaders and government institutions manage conflict peacefully, and c) drivers of participation in violence are addressed, then communities will be more secure and experience less violence. To achieve this, we utilize a three-pronged approach:

1. to **prevent conflict** by increasing social cohesion and addressing underlying drivers of conflict,
2. to **peacefully resolve and manage conflict** by building and strengthening leaders and institutions to mitigate tensions and disputes that arise in their communities and regions; and
3. to **reduce participation in violence** by addressing grievances and providing peaceful alternatives for creating change.



Different conflict situations—whether people are in the midst of a violent conflict or working to ensure conflict does not become violent—require one of these approaches, and often all three. Moreover, we recognize that not all conflict is negative—having people discuss and debate differing ideas is an important part of an inclusive society; in working with the Governance and Partnership team, we help communities discuss these ideas constructively so that conflict does not erode trust and potentially turn violent. The diagram above illustrates how each tenet of our approach—all of which are described below in more detail—leads to our expected outcome of increased security and reduced violence.

9. <https://mcdl.mercycorps.org/gsd/docs/MCGoodGovernanceFramework.pdf>
10. <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Preventing Conflict

Violence and unmanaged conflict destroys trust and disrupts relationships; moreover violence often erupts where little trust exists between people and communities. To prevent conflict from escalating into violence, we increase cohesion by building or rebuilding relationships between conflicting groups—whether between ethnic or religious groups or between communities and government. We do this by utilizing Mercy Corps’ Community Mobilization methodology,¹¹ where we bring people together to dialogue and create opportunities for cooperation over shared interests such as natural resources, basic service provision, and economic development. Our goal is to create a constituency of diverse community members who are committed to working together because of the social and economic benefits of collaboration.¹² These opportunities for cooperation also often address the underlying causes of conflict, particularly related to competition over resources and services.



Myanmar / M. Styslinger

Through these more cohesive relationships, people and communities are able to ensure that rumors, misunderstandings, and smaller disputes do not escalate into larger scale violence. For example, we improve government responsiveness and citizen and community engagement in Myanmar by working with civil society and government to use this moment of political transition to create functional state-society relationships through improved communication and cooperation over natural resource management, with a goal of preventing conflict and providing an alternative to violence for resolving differences. Projects include land law and land registration awareness-raising campaigns, consultations on the national land use policy, community nursery and forestry initiatives, and land and watershed protection initiatives.

Resolving and Managing Conflict Peacefully

Managing and resolving community disputes requires trust and effective communication between leaders of diverse communities and local government institutions. We identify and support a coalition of leaders and local authorities who are trustworthy, legitimate, and empowered to effectively resolve community-level disputes and drive change within their constituencies and regional structures in an inclusive and sustainable manner. Mercy Corps enhances the collaborative negotiation and mediation skills and strategies of community leaders and local government officials within informal and formal governance systems, and mentors these stakeholders as they de-escalate violent conflicts, and resolve inter-communal disputes to ensure they do not erupt into violence. We also help communities and governments develop Early Warning/Early Response systems to monitor and respond to conflicts before they become violent. In Iraq, we have managed conflict by working closely with a diverse network of 350 Iraqi leaders, including women and men, Sunni and Shia, Arabs and Kurds, Christians, tribal elders, government officials, politicians, and civil society representatives from every region of Iraq, who have worked together to resolve more than 1000 major disputes, including sectarian conflicts over land, tensions between citizens and government over services, and disputes over elections. Also, in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, we have supported leaders to resolve more than 380 inter-communal disputes with the potential to escalate

11. Mercy Corps’ Community Mobilization methodology is described in Mercy Corps’ Governance approach: <https://mcdl.mercycorps.org/gsd/docs/TSUGAPSectorApproach.pdf>

12. Ashutosh Varshney found that mixed multi-ethnic associations effectively withstand external attempts by politicians or other forces to divide and polarize society. Associational forms of civic engagement, which include business associations, professional organizations, non-government organizations, and trade unions, are sturdier forms of engagement than “everyday forms of engagement”, which include routine interactions at informal work places or in neighborhoods. Also, if these associations are inter-ethnic and not intra-ethnic, the combination of the two will help prevent violence when politicians attempt to polarize a multi-ethnic society. Varshney, Ashutosh. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

into violence. Resolving these conflicts peacefully has increased farmers' and pastoralists' ability to pursue their livelihoods and access markets, thereby improving development for communities in the region.

Reducing participation in violence

Poor governance and inequality form the basis of most grievances—e.g., unequal distribution of resources, lack of basic services, discrimination and human rights abuses. Often these grievances create an opportunity for rebel groups, such as the Maoists in Nepal or the FARC in Colombia, or violent extremist groups, such as Boko Harm in Nigeria or the Al-Shabab in Somalia, to gain community acceptance through promises that they can deliver services that the government, for a host of reasons, is not providing. To reduce these grievances that allow such groups to gain traction, Mercy Corps works with communities and civil society to better advocate for responsive governance structures that effectively deliver goods and services, while building the capacity of informal and formal governance institutions to work more effectively with constituents.¹³

While elites and leaders often instigate violence, youth, particularly young men (although young women engage and support violence), form the majority of those that engage in violent conflict. To ensure that young people do not fall prey to violent groups, from criminal gangs to violent extremist groups, Mercy Corps designs and implements integrated programs that address the multitude of reasons youth participate in violence—a sense of helplessness, grievances and feelings of injustice, lack of economic opportunities, exclusion from political processes and a lack of belonging. For example, in Kenya, to prevent election-related violence in 2013, we partnered with youth groups to: a) help them develop leadership skills to influence government officials and policy; b) reduce their vulnerability to economic incentives from political elites through small business grants; and c) facilitate community service projects to demonstrate to their communities a positive vision of youth. In all, we reached over 2 million Kenyan youth in support of a peaceful election.

Taking a Systems Approach: Integrating Conflict with other Sectors and Themes

In preventing or managing conflict where unmanaged low-level conflict erodes relationships, we recognize we need to address the drivers that put communities and societies most at risk to participating in violence. Violent conflict erupts for a host of reasons—many intersecting. For example:

- › Degradation of natural resources impedes livelihoods among farmers and pastoralists, inciting cattle raids and land grabs (Nigeria, Ethiopia)



› INTEREST-BASED NEGOTIATION AND MEDIATION

*In 2004, Mercy Corps merged with the Conflict Management Group, founded by Roger Fisher, who wrote the seminal book on negotiation, *Getting to Yes*. With this merger, Mercy Corps integrated interest-based negotiation and mediation methodology into our country programs where the inability of communities to resolve conflict peacefully was impeding their development. Mercy Corps has incorporated these critical skills successfully across the globe, including in Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Myanmar, and Iraq. See the “Frameworks and Tools” section for links to our tools and curricula.*

Iraq / C. Robbins

13. See Mercy Corps' Governance Approach for more details: <https://mcdl.mercycorps.org/gsd/docs/TSUGAPSectorApproach.pdf>

- › Poor governance, where certain populations (i.e., ethnic and/or religious groups, youth) are under-represented or served, provide openings for leaders to utilize grievances to mobilize supporters (Kenya, Myanmar, Yemen)
- › Erosion of informal and formal institutions creates power vacuums that groups vie to fill (Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Guatemala)

Furthermore, the lack of security in these scenarios and others often fuels more violence, with groups using violence to protect themselves from other groups or the state.

Given the interconnectedness between the various factors that drive violent conflict, we take a systems approach to understanding the conflict dynamics in a society, recognizing that conflict occurs as a result of a disruption (i.e., shock or stress) in the governance, economic, ecological and social systems, and a disruption in one system often creates conflict in another system. Understanding that we are not able to change the whole system at once, through a systems analysis, we try to understand where in the system we can have the most impact in reducing or preventing conflict, and design integrated interventions as such. Examples of how we address conflict through the various systems include:

Economic

Many of our peacebuilding programs seek to address the underlying causes of conflict through economic development programs that reduce competition for scarce resources, provide alternative livelihoods, increase government capacity to promote equitable economic growth and rebuild economic relationships between communities that have been torn apart by violence. We have found that economic projects – small savings and loan groups in Kenya, road or market repair in Central Asia’s Ferghana Valley or joint agricultural livelihoods projects in Nigeria – create mutually beneficial economic ties and help groups understand they stand to gain more from cooperation than conflict and violence.

Ecological

In many parts of the developing world, deep poverty combined with drought, environmental degradation, and population growth can lead to fierce competition over scarce natural resources, such as land, water or timber. Mercy Corps works with local communities to improve resource management and dispute resolution methods. Resource-based conflict in the Terai region of Nepal has its roots in the increased competition over resources



› WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

While the stereotype of women and girls is as promoters of peace, in reality women play a diverse set of roles in conflict. In many places they are the most vocal in calling for an end to fighting, as was made famous by the Women for Liberia, whose protests helped end the Liberian Civil War. However, as we’ve seen in Zimbabwe, Philippines, Jordan and Nigeria, women also encourage their husbands and sons to fight. While in Jordan, we have found that mothers are able to influence their sons to leave violent groups. Recognizing the influence they have over the men in their lives in Mali, we are leveraging their role to influence not only the men in their community, but also broader public opinion, by enhancing women leaders’ ability to promote inter-ethnic reconciliation and elevating their voice with local leaders around implementation of the national peace process.

Mali/Mercy Corps

among a growing population, land degradation, limited economic opportunities, and lack of inclusive decision-making. Mercy Corps helps Nepali community members and key stakeholders to identify and jointly implement natural resource initiatives specific to each community that reduce competition for contested resources and build relationships between divided communities.

Governance

The link between fragility and conflict rests with society's perception of its government's legitimacy, the key elements of which include accountability, inclusiveness, and transparency. In fragile states, governments are often unable or unwilling to provide basic services or security to significant portions of their population. Many of our Peace and Conflict programs are intended to build partnerships between citizens and local government around development projects to help improve perceptions of government effectiveness and build (or re-build) a measure of trust. For example, in Ethiopia Mercy Corps increases government capacity to improve security by helping officials develop the tools and skills they need to identify and address tensions before they turn violent. As part of our work there, we trained 6,000 government and community leaders who later used these skills in multi-stakeholder forums; one of these forums led to a Peace Accord among four conflicting ethnic groups. The Accord was validated individually by each village affected by the conflict and was ultimately ratified into law by the country's Ministry of Federal Affairs.

Social

Societal norms—excluding youth from decision-making, protection of women and families, caste systems, customs of how ethnic, tribal, clan and religious groups interact—often exacerbate conflict and violence over resources, whether economic, natural, or political. Additionally, in many fragile states, there exists strong norms where disagreements are resolved through violence, and young men use violence as an opportunity to establish their manhood. Our programs work to alter these norms by building relationships and social cohesion between groups. Through these relationships, attitudes change, limiting the ability of elites to use historical grievances among groups to garner support. Moreover, by supporting inclusive conflict management and governance systems, we promote the voices of those who are often marginalized and ensure their concerns are addressed, again reducing grievances and the risk of conflict erupting. We also look to reshape these norms, particularly around masculinity and violence, through public information campaigns, and parenting workshops.



Iraq/ C. Robbins

Annexes

Thought Leadership

The Peace and Conflict team's Thought Leadership is focused on two key areas—youth participation in violence and the relationship between conflict and resilience. Below we describe these streams in greater detail.

Youth and Conflict

To seek a deeper understanding of both the underlying causes of violent conflict and what works to prevent, manage, and reduce participation in conflict, Mercy Corps has produced a series of studies in countries where we work. Building off one another, these studies center on the relationship between youth and violence and how we can advance our and others' approaches to reducing violence and support youth development.

- › The [Youth and Conflict Toolkit](#) (2010) presents theories of change around youth and violence, exploring commonly made links between participation in violence and employment, political participation, community engagement, and others.
- › Evidence on violence in Kenya, [Understanding Political Violence among Youth](#) (2011), explored a few of these theories and found that both an ability to satisfy basic needs and employment status were negatively correlated to young people's likelihood to support political violence. Analysis indicated that economic incentives to refrain from violence may work in limited conditions, when the violence itself is motivated at least partially by economic factors.
- › Research from Somalia entitled [Examining the Links between Youth Economic Opportunity, Civic Engagement, and Conflict](#) (2012), challenged findings from Kenya and did not find a link between employment status and youth's attitudes toward violence. However, it did find that youth who were civically engaged were more likely to have engaged in political violence, which may indicate that motivated youth have few opportunities to make change and may see violence as one of their only options. Importantly, experiences of discrimination was highly correlated with engagement in violence.
- › The next study Mercy Corps conducted was [Why Youth Fight](#) (2013), which examined Sub-Saharan African youth and violence based on quantitative Afrobarometer data. This study found that the strongest correlates of participate in violence were exposure to violence previously and experiences with corruption.
- › Our study [Does Youth Employment Build Stability?](#) (2014) used an impact evaluation of an employment program in Afghanistan designed to promote stability. The evaluation found that employment outcomes did not have any impact on stability outcomes. In other words, youth with a job were no less likely to support the Taliban than jobless youth.
- › Our [Youth and Consequences](#) (2015) report built off these findings in important ways. Through qualitative research with current and former members of armed groups in Colombia, Somalia, and Afghanistan, Mercy Corps found that "Violence makes people poor, but poverty doesn't appear to make them violent." Instead, injustice—and the anger resulting from it—was a primary driver of violence.
- › Mercy Corps continues to explore the drivers of youth participation in violence in other regions, as well as conflict thought leadership in other areas of focus. For example, our research on instability in the Middle East region includes [Investing in Iraq's Peace](#), which looks at the importance of good governance in reducing violent extremism, as well as [From Jordan to Jihad](#), which looks at the motivations of foreign

fighters. We also explored both what drives youth to join but also resist Boko Harm in Northeast Nigeria in our paper, [Motivations and Empty Promises](#).

Conflict and Resilience

In recognition that conflict is an important shock that impedes individuals' and communities' well-being as well as how capacities related to preventing and managing conflict could help communities cope with climate and economic shocks, Mercy Corps invested in conducting research around resilience and conflict that underscores the importance of promoting the peaceful resolution of disputes in supporting communities' development. Our first study, focused on the Horn of Africa, From [Conflict to Coping](#), found that supporting communities to improve peace and security contributed to a greater resilience of communities to the effects of drought. Improved peace outcomes increased individuals' freedom of movement, which allowed groups to access resources important to coping with the effects of the drought. Additionally, in [What Really Matters for Resilience](#), we found that Somali families with interclan ties fared better during the 2011 drought. In our subsequent research in the Horn of Africa, [Pathways From Peace to Resilience](#), we found that in places where there were stronger informal and formal conflict management systems, people were better able to cope with climate and economic shocks.

Research from Nigeria, [Conflict, Livelihoods, and Resilience](#), showed that in settings of farmer-pastoralist conflict, community livelihood improvement strategies exacerbated conflict, and conversely that conflict coping mechanisms reduced livelihood capacities. This finding underscores the importance of focusing on conflict management mechanisms when trying to build long-term resilience and improve well-being in communities affected by conflict.

Another area of Mercy Corps thought leadership in this area centers on tackling the root causes of violence early in a complex, humanitarian crisis. Our study [Building Community Resilience during Violence Conflict](#) from the Central African Republic demonstrated that supporting conflict management activities during a complex crisis can both stem immediate violence and address the underlying drivers of violent conflict, building towards longer term resilience. For example, our study found that community-led conflict management activities can help break cycles of retaliatory violence during complex crises, laying a foundation for more swift and sustainable post-conflict recovery.

Frameworks and Tools

The Peace and Conflict TSU supports country teams using a variety of frameworks and tools listed below. Whether the program staff is analyzing a conflict situation, assessing natural resources and the relationships within communities, setting up baseline surveys and M&E Plans, or considering the best way to implement the program, the Peace and Conflict TSU can help support.

Interest-based Negotiation & Mediation: Most of the conflict situations in which we work require substantial negotiation and mediation. Our efforts often involve a third party assisting parties to negotiate an agreement (i.e., mediation). Our systematic, [interest-based framework to negotiation and mediation](#) first gained widespread prominence with the 1979 publication of the bestselling *Getting to YES: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, written by Professor Roger Fisher, who founded the Conflict Management Group, which Mercy Corps merged with in 2004. The framework is based on the Seven Elements of Negotiation and captured in our [Negotiation and Mediation Capacity Statement](#). We help leaders in high-risk conflict and transitional environments use the Seven Elements to prevent and manage conflicts, thereby increasing security and reducing violence.

Do No Harm¹⁴ is a core principle that Mercy Corps staff applies in all of its work. The Do No Harm (DNH) approach aims to understand the interaction between the program intervention and the wider regional and country context by asking two key questions: 1) what are the impacts (unintended or intended) of the program, and 2) how can we increase positive impacts and decrease negative impacts? DNH can and should be applied by program staff during the start of any program and referenced throughout the life of said program. DNH utilizes a contextual analysis that looks at the dividers and tensions within an area as well as the connectors and local capacities for peace. We have developed a [standardized curriculum and tools](#) that all country teams can easily access.

The [Relationship Mapping Tool](#) identifies influential individuals and organizations from the community, private sector, government, and other social groups and includes a network analysis of these individuals or organizations that allow program staff to better understand their connections, the extent of their legitimacy within their constituencies, and their influence over different issues. This exercise helps ensure that the program is balancing all key parties in the region and incorporating influential leaders. This tool can also be used to measure tensions within the community.

We have a host of peace and conflict M&E tools and indicators on the [Design for Impact Guide](#), including the [Violent Incident Tracker](#), a database program staff can use to compile information from different sources (local and international media and watch organizations, and local informants) about violent incidents occurring in the program area or region. Incidents of violence are site-specific and can include raids, burning of houses, killings, thefts, ambushes, or other events defined by the community. Information about violent incidents is entered periodically during each month and includes incident date, report date, incident description, incident type, primary cause, trigger event, parties, # of dead, # of injured, location (village, state), longitude and latitude. Country teams can use this to measure changes of violence over the length of the program.

The [Conflict and Resource Mapping Tool](#) helps identify key resources and whether they are sources of tension or conflict. Through participatory discussion groups this tool can be used with local communities to collect qualitative information on how underlying resource issues impact community relationships. This tool can assist communities in identifying potential joint projects to help manage communal tensions.

14. Mary Anderson wrote a groundbreaking book called "Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace or War" in 1999 that has since become the standard for all humanitarian and development work.

Mercy Corps has developed a unique [Dispute Resolution Monitoring Database](#) that helps Mercy Corps staff and partners identify and measure the impact of our negotiation trainings, including number of disputes resolved, types of disputes, identities of conflicting parties, identities of mediators resolving the conflict, sustainability and legitimacy of negotiated agreements, community and government contribution to negotiated agreements, and prevalence of violence related to communal disputes. Mercy Corps has adapted the database to various country contexts, including Jordan, Myanmar, and Nigeria.

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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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