Good Governance: Preventing Conflict & Building Peace

To effectively mitigate and resolve conflict, programs must go beyond violence reduction and directly address the underlying dynamics that cause and sustain conflict. While there are many contributing factors that shape conflict and violence, Mercy Corps has identified three types of governance-related root causes of conflict, as well as programming approaches that target each root cause.

Over the last 30 years, the number of communities affected by conflict has increased. This trend will continue if programs do not target root causes of conflict.

These shocks and stresses are exacerbated by ineffective or unjust governance systems, which we group into three ‘root cause’ categories:

- **Weak Capacity & Accountability**
  - Weak Service Provision
  - Poor natural resource management
  - Inadequate Justice & Security Provision

- **Economic – Political – Social – Religious Exclusion & Inequality**
  - Minorities – Youth – Women
  - Participation in Violence

- **Weak Civic Engagement**
  - Uninformed, disengaged, disconnected CITIZENS
  - Structural obstacles for CIVIL SOCIETY

Programs can target these weaknesses via Good Governance approaches:

- **Strengthen Institutions**
  - Improved Management, Quality & Access to Services

- **Build Feedback Channels**

- **Inclusive Programs & Processes**
  - Leaders understand importance of Inclusion
  - Increased Capacity, Influence & Solidarity of Marginalized Groups

- **Community Mobilization**
  - Increased ability of communities & civil society to keep government accountable
Mercy Corps Good Governance Programming Approaches

How Mercy Corps uses Good Governance approaches to help people build more secure, productive, and just communities.

Root Cause #1: Weak State Capacity & Legitimacy

Approach: Responsive, Accountable and Transparent Institutions

To address weak state capacity and accountability, Mercy Corps prioritizes four strategies which seek to strengthen the capacity of governance institutions as well as increase collaboration and cooperation between communities and governance institutions:

1. Increase interactions between governance actors and communities by building channels, platforms, and skills for engagement.
2. Increase access to, quality, and management of basic services.
3. Improve natural resource management.
4. Improve provision of security and justice services.

Root Cause #2: Exclusion & Marginalization

Approach: Fair, Inclusive Power Structures

Mercy Corps’ programs include strategies to promote more inclusive and participatory governance, particularly in contexts where the exclusion of women, youth, ethnic, religious, or other identity groups is linked with conflict:

1. Increase governance actors’ awareness of the importance of including marginalized groups.
2. Build solidarity, capacity, and influence of marginalized groups.
3. Ensure community planning processes and platforms are inclusive of marginalized groups.

Root Cause #3: Weak Civic Engagement

Approach: Mobilizing Communities and Supporting Civil Society

Mercy Corps’ programs equip citizens with the knowledge and skills critical to identify, organize and advocate for needed resources and services. As we increase citizens’ understanding of their rights and responsibilities, we provide opportunities to turn that understanding into action:

1. Engage communities in community mobilization processes in partnership with governance authorities.
2. Strengthen the ability of communities and civil society to hold governance actors to account.

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