

Improving Access to Clean, Safe Water

For drinking and cooking, hygiene and sanitation, water is essential to human life

Water is the source of life, but millions of people don't have enough to meet their daily needs. Mercy Corps is improving access to clean water and sanitation in many of the countries where we work, in urban and rural areas and in displacement camps. We provide emergency water when needed, build wells and water points to reduce long treks (often by vulnerable girls and women) and help construct reservoirs that make communities more water-secure over the long term. We also work to improve hygiene and sanitation to lessen the spread of disease. Following are highlights of four important water initiatives we are working on.

Congo: Water for Urban and Displaced People

Goma is a city of 700,000 people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Fortunately for its residents, Goma borders a large lake. But the city has lacked a safe way to transport this water to homes and businesses. Mercy Corps is working with the International Committee for the Red Cross and others to build what amounts to a citywide water system. On completion, it will provide clean water to 400,000 people.



Our massive Goma water project will improve city infrastructure and daily life for its residents. Photo: Mercy Corps

Elsewhere in DR Congo, we are providing clean drinking water, latrines and hygiene education to 63,000 people living in displacement camps, where they are vulnerable to diseases such as cholera, diarrhea and respiratory infections. We're also

providing water and sanitation to communities hosting displaced people; rehabilitating water sources to create a reliable supply; and working with communities to promote hygiene and build latrines and showers. With support from USAID and the European Commission, our program focuses on ways to ensure sustainable supplies of clean water and consistently improve sanitation and hygiene.

Indonesia: Improving Sanitation in Urban Slums

Jakarta is one of the world's largest cities, with crowded slums where infrastructure and hygienic sanitation are lacking. These conditions lead to illness and 50,000 deaths per year.



Mercy Corps sludge removal machines are small enough to navigate narrow urban alleys. Photo: Chris Tye/Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps is making affordable and sustainable sanitation facilities more available. Our wastewater treatment system benefits households that lack private latrines. We have developed sanitation equipment that can navigate the narrow alleys of urban slums. This is a low-cost and sustainable model that can be replicated by residents, local government and the private sector. Finally, we're teaching residents and officials about the environmental and economic benefits of improved sanitation through outreach at schools and events.

Jordan: Promoting Community Management

Jordan is the world's fifth-driest country. Since 2006, Mercy Corps has helped manage limited

water resources and improve water infrastructure. We're working with community-based organizations (CBOs) to promote increased awareness, responsibility and accountability of local water resources. To date we have trained 135 CBOs to strengthen their capacity in sub-grant and business management and implementation of community mobilization programs. Through CBOs, we have granted \$1.85 million in loans to 4,581 borrowers to finance household rainwater harvesting and gray-water recycling systems, water catchment and reservoir construction, and much more. The impact of these projects is significant. A household catchment system can capture a three-month supply of rainwater. This meets a critical gap, since most households have rationed access to the municipal system; it also helps augment water needs during the dry season. The captured water keeps valuable livestock and olive trees alive during periods of drought and ensures better hygiene for children and other family members.

Horn of Africa: Surviving Severe Drought

During the worst drought in 60 years in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, Mercy Corps provided emergency water to pastoralists as well as people living in displacement camps.



Trucking water is sometimes necessary during emergencies like the Horn of Africa drought Photo: Chloe Stull-Lane/Mercy Corps

In Kenya, Mercy Corps delivered water to 290,664 people and their animals for three months during the worst of the drought. In Ethiopia, we distributed water to help 284,140 people survive. In Somalia, we supplied clean drinking water to displacement camps serving 61,000 people. We also helped pastoralists in all three countries better capture,

store and manage water to become more resistant to future cycles of drought and famine.



We have water projects around the world. Photo: Mercy Corps

Hundreds of Water Projects Worldwide

Mercy Corps has hundreds of projects underway. In Haiti, we're helping prevent the spread of cholera; in Jordan, we're improving the availability and efficient use of water; in Niger, we're paying workers to rehabilitate community wells used in food production; and in the Central African Republic, we're increasing access to sustainable sources of safe water and sanitation, while promoting sustainable management of water infrastructure. These are just a few examples. For more information, visit mercy Corps.org/topics/water.

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