

Mercy Corps Brussels VII 2023 Side Event

Date of the event: 13 June 2023

Time of event (Brussels time): 16:00 -17:30 (Panel & Discussion) and 17:30 - 18:30 (Drinks reception)

Venue: Atelier 29 - Rue Jacques de Lalaing 29

Title of the event: Centering community voice to drive sustainable change in Syria

Description of the topic:

One of the most critical topics in the evolving response to the Syrian crisis is how to shift the focus and inputs to those most affected, build local ownership and accountability, as well as informing humanitarian needs and processes.

The event aims to showcase the work of local organizations collaborating with Mercy Corps in Northwest and Northeast Syria, as well as the experience of local participants already engaged in community-led approaches. It will feature a panel to share about community-led approaches and how the humanitarian community can ensure programming is led and informed by the needs articulated on the ground. Panelists will share the benefits and best practices of mobilizing communities, and how existing processes and systems can change to better incorporate community voice. Based on examples such as Mercy Corps 'Communities Acting Together to Advance Linkages Yielding Social Engagement' (CATALYSE) approach and successes and lessons learned across North Syria, discussion will focus on how centering community voices can lead to effective and impactful community and governance systems in Syria. Attendees will be able to hear direct examples from project participants inside Syria.

The event will be designed to raise awareness about the approaches and processes for driving community-led change in Syria for a more sustainable response. It will also provide a platform for networking and sharing best practices among professionals and practitioners.

The side event will include a 90-minute presentation and panel discussion; and a 60-minute drinks reception.

Issues to be addressed:

- How can donors and the humanitarian community ensure programming is led and informed by the needs and wants of communities?
- What successes and lessons learned from past interventions can be applied in future programming?
- What existing processes and systems need to change to better incorporate community voice? How do we transition from a more traditional humanitarian response to a more community-led response?
- How does centering community voice lead to more effective, sustainable and impactful programming?

Speakers

The event will feature a panel discussion led by experts and practitioners from Mercy Corps, and implementing partners, including:

- Kieren Barnes - Country Director, Mercy Corps, Moderator
- Nicole Hark - Deputy Country Director, Mercy Corps, Speaker
- Maher, International Humanitarian Relief (Northwest Syria), Speaker
- Jeger Abdulla, Salam (Northeast Syria), Speaker
- Vignette from participants in Northeast Syria- Recorded video

Invitees

- Donors supporting the Syrian humanitarian response, and community-led early recovery or resilience programming in Syria.
- INGOs, NGOs, CSOs operating in Syria.
- UN agencies working in Syria.

Organizer:

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