



**NEWS**  
RELEASE

# MERCY CORPS: FOR SYRIA'S TEENS, PERSISTENT PAIN AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

## New research calls for partnering with adolescents in aid programs

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AMMAN, Jordan — The global organization [Mercy Corps](#) conducted [a survey of 227 adolescents in Syria](#), uncovering how deeply the persistent challenges they face have affected Syria's youth.

### ABOUT MERCY CORPS

- Leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible
- Empowering people to survive through crisis, build better lives and transform their communities for good
- Meeting the urgent needs of today through emergency response and disaster preparedness
- Building a stronger tomorrow by connecting people to the resources they need to strengthen their community from within
- About 5,500 team members reaching nearly 28 million people
- \$471.8 million total operating revenue in FY2018; 86% channeled directly into programs in more than 40 countries

### MEDIA CONTACT

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“Syria’s youth have already endured a lifetime’s worth of difficult experiences while still teenagers,” says Joanne Glover, Syria Program Performance and Quality Director for Mercy Corps. “Many of those the research team met have lost family and friends to violence or displacement, while others have been wounded themselves or witnessed unimaginable brutality. Some have even been widowed or lost their own children. They are acutely aware of what they have lost, and their pain is persistent.”

Researchers found that:

- 78 percent of boys and 69 percent of girls we interviewed were not attending school or another type of educational programming;
- Most young men and a large number of young women felt that there was no longer any point in pursuing formal education;
- Many adolescents reported not only already being married — as are 18 percent of girls in Menbij and 20 percent in Atareb — but also already having their own children, or even multiple children. Some were even divorced or widowed as teenagers.

And recommended that:

- While the Syria conflict has changed, there is still a need for investment in young people’s future;
- Purpose is paramount for adolescents and is critical to how they demonstrate resilience, typically through supporting the survival of their family;
- Aid programs should not treat adolescents the same as younger children in their programming, but design programs that help adolescents build skills for emotional growth and income generation.

“We may never fully comprehend the everyday experiences of Syrians and the void left by years of conflict and loss,” says Glover. “What youth are telling us, if we will listen, is that we have yet to see the end of the cost of the Syria crisis. Their lives continue to calculate the toll of this conflict and we must not abandon them now.”



In 2018, Mercy Corps met the urgent needs of 1.5 million people in Syria. We are distributing emergency food and supplies, increasing access to clean water and sanitation, improving shelters, and creating safe spaces and activities to help children heal from trauma. [Read the research paper \*Adolescence Lost: Forced Adulthood and a Fragile Future\* for more information.](#)