

MERCY CORPS
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FISCAL YEAR 2009 SECTOR UPDATE



Photo: Miguel Samper for Mercy Corps

Furthering our Mission

Today, half the world's population is under 25 – the largest proportion of young people ever recorded. 80% live in developing countries where economic, civic and social opportunities are insufficient to address the diverse needs during transition to adulthood. In recognition that youth mobilization is integral to the success of lasting change, Mercy Corps currently operates 36 youth development projects in 18 countries worth approximately \$55 million. These projects help young people develop market-driven **capabilities** and access **opportunities** to achieve three goals: (1) secure **income**; (2) develop a sense **Responsibility, Identity, Creativity and Hope** (i.e. RICH of confidence); and (3) engage as **global citizens and agents of change**. Ultimately, Mercy Corps empowers young people to build secure, productive and just communities around the world.

Over the past year, Mercy Corps invested important resources in research and development to deepen its youth development expertise in transitional environments. In the United States, multiple empirical and longevity studies have enabled youth experts to understand the complexity of this physical and psychological transformation. Mercy Corps' Youth Transformation Framework™ (YTF) builds on these findings to provide a comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach that also takes into consideration the challenges in developing countries. The YTF describes 75 youth needs (outcomes) with benchmarks identified as critical factors driving not only Positive Youth Development, but also conflict prevention and economic development. Implementing activities that directly affect unfilled needs in the YTF predictably leads to greater contribution to community development as young people transition to adulthood. According to experts at the World Bank, United Nations and USAID, such holistic frame of reference is a pioneer in international youth development. The YTF can be used across the programming process to assess the situation across sectors, design, monitor and evaluate programs. Mercy Corps also used this research-based framework to train staff and justify strategic interventions among partners and donors. The [Youth Transformation Framework \(YTF\)](#)¹ and related tools are available online.

¹ <http://www.mercy Corps.org/sectors/youth/15520>

Global Youth Engagement

The Global Citizen Corps (GCC) program began in the United States in 2003 to educate young people about global issues while building their leadership skills. In 2007 alone, the 200 GCC Leaders USA submitted articles to 43 newspapers, collected 12,316 signatures on petitions, and raised more than \$100,000 to support poverty-alleviation projects. In the mean time, Mercy Corps initiated a youth connectivity program between young people in the Middle-Eastern and their peers in America. Online interactions were used to attract disaffected youth in conflict-affected areas and equip them with modern skills to access information and advocate for a better future. Through digital-stories, structured dialogues, and community services, first-time computer users discovered peaceful ways to express themselves and make a difference.

These two programs were integrated this year into a unique multi-country youth leadership initiative that address multiple needs across the Youth Transformation Framework at scale. www.globalcitizencorps.org evolved into a web 2.0 portal that aggregates educational and user-generated content into a single youth-friendly platform. Innovative digital tools like video/photo cameras, training and leadership opportunities allow GCC activists to reach ever-expanding audiences. In a typical month this spring, 180 GCC Leaders in Gaza and the US responded more than 600 times to each other with inspiring comments. During that same month, the website attracted 11,000 visitors from 137 countries – all prior to training on digital storytelling and ways to harness social networks. Ziad, a GCC leader in Gaza, captured this in a MSNBC interview last January: *"The situation is really bad in Gaza...but I'm happy about the protests all over the world and the posts on the GCC website. It's really nice to know that there are people who care about us...this is encouraging."* Starting this fall, over 3,000 GCC Leaders will be recruited in eight countries for the 10-month leadership program, learn from each other, and find common ground around peaceful change. Together, they will mobilize thousands of peers in their local action projects and reach out to million others online. See Christiane Amanpoor's [report on CNN](http://mercycorps.org/countries/westbankgaza/16188) (<http://mercycorps.org/countries/westbankgaza/16188>) to see how this program transforms the way young people see their role in society.

Monitoring and Evaluating Reach and Program Results

In addition to standard indicators used to monitor outputs (see results FY2009 below), Mercy Corps developed a tool to evaluate change in youth **capabilities** such as knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors. The baseline scores established using the Youth Transformation Framework™ can also be used to evaluate change in access to **opportunities**. Finally, Mercy Corps designed two key performance indicators to report youth results agency-wide: (1) Youth employment indicator (# of young people engaged in decent work); (2) Civic engagement indicator (# of youth engaged in public life). Using these qualitative and quantitative evaluative processes, Mercy Corps will be able to improve the monitoring, evaluating and reporting of programs to ensure continuous improvements and accountability in fiscal year 2010.

Youth Development:	Trained ⁽¹⁾	Engaged ⁽²⁾	Reached ⁽³⁾	Total
	15,000	60,000	12 million	12,075,000
Youth Mobilization:	Number of multimedia production posted online			300
	Number of comments posted online			10,000
	Number of youth registered online			8,942
	Amount raised by young people			\$100,000
	Average time per online visit			7 min
	Number of public appearance in outside media			20

(1) Subjects may include entrepreneurship, financial literacy, global citizenship, vocational training, life skills, psychosocial support, etc. across continents

(2) Requires some voluntary action from the person being engaged such as taking part in a peaceful walk, participate in a community meeting, etc.

(3) Passive engagement that does not require actions from the person reached such as newspaper readers, TV viewers, twitter receivers, etc.