

MERCY CORPS DORIAN HURRICANE RESPONSE

Real-Time Evaluation (RTE)

NOVEMBER 2019

Context

Hurricane Dorian hit the Bahamas on September 1 as a Category 5 hurricane affecting the Abaco and Grand Bahama Islands over which Dorian hovered for nearly 48 hours. Mercy Corps deployed a team to the Bahamas with initial arrivals on September 3. Response activities have included clean water distributions to key community locations in partnership with Mission Resolve (potable water supplier) and Non-Food Item (NFI) distribution (hygiene kits, tarpaulins, solar lanterns). The response completed NFI distribution before the evaluation team arrived in the country, and does not have plans to resume activities. As such, the evaluation team focused on ongoing water distribution. As the Government of the Bahamas and institutional donors indicate a transition to early recovery, the response has invested in a RTE that can identify key improvement points before the longer-term response transition occurs.

Approach

The evaluation team utilized a mixture of appropriate methods to examine the appropriateness, effectiveness, connectedness, coverage, and coordination of the response. Methods included the following:

Document review: the team reviewed all relevant program documents including distribution data, sitreps, and donor reports

Key informant interviews: the team interviewed response staff, as well as the staff of partners responsible for program implementation, representatives of the affected population and external stakeholders.

Observation and program participant interviews: The team prioritized field visits to conduct interviews with program participants at seven water point sites.

Quality Water Provision

The evaluation team found that Mercy Corps is providing effective, quality water to communities on Grand Bahama Island. Existing distributions sites are centrally located to meet the needs of the largest number of people. This structure is not intended to meet the needs of the most vulnerable individuals in the community.

Key Observations

100% of respondents indicated that Mercy Corps distributes quality water

Mercy Corps water is accessible to the general population

Identification requirements are an obstacle to access for individuals who lost identification in the storm

Individuals with mobility issues experience obstacles to water access

Community Accountability and Response Mechanisms should be further formalized to meet Mercy Corps standards

Accessibility

People with limited mobility (elderly, people with disabilities, single head of household) are experiencing obstacles to access. Mercy Corps, in collaboration with the cluster, should consider expanding programming to include household distribution points. This may be through mobile distribution points or distributing refilled water containers in key community locations. This activity can be coordinated with parties that have local knowledge and networks. In Grand Bahama there are at least six facilities housing these targeted populations that receive varying levels of service and about 300 people living in private homes. Plans are underway for mobile distribution, however implementation faces transportation and logistics challenges.

Identification

Identification requirements can be an obstacle to access even though individuals do not need identification to retrieve water. Many food and non-food item distribution sites require recipients to provide official identification. This has led to access restrictions for Bahamian nationals who lost documentation in the hurricane. This trend has impacted access to water points as individuals are not sure if they can access free water without official identification.

Protection Mainstreaming

Distribution sites that are accessible at night require minor adjustments to promote safe accessibility. Adjustments include: lighting, stable platforms at water spouts (to replace pallets at YMCA), and clear community accountability and response mechanisms (hotline number, online form, feedback boxes, etc.)

Knowledge of Water Points

Two months into response efforts, there are populations coming to water points that are learning of this service for the first time. In the first weeks of the response water point information was distributed via radio and video. Currently, knowledge of water points is primarily spread through social groups by Whatsapp or word of mouth. Although the GBPA has a [web-based map](#) of all water points this resource is not widely known and not accessible to individuals without an internet connection.

Sandwich boards denoting locations of free water distributions are limited to the entrance of some locations and the signs are not clearly visible from a distance.

Formalization of Agreements

Existing partnerships with external stakeholders have not been formalized. Engaging in an official agreement will allow all parties the opportunity to clearly define expectations, accountability, and areas of responsibility which facilitate smoother operations and productive partnerships.

Recovery

The main themes surrounding recovery needs include livelihoods, shelter, and solid waste management. Other pressing needs included kitchen appliances, debris removal, mold control, bedding, and medication. Abaco is noted as a location of interest for any recovery activity planning. It was noted that the local economy will recover faster through rehabilitating boutique hotels and tourism.

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ABOUT MERCY CORPS

Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we partner to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within. Now, and for the future.



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