



**NEWS**  
RELEASE

# YOUNG PEOPLE MIGRATING TO EUROPE SEEK SAFETY MORE THAN JOBS

## New Mercy Corps report says aid in Afghanistan and Somalia must both boost economies and build peace

September 10, 2018

### 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 5,000 team members reaching nearly 22 million people
- \$436.6 million total operating revenue in FY2017; 87% channeled directly into programs in more than 40 countries

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London, UK. The lack of safety and security, not unemployment and poverty, is the main reason young people in Afghanistan and Somalia intend to leave their homes and migrate to Europe. This is according to a new report released today by global organization [Mercy Corps](http://mercy Corps) and independent think tank, [Samuel Hall](http://samuel Hall).

These findings, described in the report "[Driven to Leave](http://driven to Leave)," call into question the efficacy of traditional development investments that seek to deter migration from countries lacking basic rule of law and security by providing job training and skills building. It is based on 12,200 surveys conducted from 2014-17 in Afghanistan and Somalia, and in-depth interviews with Somalis and Afghans at home and in Italy and Greece from 2017.

"We now know far more about why young people are pushed to migrate from unstable environments, and it's less likely to be because they are seeking to improve their material welfare," says Beza Tesfaye, Senior Researcher, Mercy Corps. "It seems a greater reason is often the search for stability, safety and security, based on their own experience of violence, as well as perceptions of future insecurity in their community."

The assumption from policymakers has been that more investment in skills building and job training programs in countries of origin will lead to more youth employment and higher incomes, and fewer young people migrating to Europe seeking better fortunes. Research shows this is not the whole picture.

In evaluating two youth education and vocational training programs in Afghanistan and Somalia, research showed that there was mixed, or no impact on migration intentions. In fact, in Afghanistan, a young person with more assets is more likely to migrate because they will have the means to do so.

"While employment and economic development programs have very significant positive socio-economic impacts, they will have only limited success providing alternatives to irregular migration in the long-term if not coupled with investments that address the root causes of insecurity," says Tesfaye. "The priority question for policy makers should not be 'How can youth be deterred from migrating?' but rather, 'How can aid investments support people to build better and more secure lives wherever they choose to live?'"

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