

Signpost Digital Initiative Reaches 1 Million People Across Three Continents

Since 2015, global partnership between the International Rescue Committee and Mercy Corps has provided critical information services to people affected by crisis and conflict

NEW YORK and PORTLAND, Ore. — [Signpost](#), a partnership between the global humanitarian organizations [Mercy Corps](#) and the [International Rescue Committee](#), has reached 1 million refugees, asylum seekers and crisis-affected communities with critical information across seven countries and three continents. Through a suite of digital tools, Signpost provides up-to-date information in multiple languages on legal rights and documentation, accommodation, transportation, medical care and more to people who are in transit or starting life in a new country.

Signpost, supported by [Cisco](#), [Google](#), [Microsoft](#) and [TripAdvisor](#), initially began as [Refugee.Info](#), a mobile-friendly website launched in 2015 to assist refugees arriving on the Greek islands. Since then, Refugee.Info has reached an estimated 60 percent of the refugee population in Greece. Signpost has expanded to four additional countries in Europe and has launched regional platforms in Jordan ([Khabrona.Info](#)) and El Salvador ([CuentaNos.org](#)), providing WiFi connectivity and information in seven languages through websites, Facebook, a blog, service maps and mobile app.

“We’re thrilled that we’ve been able to help more than 1 million people get the support and information they need during some of the toughest and scariest chapters of their lives,” says Meghann Rhynard-Geil, Signpost Program Manager for Mercy Corps. “With a record 68.5 million people on the run because of conflict, poverty and climate change, technology and private sector partnership with humanitarian organizations will continue playing a critical role helping people in search of a better life.”

“Technology, when coupled with human-centered design can play a critical role in providing solutions to the global refugee crisis. Signpost meets refugees where they’re at – whether via an app, social media, or through face-to-face communication that is enhanced by the use of digital technology – to provide critical information and help save lives,” says Lani Fortier, Signpost Project Director for the International Rescue Committee. “People experiencing crisis have enough obstacles to overcome as they work to survive and rebuild their lives. Signpost ensures that misinformation is not another barrier to overcome.”

In a new place and without speaking the local language, refugees often lack basic information they need to access essential humanitarian services. And after suffering or witnessing traumatic events for months or years, they are often unprepared to absorb complex information. In this environment, rumors and misinformation can take the place of credible news. In addition to providing up-to-date information, Signpost also employs social media moderators who are refugees themselves to provide two-way communication, answering questions and providing guidance in users' own languages and on their preferred platform. In 2018, 11,000 Signpost users sent 94,200 messages to social media moderators.

“Making information universally accessible and useful is a core part of our mission,” says Hector Mujica, Program Manager at Google.org. “As such, we're proud to support Signpost not only with financial contributions, but with Googlers—our top asset—who've dedicated time and technical expertise to help expand this powerful tool to the most marginalized communities around the world.”

Mercy Corps and the International Rescue Committee aim to continue expanding Signpost's presence in countries situated along migration routes, such as the Central Mediterranean, or where people are displaced due to conflict or crisis.

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. Learn more at www.mercycorps.org.

ABOUT THE IRC

The International Rescue Committee responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises, helping to restore health, safety, education, economic wellbeing, and power to people devastated by conflict and disaster. Founded in 1933 at the call of Albert Einstein, the IRC is at work in over 40 countries and 24 offices across the U.S. helping people to survive, reclaim control of their future, and strengthen their communities. Learn more at www.rescue.org and follow the IRC on Twitter & Facebook.

