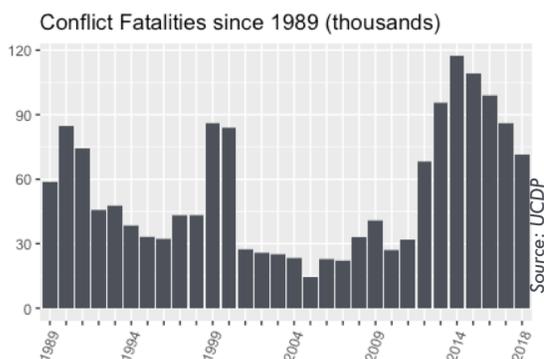# Good Governance: Preventing Conflict & Building Peace

To effectively mitigate and resolve conflict, **programs must go beyond violence reduction and directly address the underlying dynamics that cause and sustain conflict**. While there are many contributing factors that shape conflict and violence, Mercy Corps has identified three types of governance-related root causes of conflict, as well as programming approaches that target each root cause.

Over the last 30 years, the number of communities affected by conflict has increased. This trend will continue if programs do not target **root causes of conflict**.

Conflict Fatalities since 1989 (thousands)

Source: UCDP

Triggered by **Social, Economic, Political,** and **Climate Shocks & Stresses**

By 2050

1 in 3

people will be living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts

Source: OECD; UN DESA 2017

These shocks and stresses are exacerbated by ineffective or unjust governance systems, which we group into three 'root cause' categories:

Weak Capacity & Accountability

❯ Weak Service Provision
❯ Poor natural resource management
❯ Inadequate Justice & Security Provision

Economic – Political – Social – Religious

Exclusion & Inequality

Minorities – Youth – Women

Participation in Violence

Weak Civic Engagement

Uninformed, disengaged, disconnected **CITIZENS**

Structural obstacles for **CIVIL SOCIETY**

Programs can target these weaknesses via Good Governance approaches:

Strengthen Institutions

Improved Management, Quality & Access to Services

Build Feedback Channels

Leaders understand importance of Inclusion

Inclusive Programs & Processes

Increased Capacity, Influence & Solidarity of Marginalized Groups

Community Mobilization

Increased ability of communities & civil society to keep government accountable

Mercy Corps Good Governance Programming Approaches

How Mercy Corps uses Good Governance approaches to help people build more **secure**, **productive**, and **just** communities.

Root Cause #1: Weak State Capacity & Legitimacy

⟩ Approach: Responsive, Accountable and Transparent Institutions

To address weak state capacity and accountability, Mercy Corps prioritizes four strategies which seek to **strengthen the capacity of governance institutions** as well as increase collaboration and **cooperation between communities and governance institutions**:

1. **Increase interactions** between governance actors and communities by building channels, platforms, and **skills for engagement**.

2. Increase access to, quality, and management of **basic services**.

3. Improve natural **resource management**.

4. Improve provision of **security and justice** services.

The USAID-funded **Inclusive Resource Management Initiative (IRMI)** program increased accountability, inclusion and transparency in managing Nepalese natural resources through capacity building activities.

Root Cause #2: Exclusion & Marginalization

⟩ Approach: Fair, Inclusive Power Structures

Mercy Corps' programs include strategies to promote more **inclusive and participatory governance**, particularly in contexts where the exclusion of women, youth, ethnic, religious, or other identity groups is linked with conflict:

1. Increase governance actors' awareness of the importance of **including marginalized groups.**

2. Build solidarity, capacity, and **influence of marginalized groups.**

3. Ensure community planning **processes and platforms are inclusive** of marginalized groups.

The USAID-funded **Yes Youth Can!** program equipped Kenyan youth leaders with information, tools, and resources to mentor peers and engage with policy makers.

Root Cause #3: Weak Civic Engagement

⟩ Approach: Mobilizing Communities and Supporting Civil Society

Mercy Corps' programs equip citizens with the knowledge and skills critical to **identify, organize and advocate for needed resources and services**. As we increase citizens' understanding of their rights and responsibilities, we provide opportunities to turn that understanding into action:

1. Engage communities in **community mobilization processes** in partnership with governance authorities.

2. Strengthen the ability of communities and civil society to **hold governance actors to account.**

The USAID-funded **Investing in Syrian Humanitarian Action (ISHA)** program builds capacity of Syrian civil society organizations through remote mentorship and eLearning trainings.

mercycorps.org/research/good-governance