



NEWS
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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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MERCY CORPS: IMPROVING ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL INPUTS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES CAN BOOST EARLY RECOVERY IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA

New assessment examines market dynamics as Nigeria looks toward post-conflict recovery

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ABUJA, NIGERIA – A lack of access to both capital and basic agricultural supplies has created a major barrier to economic recovery in Northeast Nigeria’s Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, but humanitarian and development organizations can help residents develop alternatives to boost farming and incomes in the region, a new Mercy Corps-led [assessment](#) shows.

Traditional sources of credit have been destroyed after years of conflict displaced more than 2 million people, according to the assessment. Essential agricultural inputs, such as seeds and fertilizer, have been curbed because of security restrictions on certain crops and ammonium-nitrate fertilizers. The Mercy Corps assessment looked at the region’s current market dynamics, livelihood opportunities and constraints around agricultural production.

Mercy Corps recommends that humanitarian and development organizations consider supporting farmers and small traders by exploring alternatives, such as the procurement of non-chemical fertilizers. Cash and voucher programming has been successful in several areas of the Northeast, but more must be done to restore lines of credit to suppliers and poor farmers.

“Beyond continuing to meet urgent needs, humanitarian organizations can ensure household-level and market-level recovery strategies are mutually reinforcing,” says Darius Radcliffe, Mercy Corps’ country director in Nigeria. “It is essential that humanitarian organizations use adaptive and flexible approaches so that programs respond to the changing market conditions that will come with growth and recovery.”

Survey respondents most frequently cited limited access to capital and credit as obstacles to recovery. Many “adashes,” or informal savings groups that served as their primary saving mechanism prior to the conflict, were dissolved, and banks and micro-finance institutions were closed when people were forced to flee conflict, severely limiting the safe transfer of money, the study shows. Still, small and medium-sized businesses expressed hopefulness that recovery could occur within six months to a year if access to capital and loans improve.

Mercy Corps led the joint assessment, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, in partnership with the International Rescue Committee, Oxfam, Action Against Hunger, Catholic Relief Services and



Cooperazione Internazionale. Nearly 3,000 farmers, input suppliers, displaced people, government representatives, non-governmental organizations, traders, banks and others participated in focus groups, interviews and surveys between January and August 2017.

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