



NEWS
RELEASE

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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INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, MERCY CORPS, GOOGLE, MICROSOFT, CISCO AND TRIPADVISOR EXPAND ONE-STOP INFORMATIONAL PORTAL FOR REFUGEES UNDER THE NEWLY FORMED GLOBAL PLATFORM, SIGNPOST

Expansion to Italy, Jordan and El Salvador Will Provide 60,000 Crisis-Affected Individuals with Access to Critical Information and Resources

March 16, 2018

NEW YORK, NEW YORK – Building on the success and necessity of the informational site [Refugee Info](#), International Rescue Committee and Mercy Corps, alongside global partner PeaceGeeks and with support from Google, Cisco, Microsoft and TripAdvisor, announced today the expansion of the Europe-based Refugee Info to Italy, and the launch of new sites in Jordan and El Salvador. The sites live under the umbrella of the global platform, [Signpost](#), a digital initiative focused on providing the humanitarian community with a platform to reach refugees, asylum seekers and crisis-affected communities with critical information in multiple languages. Each site provides potentially lifesaving, up-to-date information on legal rights, accommodation, transportation, medical facilities and more.

“Technology has played a critical role in providing refugees and crisis-affected individuals with the information they need to make informed choices about their lives. Refugee Info has helped more than 600,000 people and the newly formed Signpost platform will build on its success,” said Reynaldo Rodrigues, Signpost Project Director at the International Rescue Committee. “The platform is a testament to the power of partnership in helping solve society’s most pressing issues. We are grateful to Google, Cisco, Microsoft and TripAdvisor because with their support we are able to expand this critical information pipeline to tens of thousands of the world’s most vulnerable people.”

Since its launch in Greece in 2015, Refugee Info has served more than 600,000 people, meeting refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe online through its website, mobile application and social media, to listen to their questions and concerns, and provide the information they need to make informed choices about



their lives. The expansion of the site to Italy, and the creation of new versions in Jordan and El Salvador will build on that information pipeline, providing crisis-affected individuals with essential and timely information that is local and context-specific.

“At a time when nearly 66 million people are on the run, technology plays a critical role in tackling the world’s toughest challenges,” said Meghann Rhynard-Geil, Technology for Development Advisor for Mercy Corps. “Signpost and innovative digital solutions for the humanitarian community have incredible potential to continue ensuring dignity and choice for vulnerable families in search of safety and a better life.”

Additional details of the new initiatives are as follows:

- **Italy:** Building upon the successful model of Refugee Info, the service will extend coverage to Italy by the end of March 2018. The expansion is a direct response to the fact that Italy is now the primary point of entry in Europe for migrants and refugees. In 2017, [Italy received over 118,000 arrivals by the Mediterranean Sea alone, compared to just over 28,000 in Greece.](#)
- **Jordan:** Since the start of the Syrian conflict, [over 600,000 Syrians](#) have fled to Jordan. Mercy Corps recently launched [Khabrona.Info](#), which provides crucial information on important civil documents and paperwork for refugees settling in the country.
- **El Salvador:** A new channel, CuentaNos, will also play a central role in the IRC’s emergency response strategy in El Salvador. Similar to its counterparts in Europe and the Middle East, CuentaNos will provide crisis-affected communities with timely information about rights, services, and other safety topics through platforms that are accessible and preferred by beneficiaries. CuentaNos will be live by the end of April 2018.

“We’re humbled to have had the opportunity to work alongside the International Rescue Committee on the Refugee InfoHub project since inception, and thrilled to see how much progress has been made on the platform,” said Hector Mujica, Google.org Program Manager. “Our Google volunteers have worked diligently alongside IRC to help scale the reach of the platform and adapt it to each refugee group’s context. We are excited to continue to support IRC’s goal of bringing relevant and timely information to refugees when they need it most, where they need it most.”

“As refugees seek safety and shelter for themselves and their families, information is crucial,” says Jane Meseck, Senior Director, Global Programs and Partnerships at Microsoft Philanthropies. “We have reached almost 700,000 people through Signpost’s [Refugee Info](#) app in Europe, ensuring that they can find the resources they need to begin to rebuild their lives in a new country. We are proud to partner with the International Rescue Committee to help Signpost expand the platform to crisis-affected individuals in Italy, Jordan, El Salvador and beyond.”

“At TripAdvisor, we know and understand the great value that trustworthy information, accessible in one’s native language, can have for people to make informed decisions. The Signpost Project is an essential tool to help deliver the critical information refugees, asylum seekers and crisis-affected communities need to make their way and get services where they are,” said Tali Golan,



Director, Philanthropy and Inclusion at TripAdvisor. “We’re excited to continue to partner with the IRC on this significant expansion and provide technical expertise to help magnify the impact of this platform to serve those who most need it.”

“Cisco Foundation supports early-stage, technology-driven initiatives that have the potential to scale and replicate. Refugee Info, now Signpost, is a perfect example of a scalable and replicable solution that has enabled organizations like Mercy Corps and the International Rescue Committee to reach over 600,000 people with critical, real-time information,” said Erin Connor, Portfolio Manager for Cisco Foundation. “We were excited to support this initiative when it launched in 2015, and are thrilled to continue supporting the expansion of Signpost, as it moves into new countries and connects more people to the information and services needed to rebuild their lives.”

Signpost aims to grow even further by engaging countries along the Central Mediterranean transit route such as Niger, Mali, and Libya. For more information please visit www.rescue.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 28 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](#).

About Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps is a leading global organisation 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 Google.org

Google.org, Google’s philanthropy, supports charitable organizations that apply scalable, data-driven approaches to solving the world’s biggest challenges. We accelerate their progress by providing funding, products, and technical expertise from Google volunteers with a focus on education, economic opportunity, inclusion and crisis response.

About the TripAdvisor Charitable Foundation

The TripAdvisor Charitable Foundation is the corporate philanthropic arm of TripAdvisor Media Group and works to address some of the most pressing humanitarian challenges facing global communities. Since 2010, the Foundation has donated more than \$25 million to nonprofit organizations that align with its mission to inspire and enable TripAdvisor employees to volunteer their time and skills for causes they care about and to help strengthen human lives and communities around the world. In September 2016, TripAdvisor announced a 3-year commitment of at least \$5 million from the TripAdvisor Charitable Foundation to aid the global refugee crisis.

About Microsoft Philanthropies

To support Microsoft’s mission of empowering every person and organization on the planet to achieve more, Microsoft Philanthropies is working to create a future where every person, including those who are displaced, can access technology’s benefits and opportunities. For more than 20 years, Microsoft has provided



technology and funding to empower nonprofits and humanitarian organizations that help displaced people to rebuild their lives. In 2017, Microsoft donated over \$1.4 billion in cash grants and technology to over 200,000 nonprofit organizations around the world.