

MISSING THE EMERGENCY

Shifting the Paradigm for Relief to Adolescent Girls



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About the Coalition for Adolescent Girls

The Coalition for Adolescent Girls was initiated in 2005 by the United Nations Foundation and the Nike Foundation, and has been joined by more than 30 leading international organizations, to bring fresh perspectives, diverse resources and concrete solutions to the challenges facing adolescent girls globally. When girls are educated, healthy, and financially literate, they will play a key role in ending generations of poverty. The Coalition's supporters are committed to creating lasting change for adolescent girls, leveraging existing initiatives, and mobilizing new allies on behalf of adolescent girls.

www.coalitionforadolescentgirls.org

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WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN EMERGENCIES?

ADOLESCENT GIRLS FACE HEIGHTENED RISK OF PERSONAL SAFETY VIOLATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES DURING EMERGENCIES.

This is the case from day one throughout the lifecycle of crises. They can inadvertently become a means of survival for families in crisis. They may forego meals, engage in unsafe livelihoods, assume disproportionate levels of domestic burden, or marry early to relieve financial responsibilities for their families. These circumstances isolate them from friends, school, community, and the networks of aid that might support them. Nevertheless, in the face of such obstacles, they show resilience.

Although many individuals, regardless of age or sex, assume new responsibilities in crisis, evidence indicates that adolescent girls as a population assume leadership roles in the family as a systemic response to emergencies. They care for younger siblings and manage households in the absence of parents who may leave home to find work, or who they may have lost. These activities are not unique to region, culture, or type of emergency. They seem to be pervasive and inherent to the conditions of emergency, as adolescent girls often shoulder serious responsibilities for the sake of duty or survival. Families and communities do not usually perceive or recognize these roles as forms of leadership, nor do these roles particularly promote an awareness of adolescent girls as integral to social infrastructure. If anything, the daily responsibilities that befall adolescent girls in emergencies cloak them within populations, making them invisible to aid providers. In large part due to this invisibility, humanitarian response programs—as currently designed—typically neglect them as a population.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN EMERGENCIES—WHICH IS NOTHING SHORT OF LIFESAVING FOR MANY ADOLESCENT GIRLS—MISSES MILLIONS WORLDWIDE

The immediate aims of emergency response require the performance of rapid needs assessments, which typically group adolescent girls' needs with that of their male peers or females of other age groups, leaving their unique concerns overshadowed. Some relief activities neglect them in terms of service and product delivery by assuming that they can engage in the same level of spatial mobility within their communities as others in their "peer" group. Some increase their burden during periods of shock by expecting that they can engage in the same level of social

mobility as others. The unique conditions presented by their sex and age together create circumstances where broad categorization within relief activities may actually harm adolescent girls.

TO MEET THE CORE PRINCIPLE TO "DO NO HARM," THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY MUST REFRAME THE APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING, REACHING, AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Evaluation of emergency relief policy and programming that addresses adolescent girls as a specific population has so far been limited. Humanitarian actors have an obligation to study the specific challenges adolescent girls face in emergencies, to provide them access to services, support, and safe spaces, and to lessen the factors that make them more vulnerable. The existing evidence suggests that focusing on adolescent girls as a specific population and enabling them to make decisions which can guide their recovery process is a crucial approach—one that saves lives.

ACTION AGENDA

A paradigm shift is critical. The Coalition for Adolescent Girls convened a two-part consultation in July and November 2011, in which experts in humanitarian response, child protection, and gender issues collectively articulated the urgent need for new humanitarian strategies around adolescent girls. The group defined the current contours of practice, discourse, and advocacy around this population in order to map out the following actions needed to shift the emergency response paradigm:

I. REINFORCE WHAT WE KNOW AND IDENTIFY WHAT WE MUST LEARN.

II. PRIORITIZE A LEARNING AGENDA.

III. INCREASE DONOR ENGAGEMENT TO TARGET ADOLESCENT GIRL POPULATIONS AT THE FUNDING LEVEL.

IV. BUILD CAPACITY IN THE HUMANITARIAN SECTOR TO TARGET ADOLESCENT GIRLS.

V. CONSIDER ADOLESCENT GIRLS. ENGAGE THEM. ENABLE THEM TO LEAD.

I. REINFORCE WHAT WE KNOW AND IDENTIFY WHAT WE MUST LEARN.

Most humanitarian funding, programming, and policy strategies do not target adolescent girls specifically. Subsequently, little hard evidence currently exists on how to reach and target adolescent girls in humanitarian settings, or how to design programs to best serve them. Nevertheless, preliminary field reports from multiple organizations have underscored, at the very least, the need to consider adolescent girls as a unique demographic population.

The primary argument for this articulation is that adolescent girls face enormous challenges and possibilities, specific to age and sex combined. While all actors adopt new coping strategies within emergency life cycles, adolescent girls often undergo a radical change of situation, even within their own families. During the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa, NGOs reported numerous incidences where male heads of households sold titles to their land and invested the proceeds to feed livestock, as opposed to family members. According to the Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance, over time, families married off daughters as young as age nine, in order to pay their dowries in kind before their livestock died. These methods of coping with the drought caused particular harm to adolescent girls. The guide on page five below outlines a variety of obstacles and challenges that adolescent girls face during different phases of the emergency cycle.

Nascent adolescent girl-focused programming shows preliminary evidence of unusually positive impacts, as well as potential for scaling, with the necessary resources. The inset text on the following pages outlines the objectives and initial results from a program started by the Haiti Adolescent Girls Network, and an overall approach by the International Rescue Committee to remodel internal policy, programs, and initiatives that affect adolescent girls. Both cases suggest profound impacts at the individual level, within scalable programs and organizational processes.

Twin hurdles that need to be crossed within the current culture of humanitarian emergency response include identifying adolescent girls as a population and specifically targeting funds toward research, programs, and advocacy on their behalf. Gathering and disaggregating any data in an emergency context is challenging, let alone on a group not typically visible to the aid community. In general, knowledge-gathering—in line with all humanitarian activity—should aim to ensure that activity that saves some lives does not cause harm to others, and that all populations are poised to receive essential services.

OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES ADOLESCENT GIRLS FACE IN EMERGENCIES

Humanitarian, human rights, and civil society organizations report significant differences, based on sex and age, in an individual's access to services and overall experience of emergency settings. In the case of adolescent girls, the following obstacles and challenges can radically distinguish their experiences from those of male peers or females of other age groups:

ADOLESCENT GIRLS FACE THE GREATEST RISK OF PERSONAL AND BODILY SAFETY. Because of the breakdown of community cohesion that occurs in crisis situations or during displacement, violence and harm against girls and women increases. Temporary housing conditions disproportionately affect adolescent girls, whose sex and age render them particularly vulnerable to perpetrators, both known and unknown.

ADOLESCENT GIRLS ARE AT A PARTICULAR RISK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, including exploitation by aid workers. Due to constraining social norms, adolescent girls often cannot or do not vocalize their concerns publicly, and may be intimidated by those they perceive as authority figures.

ADOLESCENT GIRLS TAKE ON DISPROPORTIONATE LEVELS OF THE HOUSEHOLD BURDEN, including caring for younger siblings, especially during crises. As a result, they experience increased isolation and disruption of their social networks, and a higher incidence of missing or discontinued education. The lack of access to social, financial, health, and educational services is often a function of adolescent girls' limited mobility within communities and the typical dispersion of these services. For example, aid distributed at external sites, like education programs in schools, may miss girls confined to the home.

ADOLESCENT GIRLS FACE GREATER MALNOURISHMENT and lack of iron in their diet. In conditions of food scarcity, families do not typically prioritize the nurture of girls and may prioritize feeding male members of the family, or even livestock.

ADOLESCENT GIRLS DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO SCHOOLING of the caliber available to male counterparts in the same circumstances. This is particularly true for secondary education. Families may pull adolescent girls out of school for a variety of reasons. They may perceive the cost being too high in relation to the benefit of educating a girl. They may have concerns about security risks for the girl or the family. They may want her to care for the family or household. These trends are exacerbated during periods of shock.

ADOLESCENT GIRLS MAY ENGAGE IN UNSAFE LIVELIHOODS on their own initiative or due to family pressures. In some settings, transactional sex is a common strategy to augment family income.

FAMILIES MAY SEE THE BRIDE PRICE OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AS A MEANS OF SURVIVAL. The rate of early marriage tends to increase in the wake of natural disasters. Female genital mutilation may occur at an earlier age, if social norms promote genital cutting to ensure girls' marriageability.

ADOLESCENT GIRLS LACK ACCESS TO QUALITY, YOUTH-FRIENDLY REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES, INFORMATION, AND COMMODITIES. The emergency context or the constraint in income that it creates often exacerbates this situation. Emergency settings foster an increase of early and unintended pregnancies, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and unsafe abortions.

CASE 1: HAITI ADOLESCENT GIRLS NETWORK, “ESPAS PA MWEN” PROGRAM

In 2010, the Haiti Adolescent Girls Network created a program called “Espas Pa Mwen”—“My Space” in Creole—to address the problem, in their words, of “missing the emergency” that adolescent girls experienced in post-earthquake Haiti. Many adolescent girls expressed never feeling unconditionally safe, and had no space where they could express themselves. Without this infrastructure, adolescent girls would not be able to build much-needed social capital and economic assets. Through “Espas Pa Mwen” programs at 17 sites, established by over 40 participating organizations, over 550 adolescent girls spend a few hours a week meeting peers, learning, and playing. With 36 trained mentors from their communities, they focus on their interests, skill building, and each other.

Mentors are available at all hours and provide a connective tissue between adolescent girls and society. They help adolescent girls access services, negotiate family situations, and navigate school settings and unsafe communities. They also deliver core program content, including 30 hours of materials in French and English in the areas of Sexual and Reproductive Health, Leadership, Community Engagement, Preventing and Addressing Violence, Psycho-social Support, Financial Literacy, and Water and Sanitation. The Network Coordinator develops this material, organizes resources, and offers technical support. To realize this dedicated approach to adolescent girls, international NGOs mobilized their resources and the Haiti Adolescent Girls Network established a small grant fund to support grassroots and local organizations, stipulating that they pay mentors a stipend and create spaces dedicated to adolescent girls.

After its first year, “Espas Pa Mwen” leaders identified several lessons:

- A collaborative learning environment must be carefully built, as organizations in emergency contexts do not often come together with a sense of shared trust.
- A network coordinator is vital to managing multiple actors at various levels.
- The number of participating organizations making a leap into adolescent girl-centered programming is as important as the number of participating adolescent girls, as it signals transformation in organizational culture.
- Defining catchment areas—in some cases, conducting house-to-house surveys using GPS technology—enables targeted recruitment. Demand-led recruitment may bypass important segments of adolescent girl populations who may be less visible.
- Adolescent girls responded to a program mixture in health, social, and economic skills building, and demonstrated interest in financial literacy content.
- The Haiti Adolescent Girls Network insists that mentors be paid a stipend, recognizing that young women are an important resource and should be compensated, and that they often face the same pressures as the adolescent girls they serve. This provoked resistance from organizations accustomed to volunteer mentors.
- A defined meeting space should guarantee both physical security and aural privacy. Network members typically designate locations to be dedicated for adolescent girls’ use for specific periods of time.

I. PRIORITIZE A LEARNING AGENDA

Developing a learning agenda around adolescent girls in emergencies is a priority. Currently, no commonly accepted evidence base on girls in emergencies exists. Building an evidence base that disaggregates information on girls in the 10- to 19-year age range is crucial to reaching them, identifying any marginalized subgroups, and gathering key assets to deliver services to them. The learning agenda should support three major objectives:

1. **ESTABLISH A CONSORTIUM OF COMMITTED PARTNERS TO DEVELOP AN AGENDA, SCOPE, PHASING, AND METHODS FOR RESEARCH AND REPORTING.** This formal or informal consortium of self-identifying partners may include agencies, organizations, research institutes, communities, and governments, but together should have the capacity to gather information within existing programs, evaluate and report findings, and push policy forward within organizations and agency systems, as well as in national or international political arenas.
2. **GATHER DATA FROM A RANGE OF CASE STUDIES, LOCATING ASSESSMENTS WITHIN EXISTING PRACTICES IN THE FIELD, AND ANALYZING THE SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF CURRENT INTERVENTIONS.** The data should enumerate adolescent girls within specific populations, catalogue existing humanitarian practices that may harm them, and establish best practices with regard to humanitarian intervention.
3. **OPERATIONALIZE INFORMATION.** For the purpose of capacity-building and programmatic intervention, the consortium should develop technical standards, program design guidelines, trainings, handbooks, and other tools that both support existing practice and enable ongoing data collection. In terms of advocacy, the group should mobilize this information in campaigns on the ground, at the country and headquarters levels, and internationally. Finally, they should repurpose this material to empower adolescent girls with knowledge of their situation, so they can advocate for themselves on the individual level, articulate and take ownership of their own experiences, and enable their own recovery in emergencies.

Launching the learning agenda must begin with the formation of a leading consortium to generate evidence, tools, advocacy platforms, and programs for adolescent girls in humanitarian settings. The consortium requires input and action from various partners: humanitarian organizations with significant portfolios in child protection, education, youth livelihoods, gender-based violence, or camp planning and management; institutions or networks targeting age issues and disaggregation in research, monitoring, and reporting; emergency relief donors whose funding directly or indirectly impacts adolescent girls; and other entities whose work engages adolescent girl populations or issues. This group should have within its purview programs (or initiatives or organizations) that can serve as platforms for study. To maximize the range of evidence, they should occupy the spectrum in the following categories:

ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE WITH ADOLESCENT GIRLS BUILDING PROTECTIVE ASSETS				
		Direct Experience	Indirect/Little Experience	No Experience/Awareness
Possible findings	Program impacts	Successfully target and serve adolescent girls	Inadvertently reach/struggle to reach adolescent girls	Do not reach adolescent girls
		Effective strategies to reach key segments of girls	Technical and operational capacity-development needs	Strategies for transforming implementing agency culture

Coalition for Adolescent Girls

THE LEARNING AGENDA SHOULD NOT ONLY BUILD A RELIABLE BASE OF THEORETICAL EVIDENCE BUT ALSO ENABLE TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

Experiments within all these categories can generate technical innovations or demonstrate methods of building consensus and political will to integrate adolescent girl-targeted programming into agencies and organizations of different scales. These trials should be well observed, documented, analyzed, and reported. Specific funding for this preliminary work should be part of a broader campaign to earmark funding and direct it toward adolescent girls in emergencies.

Studies should first aim to enumerate the adolescent girls within identified sample populations, and reveal the critical stratifications within those groups that need to be considered in program design. For example, do girls of the same age face the same risks whether they are in or out of school? If they have undergone trauma or have children of their own, do they still relate better to girls their own age than older women who may have had the same experiences?

Developing a system for counting adolescent girls requires a careful consideration of ethics and the application of a protective framework and methodology for intervention. Ideally, the data extracted should cover the life cycle of emergencies. However, collecting data and establishing a process for disaggregation by age and gender may not be feasible in all phases of humanitarian emergencies, or all contexts. Capturing information on sensitive subjects must not increase risks for adolescent girls. Furthermore, not all adolescent girls face the same types or levels of risk.

Studies should examine the terms and quality of adolescent girls' *actual* participation in selected relief programs or initiatives. They should also investigate the immanent risks in different service locations or aid distribution methods—highlighting the critical question of how to bring adolescent girls into programs or whether and how to bring programs to them. A matrix should be developed based on program locations, types, age appropriateness, goals, and direct and indirect benefits, versus the types of risk they may pose to adolescent girls. As mentioned above, because of the range of unique social complexities faced by different segments of adolescent girl populations, some programming can become nothing short of lifesaving.

BECAUSE OF THE UNIQUE SET OF RISKS ADOLESCENT GIRLS FACE, AT THE OUTSET THE LEARNING AGENDA MUST RECOGNIZE THEIR VULNERABILITIES, INCORPORATE A WIDE RANGE OF APPROPRIATE, TECHNICAL DETAILS, AND FORMULATE CONCRETE, ACHIEVABLE GOALS

While any research on populations in humanitarian settings must put their vital needs before theoretical extraction, research involving adolescent girls demands this ethical consideration even more deeply, given the possible risks to individuals. Ultimately, collecting and disaggregating data by age and gender must inform the process of designing programs and services that function protectively, beyond the mere constraints of demand and supply. The design should also support an ongoing process of collecting and analyzing vital information that is disaggregated by age and gender. A clear monitoring process involving analysis of disaggregated data should ensure that vulnerable populations—including adolescent girls—receive essential services. Moreover, the research and monitoring process should not only work to delimit risk for adolescent girls, but also help them to build a set of protective, empowering assets, along the lines of wider social networks or increased financial literacy.

III. INCREASE DONOR ENGAGEMENT TO TARGET ADOLESCENT GIRL POPULATIONS AT THE FUNDING LEVEL

From the onset throughout the lifecycle of emergencies, donors must focus on adolescent girls as a target population with unique needs, protection risks, and potential. Adolescent girls are often not visible to the aid community, and the current culture of relief and emergency response does not place value on reaching adolescent girls as a distinct population. The following shifts in approach seek to widen the perspective of donors and increase their awareness of the harm that results from the current paradigm.

FUNDING FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS IS LIFESAIVING Because funding that reaches adolescent girls has traditionally fallen under development categories, it has not been articulated in terms of its urgent relief value. Although development approaches can impact the cultural norms that initially heighten the vulnerability of adolescent girls in certain communities, reaching adolescent girls only through those channels neglects the lifesaving prospects of some relief programming, or the injection of a relief mentality into the design of development programs.

A number of scenarios argue for a shift in this thinking. Gender-neutral funding that assumes that all adolescent girls experience the same spatial and social mobility as their perceived peers may, in fact, bypass them altogether. For example, relief programs for youth that are open to males will not always be engaged by female youth for a variety of reasons, including, often, personal safety concerns. Consequently, adolescent girls do not engage in these programs and instead miss out on opportunities for aid. In addition, because of the heightened risks they perceive and face, adolescent girls experience some aid packages as urgent and fundamental, which serve the important, though milder, purpose of elevating or aggrandizing the situation of individuals from other demographic segments. For example, programs that build strong social networks can protect adolescent girls from life-threatening violence. Access to a livelihoods or education program may be the watershed that breaks their isolation. Whether or not they were conceived of or designed for urgent contexts, these programs can make the difference between life and death for adolescent girls. Shifts in perception around all these issues will only occur with new messaging around adolescent girls in emergencies, which depends upon instrumental outreach from emergency relief donors, such as the Central Emergency Response Fund, the Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance, the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission, and others.

FUNDING FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS MULTIPLIES IMPACT Adolescent girls as a population systemically support communities. On the individual level, their well being—however defined—exerts a radius of influence that often includes adult and child members of households, and sometimes many others in their social network. Support to this population typically extends beyond the individual level to families and communities, and must be understood as conceptually intertwined with broader social recovery.

A LACK OF DONOR AWARENESS CAN LEAD TO GREATER HARM TO ADOLESCENT GIRLS Reports may inadvertently mask a harmful reality within their demonstration of impact if populations are not disaggregated by sex and age. Donors are in a position to demand this level of detail in reporting. Donors must engage in systematic discussion to disseminate political and funding insights and receive updates on technical issues related to adolescent girls. This knowledge sharing would be a strategic function of their membership in the lead consortium proposed in the previous section. The consortium should facilitate regular donor-level discussion on adolescent girls, in the

clusters, in interagency settings, and at country and field levels. This can occur through regular meetings or even online forums.

Moreover, donors should call for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee gender marker, a respected component of a system to ensure gender equality in funding, to be disaggregated by age. Lack of this detail calls into question the effectiveness of the gender marker as a tool to analyze streams of funding to organizations and programs whose beneficiaries include adolescent girls. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is already invested in questions of age, through the work of groups advocating for the elderly. Revising the gender marker with a stronger focus on age is a proper rationale for more focused advocacy on behalf of adolescent girls. Tools and mechanisms should be developed under each Area of Responsibility or cluster that works on age issues—for example, Child Protection, Gender-based Violence, and Education—rather than trying to create a new mechanism or cluster focal point on adolescent girls. As with all research regarding adolescent girls in humanitarian settings, the gender marker analysis also requires examination of disaggregated data across the life cycle of emergencies.

In addition to age- and sex-disaggregated quantitative data, donors are in a position to demand better qualitative data—in effect, to better hear adolescent girls’ own voices. Adolescent girls’ voices, in specific populations and settings—for example, in recent flash appeals spotlighting their risks during the famine in the Horn of Africa—forge their own active role in communicating their situations. These voices also mobilize concern around a population for which great immediate empathy may be found. Translating that concern into direct funding can be lifesaving for adolescent girls. For these reasons, and to underscore that their participation is integral to their own recovery and that of their communities, donors should demand to hear adolescent girls.

TARGETING ADOLESCENT GIRLS AT THE FUNDING LEVEL IS A CRUCIAL TACTICAL APPROACH TO INCREASING THEIR WELL-BEING IN HUMANITARIAN

Because of their unique lack of visibility on the ground, donors need to take the extra step to prioritize adolescent girls in their internal strategy and target them through deliberate funding allocations. A first step would be to design or standardize the call for proposals to require submission criteria more specific to adolescent girls, and to support existing grantees in the careful development of targeted programs.

Donors should be aware of critical distinctions in approach at the various levels. Focusing on adolescent girls as an entity at the level of advocacy and earmarking funding for them may not translate directly to demanding focused single-sex programming on the ground. Programming that singles out adolescent girls for benefits may inspire backlash and increase their protection risks, whereas, comprehensive programs for multiple populations that account for the specific needs of adolescent girls may minimize protection risks.

Ultimately, to better allocate lifesaving funding to adolescent girls and send a signal about this population’s larger value at the community and household levels, humanitarian donors must take these important steps:

- **Raise the profile of adolescent girls on the emergency funding agenda.** Engage in systematic technical debriefings and stipulate that funding for humanitarian operations be tied to sex- and age-disaggregation of data in reports.
- **Encourage the creation of equitable programming and spaces**—fostering respect on the ground for the idea that “equitable” conditions for adolescent girls may refer to single-sex environments. Rewrite the call for proposals to describe programs for adolescent girls.
- **Work to build capacity in organizations through direct funding and knowledge sharing** that will support adolescent girl populations in humanitarian settings.

IV. BUILD CAPACITY IN THE HUMANITARIAN SECTOR TO TARGET ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Currently, humanitarian services for adolescent girls typically live within programs for broad populations in a variety of sectors, like reproductive health, education, and livelihoods. As an accident of circumstance, rather than a planned attempt to address a specific population, this approach, at best, misses adolescent girls who cannot access these services due to timing, location, or other limiting factors, and at worst, exposes them to risk for the same reasons. Addressing this problem requires some cultural conversion within humanitarian networks, as well as reinforcement of technical capacity in organizations that work with adolescent girl populations. The inset text below describes recent initiatives taken by the International Rescue Committee to effect change in both of these arenas.

CASE 2: INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE INITIATIVES

Working with survivors of gender-based violence in emergencies and post-conflict situations, the International Rescue Committee made broad shifts in internal policy and programming, after learning that 45 percent of survivors seeking assistance in its programs around the world were under 18 years old. Originally assuming that its women's programs were meeting the needs of adolescent girls, the organization recognized through further data analysis that its program design either unintentionally excluded them or increased their vulnerability. It began a conversation internally (in the Women's Protection and Empowerment, Child Protection, and Health units) and externally (including the Population Council, the Women's Refugee Commission, and others), which resulted in the identification of the following actions needed to improve programs for adolescent girls and ensure that the organization was doing no harm:

- Better targeting and segmenting of populations within programs
- Understanding age-appropriate needs
- Creating safe spaces and recruiting girl mentors
- Developing positive social networks with mentors
- Working with families to establish support systems for adolescent girls

Building upon this shift in approach and its significant experience in these areas, IRC then developed integrated program models to maximize its collective response to adolescent girls. IRC's next steps are to continue internal collaboration around integrated models, secure funding for a pilot of its program model, and support the following initiatives:

- The *Gender-Based Violence Emergency Response & Preparedness Initiative* builds organizational capacity to include adolescent girls from day one of an emergency. In the Horn of Africa, this initiative has changed the rhetoric in the organization to emphasize women *and* girls, instead of subsuming them under one category.
- The *Caring for Child Survivors Initiative* operates with the underlying premise that child survivors need care and treatment appropriate to their age, cultural context, and abuse, and that field staff responding to child sexual abuse require specialized training, supervision, and support to effectively address their needs.
- *Girl Empower* is intended to build adolescent girls' safety nets, economic assets, and life skills, in order to protect them from exploitation and give them the opportunity to make strategic life choices. It provides strong social capital through female role models, prepares girls for economic success, and educates their families and communities to understand their value.

In this example, need demonstrated at the programmatic level led to the organizational paradigm shift. Evidence from the field, commitment at the senior levels, and policy input from outside experts together encouraged a reorientation of organizational culture affecting language and action. At the program level, such a push required capacity building through a cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary team approach.

ADDRESSING ADOLESCENT GIRLS' ISSUES REQUIRES CROSS-CUTTING TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Housing technical capacity within one silo does not work. Flexible schooling models and safe methods for saving money are equally important for adolescent girls in emergency settings, although they fall under different program design areas. Also, mainstreaming adolescent girl issues does not work. Broader humanitarian agendas tend to subsume their unique needs. The empowerment of expert focal points and establishment of common resources—at the scale of organizations, rather than multilaterally, within networks, or at the cluster level—are the best methods for developing cross-sectoral technical capacity around adolescent girls.

As discussed above in the section on developing a learning agenda, because of the unique circumstances of adolescent girls in humanitarian settings, technical capacity-building must support enhancements in program design. Expert capacity in organizations must support the ability to read early warning signs and build knowledge and awareness of adolescent girls into relief response mechanisms. On the ground, program implementers need to develop specialization in aid and advocacy for adolescent girls.

Ultimately, technical expertise around adolescent girls in the humanitarian world will foster political capital. Changing the approach to adolescent girls in emergencies will require significant cultural conversion on the part of relief providers, of a sort that is subject to political will at many levels. By building hard evidence and technical expertise, implementers can slowly but surely ground the case for policy change.

V. CONSIDER ADOLESCENT GIRLS. ENGAGE THEM. ENABLE THEM TO LEAD.

A CONSCIOUSNESS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AS A POPULATION FROM DAY ONE OF AN EMERGENCY SAVES LIVES

Adolescent girls offer multiple assets to their families and communities, from the onset of emergencies (whether rapid or slow), during acute stages of emergencies, and through early recovery and reconstruction. To protect and enhance these assets, adolescent girls need emergency response programs that deliberately build their capacities. Programs that engage adolescent girls to build strong social networks, relationships with mentors, and leadership and life skills have succeeded in protecting adolescent girls from a variety of risks, from early marriage to physical violence, during all phases of emergencies.

The location, timing, and cultural context for programmatic activities affect whether different segments of adolescent girl populations can engage them. Program managers must think creatively about how to enable all adolescent girls to participate, as well as take on appropriate leadership roles in the community over time. Managers in the field must target adolescent girls for participation in suitable programs, confirm and monitor their participation, and modify programs as necessary to ensure their continued engagement, especially to help them gain access or to accommodate the other responsibilities in their lives. Program implementers must simultaneously maintain sensitivity to the needs and perceptions of other community members to avoid potential backlash.

Peer-to-peer learning is essential for girls in this age group, particularly in environments of heightened risk. Programs that foster mentor and mentee relationships for adolescent girls have formed vibrant social networks in a variety of humanitarian settings. Recognizing this vital service by offering mentors

compensation and protection from the similar risks that they face is an important facet of program design. Radio programs in certain contexts have offered adolescent girls the opportunity for direct communications with their peers, while developing leadership and livelihoods skills, amplifying their concerns and voices, and expanding their social networks. Search for Common Ground in Nepal, for example, used topics in a radio drama to engage youth in community decision-making and address sensitive topics in a non-confrontational environment. In all cases, the ability for adolescent girls to express themselves—a freedom usually curtailed, especially during emergencies—has transformational potential for the girls themselves, and their communities.

THE RISKS ADOLESCENT GIRLS FACE IN EMERGENCY SETTINGS CANNOT BE UNDERSCORED ENOUGH Their lack of visibility is among the most serious challenges they face in their own communities and in relationship to humanitarian relief providers. Conversely, visibility, while promoting their leadership and enhancing their access to aid, can heighten their risk of harm. Bringing adolescent girls out into the light, in a form appropriate to each setting, is a process that requires careful consideration and execution. The bottom line is that any program that involves adolescent girls can increase their risk, so program designers must pay extra attention to adolescent girls' safety.

Humanitarian leaders who consciously prioritize adolescent girls from the onset of emergencies, recognize their methods of learning, and consider their special risks take the first steps in enabling adolescent girls to effect their own recovery. Many adolescent girls assume this proactive role in their families and communities during emergencies, without articulating it as a form of leadership. This empowering lens is part of what the humanitarian community can bring to a recovery effort, by considering adolescent girls, engaging them, and enabling them to lead.

A CALL TO ACTION

Adolescent girls cannot wait for action from the humanitarian community. Each day in emergency settings increases their stakes for survival and well-being. Left only to rely on their own resilience, they represent, in the words of the Haiti Adolescent Girls Network, the “missed emergency.”

- 1. The humanitarian community must shift its paradigm and realize that aid to adolescent girls can be lifesaving.** The guide on page five, *Obstacles and Challenges Adolescent Girls Face in Emergencies*, outlines the urgency of the matter. This guide must be disseminated widely—to implementers, donors, beneficiaries—and posted wherever it achieves greatest visibility—in offices, in the field, at conferences, on computer desktops. Moreover, if the lives of adolescent girls do not represent a silver bullet with which to address humanitarian crises, their concerns, at the very least, remain the central aim of humanitarian activity, and indeed define the terrain in emergencies. Their limits and possibilities project the scope for a community’s survival. In other words, *they are the recovery plan*.
- 2. To make this sea change in policy and practice, all hands are needed on deck.** Donors, researchers, implementers, policymakers and other key decision-makers must help forge organizational commitments to girls. They must build on lessons learned through development approaches and grow the evidence base on adolescent girls in emergencies. They must act on existing knowledge and invest in technical expertise on adolescent girls, partnering with universities or other appropriate institutions to develop requisite education or training. Large-scale international NGOs, especially those with development agendas, should create cross-sectoral professional positions for technical specialists in adolescent girl issues that report directly to the senior-most levels and provide specific input to major donor reports. If this requires a cultural shift at the organizational level, the best evidence of need will be found by looking to populations served.
- 3. It is time to execute a rigorous research agenda.** This requires that donors take the first step in targeting funding specifically toward adolescent girls. Advocates for adolescent girls must work to develop an evidence base, report findings publicly, develop tools and training, pilot programs in various contexts, and monitor impacts. A handful of key entities should assume a leadership role in building a committed consortium to develop a critical learning agenda based in field practice. These include organizations whose mission and work meet the criteria laid out in the Action Agenda on page seven and include humanitarian donors, governments, strategic community members, and research units in agencies or universities. They will be called to draft the learning agenda for the purpose of seeking funding for this study, during a meeting to be facilitated by the Coalition for Adolescent Girls in 2012.
- 4. Seeing adolescent girls requires thinking differently.** On the ground, the humanitarian community must consider adolescent girls as a distinct population with specific needs, identify and locate them within communities, and amplify their voices in both internal and external reporting. On the level of program design, implementers must protect and invest in them by enabling their leadership and networks—engaging them as mentors and connecting them with peers. On the advocacy level, donors must push for disaggregated data in reporting, and technical and strategic experts should lobby the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to revise the gender marker. *Advocates must change the narrative around adolescent girls in emergencies, by acknowledging who they are and what they do for themselves, their families, and their communities.* Acknowledging adolescent girls, even on day one, will serve to both shield the most vulnerable and to strengthen an urgent lever for social change.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CREDITS

The Coalition for Adolescent Girls, seeking to elevate the priority of adolescent girls in emergency-response and humanitarian settings, convened a two-part expert consultation in 2011. Part one outlined the problems, state of practice, and frontiers of advocacy and theory around adolescent girls in emergencies. Part two was a technical consultation that focused on methods for empowering girls during emergencies (improving visibility, decreasing isolation, and building on resilient coping mechanisms), delivering emergency response and recovery, as well as institutional capacity issues. The Coalition for Adolescent Girls issued a Background Memo in September 2011, *Meeting Girls' Needs: Roundtable Discussion on Adolescent Girls in Emergency Response Contexts*, which captured thoughts from the first meeting. It informed the agenda for the technical consultation, of which this paper is a product. Both papers drew largely from expert opinions that emerged from the formal discussions, with some additional interviews and desk research.

The Coalition for Adolescent Girls is grateful for the collaborative effort that went into the two-part consultation and this paper. In addition to experts in humanitarian response, child protection, and gender and adolescent girl issues, the consultation discussions included a range of program implementers, researchers, representatives of government agencies, and donors. All the participants (listed below) provided invaluable insights from their own work on the needs of adolescent girls in humanitarian settings. Judith Bruce, Mark Ferdig, Rachel Hermes, Kristin Kim Bart, Mendy Marsh, Jody Myrum, Cécile Mazzacurati, Marion Pratt, Saji Prelis, Radha Rajkotia, Lynn Renken, Jennifer Schulte, and Leora Ward played key roles in the planning and execution of the meetings or the review and production of texts that followed. Sincere thanks to Cynthia Greenberg and Jessica Lenz for their exceptional facilitation and keen insights in developing the expert consultation sessions. The firm of Stroock, Stroock & Lavan generously donated meeting facilities. Special thanks to the organizers and note-takers listed below.

Adolescent girls in many humanitarian settings have shared their insights. The Coalition for Adolescent Girls hopes that in these pages their experiences have translated to a platform for activism that honors their courage and resilience.

CONSULTATION DETAILS

Consultation I

Date and Time

July 20, 2011
10:00 am-4:30 pm

Location

Offices of Stroock, Stroock & Lavan
767 Third Avenue, 37th Floor
New York, New York

Attendees (*organizers)

Meryem Aslan	Director, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women
Amy Babcheck*	Portfolio Manager, Nike Foundation
Judith Bruce	Senior Associate and Policy Analyst, Population Council
Dale Buscher	Director of Protection, Women's Refugee Commission
Pablo Castillo-Diaz	Protection Analyst, Peace and Security Cluster, UN Women
Ariana Childs Graham*	Coordinator, Coalition for Adolescent Girls
Jessie Clyde	Program Officer, Western Hemisphere, International Planned Parenthood Federation
Karen Craggs-Milne	Senior Gender Advisor, Plan Canada
Amarylis Estrella	Program Officer, Haiti, American Jewish World Service
Mark Ferdig*	Senior Fellow, Nike Foundation
Jennifer Graham	Program Manager, Conflict Management Group, Mercy Corps
Cynthia Greenberg*	Independent Consultant
Brad Kerner	Adolescent Reproductive Health Senior Specialist, Department of Health and Nutrition, International Programs, Save the Children
Kristin Kim Bart	Senior Technical Advisor, Women's Protection & Empowerment, International Rescue Committee
Mendy Marsh	Gender-Based Violence Specialist in Emergencies, United Nations Children's Fund
Veronika Martin	Protection Advisor, Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance
Leah Meadows*	Program Associate, Women & Population Program, United Nations Foundation
Saji Prelis	Director, Children & Youth Programs, Search for Common Ground
Radha Rajkotia	Senior Technical Advisor for Youth and Livelihoods, International Rescue Committee
Sarah Roma*	Deputy Director, Women & Population Program, United Nations Foundation
Elizabeth Ross	Senior Program Director, Africa & South Asia, Relief International
Elizabeth Rowley	Consultant, MacArthur Foundation
Jennifer Schulte	Program Officer, Youth and Livelihoods, Women's Refugee Commission
Pamela Shifman	Director of Initiatives for Women and Girls, NoVo Foundation
Anooradha Siddiqi*	Ph.D. candidate, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University
Shawna Stich*	Intern, Women & Population Program, United Nations Foundation
Elizabeth Sweet	Coordinator for Network Projects and Communications, Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
Katie Tong	Head of Programmes, Interact Worldwide

Coalition for Adolescent Girls

Angela Wiens Senior Associate, Gender and Flagship initiatives Department of Domestic and International Affairs, International Medical Corps
Galit Wolfensohn Gender Policy Specialist, Humanitarian Policy Section Office of Emergency Programmes, United Nations Children's Fund; Co-Chair, Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sub-Working Group on Gender

Consultation II

Date and Time

November 16, 2011
10:00 am-3:30 pm

Location

Offices of United Nations Foundation
1800 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC

Attendees (*organizers) (notetakers)**

Amy Babcheck* Portfolio Manager, Nike Foundation
Judith Bruce Senior Associate and Policy Analyst, Population Council
Andrea Burniske Director, GIRL Project, Save the Children
Dale Buscher Director of Protection, Women's Refugee Commission
Ariana Childs Graham* Coordinator, Coalition for Adolescent Girls
Farida Deif Africa Portfolio Specialist, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women

Danielle Engel Coordinator, United Nations Adolescent Girls Task Force
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Shaya Gregory Poku Africa Program Associate, Search for Common Ground
Ella Gudwin Vice-President, Emergency Response, Americares
Martin Hayes Child Protection Specialist, ChildFund International
Wendy Henning Program Officer, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, United States Department of State

Laura Kilberg** Coordinator, UN Foundation
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Cécile Mazzacurati Humanitarian Program Officer, United Nations Population Fund
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Rebecca Miller** Intern, UN Foundation
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Marion Pratt Social Science Advisor, Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance

Coalition for Adolescent Girls

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Sarah Roma*	Deputy Director, Women & Population Program, United Nations Foundation
Jennifer Schulte	Program Officer Youth and Livelihoods, Women's Refugee Commission
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Nadia Todres	Photojournalist
Sharon Thomas**	Intern, UN Foundation
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Angela Wiens	Senior Associate, Gender and Flagship initiatives Department of Domestic and International Affairs, International Medical Corps
Galit Wolfensohn	Gender Policy Specialist, Humanitarian Policy Section Office of Emergency Programmes, United Nations Children's Fund; Co-Chair, Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sub-Working Group on Gender