



# ADOLESCENT LIFE SKILLS AND PARENTING IN CRISIS SETTINGS: CONSULTATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DESIGN

**SUMMARY**

# CONSULTATIONS: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This consultation report highlights the findings of global consultations that were held between May and July 2019 with adolescents aged 10 to 19 years and their parents/caregivers in displacement settings in Bangladesh, the Lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria), Central African Republic and Tanzania. Adolescent girls and boys of different ages shared their interests and priorities for humanitarian programming, specifically focused on knowledge, skills and practices that are important for their emotional wellbeing, social relations, health, safety and protection.

## THE CONSULTATIONS HIGHLIGHTED THE FOLLOWING:

### SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Adolescents want to know what they can do to stay healthy and show specific interest in learning about sexual and reproductive health, including preventing unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Adolescent mothers highlighted the importance of information about and access to pre- and postnatal care for themselves and their children.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING

Adolescents know what they need for their wellbeing but highlight that lack of access to basic services, violence, parental neglect, and lack of opportunities severely affect their mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. Adolescents of all ages and genders warn that married girls especially suffer from serious mental health issues.

### FAMILY AND PEER RELATIONS

Adolescents identify significant risks in the relationships with parents and caregivers, including neglect, abuse and gender-based violence – particularly in foster care. Adolescents also highlighted a lack of positive peer role models and a lack of guidance in navigating intimate partner relationships.

### SAFETY AND PROTECTION

Adolescents, particularly girls, have significant concerns about their safety, at home, in the community and in intimate partner relationships. Married girls, young mothers and adolescents in foster care are among those who face the highest risks of gender-based violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect.

### CHILD MARRIAGE

Child marriage is a key concern for adolescent girls. It links to many of the identified risks and needs across mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, protection, sexual and reproductive health. Adolescents point out that child marriage risks increase in situations of crisis, displacement, income poverty and lack of opportunities. Married girls struggle with high levels of distress and serious mental health issues, including suicidal ideation. They face significant health risks resulting from early pregnancy, and report enduring violence and abuse from their husbands and family members.



## PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

Adolescents and their parents/caregivers have shared clear priorities for life skills and parenting programming as well as for broader adolescent-responsive programming, including the following:

- **Prioritise the following themes for the life skills programme:** socio-emotional skills, protection including child protection and SGBV, and health including SRHR, child marriage, conflict resolution, social cohesion, and peace-building.
  - **Prioritise the following themes for the parenting programme:** promoting positive and supportive parent–child relationships, dealing with challenging behaviour, promoting psychosocial wellbeing, protection, and health (including SRHR) of adolescents.
  - **Target adolescents with specific needs and where required, provide tailored content and support.** For example for adolescents who are separated, unaccompanied or heads of households, adolescents who are married, pregnant or caregivers, working adolescents and adolescent survivors of SGBV.
  - **Work with adolescents and parents/caregivers at the same time** to reinforce key information, knowledge and skills, and to strengthen the parent–child relationship. Where possible, organise joint sessions for adolescents and their parents/caregivers to build mutual trust.
  - **Consider a wide range of caregivers:** one of the findings of the consultation is that many adolescents do not live with their biological parents but with other caregivers who play a key role in their upbringing, such as extended family members (aunts, uncles, grandparents, older siblings), foster caregivers, or their family in-law. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the parenting programme is inclusive of this wide range of caregivers for adolescents and the roles they play.
  - **Embed life skills and parenting into broader programme interventions** that address the educational, livelihoods, health and protection needs and priorities of adolescents and their families.
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