

The Foundation Guidance introduces the key principles and approaches that underpin all of the activities, tools and guidance in the Adolescent Kit.

The Foundation Guidance provides users of the Adolescent Kit with a shared understanding of why it is important to work with adolescents in humanitarian situations and how to engage with them in ways that can positively change their lives.

The Foundation Guidance is for **everyone!**

The Foundation Guidance is for **everyone** who plans to use the Adolescent Kit. It provides users with a shared understanding of adolescents' needs in humanitarian situations, and outlines key approaches that **everyone** should take when working with adolescent girls and boys.

The Foundation Guidance:

- ▶ Describes how to support adolescents to develop key **competencies**;
- ▶ Introduces **Ten Key Approaches** for working successfully with adolescents;
- ▶ Outlines key **understandings** of adolescents in humanitarian situations;
- ▶ Explains how **innovation** and **arts** can promote adolescents' wellbeing;
- ▶ Brings together **global standards, principles and best practices** for working with adolescents from across technical sectors in life skills education, child participation, peacekeeping and psychosocial support; and
- ▶ Lists **guidance and resources** that can be used to support activities with the Adolescent Kit.

Who is the Foundation Guidance for?

The Foundation Guidance is for programme coordinators, facilitators and anyone else who plans to use the activities, tools and supplies in the Adolescent Kit. It can also be used as a stand-alone resource for anyone who is interested in learning more about working with adolescents in humanitarian situations.

Ten key competencies for adolescents

All of the activities and approaches in the Adolescent Kit are designed to help adolescents to develop key competencies. These **competencies** are **knowledge**, skills and **attitudes** that are essential for the wellbeing and healthy development of adolescents – particularly those who have been affected by crisis and conflict.

The competencies include the abilities that adolescent girls and boys need to cope with crisis, build healthy relationships, and engage positively with their communities.

The ten key competency domains are:



Communication and expression: Learning new ways of communicating and expressing themselves can help adolescents to engage positively with others, build relationships and gain self-awareness and confidence.



Identity and self-esteem: Adolescents can gain a stronger sense of identity and self-esteem by learning more about themselves, recognising their strengths and abilities, and understanding how they fit into groups and society.



Leadership and influence: Empowering adolescents to understand that they can influence things that happen in their lives can motivate them to work for positive change with their families, friends and communities.



Problem solving and managing conflict: The ability to resolve conflicts and problems in a nonviolent way can help adolescents to maintain positive relationships with others and to manage disruptions within their families, friends and communities.



Coping with stress and managing emotions: Learning ways to manage their emotions and cope with stress can help adolescents to improve their wellbeing and to deal with difficult circumstances.



Cooperation and teamwork: Practicing cooperation and teamwork can help adolescents to form healthy and respectful relationships with others and prepare them for active participation in their community.



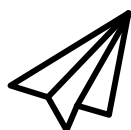
Empathy and respect: Supporting adolescents to develop empathy and respect can help them to build relationships with different types of people, to respond positively to others and to promote peace.



Hope for the future and goal setting: Feeling hope for the future can help to decrease adolescents' stress, increase their resilience and empower them to set goals and make positive changes in their lives.



Critical thinking and decision making: Learning how to think critically can help adolescents to break down harmful stereotypes, understand the consequences of their actions, and to make decisions that contribute to peace.



Creativity and innovation: Encouraging adolescents to think creatively and to find innovative solutions to problems can help them to work with others toward shared goals and to find ways to cope with difficulties.

Ten key approaches for working with adolescents

The Ten Key Approaches are at the heart of all of the guidance, activities and tools in the Adolescent Kit. They explain *how* you should work with adolescent girls and boys in humanitarian situations in order to bring about positive changes in their lives.

The Ten Key Approaches include:



Reach out to all adolescents: Outlines how to identify the adolescent girls and boys who are most in need of support and how to work actively to include them;



Provide structure and support: Describes how to create a welcoming space for adolescents with clear routines and structured activities, and to provide them with ongoing support;



Listen to adolescents: Emphasises the importance of taking time to learn about adolescents' lives, explore their ideas for working together, and give them space to express themselves;



Let adolescents take the lead: Explains how to let adolescents take the lead in your work together, and how to encourage them to try new roles and take on new responsibilities;



Include all adolescents: Provides guidance on including adolescents from all types of backgrounds within interventions, and on adapting your activities so that everyone has a chance to participate equally;



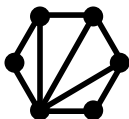
Make space for expression and creativity: Highlights the need to allow adolescents to express themselves, explore their creativity and let their imaginations run free;



Challenge and encourage adolescents: Outlines ways to challenge and encourage adolescents during your work together, while also providing them with support;



Improvise and adapt: Underlines the importance of continuously improvising and adapting your work in response to adolescents' needs, interests and circumstances;



Build connections: Explains how to support adolescents to connect with their families, communities and each other, and to help them access information and services; and



Build on the positive: Suggests how to help adolescents recognise their strengths and create a fun and positive atmosphere for working together.

The guidance and approaches in the Adolescent Kit revolve around a number of key understandings about adolescents in humanitarian situations. The guidance and approaches recognise that while the experiences of adolescents are extremely diverse, they may share certain **challenges** and **opportunities** during times of crisis.

Adolescence is a critical period of development.

Adolescence is a time of physical, cognitive, behavioural and psychosocial change. In humanitarian crises, adolescents may be forced to navigate the complexities of this phase of development on their own – jeopardising their healthy development into adulthood, and holding them back from reaching their potential.

Adolescents may disappear in humanitarian situations, or be forgotten.

Adolescents may disappear as a result of trafficking, recruitment into fighting forces, child marriage or seeking livelihood opportunities elsewhere. Other adolescents may seem to disappear if they are counted as adults in situation analyses, or confined to their homes due to social norms, safety concerns, or social stigma (especially girls).

Adolescents in humanitarian situations are more likely to experience violence, abuse and neglect and may be at risk of recruitment into fighting forces, exploitative labour and child marriage. They may lose access to education or health and livelihood opportunities and may endure separation from their families or caregivers. This may jeopardise their healthy development into adulthood.

Understanding adolescents in humanitarian context requires understanding the different experiences of adolescent girls and boys, and the different risks and opportunities they face. In humanitarian contexts, adolescent girls and boys take on the roles of adult women and men, respectively, at an even earlier age and with even less support and protection from the adults who might guide them in stable contexts. All forms of violence against women and girls increase during armed conflict. **Yet humanitarian situations may also offer opportunities to transform gender roles, including those that can be harmful or restricting for both adolescent girls and boys.**

Adolescents face risks to their health and their lives.

Conflict and natural disasters put adolescents at a higher risk of injuries or death from violence or accidents. Malnutrition may limit their physical growth, and their cognitive development may be disrupted as a result of experiences of protracted violence, anxiety or isolation.

Adolescents' sexual and reproductive health

is vulnerable. Inadequate access to contraception, child marriage, and limited awareness about safe sex mean that adolescents are often vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV and AIDS) and early pregnancies.

Adolescents may be at risk of sexual and gender

based violence: In humanitarian contexts, adolescents, especially girls, may be threatened by rape or sexual exploitation at the hands of fighting forces, community members and humanitarian workers.

Adolescents in humanitarian situations may take

on adult roles before they are ready. These roles might include heading households, supporting their families financially, entering into child marriage and having children. This can limit adolescents' access to programmes and services, including schooling and health care, and put them in situations that they are unprepared for developmentally.

Adolescents may become isolated during humanitarian situations as family and work responsibilities increase and they spend less time in school or other places where they can interact with friends. Girls in particular may be kept indoors by family members concerned for their safety and/or damage to their honour.

Adolescents with disabilities face significant barriers to accessing support in humanitarian situations. They may lack basic assistive devices, such as crutches, wheelchairs, glasses or hearing aids, and may be excluded from programmes or confined to their homes due to limited mobility, stigma and discrimination.

Most adolescents can recover their psychosocial health and overcome difficult experiences: Adolescents have deeply upsetting emotional experiences in humanitarian situations, including loss, grief, fear, horror and despair. Yet the vast majority of those who survive crises demonstrate considerable resilience and are able to 'bounce back' after stressful experiences.

There may be tensions between adolescents and adults in humanitarian situations. Adults may be concerned about the ways in which adolescents are challenging traditional roles, or see them as troublemakers. In some cultures there also may be limited acceptance of young people's right to express their views or participate in decisions.

Humanitarian crises can provide adolescents with positive opportunities. Even in challenging circumstances adolescents may develop new skills, take on different roles and learn about new cultures and people. They can take active roles as peacemakers in their communities, and help to disrupt cycles of violence, conflict and discrimination that pass from one generation to the next. As they take on new roles and responsibilities adolescents can change the way that adults see them – and help to transform attitudes toward young people.

Adolescents in humanitarian contexts often have the same interests and concerns as those living in stable contexts. They are interested in friendships, romantic relationships, sexuality, health, popular media, and the world around them.

Adolescents have a valuable role to play in humanitarian situations. During times of crisis, adolescents often contribute great energy, enthusiasm and creativity to improving their own lives as well as their communities. They can use their skills and talents to help them in their transition to adulthood, and can contribute to humanitarian response efforts in a range of ways – from participating in emergency assessments to caring for separated children and forming clubs to protect and support other young people.

Humanitarian crises can provide adolescents with opportunities to make positive changes. In humanitarian crises, adolescents can help to transform traditional norms, including discriminatory beliefs and practices around gender. They can take active roles as peacemakers in their communities, and can help to disrupt cycles of violence, conflict and discrimination that pass from one generation to the next. As they take on new roles and responsibilities, adolescents can change the way that adults see them – and help to transform attitudes toward young people.

The Adolescent Kit supports adolescent girls and boys to improve their wellbeing, learn new skills and connect with their communities through activities that focus on **Expression** and **Innovation**.

This allows adolescents to experiment, express themselves and tap into talents they may not be aware that they have. It gives them time to reflect, to create and to have fun while they solve problems and explore new ideas.

Adolescents and expression

Working with the arts can help adolescents to express ideas and feelings, learn life skills and experience the world around them in new ways. Expressing themselves through different types of art can connect adolescents with their cultures and heritage and give them opportunities to contribute creatively to their communities.

The Adolescent Kit helps adolescents to explore the arts through activities that focus on:

- ▶ Drawing and painting;
- ▶ Singing and dancing;
- ▶ Playing musical instruments;
- ▶ Creating stories, poems or plays; and
- ▶ Drama.

Adolescents as innovators

Providing adolescents with opportunities to *innovate* – experiment, solve problems, and explore new ideas – can help to stimulate their thinking and stretch their minds. This is particularly important in humanitarian contexts, where adolescents’ cognitive development may be disrupted by the stresses and emotional impact of conflict or disaster.

The Adolescent Kit gives adolescents space to innovate through activities such as:

- ▶ Planning and carrying out creative projects;
- ▶ Experimenting and working on inventions;
- ▶ Exploring new ideas and concepts; and
- ▶ Brainstorming solutions to problems and challenges.

The Adolescent Kit builds on global standards, principles and best practices for working with adolescents from across sectors. These principles provide the **technical foundation** for the Adolescent Kit and underpin all of the activities, tools and guidance included in it.

Adolescents and life skills education

Providing support to adolescents to develop life skills can help adolescent girls and boys to adapt to change and to meet the demands and challenges of humanitarian situations in constructive ways. Life skills can help adolescents to think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, and to develop a stronger sense of self-worth.

Adolescents and psychosocial support

Providing a safe and positive space for adolescent girls and boys to learn, have fun, express themselves creatively, and take a break from difficult circumstances can contribute to their psychosocial wellbeing during and after crises. Providing support to adolescents to build their resilience and encouraging them to engage positively with their families and communities are important parts of this effort.

Adolescents and participation

Encouraging adolescents to participate in meaningful ways during times of humanitarian crisis can make a difference in their own lives, as well as in their communities. It can help adolescents to develop important skills, gain confidence and speak up about their rights and needs. It also can empower them as social actors to play an important role in supporting their families, rebuilding their communities and contributing to humanitarian response efforts.

Adolescents as peacebuilders

Supporting adolescents to think, behave and relate to others in ways that promote peace – with family, friends and others in their immediate lives – can help them contribute to broader social change. Adolescents in humanitarian situations can introduce peaceful behaviours to their communities, change negative social attitudes or practices, and help to disrupt cycles of conflict and violence that pass from one generation to the next.

Adolescents and gender equality

Supporting adolescents to reflect on their identities as girls and boys, and to examine the ways in which being male or female shape their lives, experiences and opportunities, can help to promote more equitable beliefs and practices around gender. Adolescents in humanitarian situations can also help to transform gender roles by taking on non-traditional tasks (such as heads of households for girls, or care providers for boys), and working to change discriminatory beliefs and practices around gender in their communities.

Adolescents and disability

Ensuring that adolescents with disabilities have opportunities to participate equally in programmes with other girls and boys is critical in humanitarian situations, where they may face barriers to accessing support, and confront stigma and discrimination. This involves making sure that activities are accessible, safe and appropriate and inclusive for adolescents with and without disabilities, and supporting facilitators and other girls and boys to be respectful, tolerant and supportive of each other.

This section of the Foundation Guidance includes:

1

Glossary

A list of terms and definitions used in the Adolescent Kit

2

Resources

An annotated list of guidance and resources for working with adolescents in humanitarian situations

3

Sources for the Adolescent Kit

A list of the sources that provide the foundation for the Adolescent Kit

There is a lot of information out there that can help you! Use the resources listed in this section of the Foundation Guidance to learn more about supporting adolescents in humanitarian situations – and to build on your work with the Adolescent Kit.