



Adolescent Girls & Safer Livelihoods: Getting It Right

Piloting humanitarian field tools – An action-learning brief

June 2016

Overview

Location: Akobo, Jongeli State, South Sudan

Date: 2016

Objective: To merge and pilot two humanitarian field tools, the *I'm Here Approach* and the Cohort Livelihoods and Risk Analysis (CLARA) Guidance and Tool.

Aim: To implement safe livelihoods programs that are inclusive of the most vulnerable adolescent girls

Partners: Oxfam, Women's Refugee Commission

Donor: USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance

The challenge: When adolescent girls are often isolated within their homes and face unique protection risks, how can humanitarians ensure that livelihoods programs safely reach, support, and engage adolescent girls across the program cycle—from assessment and design to implementation and evaluation?

The opportunity: Combining and piloting two field tools—one designed to identify and engage the most vulnerable adolescent girls, one designed to identify safe, gender-specific livelihood options—to rapidly generate actionable information.

The results: (1) Findings staff can immediately use to inform their programming; (2) Operational learning, inclusive of ways to maximize efficiencies when jointly using both field tools.



Context & Objectives. From March 30 to April 14, 2016, the Women’s Refugee Commission (WRC) and Oxfam partnered to undertake action research in Akobo, Jongeli State, South Sudan. The partnership objectives:

- » To strengthen organizational and staff capacity on designing safe, integrated livelihoods programming that is inclusive of adolescent girls and their caregivers.
- » To integrate and pilot two emergency response tools: the *I’m Here* Approach and the Cohort Livelihoods and Risk Analysis (CLARA) Guidance and Tool.
- » To capture implementation learning and revise tools for future field-testing.

A key challenge facing Oxfam and its partners in Akobo, South Sudan, is ensuring that new livelihood programs safely reach, support, and engage adolescent girls and their families.

Simply implementing an intervention does not guarantee that adolescent girls will know about, safely access, or benefit from livelihood programs. However inconvenient or unsettling, the notion that adolescent girls are not engaged in livelihood activities is not a data-driven contention.

Specific attention to how livelihood programs may expose girls to risks is critical and requires protective design and implementation to ensure their safe inclusion. From the very early days of an emergency, girls must be made visible, gender dynamics must be understood, risks assessed, and measures taken to reduce vulnerability to threats.

The integrated pilot in South Sudan was an opportunity to fuse two tools that, taken together, yield steps that help actors to design safer livelihood programs for adolescent girls and their caregivers. With funding from the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the WRC has developed and field-tested two tools:

1. The *I’m Here* Approach—a series of steps and complementary field tools that can immediately inform how relief operations respond to girls’ needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities, as well as concurrently shape the design of targeted humanitarian programming for adolescent girls.
2. The Cohort Livelihoods and Risk Analysis (CLARA)—guidance and tools that capture risks, including GBV risk associated with specific livelihood activities and the potential risks arising from introducing livelihood interventions in response to crisis.

In collaboration with several operational partners, the WRC had independently piloted the CLARA in two countries¹ and the *I’m Here* Approach in six countries.² In South Sudan, Oxfam believed the integrated pilot could catalyze their commitment to delivering safe and inclusive livelihood programming in an isolated, crisis-affected area.

In Akobo, and in other parts of Jongeli State, limited agricultural production, deteriorating markets, and increasingly frequent natural flood events are contributing to food and nutrition



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insecurity. Inter-tribal violence and warring conflict between the government and the opposition further isolate markets and residents—host and displaced—from basic goods and services.

In this context, **women and adolescent girls face unique pressures and elevated risks.** Their core roles, such as the provision of food, water, and care for children, strain their assets and expose them to risks. Adolescent girls are at relatively higher risk of engaging in risky survival strategies or experiencing exploitation, abuse, or violence because they are young and female. In this context, humanitarian decision-making is a crossroads: design can exacerbate or mitigate protection risks associated with livelihood activities.

The Results from *I'm Here-CLARA* implementation provided Oxfam with the ability to not only collate the adolescent-specific information that is critical to safer livelihoods interventions, but also to ensure that collective humanitarian action in Akobo is inclusive of adolescent girls' unique livelihood needs and protection risks. This top-line, actionable information includes the sex, age, school enrolment status, marital status, accompaniment status, work status, childbearing status, disability, and length of displacement/residence of adolescent girls. Additionally, the CLARA focus group discussions generated self-reported insights into the specific livelihoods that adolescent girls support, the livelihood

risks they experience, and the strategies they use to mitigate risks. *I'm Here/CLARA* implementation also included identifying the geographic area where a concentration of the most vulnerable, displaced adolescent girls live (in relation to available services). Taken together, this information enables Oxfam to make informed decisions that advance response “effectiveness and accountability.”

Four key findings

1. **Adolescent girls are engaged in livelihood activities** that support their families, are exposed to risks, and self-report taking steps to promote their safety. Livelihood activities include performing care-work and contributing to subsistence farming, fishing, and collecting goods for sale or for household use. Girls encounter livelihood-associated risks when undertaking these activities, including gender-based violence. Girls rely on social protection strategies such as traveling in groups and limiting their movement.
2. **Adolescent girls are currently overlooked by humanitarian interventions in Akobo**—especially the concentration of out-of-school girls in Area 2, where most boys attend school. Area 2 is also farthest away from key resources. Results from the GPS service area resource scan found that current girls’ programs convene near, or at, NGO compounds—locations not informed by girls’ input and likely beyond the distance that girls might reasonably travel alone, with peers, or family.
3. **Gender-based difference in school attendance between displaced adolescent girls and boys.** For girls, displacement appears to have an impact on school attendance. For boys, displacement has not had the same effect on school attendance—not even close. Results from the Girl Roster find that of the total number of out-of-school adolescent girls (10-18 years) who live in Area 2, 81.6% are displaced adolescent girls. In the same service area, the Boy Matrix results identified that more than 90% of displaced boys regularly attended school—a statistic that was similar for boys from the host community.³
4. **Risk mitigation is not fully integrated into program design and GBV response is fractured.** Comprehensive measures to mitigate livelihoods-related risks for adolescent girls and their caregivers have yet to be integrated into program design and monitoring frameworks. Further, actors cite that gaps in donor funding have undermined the GBV referral and response systems.

Three key recommendations

1. **Situate safe spaces where the most vulnerable families and out-of-school girls live.** The current location for informal, “safe space” programs in Akobo are not situated with girls in mind, particularly the most vulnerable segments of girls identified during implementation.



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2. **Proactively identify adolescent girls and safely include them in all planned/future livelihood interventions**, which include but are not limited to producer groups, trading associations, income-generating activities, and protection committees. Develop adolescent-specific program components and establish measures to mitigate identified risks.
3. **Strategically share *I'm Here*/CLARA findings with other actors in Akobo**—in particular to revitalize protection referral mechanisms, and in regional and country-level cluster mechanisms, including GBV working groups, the Protection Cluster, and the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster, to advocate for the importance of gender risk analysis and mainstreaming adolescent girls into all humanitarian efforts in order to enhance their protection.

Oxfam—Three **key actions taken**, actions planned

1. **Integrating tools** into future operational assessments and program design, including into a prospective four-year livelihood initiative funded by the U.K. Department for International Development.
2. **Leveraging results to influence location of safe spaces and to make livelihoods interventions more inclusive of adolescent girls**, which includes (a) informing actors who oversee “safe spaces” about the need to work in underserved Area 2, where vulnerable

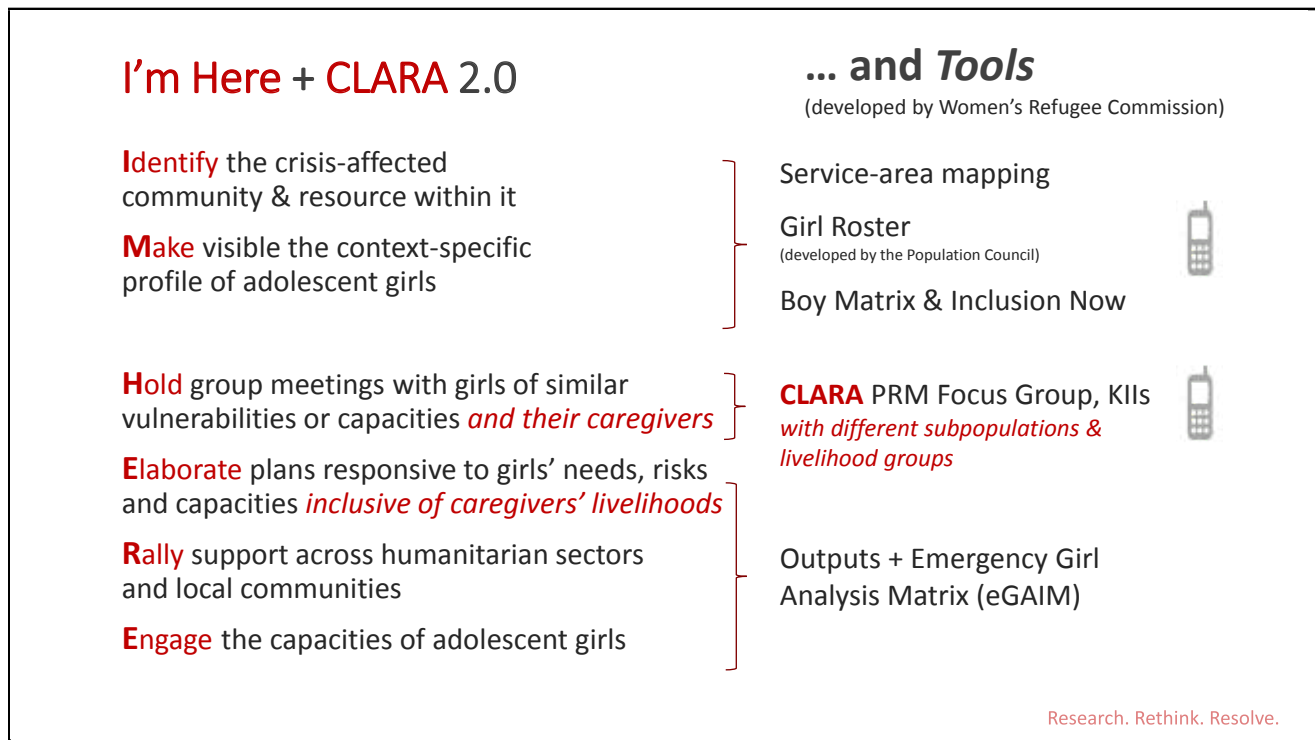
segments of displaced girls live, (b) modifying “standard” livelihoods interventions to be inclusive of adolescent girls’ inputs about their livelihood needs, protection risks, and risk-mitigation strategies, and (c) conducting ongoing monitoring and analysis of adolescent girls’ livelihood needs, risks, and risk-mitigation strategies.

- 3. Strengthening GBV referral mechanisms** in Akobo, which includes convening a workshop where key actors outline their respective roles and responsibilities. Oxfam is also engaging in relevant advocacy at the country level that could help fill resource gaps.

Three **key learnings** for future implementation⁴

Based on pilot results and implementation learning, the implementation team identified several opportunities to consolidate steps and maximize outputs with fewer resources. Key learnings include:

- 1. Revised implementation timeline** for integrated use of CLARA and *I’m Here*—10 days
- 2. Revised number of staff** for integrated implementation—10 staff persons (or enumerators)
- 3. Revised tools** for use in contexts where capacity and time are limited—adapt CLARA focus group questions for use via the Participatory Ranking Methodology outlined in the *I’m Here* Approach





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Four **unforeseen circumstances** that required real-time shifts in implementation

The implementation team encountered several unexpected challenges during pilot implementation in Akobo. Real-time shifts in field implementation were shaped by the following:

- » **The absence of telecommunication services inhibited the team from generating the contact list**, an *I'm Here* output that would have enabled the implementation team to facilitate targeted CLARA focus group discussions and key-informant interviews. Instead the team resorted to convenience sampling in the area where the highest concentration of out-of-school girls lived.
- » **It was not feasible to translate the tools into Nuer** because it is primarily an oral language. In consultation with local staff, WRC and Oxfam discussed and settled on an appropriate oral translation during the training.
- » **The implementation team narrowed the scope of the pilot**, responding to the limited number of female staff and enumerators and adhering to best practices. When discussing sensitive topics like GBV—topics covered in the CLARA only—it is critical that data collectors speak to persons of the same sex.
- » **It was challenging for data collectors to adhere to facilitation guidelines** for standard CLARA focus group discussions and interviews, despite training on the tools and on the

principles of quality and ethical data collection. As a result, some data had to be omitted as it was incomplete or unclear, thereby limiting data collected on livelihood needs, risks, and protection strategies for women, men, and adolescent boys.

The WRC will address or monitor these factors during future *I'm Here*/CLARA implementation.

For more detailed information about the *I'm Here* Approach, including the specific tools and action learning from implementation in six countries, see <http://wrc.ms/ImHere-page>.

For more detailed information about the CLARA guidance, including the latest version of the field tools, see <http://wrc.ms/CLARA-0116>

Resources are intended for use by the humanitarian community. WRC is available to support operational partners in adapting these resources for use in their local contexts (info@wrcommission.org).

Notes

1. Iraq and Nigeria
2. Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Turkey
3. Gender-based differences in school attendance have varied across all sites where WRC has supported its partners with carrying out a gender-synchronized *I'm Here* implementation, inclusive of two profiling tools: the Girl Roster, developed by the Population Council, and the Boy Matrix developed by the Women's Refugee Commission.
4. Based on real-time learning, *I'm Here*-CLARA integration relied on transferring standard CLARA FGD questions into the focus group methodology that is part of *I'm Here* implementation. Additionally, the location of CLARA focus group discussions and key informant interviews took place within an area where the highest concentration of vulnerable adolescent girls lived.

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