The IRC was one of the first humanitarian organisations to launch programs for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in refugee settings and other conflict affected communities. Today, we implement GBV programs in over 20 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Haiti.

Adolescent Girls in Humanitarian Settings
Violence is part of the lives of many adolescent girls around the world, much of which is known to be perpetrated by partners or family members. At the same time, initiatives and programs in humanitarian contexts fail to specifically target or address the generalised violence that adolescent girls experience. IRC’s focus on adolescent girls is based not only on concern about the experiences of this group around the world. It also stems from recognition of their potential and how they can be part of larger change in their own communities if greater investments are made.

COMPASS
Over three years (2014-2017), the IRC is developing, implementing and evaluating the COMPASS programme (Creating Opportunities through Mentoring, Parental Involvement and Safe Spaces). This programme identifies, acknowledges, and responds to the vulnerabilities of adolescent girls by establishing a foundation for their healthy transition into adulthood in humanitarian crises. It specifically seeks to improve the prevention and response to violence against adolescent girls in humanitarian settings. This includes strategies such as: safe space programming including life skills training and asset building; mentoring activities with the support of older adolescent girls; and engagement with service providers and caregivers to better prioritise and meet the needs of adolescent girls.

COMPASS is a partnership with and supported by the UK Government’s Department for International Development (DFID).

Research on Adolescent Girls
Although we know that violence against adolescent girls is a problem and a serious human rights, public health, and security issue, the humanitarian community is still trying to understand what works to protect adolescent girls from violence and to fill the existing gaps in rigorous evidence. This is why the IRC is undertaking a robust research agenda under this programme to appropriately define effective and supportive responses for adolescent girls in humanitarian contexts where they are largely invisible and under-served. The research objectives are to understand the feasibility, acceptability and effectiveness of the COMPASS programming for adolescent girls in humanitarian settings and will include two cluster-randomised controlled trials in refugee camps in Ethiopia and in conflict-affected communities in eastern DRC, and a mixed-methods design in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan.

The main academic partner for the research and evaluation of COMPASS is the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health.

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