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Trauma-Sensitive Programming

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN POST-DISASTER AND
CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS

CRS' COMMITMENT TO A TRAUMA-SENSITIVE APPROACH WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Trauma and traumatic stress impact development outcomes such as education, employment and well-being, and can significantly hinder efforts made toward achieving these outcomes. If not addressed, trauma and traumatic stress can have long-lasting negative impacts on people, their communities and even future generations. However, there has been increasing understanding of and appreciation for the importance of applying trauma-sensitive approaches to development work at both the individual and community levels.

In many parts of the world, a majority of young people suffer from trauma caused by armed conflict, loss, disaster, violence, exploitation or neglect. If the trauma is very severe or repeated, the impact is greater. Despite these challenges, when young people feel they can safely relay their experiences, share their feelings, and get the support they need, they can often recover. CRS' commitment

to a trauma-sensitive approach with young people integrates a broad understanding of both the causes and symptoms of trauma, and is rooted in the belief that this awareness is a prerequisite for young people to achieve personal and professional success and social empowerment.

CRS TRAUMA-SENSITIVE APPROACH

CRS interventions span the four foundational levels of the **mental health and psychosocial support pyramid** for an integrated and holistic response to trauma-related needs. **Basic services and security** are embodied in our commitment to **safe and dignified programming**: ensuring safety, maximizing access for the most poor and vulnerable, and avoiding harmful actions that can cause retraumatization. **Family and community supports** are enhanced by highlighting key protection safeguards. **Focused, non-specialized supports** include offering culturally sensitive psychosocial and resilience-strengthening activities, such as those listed below. More **specialized services** are provided



Source: mhpsmsp.org

to the smaller percentage of participants who require them through referrals to available primary care and mental health professionals.

In post-conflict settings, CRS’ trauma-sensitive programming also corresponds to the “binding” aspect of our three part approach to social cohesion and peacebuilding: **binding, bonding** and **bridging**. The underlying premise is that you cannot build peace or achieve social cohesion in your family, community or the larger society until you first feel internal balance and peace with yourself. And that peace—that internal balance—can only come when you acknowledge, share and begin coping with the hardships and trauma you have experienced in the past.

Key CRS Resources to Strengthen Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Among Young People

TITLE	DESCRIPTION
Singing to the Lions: A Guide to Overcoming Fear and Violence in Our Lives	A three-day facilitated workshop with culturally adaptable supplemental activities for children and teens. Soon to be available in 10 languages.
Rising From Resilient Roots: Peacebuilding, Migration, Disaster Relief, Youth Engagement and Recovery from Violence	An abbreviated one-day workshop derived largely from Singing to the Lions, designed for specifically for young people and adults. Available in five languages.
Introduction to Trauma Awareness and Resilience: Including a Supplemental Leaders’ Workshop and Staff Support Session	A training manual for South Sudan that is applicable cross-culturally, including a supplemental leadership workshop and Tree of Life team-building activity.
Journey of Life: Community Workshops to Support Children and Young People, Prevent Human Trafficking, and Provide Protection from Abuse	Originally designed to help communities plan and implement prevention and support activities for HIV-affected children, but equally applicable as a methodology when focusing on other target groups, including young people and people with disabilities.



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PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

APIMA: Action for the Protection and Integration of Migrants in West Africa

APIMA, a three-year project, supported young migrants in five West African countries during various stages of their migration journeys. CRS’ trauma-sensitive workshop, **Rising From Resilient Roots**, served as the main entry point for project participants. Young people then went on to participate in life and employability skills training. During the project’s second year, CRS trained Caritas and community resource people, including clergy, to reinforce participants’ coping ability, reduce their risk of additional

exploitation and abuse, and identify new economic opportunities. Among other findings, the project’s final evaluation noted that nearly 36% of APIMA participants who were surveyed reported feeling **more hopeful** and more motivated about their future.



For more information on this program and CRS, please scan this code

