

# SELF-RELIANCE INDEX

Version 2.0

Cycle 2

Learning Report



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# INTRODUCTION

The [Self-Reliance Index \(SRI\)](#) is the first global tool for measuring the progress of refugee households toward self-reliance.

The SRI supports practitioners in designing and providing effective services and can be used to target populations for assistance, highlight service gaps, and inform funding priorities. Use of the SRI is expected to help build an evidence base of effective self-reliance programming approaches and allow for comparative global analysis. It may also promote collaboration among service providers to ensure that the holistic needs of refugee households are addressed. As of December 2021, 23 agencies were applying the SRI in 17 countries globally.

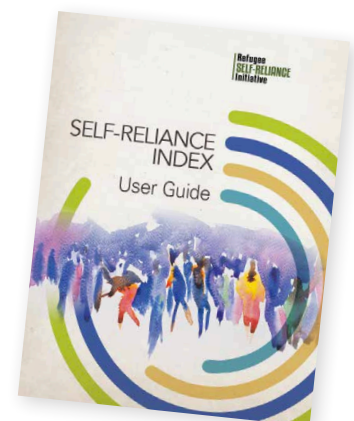
The SRI was developed through a three-year multi-stakeholder process involving over 25 contributing partners -- NGOs, UNHCR, research entities, foundations, and government agencies.

The process included a review of existing tools, partner workshops, key informant interviews and focus group discussions with refugee NGO clients in Kenya and Jordan. From 2018, the SRI development team, led by RefugePoint and the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), with the guidance of academic advisors Drs. Lindsay Stark and Ilana Seff, adjusted the SRI tool indicators for improved understanding through an iterative learning process with Asylum Access/Mexico, Danish Refugee Council and Mercy Corps/Jordan, and RefugePoint/Kenya. Based on learning from observation and testing, final adjustments were made prior to the soft launch of the SRI 1.0. The SRI 2.0 was created and officially launched in May 2020.

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The SRI supports practitioners in designing and providing effective services and can be used to target populations for assistance, highlight service gaps, and inform funding priorities.

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Alongside the launch of SRI 2.0, a new cycle of learning on the SRI (“Cycle 2”) commenced and a learning agenda for the cycle was developed (see Appendix 1 for the Cycle 2 learning agenda). This new learning agenda was designed to monitor and gain insights into the SRI through its use in new contexts and with a wider range of displaced and hosting populations as compared to the pilot phase. Continued reliability and validity testing of the tool remained central objectives, alongside observing use of the scoring rubric. Specific domains that had been refined during the pilot phase were closely monitored as the SRI was rolled out in new contexts. Additionally, as the SRI was designed to be easy to use, Cycle 2

learning focused on the integration of and training on the tool within existing operations. Finally, several additional insights were gleaned throughout the learning cycle, separate from those learning objectives identified prior to the launch of the SRI 2.0. This report describes what was learned about the SRI as the tool was rolled out between May 2020 and December 2021, both as learnings related to the objectives for Cycle 2 as well as additional learnings that emerged throughout the cycle, including: tool validity, scoring, reliability, domain review, perceptions and integration of the tool, training, interview assessments, and translation.

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**The Cycle 2 learning agenda** was designed to monitor and gain insights into the SRI through its use in new contexts and with a wider range of displaced and hosting populations as compared to the pilot phase.

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## DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

Findings presented in this report were derived from several data sources generated throughout the learning cycle. Data sources include known group comparisons, data collected by partner organizations, key informant interviews, observations, and training reports.

### Known group comparisons

There are a number of ways to assess a tool's validity, that is, the extent to which the instrument produces an accurate measure of the construct of interest. In the case of the SRI, tests of validity can be used to ensure that the SRI scores produced by the tool provide a true reflection of the measured households' levels of self-reliance. Often, a tool's validity will be assessed by administering both the tool and another gold standard or previously validated measure of the same construct to the same group of individuals; highly correlated scores between the two measures suggest greater validity of the tool. However, given that there is no gold standard (or widely used) measure of self-reliance with which to assess concurrent validity

of the SRI, the RSRI team opted to conduct known group comparisons as a means of examining validity.

Known group comparison tests represent a process whereby a tool is deployed with individuals (or households, etc.) who are externally identified as falling into different levels of the construct of interest in order to examine whether scores differ across the different levels. For the SRI, the RSRI team opted to compare pre-identified "low" and "high" self-reliant households, asserting that a valid index would produce overall scores that were statistically significantly different between the two groups.

The RSRI team partnered with HIAS Colombia to carry out this exercise. Prior to the team's trip to Colombia, HIAS staff were asked to identify approximately 20 households, each, that they agreed to be low and high

self-reliant. The RSRI team provided guidance on how to select high self-reliant households, noting that such households would likely meet many of the following criteria: live in housing that is secure and meets the needs of the household, do not face food security issues, have all children of school-age attending school, feel generally safe, have at least one member of the household who has a consistent job, don't currently have debt, don't currently receive formal assistance, and have at least a small social network. Given that HIAS primarily engages with low self-reliant households, they worked with other organizations and searched outside of their client database to find households meeting these criteria. For low self-reliant households, HIAS Colombia was encouraged to select those that have a housing situation that is not secure and doesn't meet all of the family's needs, face issues of food security, cannot always access needed healthcare, do not have any members with stable employment, have had to take on debt or sell their assets to meet their basic needs, have recently received formal assistance, and do not have strong social networks.

In order to rule out the possibility that poor results from a known group comparison are due to poor administration of the tool, as opposed to poor validity of the tool, it is critical that those administering the tool have a depth of understanding for and experience using the instrument. As such the RSRI team provided the HIAS Colombia team with a comprehensive and hands-on training. Initially, an RSRI team member conducted a

1-day virtual training with relevant HIAS staff to review the SRI basics. This virtual training was followed by a 1-day in-person training in Barranquilla in order to go into greater depth on key topics and allow staff to ask questions. This was followed by three days of RSRI team members observing enumerators administering the tool with low- and high-income HIAS clients in order to provide detailed feedback on question phrasing, rapport development, probing, and other interview strategies.

The HIAS Colombia team conducted 45 SRI interviews over the course of the next month, including 23 and 22 low and high self-reliant households, respectively. Enumerators were blind to the households' classifications at the time of each interview in order to minimize interviewing bias. The results of this exercise are presented below in the section on Key Findings and Recommendations.

## Partner data

Over the course of Cycle 2, the RSRI team provided support to several partner organizations to roll-out, apply, and respond to data collected using the SRI. In addition to training data collectors and fielding questions during administration of the tool, the team conducted descriptive analyses of collected SRI data in order to provide partners with feedback on their clients. For each dataset received (please see Table 1 for a summary of datasets), the RSRI team generated summary statistics for the overall SRI score, domain-specific scores, and basic household demographic characteristics.



The RSRI team also assessed whether the SRI overall and domain scores were associated with other variables available in the data. Although some of the available variables varied by site (for example, some partners chose to exclude certain components of Section 1 of the tool, or, alternatively, added additional questions on program type, location, and so on), scores' associations with the dependency ratio, gender of the respondent, gender of the enumerator, and length of time in host country were examined for each dataset. One partner also administered the Food Consumption Score and Coping Strategies Index alongside the SRI, allowing the RSRI team to examine correlations between these measures as a test of concurrent validity; as these constructs are theoretically and empirically linked, observed correlations between these two scores and the SRI signals greater validity.

Additional analyses were conducted for partners who collected SRI data for the same households at multiple points in time. Changes in scores between points of data collection were summarized. The RSRI team also examined whether wave 1 interviewer predictions for a household's well-being in the future were correlated with actual SRI scores in the next wave of data collection.

Finally, in order to review data quality and interdomain reliability, the RSRI team conducted a series of "consistency checks" to confirm agreement in responses between certain domains. For example, there should be agreement in a household's response for Domain 7 (employment) and Domain 8 (financial resources), in which

'employment' is included as a possible financial resource. The corresponding check involves ensuring that two conditions are met: (i) a household that indicates having employment in the last 3 months should also have 'employment' selected as a financial resource in the last 3 months, and (ii) a household that reports not having any employed members in the last 3 months should not list 'employment' as a financial resource in the last 3 months. In total, four consistency checks were conducted for each dataset: (1) Agreement between a household's response for Domain 7 (employment) and the inclusion of 'employment' as a financial resource in Domain 8 (financial resources); (2) Agreement between a household's response for Domain 10 (debt) and the inclusion of 'debt' as a financial resource in Domain 8 (financial resources); (3) Agreement between a household's response for Domain 9 (assistance) and the inclusion of 'assistance' as a financial resource in Domain 8 (financial resources); (4) Agreement between the number of school-aged children listed as part of the household in Section 1 and a household's response for domain 3 (Education) (specifically, households who report not having any school-aged children should have a response of 'not applicable' for Domain 3 and, conversely, households who have school age children should not have a response of 'not applicable' for Domain 3).

All findings were shared back with partner organizations through a brief report and phone call, when requested (please see Appendix 9 for an example of a findings report).

Table 1. SRI partner data analyzed as part of the Cycle 2 Learning process

Organization	Country	Purpose	Round	# of HHs
Bethany Christian Services	Colombia	MHPSS & Basic Needs Support	1	28
			2	25
			3	25
Caritas Switzerland	Syria	Cash & Livelihoods	1	635
			2	583
			3	155
Caritas Czech Republic	Zambia	Impact Evaluation of self-reliance Interventions	1	200
Danish Refugee Council	Iraq	MEAL Program Monitoring and Evaluation	1	290
	Jordan	MEAL Program Monitoring and Evaluation	1	60
			2	60
	Lebanon	MEAL Program Monitoring and Evaluation	1	64
			2	192
	South Sudan	MEAL Program Monitoring and Evaluation	1	419
HIAS	Guyana	Socio-Economic Support Program	1	53
			2	37
	Aruba	Impact Measurement, Holistic Livelihoods Project (Socio-Economic Support Program)	1	60
			2	36
			3	36
	Colombia	SRI Known User Group Testing	1	75

Organization	Country	Purpose	Round	# of HHs
Norwegian Refugee Council	Somalia	Impact Evaluation of Emergency Shelter Kits	1	153
		Impact Evaluation Inclusive Local and Economic Development	1	393
		Impact Evaluation Integrated Program of Permanent Shelters	1	81
RefugePoint	Kenya	Holistic Refugee Support Program	1	73
		Holistic Refugee Support Program	2	350
Sitti Social Enterprise	Jordan	Holistic Social Enterprise Support	1	33
		Holistic Social Enterprise Support	2	225

## Key informant interviews

In order to develop a deeper understanding of partner organizations' experiences with the SRI tool, the RSRI team conducted a set of key informant interviews (KIIs). A KII is a qualitative research tool whereby an individual with a particular expertise or experience is interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. The KII guide was developed by the RSRI team, with a focus on producing insights into several key areas of interest pre-identified by the RSRI team. Topics covered in the KII guide included users' overall experience with the SRI, reflections on the training and platform, challenges in administering the tool, and whether and how the SRI has changed the way partners interact with clients, among others (please see Appendix 2 for the full KII guide).

Key informants were selected from partner organizations that have used the SRI such that the sample reflected a range of regions, organizations, and participant roles. Organizations selected for inclusion were sent a recruitment email, inviting members of their team to participate in a KII. Eligible participants were required to have engaged with the SRI in some way, either through direct administration, management of SRI administration, or management of a program being evaluated with the SRI. In total, thirteen key informants gave consent to participate in an interview, with the sample including agencies working in Colombia, South Sudan, Lebanon, and Somalia (see Table 2). Given COVID-19-related travel restrictions, all KIIs were conducted online from July – September 2021, using the Zoom video platform. All participants also provided consent to have the interview audio recorded for analytical purposes.

**Table 2. Key informant interview sample**

Country	Organization	# of KIIs
Colombia	HIAS	2
South Sudan	DRC	3
Lebanon	DRC	4
Colombia	Bethany Christian Services	3
Somalia	NRC	1

Following interview transcription, the RSRI team analyzed the data using a deductive approach. The interview guide was developed such that it would generate information on predetermined areas of interest by the broader SRI team, such as experiences with the training and the interviewer assessment section of the tool; the transcripts were therefore reviewed and analyzed based on these topics. Additionally, data were examined to extract all domain-specific comments in order to identify trends.

## Observations and informal feedback

During the site visit to Colombia for the known group comparisons (see above), three RSRI team members conducted ongoing consultations with HIAS economic inclusion staff members in Barranquilla, Colombia. The trip allowed for in-person SRI training and

practice, interview observations and feedback along with staff discussions regarding their use of the SRI. Two HIAS staff members from Ecuador, who engage with country offices throughout the Latin American region, also joined the site visit. As such, informal discussions offered HIAS SRI users a chance to share reactions and suggestions for the tool in the Latin American region.

## Training reports

Following completion of SRI training, all participants are invited to respond to a brief survey capturing feedback from the training which includes information on whether or not the core objectives of the training have been accomplished. Feedback is used by the RSRI team to track whether or not trainees are learning the necessary information in training to subsequently apply the SRI correctly in the field as well as to modify the format of training itself.



## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



### Cycle 2 Learning Objectives: What we have learned

#### Tool validity

During the Cycle 2 learning process validity has been assessed in two ways: with the known group comparison tests conducted in Colombia and by examining the level of correlation between SRI scores and the Food Consumption Scores and Coping Strategies Index scores in Syria. Table 3 presents the findings for the known group comparisons tests in Colombia. Substantial and statistically significant differences in SRI scores between low and high self-reliant households were observed, with low and high self-reliant groups

averaging scores of 2.76 and 4.55, respectively (see Figure 1 for overall scores for all participants). Additionally, statistically significant differences were observed between groups for all domains excluding Domains 1b (Rent) and 5 (Health Status). Given that we don't expect all domains to improve in unison, the lack of statistical difference between groups for these two domains is not a concern. These findings demonstrate that the SRI is responsive to identified low and high self-reliant households in Colombia, providing evidence for the tool's validity.

**Table 3. Known group comparisons in Colombia: Domain and overall scores, by group**

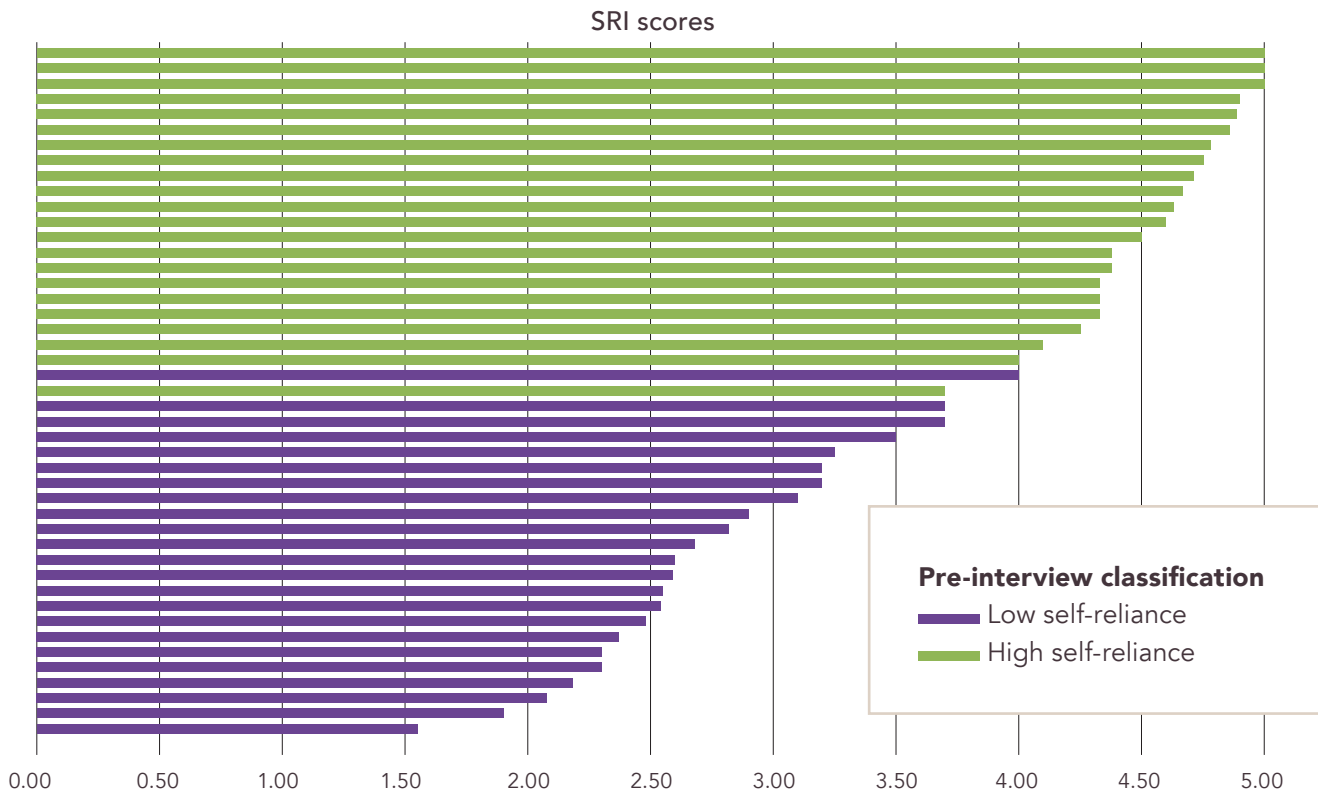
	Low	High	Statistically different*
D1a- Housing	3.3	4.95	Yes
D1b- Rent	4.71	4.85	
D2- Food	3.74	5.00	Yes
D3- Education	2.29	3.00	Yes
D4- Healthcare	3.48	5.00	Yes
D5- Health status	2.78	3.00	



	Low	High	Statistically different*
D6- Safety	3.87	4.82	Yes
D7- Employment	3.35	4.91	Yes
D8- Financial resources	3.00	4.09	Yes
D9- Assistance	3.83	5.00	Yes
D10- Debt	3.04	4.14	Yes
D11- Savings	1.61	3.68	Yes
D12- Social capital	3.35	4.50	Yes
<b>SRI score</b>	<b>2.76</b>	<b>4.55</b>	<b>Yes</b>

\* Low and high self-reliant scores were compared using t-tests. Differences are significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

Figure 1. Known group comparisons in Colombia: Overall scores by group



As noted in the Methods section, as one partner, Caritas Switzerland in Syria, collected data for the Food Consumption Score and Coping Strategies Index alongside the SRI, the RSRI team was able to examine concurrent validity (that is, the extent to which a previously validated and related measure agrees with the new measure – in this case, the SRI). Using Ordinary Least Squared regression

models, bivariate analysis found the food consumption score to be positively correlated with the SRI (see Table 4). Additionally, the two more severe subscales of the Coping Strategies Index (responding to an Emergency and responding to a Crisis) were negatively correlated with the SRI. These associations are observed in the expected direction, further strengthening the evidence for the SRI's validity.

**Table 4. Bivariate associations with SRI in Syria**

	<b>B [95% CI]</b>
Food consumption score (higher is better)	0.007*** [0.004,0.010]
Coping strategies index	
Emergency	-0.241*** [-0.376,-0.106]
Crisis	-0.076** [-0.130,-0.022]
Stress	-0.036 [-0.076,0.0043]

Note: Separate Ordinary Least Square regressions were modeled for each covariate. Models control for round of data collection. Beta coefficients are statistically significant at \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; and \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . Sample size = 1,371 households.

## Scoring

The scoring rubric is performing as expected and therefore there is no need for modification. The RSRI team will continue to monitor scoring during the next cycle of learning.

## Validity

**Key takeaways:** The SRI proved to be a reliable tool in at least one setting.

**Next steps:** The RSRI team will aim to conduct similar known group comparison tests in two or more additional settings. The RSRI team will take advantage of opportunities as they arise to continue testing concurrent validity alongside other tools.



## Reliability

Interdomain reliability – that is, the extent to which responses between relevant domains are in agreement – was found to be low for the first few datasets reviewed as part of Cycle 2 Learning. For example, in one of the datasets received earlier on in Cycle 2, 34% of households reported in Domain 7 (Employment) that at least one household member had paid employment within the last three months, but did not list employment as a financial resource for the last 3 months in Domain 8 (Financial Resources). Conversely, 7% of households reported having no paid employment in Domain 7, but listed employment as a financial resource in Domain 8. Similar inconsistencies were observed for the other interdomain reliability checks. After these inconsistencies were observed in the first few tranches of data received, the team opted to modify the form used for mobile data collection such that a pop-up box would appear in real time during an interview notifying the enumerator of an inconsistency. This addition has substantially reduced the number of inconsistencies observed.

## Domain review and refinement

**Safety.** Through key informant interviews, conversations with organizational partners when reviewing the basic findings for their sites, and interview observations in Colombia, it became clear that the intended meaning and response options for Domain 6 (safety) are not always clearly understood by both enumerators and respondents. The conceptualization



## Reliability

**Key takeaways:** Tool modifications have been made to improve interdomain reliability.

**Next steps:** The RSRI team will add a feature in the data collection platforms whereby an enumerator cannot move to the next question until an interdomain discrepancy has been resolved.

and operationalization of the safety domain has proved the most challenging since the early days of tool development, and it is clear that further work is needed to refine the domain. Importantly, key informants shared that both respondents and enumerators were often confused about the types of safety the question was referring to (e.g., conflict-related safety, general neighborhood violence, fear related to documentation, discrimination or harassment related to nationality or refugee status, fear related to COVID-19, and so on). Further, the question itself measures two conditions: (i) whether or not household members feel safe and (ii) the extent to which feelings of unsafety compromise opportunity-seeking behaviors. This feedback has prompted the RSRI team to recognize that by formulating the question in this way, an inherent value judgment is made whereby households that do not allow safety concerns to interfere with seeking opportunities are considered to have positive self-reliance. In fact, seeking opportunities in the face of safety concerns may put families at greater risk. Discussions with SRI users have highlighted instances in which a respondent does not feel safe to pursue

opportunities (like traveling to work, for example), but does not have the option of forgoing those opportunities. In such situations, the appropriate response option is not clear to enumerators.

**Debt.** Two key questions related to Domain 10 (Debt) were pre-identified for the Cycle 2 Learning Agenda. First, in order to assess whether components of Domains 1b (Rent) and 10 (Debt) were redundant, partner data were examined to assess the extent of overlap in late rent (Domain 1b-Rent) and debt for housing/utilities (Domain 10- Debt). Findings revealed that overlap occurred in approximately 50%-60% of cases, highlighting that unique information can still be gleaned from each domain for up to 50% of households. For example, cases were observed whereby households had been late in paying rent, but were not obligated to make the payment at a later date, for whatever reason. Conversely, there were cases where a household had taken on debt specifically such that they could pay their rent in a timely manner. Second, the Cycle 2 Learning Agenda identified the need to review how organizations were utilizing the 'investment' option in Domain 10. This response option is



## Domain refinement

**Next steps:** In order to further refine Domain 6 ("Safety") the RSRI team will consider revisiting and defining the purpose of the domain as well as piloting various options, which may involve rephrasing of the question, rephrasing/ changing the response options, or using more than one question to capture the household's domain score.

currently not included in the domain score as it is often a debt specifically aimed to improve self-reliance by investing in an enterprise or other potential income source. Partner organizations shared that this approach worked for them and that leaving the response option in the Domain allows them to identify households who have made such investments. Finally, key informants from Colombia and South Sudan shared that enumerators were sometimes uncomfortable asking about Domain 10 (debt domain), as debt was a sensitive topic in some contexts.

Lastly, no additional domains were consistently identified by key informants as those that needed to be added to the SRI.



## Cycle 2 Learning Objectives on support: SRI as a workable tool

### Perceptions and Integration

Appreciation for the SRI was expressed by all key informants, who noted that the tool provided them with “new information and a new perspective,” as well as allowing them to identify “gaps in services.” Key informants explained that the language used in the tool was clear, concise, and not too technical, and that the open-ended comment boxes simultaneously allowed for a deeper understanding of a household’s situation. Although a few respondents identified additional domains that could be usefully added to the SRI in their context (such as transportation in South Sudan and Lebanon, and mental health and discrimination in Colombia), the vast majority of key informants were happy with the domains and reflected on the holistic nature of the tool. As explained by one key informant:

“[The] SRI is a very good tool for measuring the livelihood of beneficiaries. It is not just a set of questionnaires but a combination of questions, discussions and observations to gain all information and knowledge

about households including food, housing, education, healthcare and employment.”

Key informants shared several other SRI characteristics they appreciated as well. First, participants spoke to the conversational nature of the tool, which they felt allowed the client to feel safe opening up because they felt “heard and cared for.” Second, several participants applauded the automatic scoring system, noting that this automation made using the tool much easier. As articulated by one key informant:

“I just like the way it is precise and technical in terms of the code, the domains and of course, the calculations. I have just loved how the calculations are already inputted in the tool, the only thing that you need to do is just collect the data, download it and have just a little knowledge for you to do analysis. And there you have it.”



### Tool perceptions and integration

**Key takeaways:** Partner organizations expressed appreciation for the tool and automatic scoring system, and shared that the tool allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of their clients’ lives and facilitated advocacy and funding requests.



The ease of scoring was critical for partner organizations using the SRI to examine changes in their clients' self-reliance, but interviews revealed that the SRI score served other purposes as well. The HIAS Colombia team, for example, shared that a household's SRI score was used to determine eligibility for self-reliance programming; SRI scores below a certain threshold were considered to be in acute need and not yet ready for self-reliance programming and scores above a pre-determined maximum were already considered to be self-reliant. In addition, a key informant in South Sudan shared how findings from his team's administration of the SRI were particularly helpful in increasing advocacy for livelihoods programming; the informant noted that the SRI provides his team with more comprehensive information on households' situations than do other assessments. As a result of this advocacy, his organization was able to "increase [their] portfolio", by securing funding for workforce development trainings and income-generating activities for women.

Finally, although many key informants felt the tool was concise and the appropriate length, key informants from Lebanon expressed frustration at the length of the tool. Enumerators in this setting, who administered the tool over the phone, shared that the SRI often took 45-50 minutes to administer, and respondents seemed agitated toward the end of the interview. This

frustration was particularly problematic for follow-up interviews; key informants from this setting noted that respondents were less likely to agree to participate in an endline interview.

One final area of learning relates to the relative ease partners have integrating the SRI within other M&E tools. In numerous cases, rather than apply the SRI as a stand-alone assessment, partners opted instead to embed the SRI (sometimes only Part 2, The Scored Domains) in other tools being used for routine M&E. This includes numerous partners, for example, that have detailed reporting requirements related to the Graduation Approach (GA) which the SRI alone would be insufficient to monitor. Partners responded positively to the efficiency gains made when integration of the SRI within other M&E tools was carried out and indicated as well the benefits of getting a sense of household self-reliance using the SRI while completing other M&E and/or reporting requirements. Given that the SRI does not rise to the level of sector-specific detail that most operational agencies require to report on project progress, this ease of integration is particularly important.

### Training

As part of the global roll-out of the SRI, training was provided to 42 partners interested in using the tool. (See Appendix 3).

The vast majority of training on the SRI undertaken during the Cycle 2 Learning Process was conducted remotely, typically consisting of two three-hour sessions that covered the following core topics and activities:

- Background to the SRI
- Detailed review of the four main sections of the SRI
- Case studies and other practice activities
- SRI User Guide Review
- Best Practices Review
- Data Collection Platform Review (e.g. Kobo, ODK)
- Q&A and Open Discussion

One of the lessons learned during Cycle 2 was the importance of having a clearly identified process from the time a partner identifies they would like to use the SRI through to training and implementation. The RSRI team worked to refine this process, and have outlined the process for engagement (See Appendix 4). Specific to training, the process map highlights a) advanced preparation / review of SRI materials, b) engagement ahead of the start of training with partners to facilitate contextualization of materials, c) setting of clear expectations (e.g. assignment completion, active participation) and d) collaborative development of follow-up plans and options for extended support.

A second lesson learned during Cycle 2 was an identified shortcoming of the remote training. When looking at the differences between the remote model

and the in-persons training model, the reduced ability of the trainer to spend time observing interviewers practicing using the SRI ahead of deployment was a clear limitation. In the remote model, there are not currently the same opportunities for the trainers to observe interviewers and correct errors in applying the tool or to build critical skills around probing. Rather, the onus for practicing is put on field teams and agency focal points, who have limited time post-training to provide support in a consistent way. One of the most common pieces of feedback from trainees was that additional practice, with opportunities to ask questions or receive feedback, would be useful to pull all the information together and to connect the training to the actual field application. The time crunch in the remote training model makes it difficult to both share the essential information with field teams and still have needed space for observed practice, testing, follow-up, and clarification of issues.

While some of the limitations of the remote training have been highlighted above, feedback from field teams trained to use the SRI has highlighted the high levels of satisfaction overall with the remote training model. Some highlights from the training feedback include the following:

- In response to the statement, "I feel that the training prepared me to use the SRI correctly in the field," 59% of participants responded "Strongly Agree" and 38% responded "Agree".

- 69% of participants “strongly agreed” that they understood the term “self-reliance” post-training, and 31% “agreed”.
- When asked about the individual parts of the SRI (“I understand the purpose of X section of the SRI and how to use it”), the vast majority of respondents responded either “strongly agree” or “agree” when providing feedback.
- Importantly, results were mixed when respondents were asked to respond to the statement, “There are areas of the SRI that I do not understand well and will need additional support to understand.” 13.8% of the respondents “strongly agreed”, 22.4% of respondents “agreed”, 58.6 % of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

While these metrics demonstrate some encouraging points of self-assessment, the RSRI team notes that best practice for assessing quality and effectiveness of training is on observed application and other more objective measures. As the team continues to expand training options (see below), there is a recognized need to increase the rigor of measurement around training structure and associated data quality.

The SRI team partnered with an external organization, Find Solutions, from July-October 2021 to create a series of online training modules. There are now three possible training options for interested partners: (1) the online training modules (English and Spanish), (2) a virtual training, or (3) an in-person training with time built in to observe and provide feedback for

enumerators administering the tool, along with users who may choose to implement the SRI following the available User Guide only. With limited time and financial resources, it is important to build effective efficiencies for these different training models to deliver the best user outcomes.



## Training:

**Next steps:** The RSRI team will aim to more formally test the effectiveness of training options 1, 2, and 3, along with participants who use the User Guide only, while also experimenting with mixed training methods that allow for practice, observation and feedback.

**Next steps:** The RSRI team will continue to build out the remote training to find creative solutions to support further practice and observation beyond the two-day training. Sharing audio recordings or allowing trainers to observe one-on-one practice sessions may help fill current gaps.

## Exploring gender and self-reliance

Prior to the start of Cycle 2, the RSRI team set a learning objective to further explore how gender contributes to/interacts with self-reliance. Using partner data, the team sought to assess whether the gender of the respondent or the enumerator was correlated with a household’s SRI score. The vast majority of partners typically used either (i) enumerators of the same gender or (ii) only a few enumerators. In both cases, there was not enough variation

in enumerators to assess the relationship between gender of enumerator and SRI score. Similar challenges presented when looking at the effect of the respondent's gender in some datasets; in other datasets, no difference in scores were observed by gender. The RSRI team believes that the relationship between gender and self-reliance would be best explored through the addition of a few gender-related questions in some sites, with partners who are particularly interested in this topic.

## Additional findings and reflections outside the Cycle 2 Learning Objectives

### Interviewer assessments

Part 4a of the SRI asks interviewer to reflect on the household they have just interviewed and to indicate where they feel the household falls on a scale of 1 to 5, where '1' represents households that are the worst off and a '5' reflects households that are the best off. The interviewer is then prompted to share where they believe the household will fall in this scale in six months. For the few sites with multiple rounds of data for the same households, the RSRI team was able to explore the following question: Are interviewer predictions of a household's wellbeing in six months correlated with the household's self-reliance at the subsequent administration of the tool (i.e., does the interviewer's assessment offer any predictive power of how the household may fare in the future)? Analysis of

these datasets did not find correlations between the two measures, suggesting that the interviewer assessment does not necessarily offer any useful or valid information about the household.



### Interviewer Assessments

**Key takeaways:** Analysis of partner datasets revealed that the interviewer assessments offered little to no predictive power." Add "Next Steps: The RSRI team will remove Part 4A of the interviewer assessment from the SRI.

**Next steps:** Analysis of partner datasets revealed that the interviewer assessments offered little to no predictive power. As such, the RSRI team recommends removing the interviewer assessment from the SRI.

### Domain 11: Savings

Domain 11 (Savings) defines savings to include not only money but also assets the household owns and considers sellable. Although the guiding question includes language on sellable assets, field observations revealed that enumerators often forgot or felt uncomfortable to probe on this element when asking about savings. As a next step, we will continue to highlight in training settings the importance of this domain despite occasional sensitivities, and work with trainees to explore options for wording of the domain and how the question is asked to soften potential sensitivities.

## Translation considerations

The HIAS regional and Colombia teams indicated that while the Spanish translation of the SRI was generally accurate, country-specific translations would strengthen comprehension of the tool in different contexts. The HIAS regional team committed to providing country-specific translations to their teams to ensure the correct nuance of each domain is captured. However, one question needed immediate attention. Responses to Domain 7 (employment) note “regular” and “irregular” employment. These terms have specific legal connotations in Spanish. Based on feedback, the phrasing of responses to Domain 7 (“Employment”) were revised in Spanish to clarify the focus on consistent or occasional work.

## Understanding how assistance relates to self-reliance

Self-reliance is a multidimensional concept, but there is perhaps one condition that is more critical than others: to be truly self-reliant, a household must be able to meet its basic needs without assistance. While this condition is obvious upon reflection, it sometimes gets lost in discussions about “approaching” self-reliance, self-reliance programming, and the ways in which partner organizations are using the tool. In fact, the relationship between assistance and self-reliance may engender a certain

paradox for partners: as long as they are using the SRI on current clients receiving assistance, those clients will never reach a score of ‘5’ on the SRI.

It is important that partner organizations are reminded from the onset that, to accurately assess the impact of self-reliance programming among their beneficiaries, it is important to also administer the SRI after assistance to those households has ended. In other words, they must wait to determine whether their programming has resulted in sustained improvements in household well-being (i.e., self-reliance).



**Key takeaways:** Partners using the SRI to evaluate their programming must aim to administer the tool following completion of programming (and, ideally, several months out from program completion).





## NEXT STEPS: CYCLE 3 LEARNING OBJECTIVES



Building on the observations, feedback and learning during Cycle 2, the next learning cycle (July 2022 - December 2023) will focus on the following objectives:

### Refining the SRI:

- 1. Tool validity:** To continue to strengthen confidence in tool validity, we will conduct known group comparisons in 2-3 new contexts.
- 2. Data quality:** In order to strengthen the quality of data collected through the SRI, we will conduct a thorough audit of the XLS form and address where “skip logic” and other form coding features can make the form more user friendly and reduce logical inconsistencies between various domain responses (e.g. If there is a logical inconsistency between two responses entered, the practitioner's attention is drawn to this for resolution before submitting the form). We will monitor the effectiveness of these changes in terms of strengthening the consistency and quality of data collected by practitioners.
- 3. Domain 6 (“Safety”):** Understanding that safety is a critical consideration when assessing household self reliance, we will explore

options for further clarifying the intention and implementation of Domain 6 via focus group discussions and other fora. We will also ensure that the wording and option choices of the domain align with that intention and deliver useful and reliable data to practitioners regarding client safety.

### Learning From Partner Application of the SRI:

- 4. Evidence on practitioner application of SRI data:** In order to better understand how the SRI informs program design, planning and implementation, we will continue to conduct check-in calls with partners using the SRI, orienting these sessions towards understanding how program teams are responding to the data collected and the various elements of the planning, implementation, and follow-up cycle that are influenced by data collected using the SRI.

**5. Evidence on effective**

**programming:** In order to expand the evidence on what programs best support self-reliance for refugee and displaced households, we will work with partners to build use of the SRI into formal program evaluations. We will aim to work with donors and grant applicants starting at project conception to ensure robust evaluation methods are used and that follow-up measurements are taken at least several months after programming ends.

**6. Training methods:** To better understand the impact of various training options on tool administration in the field, we will test the relative effectiveness of training options currently in use - in-person, remote, and via e-learning modules. We will conduct these experiments within the same sites, whereby different members of the partner organization participate in different training models. Following the training, staff members will be observed administering the tool to ascertain tool administration skills for each training model.

**Expanding Application of the SRI:****7. Self-reliance amongst unserved**

**populations:** In order to better understand levels of self-reliance amongst unserved/underserved populations, we will aim to administer the SRI in partnership with UNHCR and/or several partner organizations within one context to generate estimates of self-reliance

that are representative at the country, district (or comparable), city level. Collecting data from such a sample would allow the RSRI team to collect data from a currently “invisible” population: refugee households that are not currently receiving services from humanitarian organizations.

**8. Gender and self-reliance:**

In order to learn more about the intersection between gender and self-reliance, we will compile data on the gendered impacts of self-reliance programming. Approaches may include: comparing SRI scores for female-headed households and households with male income earners, assessing data on programs that specifically target women or other marginalized groups, and working with partner organizations to collect gender-specific data of interest alongside the SRI.

**9. High-income country application of the SRI:**

With a mind to exploring potential application of the SRI in high-income countries, we will work to assess the strengths, shortcomings, and learning opportunities for SRI application in a U.S. refugee resettlement and other high-income country application contexts.

# APPENDIX 1 ) CYCLE 2 LEARNING

## Self-Reliance Index Cycle 2 Learning Program April 2020 – December 2021

### Learning expectations:

**Populations:** Refugees in first country of asylum; Resettled refugees; IDPs; hosting populations

**Focus for Cycle 2:** Given the current pandemic more restrictions will be placed on in person engagement, this new cycle of learning will explore distance training, remote assessment, alternative SRI data collection methods among other methods of both engaging with refugee clients and practitioners.

### 1. Core – SRI Tool Development

#### PRIMARY -

#### SRI as a reliable & valid tool

- a. Validation process
  - i. Known user group comparisons
    - » This will include support for and observation by Lindsay and Ilana of the entire known user group process
- b. Scoring and Calibration – updates will be made based on Cycle 1 learning and this will need continued review as more data is collected
- c. Reliability
  - i. Inter rater reliability will continue to be reviewed (Reliability assurance will be built into training)

#### SECONDARY -

#### SRI domain refinement

- b. SRI domains to watch (through data review and Interview focus, and response template)
  - » *Safety – what are we learning? Will be a focus of academic advisor visits.*
  - » *Do rent and debt overlap? This will continue to be monitored with a focus on making recommendations as to which settings to include this optional question.*
  - » *Debt – How is the addition of “investment” as an option being used? How should it be weighted.*

- » *Trends in the data to review - Potential supplementary questions*
  - *Transport*
  - *Social cohesion*
  - *Language acquisition*
  - *Adult or tertiary education, skills development*

## **2. Support - SRI as a reliable workable tool**

- Can the SRI be easily integrated into existing monitoring systems of NGO partners?
- Assess training
  - Carry out a formal assessment of user guide only SRI use vs in person training SRI use
  - Monitor experience and data from in person vs over the phone use of the SRI

## **3. Explore how gender interacts with the administration and results of the SR**

- Methodological experiments will be built into data collection to explore whether and how a selected respondent's gender -- or gender alignment between the interviewer and respondent -- is associated with responses.
- Post hoc analysis will be employed when experiments cannot be incorporated into data collection efforts.

# APPENDIX 2

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. First, what is your role at xxx? How have you been involved in the use of the SRI?
2. What has your overall experience with the SRI been like?
  - a. What have you liked most about the SRI? What features do you think work well?
  - b. What challenges have you experienced in using the SRI?
3. Are there any major components of self-reliance that you think the SRI doesn't ask about? If so, what?
  - a. Are there any domains that you feel are less relevant for [context]? If so, what?
  - b. Are there any domains that you feel are difficult for respondents to answer? If so, which ones and why? [only after the respondent answers, ask, "what about domain 1b? domain 5? Domain 6?"]
4. How did the training prepare your team to use the SRI?
  - a. What did you like about the training?
  - b. What do you think is missing from the training? Is there anything you would do differently?
5. How has your experience with [data platform] been?
  - a. Is there anything you would change about the data entry interface? If so, what?
6. In what ways has the SRI changed how you interact with clients?
  - a. How has the SRI impacted the way your team links clients to referrals?
7. What do you hope to learn about your clients and programs through the SRI?
  - a. Do you feel you have already learned more about your clients and programs just from using the SRI (before analyzing data)? What?
8. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience using the SRI?

# APPENDIX 3 TRAINING DETAIL, MAY 2020 – DECEMBER 2021

Agency	Country	Training Date	# of Trainees	Format
RefugePoint	Kenya	Jul-20	11	Remote
DRC	Turkey	Jul-20	5	Remote
DRC	Lebanon	Jul-20	4	Remote
DRC	Jordan	Jul-20	5	Remote
Mercy Corps	Jordan	Jul-20	2	Remote
DRC	South Sudan	Oct-20	14	Remote
HIAS	Ecuador	Oct-20	4	Remote
HIAS	Panama	Oct-20	4	Remote
HIAS	Costa Rica	Oct-20	4	Remote
HIAS	Peru	Oct-20	4	Remote
HIAS	Aruba	Oct-20	4	Remote
HIAS	Chad	Oct-20	4	Remote
HIAS	Guyana	Oct-20	4	Remote
HIAS	Israel	Oct-20	4	Remote
HIAS	Kenya	Oct-20	4	Remote
HIAS	Venezuela	Oct-20	4	Remote
Sitti Social Enterprise	Jordan	Oct-20	6	Remote
Sitti Social Enterprise	Jordan	Nov-20	5	Remote
ReDSS Members	Multiple	Nov-20	35	Remote
Bethany Refugee Service	Colombia	Nov-20	16	Remote
DRC	Iraq	Nov-20	15	Remote
HIAS	Aruba	Nov-20	6	Remote
iProfile Foundation	Uganda	Dec-20	17	Remote

Agency	Country	Training Date	# of Trainees	Format
Youth Up Foundation	Uganda	Dec-20	7	Remote
Urban Refugees	Uganda	Dec-20	6	Remote
Sudanese Women for Peace and Development Association	Uganda	Dec-20	4	Remote
United South Sudanese Urban Refugees Community	Uganda	Dec-20	5	Remote
YARID	Uganda	Dec-20	6	Remote
DRC	Kenya	Dec-20	13	Remote
Save the Children	Kenya	Jan-21	7	Remote
HIAS	Colombia	Jan-21	6	Remote
HIAS	Guyana	Feb-21	7	Remote
NRC	Somalia	Mar-21	16	Remote
Good Neighbors	Zambia	Mar-21	6	Remote
NRC	Somalia	Apr-21	13	Remote
Same Skies	Malaysia	May-21	11	Remote
DRC	South Sudan	May-21	18	Remote
UNHCR	Cameroon	Jun-21	61	Remote
Same Skies	Malaysia	Jun-21	13	Remote
IRC	Uganda	Jun-21	7	Remote
IRC	Kenya	Jun-21	7	Remote
Living Water	Trinidad & Tobago	Jul-21	13	Remote
iProfile Foundation	Uganda	Aug-21	12	Remote
Nile Girls Forum	Uganda	Aug-21	6	Remote
HIAS	Colombia	Sep-21	12	Remote
HIAS	Colombia	Sep-21	7	In-Person
Sitti Social Enterprise	Jordan	Oct-21	4	Remote
Refugee Dream Center	USA	Oct-21	4	Remote



Agency	Country	Training Date	# of Trainees	Format
PADF	Guyana	Nov-21	16	Remote
PADF	Trinidad & Tobago	Nov-21	16	Remote
HIAS	Ecuador	Nov-21	14	Remote
HIAS	Costa Rica	Nov-21	14	Remote
HIAS	Peru	Dec-21	24	Remote

# APPENDIX 4 SRI PARTNER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS FLOWCHART



# APPENDIX 5 PARTNER SRI TRAINING FEEDBACK FORM

## Self-Reliance Index | Training Feedback Form

Hello. Thank you for completing the SRI Training. We'd be happy to receive your feedback as we continue to improve our ability to train teams to use the SRI.

Please take a few moments to respond to the questions below! Thank you.

---

**Please enter your name below as you would like it to appear on your training certificate.**

---

**Please enter the e-mail we should use for any future communication with you related to the SRI.**

---

Please respond to the following statements related to the SRI Training:

**I feel that the training prepared me to use the SRI correctly in the field.**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I Don't Know

**If you'd like to share detail on your response above, please enter that here.**

---

**I understand what self-reliance is, and why it is important for humanitarian agencies to work to measure self-reliance of clients.**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I Don't Know

**If you'd like to share detail on your response above, please enter that here.**



◀ **I understand how to use the four parts of the SRI (Biographical Information, Scored Domains, Open Questions, Interviewer Assessment).**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I Don't Know

**If you'd like to share detail on your response above, please enter that here.**

---

Please rate your level of understanding of each of the four parts of the Self-Reliance Index below.

---

**Part One: Biographic Information - I understand the purpose of this section of the SRI and how to use it.**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I Don't Know

**Part Two: Scored Domains - I understand the purpose of this section of the SRI and how to use it.**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I Don't Know

**Part Three: Open Questions - I understand the purpose of this section of the SRI and how to use it.**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I Don't Know



◀ **Part Four: Interviewer Assessment - I understand the purpose of this section of the SRI and how to use it.**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I Don't Know

**There are areas of the SRI that I do not understand well and will need additional support to understand.**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I Don't Know

**If you have areas where additional support will be needed, please highlight that here and we will be in touch to follow-up on any items referenced.**

---

**Please share any other details you'd like to share here on the training. If there are specific issues that we can help with, we'll be in touch with you directly.**

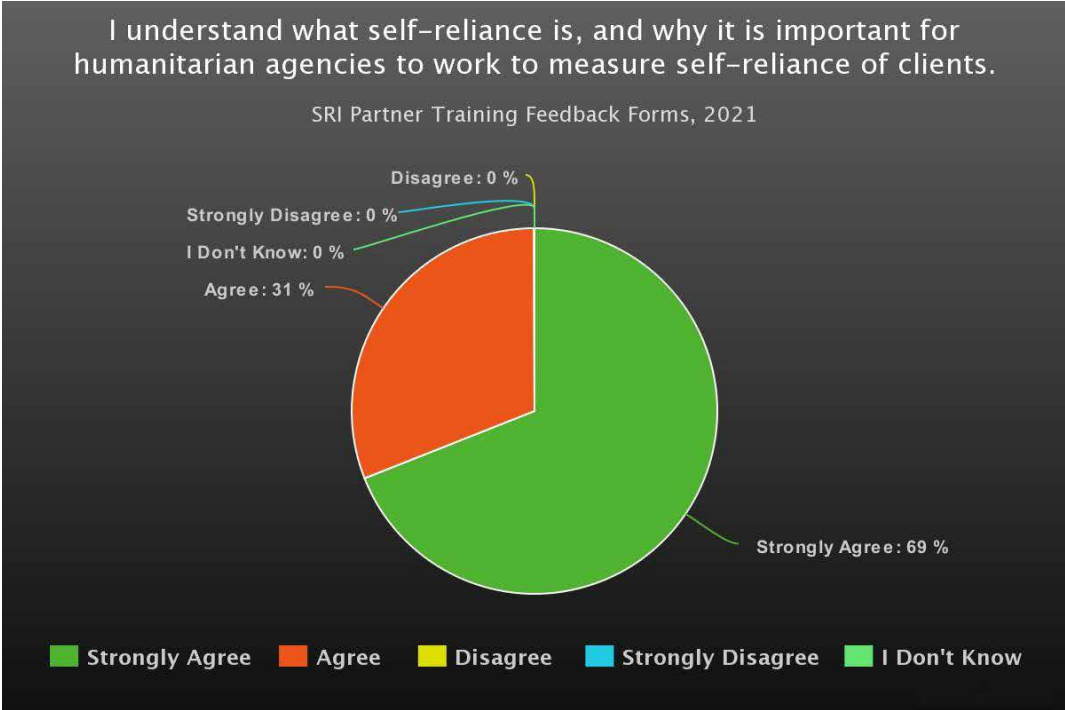
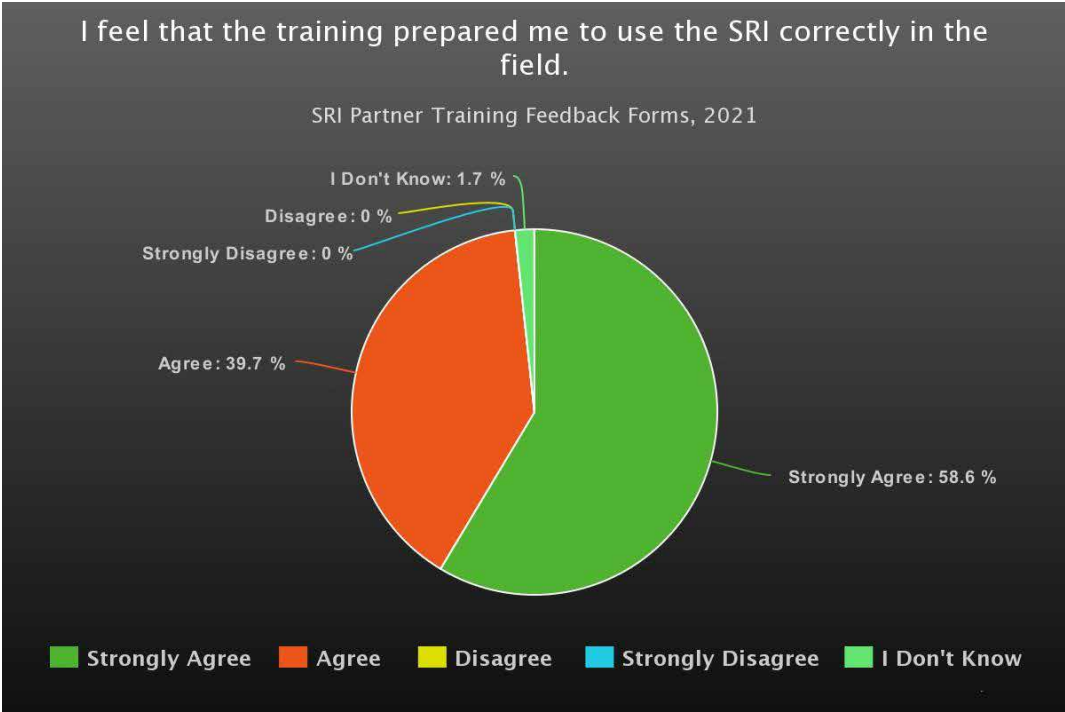
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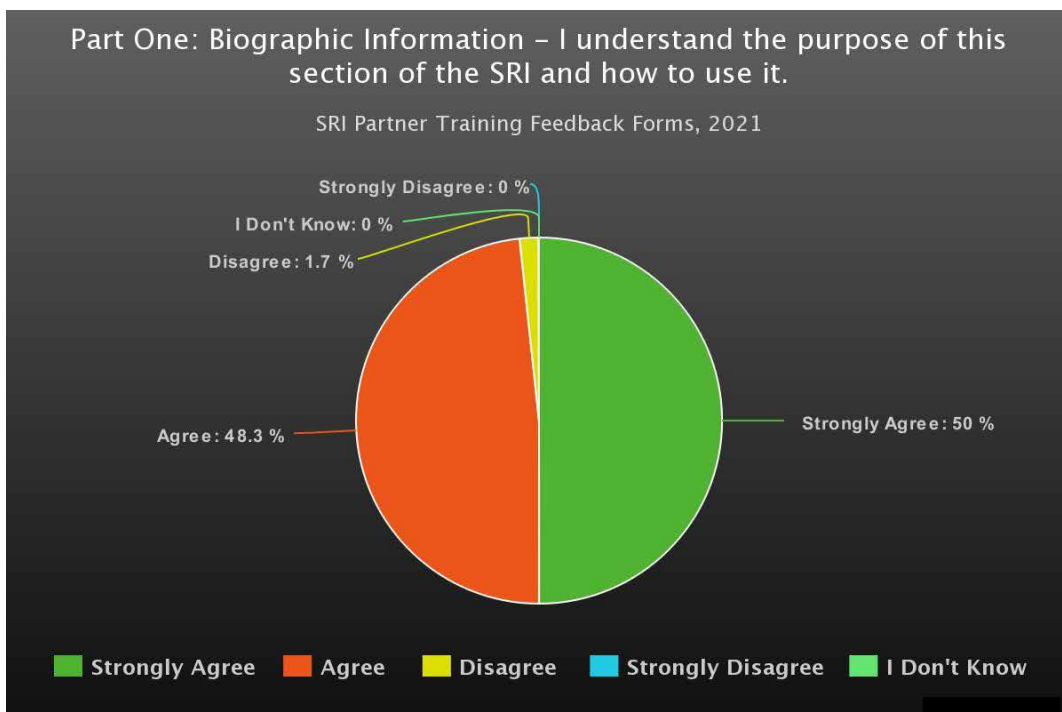
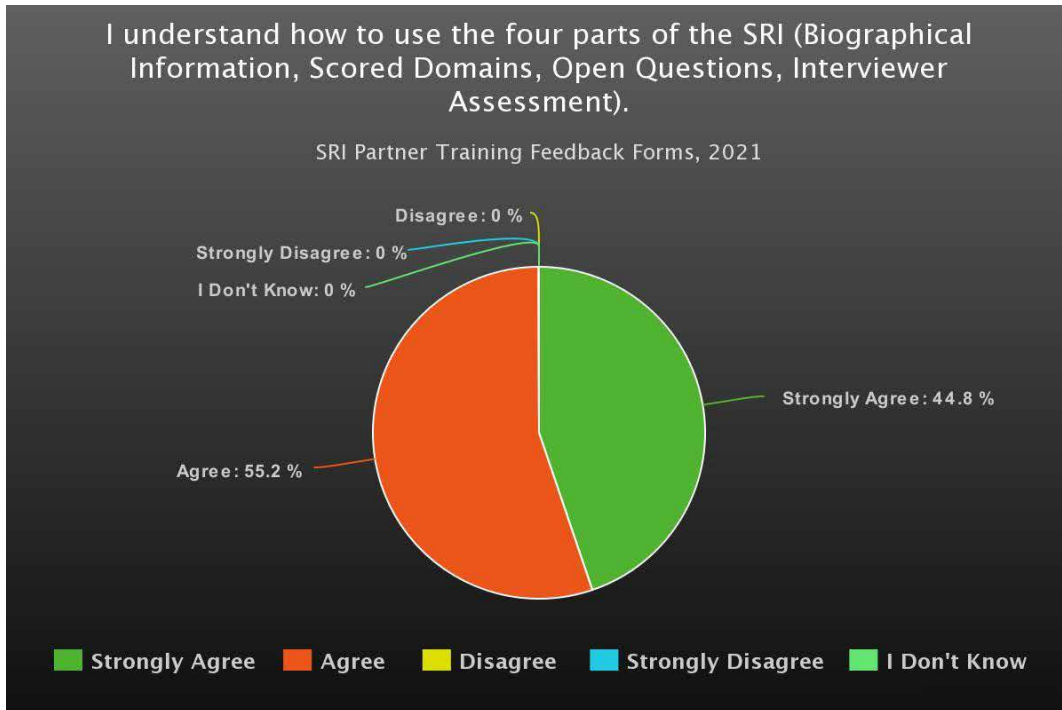
Thank you for sharing your feedback on the SRI Training. Please make sure to hit "Submit" below so that your feedback is registered.

 Save Draft

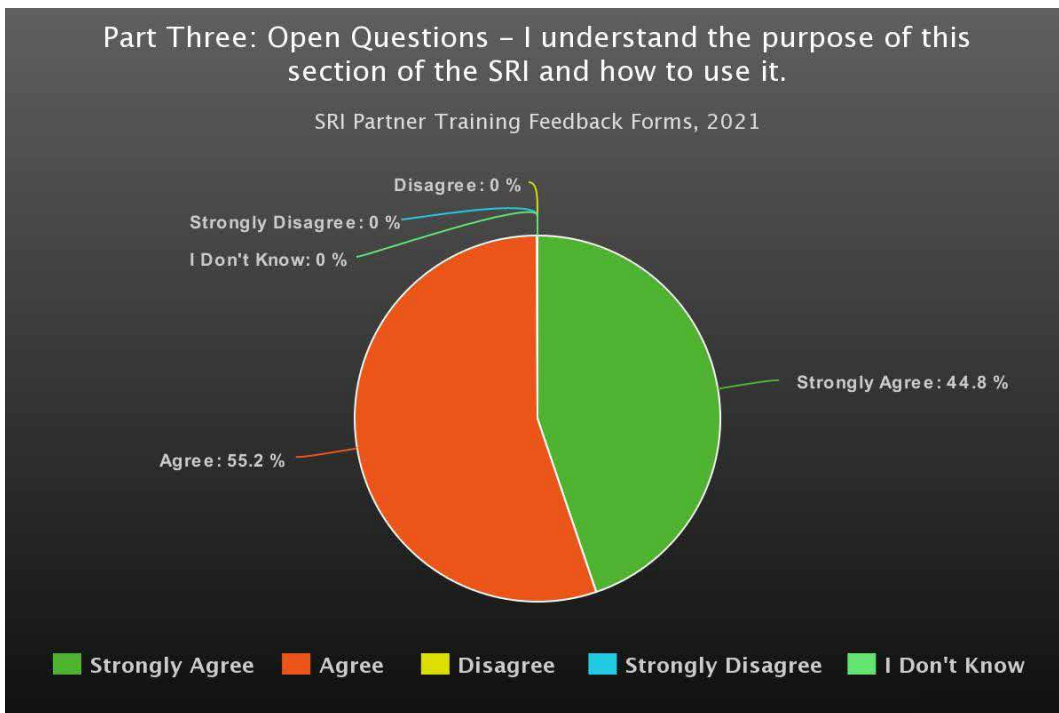
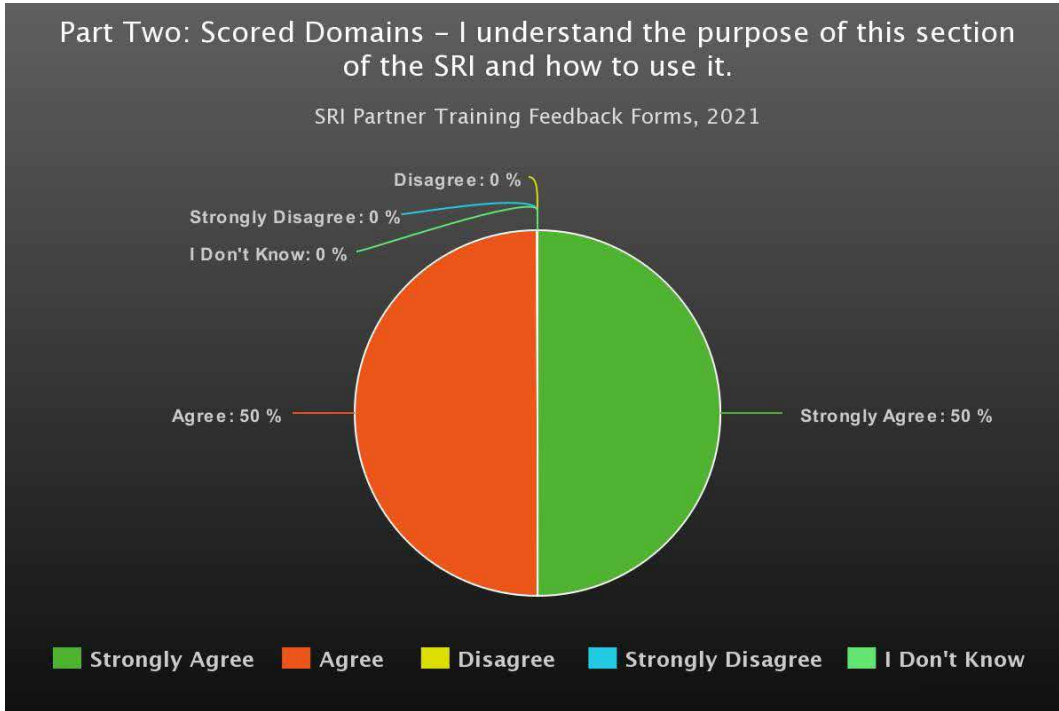
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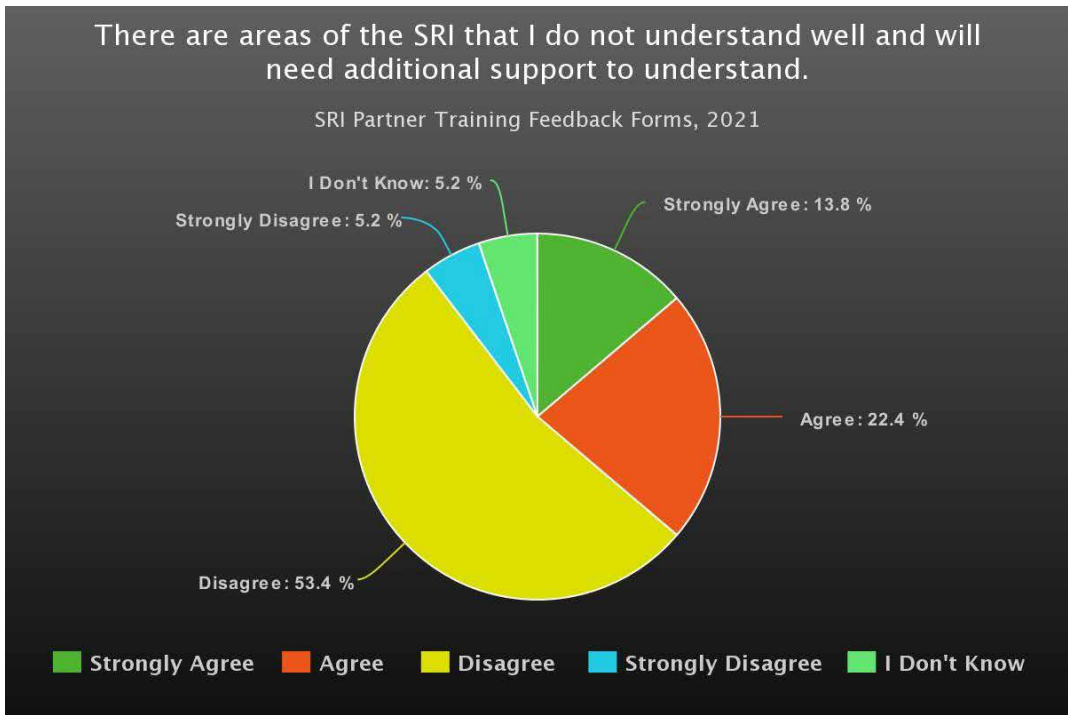
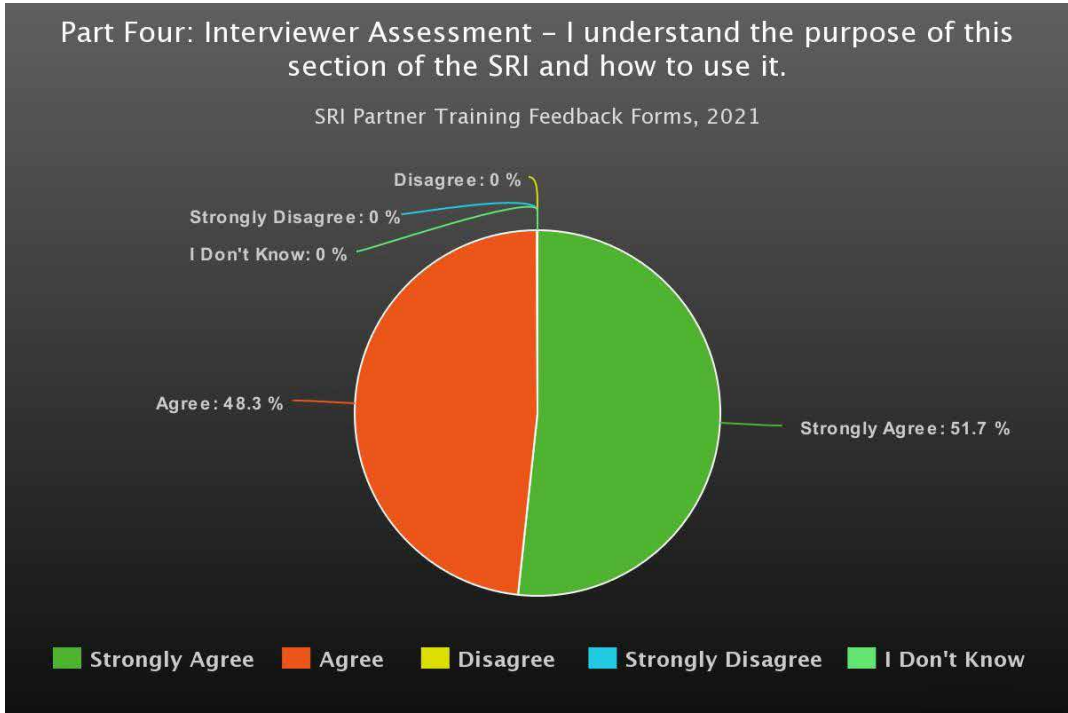
# APPENDIX 6 SRI TRAINING FEEDBACK RESULTS TABLES











# APPENDIX 7 SRI PARTNER FEEDBACK SAMPLE

## DRC South Sudan: Baseline utilization of the Self Reliance Index One-page summary of findings from data exploration

### Data consistency checks

- A few inconsistencies were noted between domains 7 (employment) and 8 (financial resources). Specifically, there were cases where a household reported having a job but did not report employment as a source of income in domain 8.
- A few inconsistencies were noted between domains 8 (financial resources) and 9 (assistance). Specifically, there were a few households that did not list 'assistance' as a source of income in domain 8, but then listed basic needs that were met through assistance in domain 9. Additionally, there were a few households that listed assistance as a source of income in domain 8 but then did not note any needs met by assistance in domain 9.
- There were 36 households that reported not having any children in the household, but provided an answer for domain 3 (education).

### Basic findings

#### Nationality

- A difference in the overall SRI score was observed between South Sudanese and Sudanese households. The average SRI score was 2.06 among South Sudanese and 1.77 among Sudanese (this difference is statistically significant).
- Further, statistically significant differences were observed between the two groups for all domains excluding domains 1b, 5, 7 and 9 (see table below).

## Domain-specific scores by nationality

Domain	South Sudanese		Sudanese	
	Score	# households with score	Score	# households with score
1a	4.03	192	2.02	227
1b	3.00	2	3.00	12
2	3.16	192	2.52	227
3	2.44	183	4.37	210
4	3.10	179	3.65	167
5	2.55	192	2.51	227
6	2.81	192	3.56	227
7	2.01	192	1.95	227
8	2.28	192	1.00	227
9	2.31	192	2.34	227
10	4.01	192	4.33	227
11	1.82	192	1.57	227
12	4.27	192	2.37	227

Domains in green represent those with a statistically significant difference in scores between the two nationalities; those in orange are the same between the two groups.

### Location

- Overall self-reliance was found to be higher in Bentiu than in Jamjang (2.06 v. 1.77). Please note that Bentiu and Jamjang consist of exclusively South Sudanese and Sudanese clients, respectively.

### Sectors

- Overall self-reliance for those in Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) is significantly higher than for those in the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and CCCM/FSL sectors, but there is no statistical difference between self-reliance for CCCM and CCCM/FSL.

### Overall SRI score, by sector



#### Dependency ratio

- The overall SRI score was not found to be dependent on the household's dependency ratio, that is, the number of children or elderly individuals in the household when controlling for the number of adults.
- However, larger household size was found to be associated with lower scores on domain 4 (health-care), domain 9 (assistance), and domain 10 (debt), and higher scores on domain 6 (Safety), domain 7 (employment). A higher dependency ratio was also shown to be associated with a lower score on domain 5 (health status) and higher scores on domain 7 (employment) and domain 11 (savings).

#### Duration in South Sudan

- The overall SRI score was not correlated with the amount of time a household has lived in South Sudan.
- However, the longer a household has been in South Sudan, the lower their assistance score is (i.e. the data suggest that households rely on more assistance the longer they've been in the country).

#### Sex of respondent

- No differences in SRI scores were observed depending on the sex of the respondent.

Refugee  
**SELF-RELIANCE**  
Initiative