



WOMEN & GIRLS SAFE SPACES

A guidance note based on lessons learned from the Syria crisis



What are women and girl safe spaces?

A safe space is a formal or informal place where women and girls feel physically and emotionally safe. The term 'safe,' in the present context, refers to the absence of trauma, excessive stress, violence (or fear of violence), or abuse. It is a space where women and girls feel comfortable and enjoy the freedom to express themselves without the fear of judgment or harm.

Why women and girls safe spaces?

In most societies, women have limited space to meet, and public spaces are often inhabited largely by men. In emergencies, their spaces shrink even more.



What are the guiding principles for establishing women and girls safe spaces?

SAFE SPACE

Leadership and empowerment of women and girls



Client/survivor centered



Safe and accessible



Community involvement



Coordinated and multi sectoral



Tailored





How to establish and run women and girls safe spaces

Initial assessment

- Security and safety
- Location
- Time
- Activities and Services
- Partnerships

Staffing

- Roles
- Capacity Development

Activities and Services

- Support to GBV survivors
- Psychosocial and Recreational Activities
- Information and awareness
- Outreach and Prevention

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Plan for the beginning
- Ongoing monitoring
- Engage women and girls

Phase out

- Prepare
- Involve the community



Initial Assessment

Safety and security, Location, Time, Activities and Partnerships

In Jordan: A safety audit provided recommendations to make the women safe space more accessible.

In Iraq: UNFPA and UN Women partnered to supporting safe spaces. UN Women brought in the economic empowerment expertise and UNFPA ran the safe space.

In Syria: Safe spaces are within the RH clinics





Staffing

Roles and Capacity Development

In Turkey: an important lesson learned was to provide incentives for volunteer staff. Incentives need not be financial, but could be in the form of trainings and/or material goods.

In Syria women have preferred that social workers come from their community but live in a different camp or a town outside of the camp as they felt that this made the services more confidential.

In Iraq: the social worker came from the same community, lived in the camp, and had established a high level of trust with women in the community.





Activities and Services

Support to GBV survivors; Psychosocial and Recreational Activities; Information and awareness ; and outreach and Prevention

In Iraq: women have been sewing winter clothes for women and newborns with material provided by UNFPA. These clothes were then bought by UNFPA to include in the winterized dignity kits.

In Lebanon and Jordan: centers have purchased toys for children to play with while their mothers participate in activities.





Monitoring and Evaluation

Plan for the beginning; Ongoing monitoring; Engage women and girls

In Syria, complaint boxes and client feedback is used to monitor the safe spaces;

In Jordan, the RH clinics look at the monitoring data and refer to women safe spaces especially for women under 18.





Phase-out

Prepare and Involve the community

In Lebanon and Iraq, safe spaces are housed within existing community structures making an eventual phase out easier.

Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, partnered with local organisations.





“I am deeply moved by the stories of these women. It’s not easy for them but I’ve seen a lot of change in women who visit the center. When they first came here, many couldn’t sleep, had problems at home and some even lost their temper with children. Being able to access a support network and information lifts a weight off their shoulders as they know they are not alone.”

Jihad, A Syrian refugee social worker in Jordan

“I try to come to the center as often as I can, as it is the only time I get to talk to other women and forget my worries for a while. Sine I didn’t have any baby clothes, my friends at the center gave me clothes and blankets they didn’t need anymore. It’s a great relief to have a support”

*Yasmeen, Syrian Refugee women in Lebanon
(5 months pregnant)*



WOMEN AND GIRLS SAFE SPACES

A guidance note based on lessons learned from the Syria crisis