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Women & Girls' Safe Spaces

Examples from CARE across eight countries

CARE reviewed how humanitarian teams are using Women and Girls' Safe Spaces (WGSS) within humanitarian response efforts across eight countries: Bangladesh, Egypt, Lebanon, Nigeria, South Sudan, Türkiye-Northwest Syria, Uganda and Yemen.

Each represents a different context and illustrates the diverse ways in which WGSS can support efforts to address gender-based violence (GBV) in emergencies.

These examples are intended to complement the **Promising Practices Guide on Women and Girls' Safe Spaces** and the **WGSS Project Cycle Tool**, available from care.org/wgss-ie.

Bangladesh

Context: Static WGSS within refugee camps and in host communities providing services for specific geographic locations.

Services: A schedule of activities for women and girls aged 10+ is displayed in the WGSS. Services include:

- GBV case management and referral services.
- Life skills activities to promote income-generating initiatives and develop leadership skills for building self-resilience in the community.
- Girl Shine sessions for adolescent girls, including a focus on preventing child, early and forced marriage.
- Dedicated space for women and girls to wash menstruation materials.
- Community outreach engaging men and boys to address barriers to women and girls accessing the safe space and conduct GBV prevention activities.

Donors include: Australian Department for Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT), USAID, private foundations.

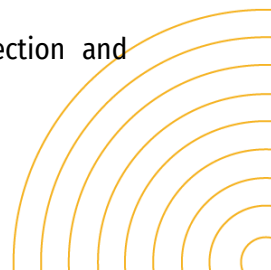
Nigeria

Context: WGSS in camp settlements for internally displaced people and in host communities.

Services: As per the request of the women and girls, WGSS activities are available from Mondays to Fridays from 9am to 3pm daily. Services include:

- GBV case management and referral services.
- Psychosocial support activities, including individual counselling for survivors of GBV, group therapy and peer-to-peer psychosocial support sessions, offered by CARE or through local partners.
- Awareness sessions on different topics selected by women and girls such as menstrual hygiene and life skills.
- Skills training and VSLA activities.
- Engagement of men and boys in dialogue on gender and power to discuss the need for women and girl-only safe spaces and address community concerns.

Donors include: European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).



Putting principles into practice

CARE Egypt Foundation's WGSS for migrants and refugees demonstrate the power of these spaces for building strong networks of women able to lead the direction of the WGSS and beyond.

To ensure it is truly-women-led, the Agami WGSS has a Board of Facilitators drawn from diverse WGSS attendees, engaging them in decision-making on management of the space. The Be An Inspiration initiative specifically aims to strengthen women's skills, experience and confidence to develop a pipeline of future leaders to join the board.

This is complemented by a Community Committee – drawn from women and men of diverse nationalities from refugee and host communities – to represent the WGSS in the wider community. They play a key role in addressing misconceptions about the WGSS and enable access for outreach activities.

GBV case management services are primarily offered through this outreach. Within the WGSS, activities focus on the principles of inclusion, solidarity and empowerment – from cultural exchanges encouraging appreciation of diversity to weekly VSLA meetings – as well as psychosocial support activities.

Many activities use innovative approaches to further develop leadership skills while promoting access to knowledge, skills, and services on GBV and other topics. For example, the Agami space didn't stop at digital skills training; women from the WGSS went on to lead their own [podcast](#) as a platform to voice their concerns and share information within their communities.

Services are provided very much in partnership with other organizations, with service providers offering awareness sessions within the space and development of a refugee service guide app to support women and girls' access to partner services. Looking to the future, CARE Egypt Foundation has signed a cooperation protocol with the Ministry of Youth to expand WGSS within youth centers.

Egypt

Context: Static WGSS in host communities.

Services: Services include:

- GBV case management and referral services in communities.
- GBV prevention awareness campaigns.
- Psychosocial support activities including use of art to express the challenges women and girls face, storytelling sessions, and group sessions to plan for the future and change perspectives.
- Social cohesion activities including Happiness Café, library and group breakfasts celebrating the customs and traditions of different nationalities.
- Be An Inspiration Initiative to encourage women's leadership of the WGSS.
- VSLA sessions.
- Partnerships to offer health, trainings and other support through government, private sector and NGO service providers.
- Broader community engagement through women-led podcasts.

Donors include: UNHCR, BPRM.

Yemen

Context: Static WGSS in four governorates with some services provided in mobile form through literacy classes outside the WGSS.

Services:

- Skills development training (sewing, hairdressing, bakery etc).
- Literacy classes.
- Life skills modules.
- Case management.
- Legal support (awareness, consultation, facilitating getting legal documents such as ID cards and birth certificates, and representation through referral to other partners).
- Psychological and social support (group sessions and individual sessions).
- Referral to more specialized services through other service providers.
- Childcare services.
- Community based protection networks.
- Community awareness on GBV.

Donors include: UNFPA (ended), ECHO, USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

South Sudan

Context: Static WGSS in host communities run by partner organizations.

Services: Services include:

- GBV case management and referral services, including provision of counselling, cash & voucher assistance and dignity kits.
- Tea talk sessions to raise awareness of available response services, confidential referral pathways and the importance of timely reporting.
- Psychosocial support and economic empowerment activities such as bakery, beading, knitting and wool designing, which provide emotional healing and income generation.
- Recreational activities including volleyball, football, drama, song practice and cooking demonstrations.
- VSLA sessions.
- Women's rights advocacy activities in collaboration with women-led partner organizations, including radio talk shows on topics such as property ownership by women and girls.
- Training sessions for community leaders, WLOs, and others.

Donors include: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Türkiye-Northwest Syria

Context: Static WGSSs in urban (non-camp) settings for Internally Displaced People (IDP) and host community, and mobile outreach in form of mobile WGSS in IDP camps.

Services:

- GBV case management including cash & voucher assistance and referrals for specialized services (including specialized sexual reproductive health (SRH) services)
- Psychosocial support services including leisure time, recreation, skills building trainings such as financial literacy, language education etc., and life skills sessions for adolescent girls and adult women.
- Information dissemination and awareness raising sessions on GBV and protection services.
- Community dialogues, including engaging men and boys on gender norms and social cohesion.
- Working with women-led initiatives through the Women Lead in Emergencies (WLiE) model.
- SRH consultations and awareness raising in SRH clinics within the WGSS.
- Adolescent-friendly SRH through the AMAL Initiative's three components: Young Mothers Club; Community Engagement; and Health Service Provider Dialogue.
- Mobile outreach through integrated team of protection psychosocial support workers and Community Health Workers (CHWs) in IDP camps.
- Transportation for referrals between WGSS and CARE-funded maternity hospitals, and between IDP camps and WGSS.
- Continuous safety audits in IDP camps
- Training for health and non-GBV specialized humanitarian frontliners on GBV and referral pathways.

Donors include: USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO).



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Jackline, 41, attends a WGSS in an urban center in South Sudan.

The WGSS offered wool designing as a psychosocial support activity. Before enrolling in this, Jackline had just remained in her house and had no way to support herself. She says the first day she joined the group at the WGSS it helped her feel better emotionally. She is now able to earn a small income from the products she makes with the group and says this sense of achievement is very positive for her mental state.



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Shomina, 18, arrived in Bangladesh from Myanmar in 2017.

At the WGSS, she learned to sew, enabling her to earn income. She now works as a volunteer at the WGSS, supporting the management of training and meetings.

She encouraged her mother to join her in sessions at the WGSS, so Shomina has her family's support to continue in these roles rather than get married. She says she is valued in the community for the knowledge she has and is able to support her neighbors to access referral services.

Lebanon

Context: Static WGSS run by partner organizations.

Services:

- Lifeskills and psychosocial support.
- Persons with Special Needs (PWSN) and GBV Case Management.
- Sexual and reproductive health awareness raising and testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Referrals to other specialized services.
- Provision of dignity kits.
- Provision of emergency cash assistance.

Donors include: Messika (private donor), UNOCHA, Agence Française de Développement (AFD).

Uganda

Context: Entry point in providing appropriate and timely GBV and protection services to persons of concern (PoC) at settlement level and providing specific services in the host community for certain geographic locations.

Services:

- GBV case management including referrals for specialized services, survivor fund, and information sharing.
- GBV prevention through approaches including Women Lead in Emergencies (WLIE), Role Model Men & Boys (RMMB), and Social Analysis & Action (SAA) – (awareness sessions, dialogues, and reflection meetings) – and through the boda boda talk talk.
- Basic psychosocial support services including skills training (entrepreneurship, art and craft, music dance and drama, sports, leisure time, listening sessions).
- Life skills and trauma healing sessions for adolescent girls and young mothers through the Girl Shine model, with a focus on menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR).
- Basic functional adult literacy (FAL) classes.
- Economic empowerment and youth skills.
- Leadership cafes for all refugee women leaders at all levels.
- Advocacy for voice, participation and leadership.
- Training of community structures on a needs basis in GBV and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).
- Livelihood support through provision of farming inputs.
- Legal service support.
- Provision of non-food items (NFIs) such as dignity kits and clothes.
- Periodic safety audits, Rapid Gender Analyses (RGAs), and pre and post distribution monitoring.
- Training of GBV and non-GBV specialists in GBV mainstreaming, clinical care for GBV survivors and PSEA.

Donors include: ECHO, German Federal Foreign office (GFFO), Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA), Austrian Development Agency (ADA).