EMPOWERING BOYS AND YOUNG MEN IN UNFPA SAFE SPACES

Experiences from the Humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina
EMPOWERING BOYS AND YOUNG MEN IN UNFPA SAFE SPACES: Experiences from the humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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1. Introduction

1.1. How to use this document

Following the needs of the migrant population through the mixed migration humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina led UNFPA to establish safe spaces for boys and young men. These spaces are known locally as boys and young men centres (BYMC). While a detailed description of BYMC is provided in the document ‘Boys and Young Men Safe Spaces: A guidance note based on the humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina’ (see box 1), this document aims to provide an overview of the essential and the most extensive operational part of BYMCs or the empowerment activities. Yet in order to fully understand the purpose of this document as well as its applicative value, it is necessary to read the aforementioned guidance note.¹

This document describes the purpose of the empowerment activities applied in BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the methods of their implementation and their impact. Created primarily for professionals engaged in similar humanitarian response interventions, this document has strong potential to answer the following questions:

- Why is empowering boys and young men an imperative?
- How do you gain the attention of boys and young men on the move and keep them involved?
- How do you gain the trust of the boys and young men?
- How do you hear and understand the boys and young men at BYMCs?
- How do you create a supportive environment?
- What kind of resources do you need for successful implementation of activities?
- How do you handle sensitive topics?
- What are the things that we missed that you should not?

This is not a guidance document that must be followed strictly in similar future interventions but rather a document that highlights good practice and lessons learned from the mixed migration humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is based on the experiences of the UNFPA team working in the field with the migrant population as well as on evidence shared by other organisations engaged in similar activities. Yet in order to ensure the best approach to working with vulnerable categories of people on the move in future interventions the empowerment activities presented in this document need to be adapted to the specific characteristics of the population within the relevant context.

Box 1. The document cover page

1.2. Meaning and purpose of empowerment activities in BYMCs

The term ‘empowerment activities’ covers different groups of activities that are based on the specific needs of boys and young men on the move. The overall goal is to empower them for their future life, with special focus on gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual reproductive health (SRH). While the active participation of the boys and young men is always encouraged, empowerment activities are normally led by the facilitator who is usually an empowerment officer. Beside their sensibility for work with the target population, people in these positions must have different developed competencies (see Box 2). They need to be able to motivate the boys and young men to participate in relevant activities, be able to assess their needs, prepare and apply activities and collect feedback and where appropriate incorporate it into the next sessions.

As shown below in Illustration 1, through the perspective ‘Now, in the BYMC’ staff members create a safe and supportive environment for the boys and young men. This allows for a ‘dipper dive’ into their past (the ‘Looking back’ perspective), including their background and life experience. Both of the above-mentioned perspectives then ‘feed’ into the third one or the ‘Looking forward’ perspective, which targets positive plans for the future of the boys and young men.

Empowerment activities can be implemented at the individual or group level, depending on the needs. Bearing in mind the social benefits of group work for both individuals and the group, group level work is applied predominantly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Besides the primary purpose of each empowerment activity applied in groups the collected evidence suggests that group work at the very least contributes to the following aspects:

a) trust between group members (even though some of them come from countries that are in conflict),

b) trust between the facilitator (staff member) and the members of the group,

c) helping individuals by sharing the experiences of other members of the group,

d) maximising the impact by creating sub-groups comprised of individuals who have similar needs.

Group sessions have their goals but their success depends on different factors, such as active listening to what the group is saying, careful observation of the reaction of all members of the group when it comes to certain publicly expressed attitudes and opinions, and empathy, namely positive acceptance of all members of the group equally so that they feel free to express their opinions.

Purpose of the empowerment activities in BYMCs

Illustration 1. The purpose of empowerment activities in BYMCs

Purpose of the empowerment activities in BYMCs

- Create a supportive environment for boys and young men in which they feel safe and willing to share thoughts and express concerns (and expect feedback), share experiences (and expect support to overcome negative effects), and discuss plans for the future (and expect advice).

- Inform and encourage them to take part in relevant protection and assistance activities, with a special focus on GBV and SRH.

- Strengthen boys and young men survivors of violence (especially GBV) and help to recover through empowerment activities.

- Empower boys and young men who experienced violence and to “give them back” the feeling of responsibility for their lives as well as the ability for making choices and decisions.

- Empower boys and young men through awareness rising, learning, and skills developed in the areas which could help them in their lives (taking into account their needs and plans).

- Improve/maintain their mental and physical health through combination of different types of activities.

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Box 2. Empowerment officer profile

Empowerment officers must have a relevant education background in social sciences (psychology, psychotherapy, social work, social pedagogy, andragogy and other social sciences) and the knowledge to apply theoretical assumptions in the field. Their ability to adapt their knowledge to specific circumstances is equally important. Empowerment officers must apply ethical values such as understanding, respect, responsibility, non-discrimination and tolerance.

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2. Empowerment activities: purpose, methods and impact

2.1. Understanding the interconnection between empowerment activities

Implementing empowerment activities is the most extensive part of boys and young men centres (BYMC) operations. Their implementation is usually critical for the application of protection and assistance activities. Compact teams at the centres (comprised of up to 10 staff members) plan and implement all of the activities together, ensuring almost perfect coordination. This is an additional reason for maintaining a high level of interconnectivity between empowerment activities as well as between these activities and protection and/or assistance activities. As the staff say, ‘they are all intertwined’.

This section provides a detailed overview of the empowerment activities implemented at BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bearing in mind the above mentioned and with the aim to avoid any misunderstanding and assure clear interpretation, the text is divided into two sub-chapters: ‘Pure’ empowerment activities (sub-chapter 2.1.) and Empowering through protection activities (sub-chapter 2.2.). Despite a clear distinction between empowerment activities and protection activities in terms of their purpose and methods of implementation it is clear that the implementation of protection activities implies a significant component of overall empowerment. Table 1 below shows the key activities implemented in BYMCs in this country, together with their affiliation.

### Table 1: Groups of empowerment activities applied at BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Group of empowerment activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Boys on the Move sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Informal education sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Creative (social) workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Language classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thematic sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sports and board games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Art sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Monthly events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Social cohesion activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Info sharing and socialising outside of the centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Empowering through SRH activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Empowering through GBV activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Empowering through PSS activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although this document uses the term ‘centres for boys and young men’ the centres for boys and the centres for young men in Bosnia and Herzegovina are separate and constitute separate centres within this context. In the centres for boys the activities and services provided are only for boys and access for adult men is prohibited. Likewise, boys do not have access to the centres for young men. This way of working has proven to be crucial in terms of maximising the protection of adolescents, often minors, and in preventing any illegal behaviour and violence. Adolescents were for a certain period present at one of the temporary reception centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was intended solely for accommodating adult men. UNFPA, which established a centre for young men, allocated a specific period when the centre could provide services and support to the adolescents. During that time, the young men did not have access to the boys and young men centre. In this document the term ‘centres for boys and young men’ is used because most activities refer to work conducted both with boys and with young men.
Planning each session is a key segment of successfully conducting the BOTM curriculum. Empowerment officers must follow the provided guidelines, which include instructions for teachers to use all available means of communication, and the facilitator role is to support and guide learners to develop a meaningful learning experience.

The facilitator is expected to adapt the session to the characteristics of the participants. One of the significant factors is their age, which is reflected in, for example, the introductory part when defining key terms and clarifying the meaning of the curriculum and the objectives when selecting the different work techniques. Unlike work with older participants where there is a high probability that a key part of the session will take place in the form of a participant discussion or debate, when working with adolescents a greater emphasis is achieved through group work where all members of the group work together to complete and present the task together.

Empowerment officers are also encouraged to use certain aids in order to conduct these sessions to the best of their ability. These aids can take various forms, such as, for example, paper and pencils, books, hand-outs, role play or multimedia presentations. As many of these sessions are closely related to GBV the empowerment officer must pay close attention to the participants to ensure that the session is being conducted fairly and in a non-violent manner. Some examples of non-verbal feedback are when a participant suddenly leaves a session on a certain topic for reasons such as a total misunderstanding of the topic, indolence or after being ridiculed by other participants. The empowerment officer must try to find out the possible reasons and act accordingly in order to identify possible GBV survivors. In the event that the feedback does contain certain aspects of GBV the empowerment officer should act immediately whilst taking into consideration the sensitivity of the topic and the need to respect the boy’s or young man’s needs. In accordance with the survivor-centred approach, which reduces the risk of secondary traumatisation and in order to identify possible GBV survivors. The empowerment officer must pay close attention to the participants to ensure that the session is being conducted fairly and in a non-violent manner. Some examples of non-verbal feedback are when a participant suddenly leaves a session on a certain topic for reasons such as a total misunderstanding of the topic, indolence or after being ridiculed by other participants. The empowerment officer must try to find out the possible reasons and act accordingly in order to identify possible GBV survivors. 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Motivated learners: The purpose of the activity is explained in a motivational way.

Materials available: Papel, pencils, boards, a video projector and maps of the world.

Task of knowledge acquisition is performed in different parts of the world and for adopting those norms and principles of behaviour that are universal and generally accepted.

A safe space suitable for educational sessions: Ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

Additional note: The facilitator should be familiar with specific cultural differences regarding desirable and undesirable behaviour in the countries from which the participants come.
Digital skills sessions are some- thing that adolescent boys usually find very interesting and attractive and in which they participate regularly.

The purpose of these sessions is to introduce the boys and young men to the basics of working on a computer and, if possible, to learn the basics of MS packages.

For some adolescents it is the first time that they have used a computer and, if possible, to learn the basics of MS packages.

The purpose of these sessions is to introduce the boys and young men to the basics of working on a computer and, if possible, to learn the basics of MS packages.

The session itself contains a large percentage of practical work on a PC/laptop. In order to realise an IT session, namely typing in Word, it is necessary to make an introductory speech about the importance of typing fast and to clearly and visibly demonstrate the skill itself through instruction (the position on the keyboard, etc.). For this purpose, a live example can be used where the facilitator demonstrates fast typing. However, it is more effective to show a video with instruction on a large screen using a projector.

The importance of mathematics sessions is the acquisition of basic knowledge in this area. These are usually conducted with the population whose basic knowl edge in this area is very low. During the implementation of mathematics sessions it has been shown that the facilitator’s work on the board is inevitable but also that it should definitely be upgraded. Namely, it should be supplemented by visual aids such as objects and shapes. A session on, for example, the topic of Arabic (universal) numbers can begin with writing the numbers (in notebooks or on the board) and after that they can be supplemented by visual aids such as objects and shapes.

A safe space suit able for educational sessions: ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

Motivated learners: The purpose of the activity is explained to the boys and young men in a motivational way, especially for those with a low level of education.

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A safe space suitable for educational sessions: ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.
In general, educational sessions are implemented in a similar way for both adolescent boys and young men. At the beginning of the implementation, it is essential to pay attention to the characteristics of the participants in the group and to adjust the teaching approach accordingly. Through the implementation of these sessions with young men and adolescent boys in BYMCs, it has been observed that the young men showed greater interest in this topic. This can be explained by their awareness of their educational deficiencies, which are often caused by their occupation with such work means that they are less exposed to participatory work and stress relief. The inclusion of adolescents in these activities and occupational effects. Moreover, creative activities allow the boys and young men to express themselves in a creative way and to ‘tell’ something that they cannot say verbally.

Besides improving their education in general, a desired impact of educational sessions is to contribute towards a safer and more certain future for the boys and young men. While some of the boys and young men increase the literacy level necessary for daily life many acquire skills and knowledge that will prove helpful in their further life, such as writing a CV or offering/applying their skills in the market. Moreover, the acquired knowledge will help them to make important life decisions by increasing the possibility that their decisions will be in accordance with accepted social norms.

2.2.3. Creative and social workshops

In the purpose of creative and social workshops is to activate each individual in BYMCs and to monitor them in order to gain a deeper understanding of their individual needs. More specifically, this activity is very important for developing a culture of diversity and acceptance of differences but it also has good occupational effects. Moreover, creative activities allow the boys and young men to express themselves in a creative way and to ‘tell’ something that they cannot say verbally.

From the perspective of the participants, the most visible effect of these sessions is to evoke their creativity and further develop their existing skills. It is about learning specific practical skills that will enable independent work and the production of final products, namely the process of spark practical services such as working with wood, foil, making decorative objects, sewing workshops and many others. It is a group of workshops of a practical nature the realisation of which passes through the process of learning, socialisation, exchange of experiences and opinions and mastering the production of final products or the acquisition of independent craft skills. During these workshops, a large number of adolescents and young men are identified and encouraged to play the role of facilitator for certain activities and they are usually very happy to respond. It is of great importance to note that we work on occupational therapies to relieve stress through creative work. The inclusion of adolescents in these activities and their awareness of their educational deficiencies, which are often caused by their agitation.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of activity</th>
<th>Description of activity</th>
<th>Materials available:</th>
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<th>Description of activity</th>
<th>Materials available:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dance with accepted social norms.</td>
<td>Life decisions by increasing the possibility that their decisions will be in accordance with accepted social norms.</td>
<td>Diverse materials used to demonstrate the process of learning, socialisation, exchange of experiences and opinions.</td>
<td>'Ludo game'</td>
<td>It is important to provide material that is useful for the decoupage technique as well as items that will be processed, whether it</td>
<td>Printed materials with mandala patterns that the participants can style as they want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The purpose of the activity is occupational work and stress relief.</td>
<td>Materials are available:</td>
<td>A safe space available:</td>
<td>A safe space available:</td>
<td>A safe space available:</td>
<td>A safe space available:</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mandala art

It is important to explain to the participants that they have to think about what they want to draw. Usually, the mandala patterns that are later dotted with colours, but if the participants find it difficult they can draw whatever they want.

The purpose of this activity is to focus the attention of the participants in the grooming process, which is very inspiring and has a therapeutic aspect. The participants should enjoy the process. The final product is usually a reflection of the person who created it. Applying this activity to adolescents gives us a clearer picture of their state of mind. In many cases they give up and it is at that moment that they want to play and they will be more happy than happy to play something that comes from their country. This activity helps build self-esteem among adolescent boys.
The workshop is implemented during the holiday period, whether religious or other. The participants are given the materials and are encouraged to create decorations in accordance with the upcoming holiday. They work on the basis of what the practice is in their country after making the decorations, they present them and either decorate the centre or their room.

Materials available:
Different necessary materials needed to support the participants in making decorations.

A safe space available: Ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

Additional note:
During the holidays, the participants are emotionally sensitive and emotions are visible in everyone. This is because they are happy to recall warm family moments and the time they spent with their family.

Landscape creation

An interesting yet demanding activity in which a large number of participants take part is when a landscape is painted on a large piece of hammer paper. One of the participants is asked to draw the landscape while the rest of the group are asked to trace the picture by following the student’s instructions. The participants fill in the parts of painting with the beads one by one. The purpose of this activity is that through group work all of the participants take part in coordinating and filling in the different parts of the landscape and that they divide each other. More important during the activity is the development of fine motor skills.

Painting and drawing

The drawing and painting workshops are implemented in a quiet relaxing atmosphere with instrumen
tal music in the background. The participants are given a canvas on which they are free to transfer their emotions. It was found that the young men from Burundi are very talented in drawing and they left very beautiful pictures at the centre. In contrast to them, the young people and adolescents from Afghanistan would mostly draw

Materials available:
Preparation of hammer paper and glue.

A safe space available: Ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

Additional note:
It is recommended that during this activity that in addition to the

Motivated learners:
Animate the group and, more importantly, inform them about this activity, their aims and objectives. Assistance: The materials needed for the activity are:

- Graphite pencils
- Small beads of different colors
- Hammer paper

Provide each participant with the materials and encourage them to design and paint according to their imagination. This activity can serve as a starting point for promoting practical skills to gain knowledge about the mental and physical health of the individual with whom we work and what kind of life the individuals used to live and what kind of education they had growing up. It also serves as a good tool for identifying those in need of psychological support.

Description of activity

The purpose of this activity is that in addition to the

- Engagement with the community in which they live. This is because the objects and decorations they make are used in the boys and young men centres or in the temporary reception centres. It is very important to make a good workshop plan and have an interested group of participants. This group should work on a wide range of topics. One example is working with wood. Wooden benches are made along with wood engraving, foil engraving, stained glass, plaster figures, vases and cement figures.

- Motivated learners: Depending on the workshop, animate a small group of participants and explain to them in detail what will be done. A safe space available: Ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

- Additional note: Many works created during the workshops are sold at a bazaar. The bazaar is organised and the money from the sale is donated to the workshop, animate a small group of participants and explain to them in detail what will be done. A safe space available: Ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

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Sewing

The purpose of the sewing workshop is to develop practical skills that will enable the individual to progress independently. It is about learning specific practical skills that, after their adoption, will enable independent work and the production of final products. Namely, the provision of quality practical services. When it comes to these skills, all you have to do is ask. You will be surprised how many boys and young men are tailors, carpenters, electricians and more. Your task is to empower them with the knowledge and teach others. Adolescents interested in engaging in sewing in their country of origin are increasing to take on the role of facilitator.

Handcrafts

The main purpose of the handcrafts workshops is first to activate each individual and small group of participants with this involvement would involve everyone in creative work and to contribute to the community in which they live. This is because the objects and decorations they make are used in the boys and young men centres or in the temporary reception centres. It is very important to make a good workshop plan and have an interested group of participants. This group should work on a wide range of topics. One example is working with wood. Wooden benches are made along with wood engraving, foil engraving, stained glass, plaster figures, vases and cement figures.
“Our ability to create and sustain our social world depends in large measure on how we communicate. People’s social skills are crucial to their well-being—individually and collectively. The importance of understanding skillful behavior in all its complexities cannot be overstated.”

Communication plays a key role in everyday life, even in conveying the simplest messages. However, the ability to communicate in a foreign language is crucial for boys and young men on the move because it not only overcomes issues during their journey but also helps ensure a better life in the future through, for example, improved employment prospects.

Many of the boys and young men in BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not have the chance to complete their formal education in their country of origin. It is therefore very important to them that the BYMCs offered opportunities to learn new languages, depending on their wishes and affinities. Thus, language classes are one of the most popular activities.

Implementing foreign language classes for people on the move requires special attention and a willingness to hold a class with different levels of knowledge and populations from diverse cultural backgrounds. While there are participants there are different categories, ranging from those who have not been introduced to the Latin alphabet to participants who already know their letters go above and below the lines of a row. It is important for them to learn the writing technique. Apart from the written part, the alphabet letters are prepared for participants individually. The empowerment officer always pays attention to the word on the work material as well as the picture and at the same time practiced both in a group and individually.

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One of the main differences between implementing language sessions for young men and for adolescent boys is that adolescent boys often need to be motivated to learn a foreign language, because some of them still do not understand the importance of knowing a foreign language. This requires adaptation of the implementation of the session itself, using methods and techniques that make the session closer and more interesting to the younger population. This can be done, for example, by including a combination of pictures, sounds and coloring books in a foreign language, repetition of lessons after an audio recording, naming cartoon characters and giving tasks for the next session.

2.2.5. Thematic sessions

Thematic sessions that are implemented in BYMCs are planned in advance and are structured and adjusted to the interests and needs of the participants. Through the implementation of thematic sessions, the participants develop skills and attitudes and are strengthened in the area of expressing their identity as well as their understanding of situations where they were or could have been a victim of any number of forms of violence. Among others, topics related to violence are discussed through non-violent communication workshops. The thematic workshops at BYMC help to identify many cases of GBV, because they are run in such a way that through their active participation in the discussion the young men express a need for a conversation with the GBV case manager.

It must be kept in mind that these sessions are of an informal and relaxing nature and are intended to expand the knowledge of the participants on various topics. These sessions should therefore be as informal as possible and fit the wishes and needs of the boys and young men. Sometimes it is good to let one of the participants lead a session on a topic that he knows well. In this way the participants are given a sense of confidence and thus build their self-belief. However, taking into account the fact that group participants come from different countries with cultural differences it is not recommended to allow individuals to hold a thematic session of their choice without prior discussion with the empowerment officer. This is because it could contain cultural practices and traditions that are not acceptable to participants from other countries.

The creativity and good observation of the empowerment officer are the keys for successfully implementing thematic sessions. Depending on his previous migration experience and the needs of the boys and young men, the empowerment officer will prepare a topic to be presented and discussed during the session. The table below contains a description of thematic sessions that are successfully applied in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### Thematic sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GBV prevention</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Materials available

- Textbooks
- Working materials
- Audio recordings
- Videos
- Role play scenarios
violence. It is important to present certain aspects of the behaviour of a person who has or is experi- encing such violence and also the behaviour of the perpetrator of the violence.

Tolerance

This is a structured and planned session aimed at involving young men and adolescents from different countries. Considering that the main goal of the session is to educate the participants about the terms ‘labelling’, ‘violence’, ‘toler- ance’ and ‘diversity’, at the end of the session the participants will answer a few questions to provide feedback about their own social position, whether they have been exposed to labelling or vio- lence or if they have participated in labelling or violence.

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This is a session that focuses on the participation of participants from different countries. The participants will have the opportunity to present the culture, customs and language of their country of origin. The goal is for them to acquire knowledge and accept cultural differences.

Materials available: Everything that is available and could be used to represent one’s own culture, customs and traditions.

A safe space available: Ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

Additional note: Encourage participants from different countries to take part. When implementing the session pay attention to the presentation of the traditions and cultures of the participants as well as the reactions of others. Sometimes comments can be unpleasant and it is important to react in a timely manner in these situations.

The areas covered in the thematic sessions apply equally to adolescents and young men. In both groups the focus is on empowering individuals in the group who are withdrawn, reluctant to engage in communication activities and are reluctant to communicate and afraid of participation. Thematic sessions are ideal for joint activities of adolescent boys and young men. Adults play an important role in continuing the dialogue whilst adequately respecting the process of development of adolescent boys, who struggle with three core issues: identity, intimacy and independence.

Sometimes, as a result of the thematic discussions, it is possible (especially with adolescent boys) to obtain useful information about the ‘protection’ challenges they encountered during their travels from their country of origin to the TRC as well as information on their future action plans (future plans). Although this activity was introduced as a form of casual conversation and ‘chatting’ about interesting topics it can also be used as a tool for gaining an insight into significant trends and difficult or traumatic personal experiences and conditions of individuals, primarily adolescents.

The impact that thematic sessions have depends on the nature of the selected topic. They usually contribute towards other empowerment activities, while their flexibility also allows them to contribute towards protection activities.

2.2.6. Sports and board games

Sports and board games are purposefully aimed at establishing positive and strong social bonds and trust between the boys and young men and the empowerment officer. At first glance, these activities appear to create a fun relaxing and friendly atmosphere; however, they achieve much more than that.

Guided by the importance of physical activities for the health of each person, the UNFPA team conducts sports activities in BYMCs and outdoors. According to the WHO, “…regular physical activity helps prevent and treat non communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and breast and colon cancer. It also helps prevent hypertension, overweight and obesity and can improve mental health, quality of life and well-being.”

Although the type of sports activities should be selected together with the boys and young men, they are carried out in accordance with the resources available. BYMCs are usually equipped with sports equipment such as those for football, volleyball, badminton, darts, etc. All these sports require physical activity and allow the empowerment officer to recognise potential physical injuries that could result from GBV.

Implementing social games in BYMCs or outdoors occupies a special place and has multiple roles. All social games include different forms of behaviour and

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Choose the sport that will be the focus and make sure that every one understands the rules. The facilitator should be consistent in this in order to avoid confusion throughout the entire period of the sports activity. It is good to take a role on the referee. In addition to playing matches, specially designed body tasks (e.g., movements with a ball) can be used. These can usually beneficially for adolescents as it contributes to the proper development of their muscles, proper body position, etc. If the sessions are organised to provide training then they require continuity and specificity. The participants should develop in phases and usually result in the performance of longer prepared content events where adolescents play an active role.

Art sessions are conceived and carried out as constant activities whose intensity is adapted to the interests of those attending the TIC. They usually result in occasional manifestations where the created and rehearsed content is demonstrated in front of the TRC audience. In this way, for example, the adolescent boys from one BYMC in Bosnia and Herzegovina independently performed the theatrical performance titled ‘We are human’ in front of the employees of all the organisations present at the centre who attended as their guests. Another example is ‘Culture Days’ where written poems were recited. Some of the specific art activities that achieved a significant impact in this country are described in the table below.

While it is more suitable to implement sports activities outside, board games can be played both indoors and outdoors. The positive effects of these activities is not only to keep in good physical condition and achieve situational mental relaxation but also to learn (e.g., spirit of sport, fair play, positive emotions), socialise and to share difficulties.

2 Practical examples of sport and board games activities written by staff members are attached as Annex 1 (6.3).
The purpose of theatre/drama sessions is to develop a sense of art and personal artistic expression and creation. Guided by the idea that art has a therapeutic effect, there is an additional reason for implementing these sessions of this type in the migration context and the conditions in which adolescent boys and young men find themselves.

Concurrently, the drama sessions have their own continuity and take place in a planned sequence. Some of the steps are to form a group of adolescents who will participate, achieve group cohesion and relaxation of the participants, basic exercises on the elements of acting (voice, facial expression, and movement), joint design of the content (plays) and future training to the required level.

After rehearsing, there is the opportunity for the participants to express their own experiences in relation to the films during their free time or similar. It gives adolescents an opportunity to present their works (about their homeland, sex, family, etc.) in front of an audience. The goal of the self-expression is to expose themselves, which can potentially be important matters that could not be reached through other forms of communication.

There is an opportunity during film sessions to develop a discussion about the film shown. The films can be short educational films on taboo topics, films about relationships, feature films, etc.

Equipment needed: Various appropriate films, a flat screen, a projector and, if possible, drinks and popcorn.

A safe space available: Ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles. If there is a large number of adolescent boys and young men present, then a larger space is more suitable for such an activity is to increase motion and improve the mood of the group as well as to build the self-confidence of individuals.

Additional note: Pay attention to the age of the participants and make sure that the group is composed of participants of a similar age. Avoid a combination of different age groups. This is due to the fact that in some cultures dancing can also be seen as a form of courtship or even abuse.

Music sessions

These sessions can be included in, for example, the implementation of regular activities at BYMCs where talented young men who are interested in music are identified. The UNFPA team supports the organisation of a concert where the young men can show their talent to which they gladly respond. A concert can be organised in accordance with the cultures of the residents of the TRC which can be invited to support the event.

A safe space available: Ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles. If there is a large number of participants then a larger space is more suitable.

In warmer weather an outside space can be used for this purpose.

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Equipment available: Loudspeaker, appropriate music should be agreed beforehand. A safe space available: Ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles. If there is a large number of participants then a larger space is more suitable.

In warmer weather an outside space can be used for this purpose.

The participants can describe their own experiences in relation to the film using the emotions it evokes in them and the ideas and messages contained in the film. A skilled facilitator with the necessary skills in understanding different elements and aspects of the film. In this way a critical attitude is adopted when selecting the films during their free time and learning about films as the seventh art.

Based on these sessions, the activities of the day/night cinema/film sessions during which the film is shown outside the BYMC is an appropriate space on a large screen for all boys and young men. A cinema atmosphere is ensured by creating a concert-like atmosphere and, where possible, providing appropriate music. A gardener is required prior to the session to inform the participants of the film and it should not be in any way stigmatising for a certain culture.

This is about presenting national dances of other interested people. This activity is suitable for situations where there is some type of celebration (holiday) and for preparing a dance point for some event (monthly event or similar). It gives adolescents an opportunity to present their culture through their national dance (dance is a very important part of cultural identity for some nationalities and has a therapeutic and relaxing effect).

A safe space available: Ideally, it is a BYMC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles. If there is a large number of participants then a larger space is more suitable.

In warmer weather an outside space can be used for this purpose.
2.2.8. *Monthly events*

Monthly events is an empowerment activity primarily of a recreational nature that targets adolescent boys. It is an activity that is organised once a month and in such a way that it takes the form of a manifestation/event for a wider audience (in the context of BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is most often for an audience at the level of the TRCs). Namely, at regular meetings with adolescent boys (ideally at the level of the ‘Boys’ voice’ group) proposals about what they would like to organise are collected.

This is a good opportunity to practice leadership because the organisation itself (giving a loan, helping with organisation and performance) involves adolescents. After an idea for a future monthly event is submitted the proposal is then presented to professionals at the BMYC and to other organisations. Once the proposal is approved, the event’s planning and preparation begins. On the day of the event, adolescents play the most important role in the implementation of everything planned, with the support of the empowerment officer of course.

The adolescent who will participate, the materials and other content needed for the event are prepared during the month during regular BMYC sessions (depending on the event in question). The following are examples of monthly events implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1) the drama performance ‘Days of Culture’, which was prepared by a BYMC together with adolescents during Art drama sessions, where adolescents presented the cultures of their countries of origin in the form of, among other things, recitations, songs, dances and drawings; 2) ‘Balkan Day’, during which adolescents invited their friends and members of their families in the community to participate in certain sports activities once a week for two hours. During the BYMC creative sessions and used the money received from the sale to, among other things, participate in the ‘Balkan Day’, during which adolescents sold their works of art and handicrafts made in the TRCs. Namely, at regular meetings with adolescent boys and young men of different characteristics must accept and respect such diversity. An additional benefit is that adolescents and young men actively engaged in sports activities will develop the skills they need to manage stress and behave in ways appropriate to the environment. This will help them to believe in themselves and increase their confidence when learning new skills.

Fact that adolescents are given the opportunity to propose the events they want and to participate in the preparation and implementation from start to finish. This certainly contributes to their empowerment in the form of strengthening their advocacy and leadership skills, organisational skills and practical public speaking and also contributes to their getting to know each other and exchanging experiences.

2.2.9. Activities related to social cohesion

The purpose of activities related to ‘social cohesion’ is primarily to remove prejudices in the community based on ethnically, gender, racial or other prejudices. They are realised in the form of some of the previously mentioned types of activities. This paper uses, for the purpose of demonstration, sports and recreational activities as examples. Namely, the UNFPA agrees with the local community sports centre to implement certain sports activities once a week for two hours. During BYMC creative sessions and used the money received from the sale to, among other things, participate in the ‘Balkan Day’, during which adolescents sold their works of art and handicrafts made in the community based on ethnicity, gender, race or other prejudice. They are realised in the form of some of the previously mentioned types of activities. This paper uses, for the purpose of demonstration, sports and recreational activities as examples. Namely, the UNFPA agrees with the local community sports centre to implement certain sports activities once a week for two hours. During BYMC creative sessions and used the money received from the sale to, among other things, participate in the ‘Balkan Day’, during which adolescents sold their works of art and handicrafts.

The key impact of these activities is expected to be the development of a sense of belonging to a group, namely a sense of acceptance within a group in which adolescents and young men of different characteristics must accept and respect such diversity. An additional benefit is that adolescents and young men actively engaged in sports activities will develop the skills they need to manage stress and behave in ways appropriate to the environment. This will help them to believe in themselves and increase their confidence when learning new skills.
2.3. Empowering through protection activities

2.3.1. Empowering boys and young men through SRH activities

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) activities, as protection activities, in BYMCs are an essential part of the UNFPA mandate. Their importance and methods of implementation are described in the document BOYS AND YOUNG MEN SAFE SPACES: A guidance note based on the humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNFPA, 2022.

During the group sessions, the empowerment officer clarifies certain input provided by the boys and young men previously visited a urologist and generally have poor knowledge of SRH, the empowerment officer must be assured and conducted in a timely manner. After group or individual sessions are prepared ahead of time and delivered mostly through PowerPoint presentations and simple words. Later, on the boys and young men have the opportunity to have individual consultations with a urologist. The empowerment officer has an important role because, during and after these sessions:

- It is essential to encourage participants, especially adolescent boys, to raise a question during the SRH sessions or to ask for an individual consultation. As of today, many boys and young men present in Bosnia and Herzegovina have never previously visited a urologist and generally have poor knowledge of SRH, the empowerment officer explains the importance of the sessions and motivates them to participate.
- During the group sessions, the empowerment officer clarifies certain input provided by the boys and young men previously visited a urologist and generally have poor knowledge of SRH, the empowerment officer must be assured and conducted in a timely manner. After group or individual sessions, the empowerment officer may collect feedback in order to identify and encourage those who had not had the opportunity to raise questions at the time.
- Knowledge about sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and access to adequate care has the power to improve the lives of people. Therefore, it is crucial to raise awareness on SRH and related services and to empower and inform the boys and young men about this topic. The UNFPA educational programme was created in order to prevent entry into early unprotected sexual relations, teen pregnancy, early diagnosis of prostate cancer and treatment of urinary infections, the consequences of the sexual and intimate partner violence and sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and HPV.

Empowerment sessions should be organised separately for boys and young men because they deal with different aspects of SRH and because the topics relating to certain aspects of SRH are relevant solely to boys or young men. Sessions on puberty and changes in a boy’s body, for example, should be held separately with boys because they might feel ashamed to ask questions or share their thoughts in front of older male persons. It should also be kept in mind that if boys from conservative and more traditional countries should be different from that of other boys, because they may not be so open or willing to talk about such issues.

The facilitator should have a good understanding of the cultural, religious and traditional sensibilities of the boys and young men and organise and implement the sessions in a secure and comfortable conditions in order for the beneficiaries to become actively involved and express their needs and questions and the facilitator should make sure that the boys and young men feel ashamed because of the unusual SRH practices that they use or the level of knowledge that they have. In such a situation, the facilitator should talk to the boys and young men individually and allow them to share their experiences in confidence. The terminology used in the sessions should be explained in simple and understandable words.

In addition to being able to visit the hospital or receive the necessary medical care, the boys and young men have also the opportunity to have a healthy sexual and reproductive life through seminar sessions (sexually transmitted diseases or infections, anal and vaginal infections, testicle diseases, erectile dysfunction, etc.). All are fields that the boys and young men will not only be able to relate to their own health experiences but also receive valuable information in order to recognize in time certain health issues that may occur in the future. Potential SRH activities are listed in the table below, while some examples are crucial in Annex 1 (Ex. 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SRH activities</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of sexually transmitted deceases and reproductive tract infections and their causes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genital and sexual health and hygiene.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods and awareness of contraception and its importance in terms of sexual and reproductive health.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness on puberty and changes in the body of adolescent boys.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of the sexual relationship between men and women.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family planning sessions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching materials: stationary, visual literature, posters and models and video materials.

Impact:
The majority of the boys and young men who had not had the opportunity to be examined by a urologist previously decided after the SRH sessions and activities to go to a urological examination. They also spoke openly about their difficulties in respect to sexual reproductive health with the urologist and the empowerment officer. Through these activities the participants level of awareness is raised about the importance of taking care of their health and use of contraceptives and the possibility to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and their spread.

2.3.2. Empowering boys and young men through GBV activities

Empowering boys and young men through GBV activities

GBV is the most extreme expression of unequal gender relations in society and one of the most widespread violations of human rights. While GBVP disproportionately affects women and girls it also affects men and boys. These abuses take place all over the world in homes, schools, work places and communities. Yet GBV is preventable and education and educational institutions can play a central role in ending GBV.

As the identification of gender-based violence is done on a daily basis during the implementation of the GBV activities in these centres, another separate activity is that performed within these centres. If we are to define what GBV represents then we can note that “gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality, and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies. Gender-based violence is a violation to be inflicted upon a person because of their gender. Both women and men experience gender-based violence.”

Most violence occurs within relationships, and violence in relationships is considered one of the most important forms of gender-based violence and given that the situation on the ground has shown that there is a need for additional help for boys and men about this subject, GBV education has to be conducted with this population.

More often than not, the boys and young men who visit BYMCs come from regions that have been afflicted by war or similar social misfortune and were there for more likely to become or are survivors of GBV committed either in their native country or during their migration journey than those who live in established democratic societies. GBV education consists of educating the boys and young men about the types of GBV. The main goal is to acquaint them with these terms

but also to identify potential GBV victims and by using the already existing re- ferential system and tools provide help to those in need. One of the roles of the empowerment officer is to identify potential GBV victims, however, these sessions are conducted by the UNFPA GBV case manager, a professional who deals with this issue. The GBV case manager is also the person responsible for taking further steps in regard to the identification, inclusion in essential services and further processing or referral of the survivor to another organisation. By using the ex- isting tools, the case will be opened in the safe centre’s database (GBVMS) and further progression will be monitored. Needless to say, the privacy of the victimised person and his dignity is of utmost importance.

When conducting this training, it is necessary to explain to the participants the concept of gender-based violence and then all of the type of violence that exist, how to identify it, how to react to it, what it is. It is important to let the identified survivors are provided with psychosocial support and other necessary services. The services, which includes age appropriate activities, the promotion of positive coping strategies (individual and group activities)

The term ‘psychosocial’ refers to the dynamic relationship between the psycho- logical and social dimensions of an individual’s life. The psychological dimen- sion includes the emotional, intellectual and thought processes, feelings and reactions, while the social dimension includes relationships, family and community, social values and cultural practices. Psychosocial support is therefore provided to all survivors of GBV, with the psychological and social needs of individuals, families and communities.

The provision of specialised, targeted and age appropriate GBV mental health and psychosocial support within the UNFPA Psychotherapy sessions: Support the mental health of the young men and help them to deal with their problems. The BYMC psychologist and psychosocial worker organize three types of sessions: individual, group and educational sessions.

Boys and young men on the move are very often unwilling or unable to talk about the difficult experiences they have survived in their country of origin, during their journey and upon arrival. That is why there is a need to develop a relationship of trust with them. Sometimes all you can do is listen to their story and be understanding. In most cases, GBV survivors need psychosocial support in order to overcome this traumatic experience. Psychological support for survivors of GBV can be of an individual character. In this case, the GBV case manager or MHPSS expert arranges an appointment with the GBV survivor and conducts a counselling session. At the same time, there is also a group form of psychosocial support. Such a group can be led by the GBV case manager or an MHPSS expert and it can be led jointly by the aforementioned facilitators. When the GBV survivor is at the point he decides the flow of the conversation whilst going the participants the opportunity to share their experiences with each other or to experience the negative psychological effects. GBV survivors know his problem the best, during individual or group PSS activities a relationship of trust, mutual trust and awareness of needs is necessary.

Judging from the experiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the male population in need of psychological support is reluctant to accept this form of sup- port outside of a person of the Boys and Young Men Centre (BYMC) or the UNFPA psychotherapy within a BYMC has proven to be crucial, because survivors of violence that the gender consonance is referred to other agencies. There are a couple of reasons for this. The first is that they do not want to reveal GBV to another person. The second is that they have to come to such a decision. They trust the UNPA personnel at the BYMC and expect that in addition to the already ex- isting services they will be provided with psychosocial support within the UNFPA centre.

The above-mentioned reasons led to psychological support to the male popula- tion within the Boys and Young Men Centre (BYMC). For survivors of GBV psychological support intended for the female population covers all women and girls aged 15+. According to our experiences, the most needed and most impactful MHPSS sup- port activities are 1) psychotherapy sessions and 2) educational sessions.

Teaching material: stationary, visual literature and posters and video material.

Impact: It is important to emphasise that one of the goals is to educate survivors of gender-based violence, empower them but also to identify those who may be at risk of GBV or are experiencing some risks they do not recognise as such or do not recog- nise it as violence or are not ready to talk about it themselves. It is not uncommon for them to realise during their education that they have experienced gender-based violence. Of course, the participants are told before the education begins that if they come to such a realisation during the education they will have the opportunity to talk to the GBV case manager immediately after the education ends or whenever they want to schedule an appointment for an individual inter- view.

To sum up, the importance of this education is multiple. In addition to raising awareness about gender-based violence, the participants also learn how to be- have in the event that they experience or witness gender-based violence. Iden- tification of such forms of GBV is also included and how to react to the situation. Given that GBV is a complicated issue, it is very difficult for the identified victims to come to their realisation during their education that they have experienced GBV or are experiencing it but due to the some reasons do not recog- nise it as violence or are not ready to talk about it themselves. It is not uncommon for them to realise during their education that they have experienced gender-based violence. Of course, the participants are told before the education starts that if they come to such a realisation during the education they will have the opportunity to talk to the GBV case manager immediately after the education ends or whenever they want to schedule an appointment for an individual inter- view.

To sum up, the importance of this education is multiple. In addition to raising awareness about gender-based violence, the participants also learn how to be-
3. Lessons learned and tips for users

3.1. General facilitation tips

- Facilitators should be adequately acquainted with the topics they intend to discuss during the sessions.
- Before asking any personal questions the facilitator should be prepared to share their own personal experience or knowledge in order to engage young men in conversation and discussion.
- Facilitators need to understand and patience when implementing activities, because there are people who will need additional explanation or are not able to express themselves because of language or some other barrier.
- Facilitators should create a relaxed atmosphere in their working area by providing (if possible) coffee/tea or candy for the participants.
- Facilitators should always introduce themselves and their colleagues and thoroughly explain the work of the BYMC if there are new registered boys and young men.
- Facilitators should ask the boys and young men to provide their feedback at the end of each session (where applicable).
- Facilitators should avoid asking about sensitive topics with the boys and young men when employees of other organisations are present or nearby.
- If a young man who is skilled in English and willing to provide assistance in translation would be of great help to the facilitator, they should be made aware of this information.

3.2. What about sensitive topics during the activities

In the practical workshops it is necessary to guide the participants step by step because they have been shown that they are afraid and tend to run away from the unknown. The connection between thoughts, emotions, behaviour and the need to respect everyone’s values system and the need to show care and support towards the reactions of all group members to certain publicly expressed attitudes and opinions, and empathy, namely positive acceptance of all group members equal in all respects and in all ages. Important factors on which the assessment and determination of goals in group work depend are active listening to what the group is saying, careful observation of the reactions of all group members to certain publicly expressed attitudes and opinions (see Box 3). The facilitator needs to have understanding and patience when implementing activities, because there are people who will need additional explanation or are not able to express themselves because of language or some other barrier. When talking about sensitive topics, it is necessary to choose your words carefully and monitor the reactions of the participants or interlocutors in order to avoid any possible stigmatisation. When implementing history classes, attention should be paid special attention to their facilitation style and give extra care when dealing with such topics. First-hand experience of working with boys and young men on the move has shown that an appropriate approach to the boys and young men is crucial when it comes to evoking their interest in topics such as SRH and GBV (see Box 3).

- Boys and young men who decide to open themselves up in regard to sensitive topics must be assured that all the information given will be protected by the staff involved and will be treated only with their consent and with the consent of their legal guardians (if a minor) that can information be channelled further, it is necessary for an intervention by employees from another international organisation. Furthermore, if a sensitive topic is brought up during a group activity the officers should encourage someone to try avoid speaking about it in front of the group until an appropriate time to speak to that person individually in order to avoid any possible stigmatisation.

Facilitators need to be careful when discussing sensitive topics with the boys and young men. It is necessary that the same topics are adapted to all categories of BYMC visitors and especially to unaccompanied and separated boys and adolescents. When talking about sensitive topics, it is necessary to choose your words carefully and monitor the reactions of the participants or interlocutors in order to avoid any possible stigmatisation. Furthermore, when implementing history classes, attention should be paid special attention to their facilitation style and give extra care when dealing with such topics. First-hand experience of working with boys and young men on the move has shown that an appropriate approach to the boys and young men is crucial when it comes to evoking their interest in topics such as SRH and GBV (see Box 3).
Successfully and has its purpose. Provided we can conclude that the session is decide to participate. Based on the feedback etc.). After an additional explanation, many preventing sexually transmitted diseases, recognition of the first signs of some illness, able in future life (maintaining good hygiene, doctor has to say because the information of sometimes the answer is simply ‘I'm fine and I don't have any problems with that’. However, the officers explain that even if someone is healthy have any problems with that. However, the of participants is and the role of the urologist, some explaining what the purpose of the SRH ses sessions men to participate in SRH Inviting the boys and young - Box 7.

- Reaching the agencies is another important aspect. Respecting the agreements schedule of a BYMC resulting in a small number of attendees during a BYMC

- Activities of other organisations within a TRC: When attempting to reach as many of the boys and young men as possible the location of the BYMC within a TRC is also one of the crucial aspects with regard to its successful work. If a BYMC is located remotely or if it is outside of the perimeter that is used by the boys and young men in their everyday TRC life the BYMC will not reach as many of the boys and young men as it potentially could if the location was on hand for the boys and young men. Two contrasting BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina highlight the importance of the location. One BYMC is located at the entrance to the TRC and hence the boys and young men were able to see it immediately upon entry. This resulted in a great number of participants during the implementation of activities and it was also easy to explain the location to those who had perhaps not noticed it. On the other hand, the other BYMC is located on a plateau that was not used by anyone and therefore it drew little attention in the TRC. This has also proved as an issue during the ‘info sharing’ activity when it was hard to explain the location of the BYMC to the young men because of its remote location. After receiving feedback from the young men and after further assessment the BYMC units were relocat-ed to the plateau where the accommodation units are also located. This resulted in an increase in the number of participants during the BYMC activities.

- Activities of other organisations within a TRC: The time schedule of activities implemented by other international organisations sometimes intervenes with a schedule of a BYMC resulting in a small number of attendees during a BYMC activity. Coordination between all humanitarian agencies is crucial for ensuring that there is no overlap or duplication of activities. Respecting the agreements reached between the agencies is another important aspect.

3.3. Gaps and challenges

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3.4. Empowerment stories from Bosnia and Herzegovina

3.4.1. Bosco aged 17

Bosco came to the Temporary Reception Camp a few months ago. He says that he is very passionate about selling and designing clothes and shoes and that he could not develop his future in his home country.

“I come here every day, when I have free time, because I know that if I come here I will get many things and at least one of the team members from UNFPA will help me. They advise me on how I can continue my way in my field, they help me with many problems, they advise me on how I can develop myself as a person and how I can develop my knowledge and use the skills I already have.”

3.4.2. Hamza aged 21

Hamza has been on the move for the past two years. He says his mother was against his decision to leave their country but that he is determined to provide for his family. His father died when he was four years old and to help his family

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Usually, some boys and young men tend to withdraw or feel shy when we invite them to take part in a SRH session. After thoroughly explaining what the purpose of the SRH ses-sion is and the role of the urologist, some-times the answer is simply ‘I’m fine and I don’t have any problems with that’. However, the officers explain that even if someone is healthy and has no medical issues it is always ad-visable to participate and listen to what the doctor has to say because the information learned during the SRH session will be valu-able in future life (maintaining good hygiene, recognition of the first signs of some illness, preventing sexually transmitted diseases, etc.). After an additional explanation, many decide to participate. Based on the feedback provided we can conclude that the session is successful and has its purpose.
Hamza became a welder at a very young age.

“I was forced to work because my two brothers are people with disabilities and I was the only one who was able to work and support my family.”

Upon arrival at the Temporary Reception Centre, Hamza met the UNFPA team and began to participate in classes and sessions.

“I could not write or speak English. Every day of my stay at the centre, for three months, I learned to write and speak English, quite good actually. When they asked me what ‘special’ means I told them that learning English is special.

English is a language commonly spoken in many countries around the world and this is what I appreciate and like so much and I have made a couple of friends among other migrants and refugees during his stay. This is what I appreciate and like so much and I have made a couple of friends among other migrants and refugees during his stay.

“Gustave has been in the Temporary Reception Centre for a couple of months, he has even made a couple of friends in the centre and refugees during his stay. As regularly as he can, Gustave joins the UNFPA activities with his friends. What stands out in his story is that he does not just think about how these activities can benefit him but instead he notices how they affect other migrants and refugees.”

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“Working on ground testing may include the use of his hands but it is in stark contrast compared to the colourful paper flowers he was holding in his hands. Yet this process that although some things are different it does not make them any less, or more any beautiful than the other. Ali has shown great talent during creative sessions and also at the centre, but he says that in the future he wants to do what he did before.

“I enjoy learning about the environment and I want to continue to help the environment. And also, I want to continue working with the UNFPA team. I really enjoy the creative sessions because it allows us to make something with our own hands and it’s beautiful. It is also a great distraction, when I occupy my hands I occupy my mind also... . I don’t think about the past and I don’t worry on the future, I just do what I have in my hands.”

Activity fibres: Practice has shown that fibres increase the number of participants at the activities by 50%. Upon their arrival and registration at a TREC, the boys were not supposed to be accompanied with the works of art inside the BYMCs but also with all other international organisations whose work is imple-mented within the TREC. Activity fibres are the activity girls and young men to the work of everyone involved.

“Feedback questionnaire: This would be quite useful in the sense that the audience would be able to provide feedback (in a physical form) after each or a particular session. This feedback is helpful in increasing the quality of services and attendees should be aware that their opinions are taken into consideration with new activities that are not just simple and can be understandable to everyone. Examples of a feedback form can be found in Annex 2.”

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations are useful for realising the full potential of a BYMC.

1. Interviews: More often than not the officers struggle during the implemen-tation of activities at the centre. This is something quite useful for the well-being and psychological state of BYMC employees. Regular consultations with a psycholo-gist could prevent potential issues for the staff, since working in such an environment and dealing with stressful situations/events can cause psychological damage. Besides group sessions such supervision should also offer the staff the chance for an individual consultation, which can result in more sincere and open communication.

2. Psychological supervision: Such supervision is very useful, as well as the psychological state of BYMC employees. Regular consultations with a psycholo-gist could prevent potential issues for the staff, since working in such an environment and dealing with stressful situations/events can cause psychological damage. Besides group sessions such supervision should also offer the staff the chance for an individual consultation, which can result in more sincere and open communication.

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The following recommendations are useful for realising the full potential of a BYMC.
6.2. Examples from a thematic session

Cultural differences

Materials: laptop/projector

Since the boys and young men originate from different countries and different parts of the world, this activity has proven quite interesting and useful because we can talk about and discuss different customs, religions and customs. Depending on their country of origin, the participants are asked to speak about something interesting that is specific to their culture (clothes, dance, food, etc.). This exercise is also included in this activity by providing examples of his own. The activity is further enriched by presenting these cultural differences via a laptop or a projector.

The activity is intended to relax the participants and encourage them to speak about and share their own views on the aforementioned aspects of life.

6.3. Empowering through SRH sessions

Urogenital infections

Materials: laptop/projector

The session is introduced by explaining that urogenital infections, after respira-
tory infections, are the most common infections health wise. It is explained that the physical differences mean that women are more prone to such infections but that men are also able to contract this type of infection, especially migrants and refugees who often spend nights outside during their journey and drink water from unreliable sources. The difference between the male and female urogenital tract is explained via illustrations.

The session continues with an explanation of the usual symptoms during an in-
fection, painful urination, constant need to use the toilet, small amounts of urine, blood traces in urine and fever. It is also explained to the participants via illus-
trations that the colour of their urine can also be one of the signs of a potential issue with the urogenital tract. By using this approach, the possibility of an infection is explained.

The participants are told what to avoid and what to practice in order to preserve their urogenital health. Spicy food, alcohol, wet underwear, showers and long bicycle rides are things that can do harm whereas fruits (berries) can preserve urogenital health.

The next part of the session addresses ‘Escherichia coli’ bacteria, which is the main cause of this infection. The process of urogenital infection treatment (sam-
ples of urine for analysis, ultrasound of the urinary tract, blood samples and in-
testes in countries in forest

6.4. Empowering boys and young men through GBV

Empowerment activity – ‘Gender-based violence’

The training is conducted by explaining the term gender-based violence to the participants at the very beginning and then asking them about their understand-
ing of the topic and asking them to give an example. The training is interactive. The facilitator leads the training but the participants have the right to ask ques-
tions or make comments whilst respecting the roles of the group. At the end of the training the participants provide feedback and compare what they said at the beginning with what they have learned.

Example of a workshop: The participants are given papers on which fictitious situations that they might find themselves in are described. Their task is to imag-
ine themselves in those situations and to share with the others how they would behave in such a situation. The other participants have the right to comment and ask questions or to say how they would behave in that situation. An example of such a situation is that you are travelling to Italy and you realise that your companion intends to seduce a boy. How would you act? If the participant does not know how to respond, the facilitator takes into account all factors, motivates and advises the participant so that he can act. Other partici-
ants are also involved in solving this task.

Materials: sheets of paper, pencils, white board and white board markers.

Articles, a, an, the

Materials: sheets of paper, pencil, white board and white board markers.

This lesson is implemented when the officer notices that there are advanced English language speakers present in the BTC. Often though they may poss-
sess a certain knowledge of the language many of them struggle with the usage of articles. Using the white board the officer thoroughly explains the difference between the articles and how and where each one of them is used. After giving the explanation, the officer then conducts exercises with sentences in which the participants have to write the corresponding article (further explanation is pro-
vided if needed).

Dangers in my surrounding

Materials: laptop/projector

Since migrants and refugees are not aware of the possible dangers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the activity aims to provide them with an understanding of the area, its climate, the possible dangers they may encounter in the forests, etc. While performing this activity the officer uses a projector to provide illustra-
tions of things that may be harmful to them. Those dangers come in the form of animals (snakes, wolves and bears), plants such as the locally well known ‘žara’ or poisonous mushrooms. Another potential danger to the boys and young men that needs to be paid attention to whilst they are walking through unmarked trails are landmines and unexploded ordnance. By showing illustrations of each of the named potential dangers the officer raises their awareness and thereby possibly saves the boys and young men from certain danger.

Please Note: One example of how unaware the boys and young men are of this area is the fact that they sometimes ask if there are lions or tigers living in the
Sexually transmitted diseases

Materials: laptop/projector.

Before the session starts, the officer introduces himself and the doctor in case there are newly registered boys and young men at the BYMC. The topic is then introduced through an explanation of sexually transmitted diseases (how to recognize and follow-up procedures). This activity is carried out as part of gender-based violence (GBV) education.

6.5. Empowering boys and young men through PSS

Empowerment activity – ‘Harmful traditions in the world’

This activity requires a pen and a pencil. At the beginning of the activity the participants are told to write different emotions they know on pieces of paper. After the facilitator has written all the emotions they wrote, the facilitator together with the participants then categorize the emotions into positive and negative emotions. In order to facilitate the process of categorization the facilitator should ask questions or give an explanation about certain emotions. At the end of the activity the participants are asked to write in one sentence how they feel, but not to use a single word that indicates a certain emotion. You could respond by, for example, saying ‘I feel like a sunny day’ and in response the facilitator could ask an additional question such as ‘Can you explain to me what a sunny day is to you?’ Once everyone has said how they feel, the facilitator lastly asks the participants to draw a smiley face on a paper to rate the activity.

The participants will also tell their stories, which means that the activity has been implemented successfully. Please Note: Never do this activity with a newly established group, only with a well-established group that you know has developed a mutual trust relationship. Many of the boys and young men have not had the opportunity to share their travel experiences with others. During the frequent arrivals of the same group the facilitator of course explains to them that they do not necessarily have to talk and that it is perfectly okay if they wish to remain silent, while he explains to the others that they must respect the decision of others to remain silent and not to attempt to force anyone to speak.

Through this activity, people are given the opportunity to talk about their experience of a certain emotion or experience from the narratives of others. It very often happens that by describing their journey they become aware of what they have been through and then realize how strong they really are, even though some of them might feel completely hopeless at the time. A lot of information can be discovered about sensitive issues through this activity as well as the feelings of others. This activity is intended to motivate participants to speak and through this to help themselves as well as other participants.

You need a piece of paper and a pencil to implement this activity. The optimal number of participants for this activity is six. The task of each participant is to describe each other on paper and after writing it down put the same in front of the person they wrote about. Everyone must write at least five words on the paper. In addition to the description, they also write their wishes for each other for the future. After everyone has written their letters, they get up one by one and read all the letters they have. The purpose of this activity is for the young men to understand that they are not alone in the situation and that there are people around them who can understand what they are going through. This also has a motivating effect on the participants.

Empowerment activity – ‘Future Me’

This activity requires a pen and paper and good background music. The activity is carried out by asking the participants to write a letter to themselves but five years in the future. These boys and young men are very often demotivated and need something to make them think positively. Given that planning for the future can positively affect the mood of this population this activity is carried out pre-emptively and focused on the future. The aim of the activity is for the participants to write a letter about how they currently feel and what they hope to achieve in the next five years. The participants are given the opportunity to read their letter in front of the others; however, if they do not wish to do so no pressure is put on them. It is explained to them that they should keep the letter in a safe place so that they can keep it for the next five years under the agreement that they will not read the letter before then. Participants who have taken part in this activity stated in their feedback that this activity really gives them more motivation to plan for their future.

Empowerment activity – ‘Deserve to or wish something for me’

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Empowerment activity – ‘My journey to Bosnia and Herzegovina’

Many of the boys and young men have not had the opportunity to share their travel experiences with others. During the frequent arrivals of the same group of young men at the session, an activity that is often created for them, so they would end, is to describe their journey to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The facilitator of course explains to them that they do not necessarily have to talk and that it is perfectly okay if they wish to remain silent, while he explains to the others that they must respect the decision of others to remain silent and not to attempt to force anyone to speak.

Through this activity, people are given the opportunity to talk about their experiences and show their own experiences or from the experiences of others. It very often happens that by describing their journey they become aware of what they have been through and then realize how strong they really are, even though some of them might feel completely hopeless at the time. A lot of information can be discovered about sensitive issues through this activity as well as the feelings of others. This activity is intended to motivate participants to speak and through this to help themselves as well as other participants.

This activity is carried out as part of gender-based violence (GBV) education. Namely, the PowerPoint presentation, the group of participants is given papers on which different customs from all over the world are written. They are then asked if they have ever heard of this custom. If they are familiar with it they are then asked to explain this custom and then to evaluate whether it is ‘good’ or ‘bad’. After they answer the questions, they are shown a prepared presentation that complements their answers. There are then many documentar- ies about these customs. It is desirable that if deemed advisable certain doc- umentaries should be shown. In this way, it is easier to explain the topic being discussed to the participants.

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You need a piece of paper and a pencil to implement this activity. The optimal number of participants for this activity is six. The task of each participant is to describe each other on paper and after writing it down put the same in front of the person they wrote about. Everyone must write at least five words on the paper. In addition to the description, they also write their wishes for each other for the future. After everyone has written their letters, they get up one by one and read all the letters they have. The purpose of this activity is for the young men to understand that they are not alone in the situation and that there are people around them who can understand what they are going through. This also has a motivating effect on the participants.

6.4. Explaining sexually transmitted diseases

During the explanation of each of the named diseases illustrations are used so that everyone can see what these diseases look like and what to pay attention to when observing their own body.

Sexually transmitted diseases

During the explanation of each of the named diseases illustrations are used so that everyone can see what these diseases look like and what to pay attention to when observing their own body.
Example 1

QUESTIONNAIRE
(Please circle your answer)

Activity name:
Date:

Did you like the activity?

Did you learn something new?

Did you understand the provided information?

Do you think this activity needs improvement?

Will you participate in similar activities?

Example 2

Activity:
Date:

Please cut out a jar to rate this activity.
Place the cut piece of paper in the box in front of you.
Answers are anonymous.

I'm not satisfied.
I am neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
I am satisfied.