BOYS AND YOUNG MEN
SAFE SPACES

A Guidance Note based on the Humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina
BOYS AND YOUNG MEN SAFE SPACES:
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Authors:
Srđan Vujović
Alma Pezerović

Editing and proofreading:
Christopher Hughes

Graphic Design:
Saša Đorđević

This publication was developed by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Humanitarian Response Team within the project “EU Support to the BiH Refugee and Migration Response” funded by the European Union through an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) special measure and is implemented by the IOM in partnership with UNFPA.

Sarajevo 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1. Who are boys and young men ‘on the move’

Boys and young men on the move is a population of males between 15 and 30 years of age who have left their country of origin for various often interconnected reasons, such as conflict, poverty or experiencing violence, that made them vulnerable. Some of them are children who travel alone, also known as unaccompanied or separated children/minors. On their journey to reach their desired destination country this population usually suffers from different harmful experiences, including exploitation, violence, hunger and neglect of hygiene. As the number of days spent in transit increases so does their level of vulnerability.

1.2. Mixed migration humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Since 2017, Bosnia and Herzegovina has become a country on the Western Balkans transit route for many boys and young men trying to reach Western Europe. Most of them are officially registered at formally established temporary reception centers (TRCs), where competent institutions and organizations provide a range of services that target the entire population of irregular migrants. UNFPA has established boys and young men safe spaces within TRCs, locally called BYMC centers (Boys and young men centers). The functioning of BYMCs as part of the comprehensive referral mechanism implies strong cooperation with all partner institutions/organizations. In the beginning, the migrant population in Bosnia and Herzegovina was mainly from middle eastern countries (Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan and Iraq) but the characteristics of the population have changed frequently over the years. This diverse population has arrived from more than 20 countries on three continents, namely Asia, Africa and the Americas. Since November 2022, the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina recorded the arrival of 106,090 migrants of which 68 per cent were adult men and 6 per cent were unaccompanied minors (almost exclusively boys). In addition to the different cultures and traditions with all their specific components, diverse educational backgrounds, habits and plans for the future create many challenges for humanitarian response programmes.
1.3. What are boys and young men centers (BYMCs)?

BYMCs are suitable places where competent professionals assure the physical and emotional safety of boys and young men on the move, with the final mission to prevent, mitigate and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) and ensure accessibility and availability of sexual and reproductive health services (SRH). Through a wide range of needs based and participatory activities these centers give them a sense of dignity and help to eliminate the sense of helplessness that many young men in this population often feel.

BYMCs can be established in the form of two different operational models: 1) as independent/separate service centres in a selected community in a particular country and 2) as centres within a more extensive response mechanism (e.g., camp for a population affected by a certain crisis). Yet they must be established with the appropriate involvement of the relevant government institutions. UNFPA has established BYMCs within TRCs as part of a broader migrant related interventions. UNFPA has established BYMCs within TRCs as part of a broader migrant related interventions.

1.4. How to utilise this document

Bearing in mind that the global migrant population has never been larger (3.4% of the total population is migrating internationally), predominantly made up of millions of young people, there is no available tool or manual to provide guidelines for establishing safe spaces (see Box 1). This document has the potential to help and guide all those who will establish centres for boys and young men in the future in a crisis situation or as part of a humanitarian response.

The document is based mainly on the experiences of UNFPA teams and the teams of partner organisations that worked on the mixed migration humanitarian response in this country. It is enriched by the findings of desk review research. The structure of the document matches the format of similar guiding documents, which not only allows the reader to compare the differences between safe centres in different countries (e.g., Syria, Bangladesh and Bosnia and Herzegovina) but also the differences between safe spaces for men and women.

The following chapter (Chapter 2) emphasises the different needs of boys and young men on the move that can be addressed through boys and young men centres (BYMCs). Chapter 3 offers solutions and examples of how to respond to the identified needs. Chapters 4 and 5 lead the reader through the process of establishing BYMCs, including the key guiding principles. In the final chapter (Chapter 6) the document offers useful stories and examples from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2. Why BYMCs are needed

Boys and young men on the move as irregular migrants or refugees usually travel for months or years before they arrive in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The more time they spend on this journey and the more borders they cross irregularly only increases the probability that they will experience more unpleasant and harmful situations. Consequently, in general, they suffered more than the migrant population in countries at the beginning of the migration route such as, for example, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The more irregular migration is, the more likely it is that boys or young men have diferent needs at different stages of the ‘migration journey’.

Box 2: Purpose of BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina

1. To make them feel safe and to provide services and assistance to the survivors of gender-based violence.
2. To provide services for the protection of sexual reproductive health.
3. To provide psychosocial support to the boys and young men.
4. To organise informal education.
5. To empower and build the competencies of the boys and young men.
6. To fill the free time of the boys and young men with useful activities.

As there is no available tool or manual that would provide guidelines for establishing safe spaces for boys and young men in a humanitarian crisis, this pioneering document represents a kind of precedent by creating guidelines through the experiences of the presentation of the humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
The especially vulnerable categories are unaccompanied and separated boys and girls. Without parental care, they are most likely to experience violence and exploitation. Their lack of economic certainty makes them even more vulnerable.

(1) Traditional harmful practices: These often support the idea that “boys and young men deserve physical punishment if they do not show obedience and submission to elders”.

(2) Situational exploitation: This is manifested in the form of occasional requirements from a mature male requiring boys or young men to do something for him. These can be different requirements, ranging from the least serious (bringing some food or charging a mobile phone) to the most serious (sexual services or forced criminal activities). Those who refuse are usually punished. A typical example is abuse by a smuggler during the journey from one place to another.

(3) Systematic exploitation: This is planned and organised by those who have identified and organised the boys and young men in TRCs throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. A young man or gang and their influential position resulting from their connection to smugglers.

There are several reasons that frequently appear in this respect:

a) survival sex that involves engaging in sexual intercourse in order to secure basic human needs (food, clothing or shelter).

b) transactional sex favours for gifts, services, humanitarian goods, etc.

c) survival sex and sexual favours for leisure, recreation or entertainment.

d) low levels of education are common and education on SRH in particular.

Conservative backgrounds nurture the value of men as the stronger gender and therefore the preconception that men should ‘suffer in silence’.

There is the general understanding that shame is attached to sharing and disclosing reproductive health issues with others.

Low levels of education enrolment rates among the migrant population broadens the gap between boys and young men who travel through Bosnia and Herzegovina usually enter the ‘do no harm’ approach. Therefore, competent BYMC staff have to find a way to prevent this (see Box 7).

2.3. Provision of necessary psychosocial support

While physical suffering is more visible, recognising and especially helping trauma takes time. Negative thoughts and emotions, flashbacks, nightmares and other negative feelings can appear suddenly months or even years after negative experiences. Boys and young men on the move do not always agree (informally) to secure basic human needs (food, clothing or shelter); enough to cope with stress.

There is no time limit to the healing process because it takes time.

The fact that boys and young men only stay for a relatively short period at the TRCs in this country makes the necessary implementation of psychosocial support extraordinarily challenging. According to official statistics for the five-year period, the approximate length of stay is between 20 and 150 days, the internal records for 2022 suggest that it is between 3 and 5 days. This leads to the risk that the healing process will not be completed successfully in cases where it is suddenly interrupted, namely the person left the TRC, and this in turn jeopardises the overall goal of the BYMCs.

2.4. Organise informal education

The low level of education enrolment rates among the migrant population broadens the gap between boys and young men who travel through Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many boys and young men registered at TRCs in this country have never had the opportunity to learn about the cultures and customs in their country of origin and the circumstances and deprivation they experienced during the years they spent on the move (including, among others, violence and different forms of exploitation) means that it is not reasonable to expect them always to be able to make the right choices for themselves and/or socially responsible decisions.

2.5. Empower them and build their competencies

The empowerment of boys and young men on the move is critical to giving them back their sense of dignity and responsibility for their lives. The various hard conditions they experienced in their country of origin and the circumstances and deprivation they experienced during the years they spent on the move (including, among others, violence and different forms of exploitation) means that it is not reasonable to expect them always to be able to make the right choices for themselves and/or socially responsible decisions.

2.2. Provision of services aimed at protecting sexual reproductive health

Although issues related to sexual reproductive health (SRH) are expected and sometimes obvious among the population of irregular migrants, especially because of the hardship they experience during their journey, ensuring their participation in the programme of support can be very challenging.

There are several reasons that frequently appear in this respect:

- Conservative backgrounds nurture the value of men as the stronger gender and therefore the preconception that men should ‘suffer in silence’.

- Low levels of education are common and education on SRH in particular.

- There is the general understanding that shame is attached to sharing SRH-related issues with others.

- Harmful traditions in their country of origin (See Annex 2 for more detail on the top five forms of harmful traditional practices experienced by boys and young men at BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina). Boys and young men who travel through Bosnia and Herzegovina usually encounter many challenges within the following broad aspects:

- awareness of differences (hygiene and health issues, human rights, cultural diversity, etc.);

- life skills (communication, conflict avoidance and conflict resolution, critical thought, etc.);

- lack of trust and fear of the future (the psychological and physical impact left by their experience of violence).
3. Responding to ‘their needs’ through BYMCs

3.1. Activities and services at BYMCs

3.1.1. General consideration

In order to achieve the desired impact BYMCs provide a range of activities that can be grouped into the following categories: 1) empowerment activities, 2) protection activities and 3) assistance activities. Activities at BYMCs are adapted and applied depending on the identified needs of boys and young men as well as other relevant factors.

In the context of BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the disproportion between the extent of the application of different activities is evident (see Illustration 1). Empowerment activities predominate yet assistance services require significantly less effort.

3.1.2. Empowerment activities

Empowerment activities refer to different groups of activities based on the specific needs of boys and young men on the move with the overall goal to empower them for their future life, with special focus on GBV and SRH. As shown below in Illustration 2, staff members create a safe and supportive environment for boys and young men through the perspective ‘Now, in the BYMC’. This allows for a ‘dipper dive’ into their past or the ‘Looking back’ perspective, which includes their background and life experiences. Both of the aforementioned perspectives ‘feed’ the third one or the ‘Look forward’ perspective, which targets positive plans for the future of the boys and young men.

Illustration 2. The purpose of empowerment activities at 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 participation 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 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.

Purpose of the empowerment activities in BYMCs

Illustration 1. Types of activities at BYMCs

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2.6. Fill their free time with useful activities

Boys and young men at the TRCs have a significant amount of free time to spend and without control and/or strict activities different antisocial behaviour can easily appear, such as, for example, physical conflict, drug abuse and exploitation in order to prevent this from occurring and at the same time preserve the mental and physical health of the boys and young men they are encouraged and motivated to get involved in different social and recreational activities.

Table 1. Groups of empowerment activities applied in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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In order to enhance their ability to overcome these issues in their future life, BYMCs offer diversified empowerment activities that take into account the needs and plans of individuals. A detailed overview of these empowerment activities is available in the document ‘Empowering Boys and Young Men in UNFPA’s Safe Spaces: Experiences from the mixed migration humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina’.

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A range of empowerment activities have been applied in BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to achieve the stated purpose (see Table 1). A detailed description of each particular activity is provided in the related document 'Empowering Boys and Young Men in UNFPA’s Safe Spaces: Experiences from the mixed migrant humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina'.

### 3.1. Protection activities

In the broadest sense, protection activities implies ‘all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individuals in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law, namely human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law’.6

However, within the afforded mandate of BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina three groups of protection activities are implemented:

1. GBV prevention and support for survivors.
2. GBV prevention and support for survivors.
3. SRH related activities.

Support for survivors of Gender-based violence (GBV)

While GBV is caused by gender inequality and the abuse of power it does not nec-

6 www.government.nl/topics/mhpss.

essarily depend on the age or gender and anyone can experience it. There are many reasons why

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to GBV but it is significant to note that boys and young men are also at risk. GBV is a violation of human rights and is a crime in the leading states.1 According to the political declaration the届006th session dealing with the issue of violence against women and girls (2015) GBV occurs in "all settings, situations and contexts, and is a human rights issue with gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is critical in preventing GBV and ensuring that help is provided in a gender-sensitive manner to every survivor. Children of these states have a role to play in preventing GBV.24 To prevent and combat GBV is a key role of the humanitarian community and the community at large.3

GBV case managers at BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina work at the individual and group level, not only to identify potential cases and run the referral mechanisms and to prevent further cases, but also to raise awareness about and prevent further occurrences of GBV. It is critical to identify and treat GBV cases as early as possible.4

The role of a BYMC in one such case is explained in Annex 3. A GBV case manager at BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina works at the individual and group level, not only to identify potential cases and run the referral mechanisms and to prevent further cases, but also to raise awareness about and prevent further occurrences of GBV. It is critical to identify and treat GBV cases as early as possible.4

In general, MHPSS activities aim to treat and prevent psychiatric illnesses such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. MHPSS is necessary since it supports one’s psychological well-being, overcoming daily struggles and issues and reducing psychological pain and stress.34

Assist the recovery

Reduce the risk

GBV access to specialised care and support services.
Types of PSS related activities at BYMCs

1. Group PSS education and discussions
2. Group psychological support
3. Individual psychological support
4. Preventing SRH issues and supporting those affected

IN GENERAL, THERE ARE FOUR ESSENTIAL GROUPS OF SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (SRH) ISSUES. THEY NEED TO BE ADDRESSED: PREGNANCY, HIV, UROLOGICAL AND GENITOURINARY PROBLEMS.

Preventing SRH issues and supporting those affected

In general, there are four essential groups of sexual reproductive health (SRH) activities at BYMCs: 1) regular visits by a urologist to the BYMC and the holding of educational and preventive sessions on this topic; 2) identification of those who need an individual consultation with a doctor and provision of the same; 3) identification of those who need a medical examination and organisation of the same and 4) monitoring the person in case of further need.

BYMCs engage professional doctors (urologists) in order to maximise the effectiveness of preventing SRH issues. They provide educational sessions and relevant training for boys and young men, focusing on the most relevant SRH topics identified as the most needed for specific groups of the migrant population—such as gbv survivor adolescents and young men. Moreover, they use comprehensive urological and sexual health examination, which is performed after the first visit to the urologist.

BYMCs need to provide education and information about the risks and consequences of SRH issues, including pregnancy, HIV, urological and genitourinary problems. They must ensure that boys and young men have access to relevant medical services and recognize the importance of seeking appropriate medical care when needed.

BYMC staff organise an assessment by collecting information from all the boys and young men who need this support may not be an easy job. Besides the above-mentioned sessions, other empowerment activities play an important role in encouraging the boys and young men to report SRH issues. Moreover, BYMC staff organise an assessment by collecting information from all the boys and young men who need this support may not be an easy job.

Support for those affected by SRH issues is provided in cooperation with the relevant medical institutions (clinics/hospitals). However, identification of those that need this support may not be an easy job. Besides the above-mentioned sessions, other empowerment activities play an important role in encouraging the boys and young men to report SRH issues. Moreover, BYMC staff organise an assessment by collecting information from all the boys and young men who need this support may not be an easy job.

BYMCs use a developed tool (asking them to answer a list of questions) designed with a urologist for the first time and for the first time the boys and young men in the accommodation units, using a designed tool (asking them to answer a list of questions). The tool consists of a list of questions about sexual and reproductive health, including symptoms of sexual and reproductive health problems, including symptoms of sexual and reproductive health problems. The tool is used to assess the health status of boys and young men and identify those who need further medical attention.

SRH issues must be adapted to boys and young men to ensure that they receive appropriate care and treatment. This may involve providing information about the symptoms of SRH issues, discussing the different options available for treatment, and encouraging boys and young men to seek medical help when needed.

The purpose of the facilitator should be to guide, inspire and help the boys and young men by setting a good example through their own actions. It is also important that the facilitator provides clear directions that are simple to follow. To make the approach more friendly, facilitators who work in safe spaces in Bosnia and Herzegovina often use examples or stories from their own life experiences in order to make a friendly environment and to engage the participants. This is quite important since some of the topics discussed are sometimes personal or taboo and may require a sensitive approach.

The facilitator must ensure that the boys and young men understand the information provided and are able to apply it to their own situations. Facilitators who work in safe spaces in Bosnia and Herzegovina often use examples or stories from their own life experiences in order to make a friendly environment and to engage the participants. This is quite important since some of the topics discussed are sometimes personal or taboo and may require a sensitive approach.

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Although it was developed primarily to address the needs of women and girls through the UNFPA humanitarian response, ‘Dignity kits’ have been prepared and distributed to 3,500 boys and young men in TRCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the recorded data and monitoring results, it had a significant positive impact.

### 3.1.4. Assistance activities

At BYMCs there is a need to provide assistance on a daily basis and these activities are always related functionally to the above-mentioned protection activities. Hence, one of the most frequent activities is accompanying a boy or young man during transport to a public institution for the needed services. It includes, but is not limited to the following:

- hospital (e.g., for a medical examination);
- police station (e.g., in some GBV cases);
- safe house (e.g., to support the survivor of GBV);
- or young man to the TRC's chemists so that he can be provided with the prescribed medication. Moreover, the centre itself prepares certain necessary items in the form of coffee, tea, candy and 'Dignity kits' (see Box 12).\(^{26}\)

These activities also extend within the TRCs. When there is a need (prescription by a urologist for certain medication), the empowerment officer will escort a boy or young man to the TRC’s chemists so that he can be provided with the prescribed medication. Moreover, the centre itself prepares certain necessary items in the form of coffee, tea, candy and ‘Dignity kits’ (see Box 12).\(^{26}\)

These activities can also be in the form of informal open conversation with a boy or young man when they seek advice on certain matters. This causes open conversations about their daily life struggles to GBV, SRH and personal hygiene and the living conditions at the TRC, which stand out as the most important topics.

\(^{26}\) ‘Dignity kits’ are kits designed to provide personal hygiene and clothing equipment for a total of twelve items that young men or older boys participate in certain activities. These packages can include toothpaste, a toothbrush, shaving foam, a razor, shampoo, shower gel, a razor, shampoo, toothpaste, and a toothbrush.

3.2. What works for whom and under which circumstances

One of the most important criteria that determines which activity will be chosen and how it will be applied is age difference. Boys both as children and as human beings with emotional and physical immunity have different needs from young men, but also special rights.\(^{27}\) There are enough reasons to keep the focus on these differences during the intervention.

To maximise the impact, BYMC staff take into account other criteria that have a significant influence on the capacities of boys and young men to overcome the challenges they face. Family status is one of them. In that sense, Table 2 shows the important categories of boys and young men in BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There are also many other differences that must be considered during the design and implementation of activities. Seen through the experiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a process commonly known as a ‘white paper’.

An international organisation whose mandate in TRC is WASH approached the BYMC asking for our support to improve and prevent further misuse of the sanitary units by boys and young men. Empowerment officers at the BYMC prepared a PowerPoint presentation on the proper usage of the sanitary/hygienic units and applied it on many occasions (especially when new arrivals were admitted to the TRC). Besides the direct impact achieved, this activity indirectly contributed to the SRH component and general improvements in their living conditions.\(^{28}\)

Table 2. Categories of boys and young men in BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied boys</td>
<td>Boys (also known as unaccompanied minors) who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who by law or by custom is deemed responsible for so doing.(^{29})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated boys</td>
<td>Boys separated from both parents or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver but not necessarily from other relatives. These can therefore include children accompanied by other adult family members.(^{30}) Moreover, families with all male members (so-called ‘male families’) is a particularly interesting phenomenon whereby boys and young men have an increased risk of experiencing different forms of violence.(^{31})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys with families</td>
<td>Boys traveling with their families and with both parents or at least one parent (father, mother, adult sibling).(^{32})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men with families</td>
<td>Men traveling with wives and children or other family members. This also applies to men traveling only with their wife, only their children or with only other family members.(^{33})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single men</td>
<td>Men aged 18 or above traveling without family members. They are usually registered as single when seeking asylum in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a process commonly known as a ‘white paper’.(^{34})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{27}\) In accordance with the Child Rights Convention (CRC) dating from 1989, a child is defined under Article 1 as every human being below the age of eighteen years of age.

\(^{28}\) A process that is also known as the ‘white paper’.\(^{30}\) International Crime and a Middle Eastern Country.\(^{32}\)

\(^{29}\) International Committee of the Red Cross.\(^{33}\) See, for example, Vujovic S, “All roads lead to Sarajevo: The capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a suitable place for trafficking of children,” Urban crime – An international journal, 3(2021), pp. 226-229.

\(^{30}\) Ibid.\(^{31}\) The need to keep in mind that the national law on family and rights guarantees the rights of children.

\(^{31}\) There are enough reasons to keep the focus on these differences during the intervention.

\(^{32}\) Ibid.\(^{34}\) There are enough reasons to keep the focus on these differences during the intervention.

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Herzegovina, the most important are the literacy level, educational background, cultural differences, traditions, sexual orientation, disabilities, conflict between different nationalities, religion and race.

To achieve the maximum level of success it is sufficient just to adapt the activities to the specific group with whom you are working. However, there are also important universal circumstances and conditions that should be considered. Experiences from Bosnia and Herzegovina point to three important universal segments.

> Participatory planning: The plan of activities and services should be made in accordance with the needs and preferences of the boys and young men. This should be based on participatory assessments, but it should be noted that these might be made very quickly and informally. It is necessary when implementing services and activities to understand the cultural framework from which the boys and young men come and to implement activities and services in accordance with them.

> Adaptability: Although planned activities are always prepared ahead of time via a weekly schedule, working in a BYMC premises requires ‘rescheduling’. Obviously, the primary goal of the boys and young men in BYMCs established in the countries that are on their transition route, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, is to continue on their journey and reach their chosen ‘destination country’. Consequently, their priorities are focused on their personal plans and needs including their clear expectations whilst they are at the TRC or in this country. The working hours of a BYMC should be aligned with their needs and they should also participate in the re-modeling of the BYMC premises and accommodation units (see Illustration 3).

> Building trust and social bonds: Boys and young men should accept a BYMC as a place where they have an opportunity to actively participate in designing and leading certain activities or processes. These centres represent the best way to match their needs as well as for them to gain a sense of empowerment and value. The working hours of a BYMC should be based on participatory assessments, but it should be noted that these might be made very quickly and informally. By acting professionally and respecting the boys and young men including persons with disabilities. Activities and services must be provided on a timely basis and in accordance with the schedule. When services depend on other organisations within the TRC they must be well coordinated. It is also desirable to inform them about the different cultural patterns in this country (but also the region and the world) in order to prepare them for life in multicultural environments. By acting professionally and respecting the boys and young men and their needs social bonds will become stronger and stronger. Consequently, these positive circumstances have led to many boys and young men are ready to help BYMC staff in engaging other boys and young men.

## 4. Guiding principles for establishing boys and young men safe spaces?

### 4.1. Leadership and the empowerment of boys and men

Boys and young men should accept a BYMC as a place where they have an opportunity to actively participate in designing and leading certain activities or processes. These centres represent the best way to match their needs as well as for them to gain a sense of empowerment and value. The working hours of a BYMC should be aligned with their needs and they should also participate in the re-modeling of the BYMC premises and accommodation units (see Illustration 3).

Everything you do in a BYMC has to be in the best interests of the boys and young men. Looking from the other side, nothing that could jeopardise their best interests can be implemented at a BYMC. This means that the boys and young men are at the centre of all processes in the BYMC. Hence, almost everything requires consideration, assessment and monitoring and crucially feedback from the boys and young men. Safety: The safety and security of the survivor and his children is the primary consideration.

### 4.2. Survivor centred approach

“A survivor centred approach creates a supportive environment in which the rights and wishes of survivors are respected, their safety is ensured and they are treated with dignity and respect. A survivor centred approach is based on the following guiding principles.

> Safety: The safety and security of the survivor and his children is the primary consideration.

“The Boys’ Voice: a body that represents boys from all over the world that are currently in TRC in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was formed by organising elections in which all present boys took part and democratically elected two representatives from each country of origin (this was organised with the support of other adolescent mandated organisations). This was followed by the holding of regular weekly meetings attended by representatives of the boys and representatives of organisations that, according to their mandates, work with boys. Now there is two-way communication and the boy representatives have the opportunity to advocate the opinions/ideas/proposals of the other boys in matters related to solving significant challenges/difficulties/problems at the TRC, but also to give ideas and proposals for innovations in matters related to the activities and services themselves. Minutes are regularly written and delivered to other organisations and through the ‘action points’ work is done on what is pointed out through ‘The Boys’ Voice’. In addition to the development of leadership and advocacy skills and the realisation of changes at the TRC, this opportunity contributes significantly towards the boys getting to know each other and brings them together despite all of their differences.

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> Safety: The safety and security of the survivor and his children is the primary consideration.

> The example 'The Boys' Voice'
"When we (migrants/refugees at the TRC) do something wrong or act out during a session UNFPA team calm us down and they talk to us and help us find another way to deal with our emotions and thoughts. No matter how I am feeling I know they won't tell my story and this information cannot be shared without the informed consent of the survivor."

Box 15. An adolescent (19) "After conducting the participatory assessment, the BYMC was placed in one part of the TRC. However, the boys and young men did not want to visit the centre for unexpected or unexplored reasons. After a follow-up assessment with young men, it was concluded that the BYMC should be placed in a different location within the same TRC. Therefore, participatory assessments sometimes need follow-up."

4.3. Safety and accessibility

Since their establishment, all BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been located within the TRCs. BYMCs for young men aged 18+ have been established in TRCs for ‘single men’, while BYMCs for children (aged 15-17) were established in TRCs for families in order to ensure a higher level of safety. Namely, although many of them are technically single males their vulnerability as unaccompanied separated children means that they need to stay in a safer environment.

Although BYMC team members are working with people in need, including vulnerable categories, they must be careful to avoid labelling the population such as females from Afghanistan have a low level of education. The consequences could lead to discrimination.

Since their establishment, all BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been located within the TRCs. BYMCs for young men aged 18+ have been established in TRCs for ‘single men’, while BYMCs for children (aged 15-17) were established in TRCs for families in order to ensure a higher level of safety. Namely, although many of them are technically single males their vulnerability as unaccompanied separated children means that they need to stay in a safer environment.

It is necessary to monitor the position of BYMCs within TRCs. It is always important, for instance, to consider how close the entrance gate is, how far from police there are any potential hazards that could adversely affect safety. Since these centres are located within the TRCs, only boys and young men registered as residents of the TRC are permitted to enter the TRMC and participate in its activities.

A safe space for boys and young men should be accessible to all of these boys and young men. This space must also ensure their safety and privacy. Their opinion should be taken into account when deciding where the safe space for boys and young men will be located. Although the safety regulations of one TRC meant that GBV specialists and experts from the UNFPA team made the final decision together with the management of the TRC, it is extremely important to provide all necessary evidence to explain and justify the choice of the best place to establish a BYMC and this includes the perceptions of the boys and young men themselves. A good practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the conduct of regular ‘safety audits’.

In order to make possible improvements and to minimise the chances of GBV and other types of violence occurring, the safety audit aims to check the surveillance video system, that toilets are separate for different categories of people present in the TRC (especially the most vulnerable), accessibility and proximity to key services of the majority of the police to the TRC accommodation units, perception in call of the ‘green zone’, etc. As part of the safety audit, which includes a physical tour of the TRC and the recording of any identified shortcomings/challenges, the BYMC conducts focus group discussions with the vulnerable population in each TRC.

The aim of the focus group discussions is to include their perception and to identify any risks, patterns and causes that could make the affected populations susceptible and vulnerable to violence as seen from their point of view (see Annex 4 for an example of a participatory assessment exercises).

BYMCs also regularly conduct a ‘GBV participatory assessment’, especially when trends or the structure of the people in the camp change or when there are any changes in general living conditions of the migrants residents. The GBV participatory assessment carried out with the target group checks their viewpoints, experiences, challenges, ideas and recommendations regarding their personal feeling of safety and possible exposure to GBV at a particular TRC (see Box 16).

Recommendation: above-mentioned documents are forwarded to the TRC management in order to improve the security situation and are also discussed with the broader audience such as working groups.

4.4. Community involvement

Depending on the situational context and operational model of the BYMC, the expectation of community involvement might be different. While those establishing the BYMC have to involve local leaders and representatives of the relevant institutions, working in TRCs is more about creating a supportive environment inside. Experiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina underline the importance of community involvement in the following two directions:

1. Boys and young men should be involved in the processes in a BYMC in order to maximise the potential for addressing their needs. Namely, all different components of a ‘community’ (the target population in a TRC) and all communities coexisting in the territory, namely the TRC, should be engaged.

2. Their involvement in terms of peer support is extremely beneficial for newly arrived boys and young men. Acceptance and peer support in order to improve the boys and young men at a BYMC TRC has the potential to determine how much of an impact the
interventions at the BYMC will have, particularly when it comes to unaccompa-
nied and separated boys whose uncertainty is emphasised.

Therefore, community involvement can be considered as both 1) a process and 2) the impact that mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programmes have in emergencies.88

4.5. Coordinated and multi-sectorial

While operating with relatively small teams and providing different forms of pro-
tection and assistance activities, functional BYMCs have established multi-sec-
torial coordination. Working in the best interests of the boys and young men on
the move implies cooperation with the centres for social welfare, police, health
institutions, NGOs, etc. When BYMCs operate within TRCs multi-sectorial coordi-
nation is an essential part of daily and weekly activities.

To ensure successful coordination, it is crucial to have a GBV and other referral
mechanisms, including the relevant SOPs, so that there is no overlap in the work
of different organisations and to know at all times who is in charge of what. Staff
familiarisation with these documents is critical not only for ensuring timely and
successful support for a boy or young man in need but also for ensuring a safe
and confidential process.

4.6. Tailored

A BYMC should appeal to all of the boys and young men alike. If it is to be equally
attractive to everyone then it is necessary to consider different age groups, the
different cultures from which the men and boys come, their different interests
and skills and the like when organising and implementing activities. It is neces-
sary to emphasise that this space must be accessible to people with disabilities
and allow BYMC personnel to identify cases of GBV. It is also a good way to share
attractive material such as brochures.

Presenting ‘catchy’ activities at the BYMCs should be done at the right moment.
Although it is expected that boys and young men are informed about such activi-
ties shortly after their arrival at a TRC, it should not be applied if they are in a poor
physical or emotional condition (e.g., exhausted, injured, emotionally unstable,
etc.). Innovative and attractive methods of presentation are helpful. Short documen-
taries, PowerPoint presentations, newspaper articles, etc. are very often used to
evoke interest in and the success of these activities.

4.7. ‘Catchy’

Significant efforts should be invested in order to attract boys and young men to
visit and become involved in the BYMC. It is always good to ask yourself ‘why
should they decide to visit us?’ The right answer should usually be ‘to meet their
needs’, especially their short-term needs such as to charge a mobile phone, get
the right information, etc. To familiarise boys and young men with the long-term
benefits of participating in BYMC activities and to enhance their sense of em-
powerment info-sharing activities should be performed on a daily basis. Whether
door to door info-sharing or simply walking within the compound of the reception
centre, the empowerment officers need to motivate the boys and young men to part-
ticipate. This can also lead boys or young men to reveal violent experience
and allow BYMC personnel to clarify cases of GBV. It is also a good way to share
attractive material such as brochures.

Experience shows that some participants are shy at the beginning of the activity
and avoid conversation. Probably, it is the right moment for ‘ice-breaking’ activities.

Box 17. BYMC self-reflection

5. How to establish and run a boys and young men safe space?

5.1. Initial assessment

The first step in establishing a BYMC is to explore the needs and potential as
well as the resources and limitations in terms of resilience. The obtained results
should inform all decisions during the process. Yet given the complex humanitar-
ian accommodation settings for extremely vulnerable categories, including boys
and young adults, the situation can change rapidly. Therefore, these participa-
tory assessments should be conducted regularly. That is the only way to regularly
explore and examine more closely the risk factors associated with GBV.

The initial assessment should also include an assessment of other partner or-
isations in the field so that there is no overlap in activities and services. Such
an assessment would also contribute to the establishment of referral mechani-
sms and SOPs.

There are no strictly prescribed standards in terms of the methods and tools for
conducting the initial assessment, which strongly depends on the context and the
needs in the field. It is important that the assessment is led by experts.

Some UNFPA centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina were set up before the migrants
and refugees were accommodated in TRCs and in those cases GBV experts,
without the possibility of including the boys and young men, carried out the as-
essment. In other situations, UNFPA centres were established after the popula-
tion had been located and it was therefore possible to include the opinions and
perspectives of the boys and men in the pre-establishment assessment.

88 See also IOM, Manual on Community-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies and Dis-
It is necessary when determining the location of a safe space for boys and young men to, whenever possible, take into account the opinions of the boys and young men themselves. It is necessary to consult with them. It is also necessary to better investigate their cultural patterns in order to organise the work in the safe spaces in an appropriate manner. To better understand what the potential risks are for this population it is necessary to provide a room for individual consultations. When determining the location it is necessary that this room be accessible to people with disabilities. The secure room should provide at least 20 places for participants in the activities. It is essential that a BYMC is located in a place that is comfortable for boys and young men and that these premises are away from any disruptive entities. The characteristics of a good initial assessment:

5.1.1. Safety and security
In Bosnia and Herzegovina BYMCs are located within temporary reception centres (TRCs), which are always secured by either a domestic security company or the police. In case of an emergency or if a certain vulnerable individual needs to be moved or protected the security guards or police officers on duty, in coordination with other organisations, ensure the safety of the boys and young men. In order to better understand the safety risks for boys and young men it is necessary to consult with them. It is also necessary to better investigate their cultural patterns in order to organise the work in the safe spaces in an appropriate manner. To better understand what the potential risks are for this population it is necessary to consider the environment from which they originate. Such centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina where TRCs were created from former hotels and safe spaces for boys and young men were established within those premises. It is important that these spaces have a certain physical distance that ensures privacy when performing activities. It is also necessary to provide a room for individuals consultations. When determining the location it is necessary that this room be accessible to people with disabilities. The secure room should provide at least 20 places for participants in the activities. It is essential that a BYMC is located in a place that is comfortable for boys and young men and that these premises are away from any disruptive entities.

5.1.2. Location
It is necessary when determining the location of a safe space for boys and young men to, whenever possible, take into account the opinions of the boys and young men as well as the resources of the TRCs in which the centre will be opened.

5.2. Advocacy and partnering
Advocacy activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina play a critical role not only in establishing BYMCs but also for their daily functioning and transformation. Without the focused advocacy activities, such as the establishment of the ‘green zone’ (as planned in sub-chapter 5.5. Adapting and transforming) this would not be possible.

The same rules are applicable in the context of the humanitarian response to the ongoing influx of refugees. In most instances, the model will be implemented in the presence of a different area of expertise (or intermediate) that can be quite useful. To improve and ensure accessibility to the centre for people with disabilities, specialised organisations working with such categories should also be engaged.

The same rules are applicable in the context of the humanitarian response to the ongoing influx of refugees. In most instances, the model will be implemented in the presence of a different area of expertise (or intermediate) that can be quite useful. To improve and ensure accessibility to the centre for people with disabilities, specialised organisations working with such categories should also be engaged.

5.3. Time
It is important to harmonize the working hours of the safe space for boys and young men with the working hours and habits of the boys and young men and to implement them in a way that the full potential of the safe space can be fulfilled. Moreover, a person working in the position of a gender-based violence case manager or social worker should be aware of the needs of adolescent boys and young men and that these premises are away from any disruptive entities. This fact is also crucial when it comes to emergencies.

5.4. Partnership
Establishing a BYMC means complex and context specific risks. Approaches to safe spaces should be organised and managed in consultation with communities. The opening of a safe space in Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided between the shifts and during that period a record breaking number of newly registered attendees was recorded at the safe space.

5.5. Adapting and transforming
5.5.1. Obligations of the safe space
5.5.2. Obligatory events within the temporary reception centre (TRC). The time schedule of the safe space will be adjusted in order to reach as many boys and young men as possible. A good example of this time adjustment in Bosnia and Herzegovina occurred after the closure of TRC Mira in Velika Kladusa when all persons on the move were transported to TRC Lipa. Since the number of people on the move at TRC Lipa suddenly expanded it was decided that the safe space would work in two shifts. The first shift had a working schedule from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., while the second shift had a working schedule from 2 p.m. until 10 p.m. From 2 p.m. until 10 p.m. the teams of both shifts worked together and had time to exchange information and agreed on the cases that should be followed up. The workload was divided between the shifts and during that period a record breaking number of newly registered attendees was recorded at the safe space.

The characteristics of a good initial assessment:

• It should be participatory,
• actively engage boys and young men led by an expert,
• contain interpretable results for each relevant boys and young men category,
• be updated regularly.

Sometimes there is no need to build such rooms from scratch, because there may be already available rooms in the TRCs that would be appropriate for the safe space concept. There have been cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina where TRCs were created from former hotels and safe spaces for boys and young men were established within those premises. It is important that these spaces have a certain physical distance that ensures privacy when performing activities. It is also necessary to provide a room for individuals consultations. When determining the location it is necessary that this room be accessible to people with disabilities. The secure room should provide at least 20 places for participants in the activities. It is essential that a BYMC is located in a place that is comfortable for boys and young men and that these premises are away from any disruptive entities.

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• be updated regularly.

Sometimes there is no need to build such rooms from scratch, because there may be already available rooms in the TRCs that would be appropriate for the safe space concept. There have been cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina where TRCs were created from former hotels and safe spaces for boys and young men were established within those premises. It is important that these spaces have a certain physical distance that ensures privacy when performing activities. It is also necessary to provide a room for individuals consultations. When determining the location it is necessary that this room be accessible to people with disabilities. The secure room should provide at least 20 places for participants in the activities. It is essential that a BYMC is located in a place that is comfortable for boys and young men and that these premises are away from any disruptive entities. The time schedule of the safe space will be adjusted in order to reach as many boys and young men as possible. A good example of this time adjustment in Bosnia and Herzegovina occurred after the closure of TRC Mira in Velika Kladusa when all persons on the move were transported to TRC Lipa. Since the number of people on the move at TRC Lipa suddenly expanded it was decided that the safe space would work in two shifts. The first shift had a working schedule from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., while the second shift had a working schedule from 2 p.m. until 10 p.m. From 2 p.m. until 10 p.m. the teams of both shifts worked together and had time to exchange information and agreed on the cases that should be followed up. The workload was divided between the shifts and during that period a record breaking number of newly registered attendees was recorded at the safe space.

The characteristics of a good initial assessment:

• It should be participatory,
• actively engage boys and young men led by an expert,
• contain interpretable results for each relevant boys and young men category,
• be updated regularly.

Sometimes there is no need to build such rooms from scratch, because there may be already available rooms in the TRCs that would be appropriate for the safe space concept. There have been cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina where TRCs were created from former hotels and safe spaces for boys and young men were established within those premises. It is important that these spaces have a certain physical distance that ensures privacy when performing activities. It is also necessary to provide a room for individuals consultations. When determining the location it is necessary that this room be accessible to people with disabilities. The secure room should provide at least 20 places for participants in the activities. It is essential that a BYMC is located in a place that is comfortable for boys and young men and that these premises are away from any disruptive entities. The time schedule of the safe space will be adjusted in order to reach as many boys and young men as possible. A good example of this time adjustment in Bosnia and Herzegovina occurred after the closure of TRC Mira in Velika Kladusa when all persons on the move were transported to TRC Lipa. Since the number of people on the move at TRC Lipa suddenly expanded it was decided that the safe space would work in two shifts. The first shift had a working schedule from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., while the second shift had a working schedule from 2 p.m. until 10 p.m. From 2 p.m. until 10 p.m. the teams of both shifts worked together and had time to exchange information and agreed on the cases that should be followed up. The workload was divided between the shifts and during that period a record breaking number of newly registered attendees was recorded at the safe space.
5.3. Staffing: Roles and capacity development

The organisational structure of a BYMC depends on the chosen operating model (an independent centre or a part of a comprehensive response), which is always reflected in the types of activities that are to be implemented. The BYMC model applied in Bosnia and Herzegovina meant that it was appropriate to have relatively small but very agile and well-coordinated teams. The core positions in these teams, with related responsibilities, are listed below in Table 3.

Table 3. Core structure of BYMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Main responsibilities and expected competencies</th>
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| BYMC Coordinator              | • Daily supervision of BYMC staff and regular evaluation of the implementation of activities, with the aim to improve BYMC services.  
• Support and advise the team members during the implementation of activities, not only in terms of the relevant procedures but also on the subject matter of activities.  
• Coordinate activities with other organisation in the TRC.  
• Ensure regular communication and reporting at different levels.  
• Conduct administration-related to staff.  
• Attend community and management meetings. |
| Empower Officer               | • Design and lead the implementation of different empowerment activities, including informal education, sports activities, creative workshops and language classes.  
• Lead the implementation of the Boys and Young Men on the Move Programme.  
• Conduct info-sharing and socialising outside the BYMC.  
• Issue GBV screening/referrals to the GBV officer and follow up on the cases, cooperate with other organisations in the field.  
• Provide assistance/translation during SRH and PSS sessions and other activities.  
• Assist (accompany) boys and young men who are referred for an examination at a hospital (SRH-related), to the police, the prosecutor’s office and the like. |
| GBV Case Manager             | • Provide GBV education, support to GBV survivors and follow up on these cases.  
• Lead GBV case management and coordination of GBV cases and ensure the provision of health and psychosocial support for survivors of GBV.  
• Act as the focal point for GBV cases (24/7).  
• Organise case conferences, participate in the GBV working group and revise GBV referral pathways when needed.  
• Assist empowerment officers when needed.  
• Info-sharing and socialising outside the BYMC.  
• Cooperate with other organisations in the field. |
| PSS Officer                  | • Provide psychosocial support for boys and young men, focusing on GBV survivors.  
• Prepare group educational sessions on PSS and provide individual consultations.  
• Provide the first psychological aid in accordance with the identified needs.  
• Deliver SRH prevention sessions and provide information on health topics.  
• Provide sessions on contraception for the young men and adolescent boys.  
• Visit the accommodation units of the boys and young men for the purpose of informing them about the available services and to check their health status.  
• Identify any potential need for individual consultations or additional support by other professionals.  
• Provide medical check-ups and if necessary further treatment at the health centre. |

Although the BYMC and WGC were relatively closely positioned in Bosnia and Herzegovina, because of the specifics of work in both centres cooperation between staff members could have been better than it was. Consequently, some opportunities to share good practice and lessons learned and to explore the potential for joint implementation of the activities dropped. This lesson will be used to improve the future work of both centres.
other qualities such as empathy, understanding, trust, active listening, tolerance and non-discrimination. When it comes to refugees and migrants living in Bosnia and Herzegovina it is important to emphasise that these are populations that come from cultures where gender equality is at an uneven level or even non-existent.

The gender of BYMC staff is also an essential dimension for the successfully implementation of the activities. Bearing in mind the nature of the activities, male members of the team are usually preferable. However, experience from Bosnia and Herzegovina suggests the importance of the involvement of female team members. Usually, for practical reasons, female staff members from the identified needs and gaps of GBV survivors clearly suggested and later con

Reflection by a UNFPA staff

Box 20.

"Even though these group psychological sessions are helpful, one drawback that has to be pointed out is that is has no chance for individual consultation."
To ensure impactful monitoring and evaluation of BYMCs, the following questions should be considered:

- Are the monitoring and evaluation plan and the relevant tools well established and used?
- Is multisource feedback captured well?
- Are the monitoring and evaluation plan and the relevant tools well explained to the relevant BYMC staff and managers?
- Is the plan explained to the relevant BYMC staff and managers?
- How is the participation of the boys and young men in these processes ensured?

5.5. Adapting and transforming BYMCs

Adapting and transforming safe spaces within humanitarian actions depends on different contextual changes.21 BYMCs, such as those in Bosnia and Herzegovina, can be transformed from the core model into more sophisticated functioning models. A good example, that had a great impact in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is the establishment of protection sensitive accommodation or a so-called ‘green zone’ that is categorised for ‘single men’ in the TRCs. The establishment of the green zone started as an UNFPA initiative when the BYMCs recognised that a higher number of young men were in need of specific services. This is a separated accommodation unit for this group of boys as they are one of the most vulnerable (LGBTIQ+) in TRCs that only accommodate single males. They were established with the aim to offer them alternative living arrangements and support to the survivors of GBV in all of the forms described in the above sub-chapter (2.1). This is particularly important as an alternative to the TRCs, as the boys are at risk of sexual violence and are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. They are eldernext to them in the running and sustaining of such a centre. The conditions that can aid the transformation into independent centres outside the TRCs and within communities are an important aspect of the planning process. This should be understood twofold:

- The transformation into independent centres outside the TRCs and written communities. Such centres can achieve a significant level of independence and become self-sustainable, namely the boys and young men themselves become involved in the running and sustaining of such a centre. The conditions that can aid the development of such centres include when the migrants and refugees currently located in Bosnia and Herzegovina decide to stay in the country and assimilate into the society.

5.6. Phase-out

Depending on the decision made regarding a BYMC, the ‘phase-out’ process can be understood twofold:

(1) Phase-out due to the closure of one BYMC in order to relocate it from one place to another or transform it into the new model.
(2) Phase-out due to the closure of the programme in the country.

In the case of the first scenario, the most important step is to develop a plan for the ‘phase-out’ implementation. This should be done together with all relevant stakeholders (government institutions, partners, local leaders, NGOs, etc.), but also representatives of the boys and young men. It implies, among others, the need for reliable communication channels, agreed deadlines and safety measures. The process is imperatively to pay special attention to the needs of the most vulnerable categories such as GBV survivors and unaccompanied or separated boys.

There is not always that much time for the phase-out. The decision, for example, to close one TRC in Bosnia and Herzegovina means that there are about two weeks for the phase-out and at the same time the preparations to receive the boys in the new one are ongoing.

In the case of the closure of the programme in the country, services will be gradually reduced in such a way that allows for key services to be closed last during the end phase of the programme. It is important to ensure a clear transfer of responsibility for key services provided by the BYMC (usually by preparing domestic institutions and communities to take over specific services), but also to ensure that the process is as straightforward as possible for the boys and young men on the move.

6. Stories from Bosnia and Herzegovina

6.1. Green zone

Olivier (19) describes his life growing up as the only member of his family who went to school. His mother was a housewife and his three sisters and younger brother were sent to Europe by their father in 1992 to seek safety, while the rest of the family stayed in their homeland. He says that it is a place where he feels protected, a place where he can openly express his emotions without worrying that anyone will make fun of me or underestimate me.22

Olivier continues to express his gratitude for being placed in the green zone, which is protection sensitive accommodation established at the initiative of the UNFPA. He says that it is a place where he feels protected, a place where he can openly express his emotions without worrying that anyone will make fun of me or underestimate me.22

For migrants and refugees who have spent their teenage years on the move, or unable to focus on themselves, their education and their hobbies like other teenagers do, the green zone provides an additional sense of safety to them. It allows them to focus on their individual growth and seek psychological support but also attend various activities within the Boys and Young Men centre.

As a young adult, it is important for Olivier to have the chance to learn about different opportunities in life, different career choices, necessary education for different fields, general knowledge about the world of the state and world of culture, but also vital information about one’s health, types of violence, prevent-
6.2. “Timely reaction saved my life ... and my dignity.”

Hassan enters the Boys and Young Men Centre with a big smile on his face and great confidence as he greets the UNFPA team and other migrants and refugees. He was at the Temporary Reception Centre Miral before arriving at Lipa. He says that the UNFPA doctor and team have helped him greatly.

“Six or seven months ago, when I was in Miral, the UNFPA urologist told me that I have a health issue and that I had to go to surgery.”

“When a migrant or refugee is in need of such an intervention, when their health is at risk, UNFPA cooperates with other agencies from that Temporary Reception Centre to resolve the issue quickly. Due to external factors, Hassan’s surgery was delayed several times until UNFPA in collaboration with the local health centre organised a procedure for him and the surgery was done the next week.”

“If I hadn’t met the UNFPA team I would probably still be in pain. I want to thank them for caring and helping me, because my health is most important. I am in great confidence as he greets the UNFPA team and other migrants and refugees.”

6.3. “Who wants will find a way, who does not want will find an excuse.”

A.A., an 18-year-old young man from Pakistan, is a person on the move who is currently staying at a temporary refugee centre (TRC) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was in the ninth grade he had individual lessons. Then, as he told us, one girl fell in love with him, but he did not pay attention to her because he was busy reading books.

“During the day I have lectures that I listen to over the phone. Sometimes I don’t sleep at night so I can study or do homework. I usually get up at three or four in the morning so I can study. I make presentations and seminar papers on the phone because I don’t have a laptop or computer. Sometimes I am bothered by noise, but I am used to it. Conditions are difficult but schooling gives me motivation and hope for a better future. One day I want to write books and be a speaker. I would like to improve the education system in Pakistan, because I do not agree with the current system.”

A.A. says he is motivated by the support and trust his parents give him. He says that his family does not need his financial support and that finances are not the reason for his arrival in Europe, but rather education. The young man also says that his family is proud of him and that he told him to dedicate himself to his education.

In the past A.A won awards for public speaking and newspaper articles. He was also given space and time at the UNFPA Centre to present the topic ‘Marriage’ to the other participants. In preparing this presentation the young man used the knowledge and skills acquired through his young life but also through his education. A.A is one of the best examples of someone who wants to achieve something. He always finds a way to achieve his goals. There is no doubt that this young man will achieve great success throughout his life, which we all wish him.
Harmful traditional practices are not unique to a particular culture or religion. They occur in all societies, across all sexes, sexual identities and genders. However, the following five forms have been identified during the humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I. Early child marriage

"Child marriage refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child. Although girls are disproportionately affected by the practice, it is not the exception that also boys being married as children. Namely, every sixth child marriage involves a boy. Globally, an estimated 115 million boys and men were married as children and 23 million were married before the age of 15."  

II. Forced marriage

Forced marriage is a marriage in which one and/or both parties face physical or emotional and psychological pressure to marry and have not personally expressed their full and free consent to the union. Many boys and young men have experienced this harmful traditional practice and cite this as their main reason for leaving their country. This phenomenon has also increased in developed countries in the last five years.

III. Scarification

"Scarification is the cutting, burning or branding of the skin to create scars in a set pattern or design. Some indigenous cultures have used scarification for centuries as a ritualistic practice. People in western practices may choose the practice as a body modification method for aesthetic or self-expression reasons. Risks of scarification include keloid scars, infection, and inconsistent results. Regulation of scarification procedures varies from state to state, so people still need to search for reputable artists and check their hygiene and safety measures."  

IV. Bacha bazi

Historically present in Afghanistan, ‘Bacha bazi’ or ‘dancing boys’ is a slang term for a harmful traditional custom that includes the sexual abuse of boys by older men. Young adolescent men, usually those perceived as ‘handsome’, are forced to dress up like women and dance at men only parties. The boys twirl and shimmy while the men clap and laugh and enjoy the private show. After the party, it is customary for the adult men to choose their favourite boy with whom they want to have sex. These young boys are called ‘Bacha Baraish’ or ‘beardless boys’ and the practice itself is called ‘Bacha Bazi’. Although this practice is officially forbidden, powerful men organize hidden private events. Some of these boys are taken from their families through the promise of work, education or a better life. They serve as ‘Bacha bazi’ for a long time, usually until they are ready for their own family. The psychological damage caused by years of sexual abuse and social isolation makes it difficult for them to reintegrate into society.

V. Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure that involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia and other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. This practice has no health benefits for girls or women. It is also known as female circumcision or cutting as well as by other terms. More than 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM in 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia where FGM is practiced. Men of African origin speaking on this topic pointed out that it is essential that women are ‘circumcised’, otherwise, they would not marry them.
An urgent solution is needed for adequate accommodation of adolescent boys identified in TRC Blazuj as they represent the population most exposed to the various risks of GBV. Since TRC Ustjak is often operating at full capacity, temporary accommodation capacities need to be increased which will be intended for adolescent boys in TRC Blazuj, enabling young boys, currently sharing sleeping premises with adult males, to be provided with suitable age-appropriate accommodation with their peers, until their relocation to TRC Ustjak is made possible.

Increased protection and guidance facilitating integration of boys who transition into adulthood, as a specifically sensitive group, in face of relocation to adult male camps and life in different accommodation settings.

Access to beds-based services in TRC Blazuj with dedicated session timeslots exclusively for young boys need to be ensured, in order to avoid/minimize mixing minors and adults (whenever possible).

Awareness of adolescent boys and young men needs to be raised to recognize violence and know what to do if they experience violence.

Security measures to prevent and mitigate GBV need to be instituted; Humanitarian actors should regularly monitor potential risks of GBV vulnerabilities of the affected populations, especially, in this case, of young boys and adolescents who have been relocated to TRC Blazuj following transition to adulthood.

Sensitization of humanitarian personnel to GBV and how to recognize and identify child protection risks, concerns and timely reaction, need to be ensured.

GBV referral mechanism in place needs to be understood by humanitarian actors and applied in appropriate manner.

Provision of more occupational content and activities for young men that will adequately occupy their time need to be ensured.

A standard set of vulnerability criteria to ensure that all actors engaging in the response identify, prioritize and respond to individuals who have heightened protection risks needs to be developed, standardized and used.

The use of identifiable insignia by humanitarian actors on outer clothing needs to be ensured throughout and consistently as possible in all reception facilities.

Recommendations

- An urgent solution is needed for adequate accommodation of adolescent boys identified in TRC Blazuj as they represent the population most exposed to the various risks of GBV.
- Since TRC Ustjak is often operating at full capacity, temporary accommodation capacities need to be increased which will be intended for adolescent boys in TRC Blazuj, enabling young boys, currently sharing sleeping premises with adult males, to be provided with suitable age-appropriate accommodation with their peers, until their relocation to TRC Ustjak is made possible.
- Increased protection and guidance facilitating integration of boys who transition into adulthood, as a specifically sensitive group, in face of relocation to adult male camps and life in different accommodation settings.
- Access to beds-based services in TRC Blazuj with dedicated session timeslots exclusively for young boys need to be ensured, in order to avoid/minimize mixing minors and adults (whenever possible).
- Awareness of adolescent boys and young men needs to be raised to recognize violence and know what to do if they experience violence.
- Security measures to prevent and mitigate GBV need to be instituted; Humanitarian actors should regularly monitor potential risks of GBV vulnerabilities of the affected populations, especially, in this case, of young boys and adolescents who have been relocated to TRC Blazuj following transition to adulthood.
- Sensitization of humanitarian personnel to GBV and how to recognize and identify child protection risks, concerns and timely reaction, need to be ensured.
- GBV referral mechanism in place needs to be understood by humanitarian actors and applied in appropriate manner.
- Provision of more occupational content and activities for young men that will adequately occupy their time need to be ensured.
- A standard set of vulnerability criteria to ensure that all actors engaging in the response identify, prioritize and respond to individuals who have heightened protection risks needs to be developed, standardized and used.
- The use of identifiable insignia by humanitarian actors on outer clothing needs to be ensured throughout and consistently as possible in all reception facilities.

8.2. Annex 2. The place of BYMCs in the GBV referral pathway (An example from TRC Blazuj)

8.3. Annex 3. An example of a participatory assessment exercise

8.4. Annex 4. An example of a Gender Based Violence Risk Assessment of Adolescent Boys and Young Men in TRC in Bosnia and Herzegovina - recommendations
An example of a Safety Audit conducted in TRC in Bosnia and Herzegovina - example of Safety Audit focus group discussion findings

**Number of FGD participants (young men): 12**

**Age of participants: 18-23 years**

Young men focus group participants regard the security situation in the reception facility as generally good; however, there are areas, which can be further improved. The key places that the participants consider high risk are primarily those outside the TRC grounds (access to the camp, crossing the railway, etc.). When it comes to TRC, FGD participants claim that during the day they feel safe throughout most of the reception facility, however, they opt not to venture into certain accommodation units (such as hangars) during the night, due to potential risk of violence, petty theft etc. During the night, they mostly feel safe in their accommodation units within the Green Zone because they are physically separated from the other adult male residents, and they are gathered closely in one place (in 5 containers located near all service providers and services). Also, the fact FGD participants do not cause any problems contributes to their sense of security and safety.

In cases of security problems or other immediate needs, most participants stated they would contact Boys and Young Men Centre’s (BYMC) officers during the day. They would report the problem during the regular visits of UNFPA officers in the Green Zone, and if it were urgent then they would come to the BYMC themselves and report the problem. Some also stated that they would refer the problem to IOM, and if something happened during the night then most would go to the IOM to report the problem.

Generally, the most vulnerable groups are those who have just arrived to TRC, because they need some time to adjust, establish friendships, get acquainted with the TRC and available services. Besides, other vulnerable groups are also those who are in the numerical minority in the TRC, and these are currently residents of African origin. Minority groups automatically stand at increase of GBV by other numerically dominant national groups in TRC. The most common problems these vulnerable groups may face are petty theft. Conversely, representatives of groups that are numerically dominant in the TRC feel safer, because, as they say, they are less likely to be attacked. Participants also explain that attempted theft can happen to all residents, usually during the night when unknown or well-known older residents come in front of their accommodation units in an effort to steal their personal belongings. It was explained to participants it should be reported to BYMC in order to provide better monitoring at night in cooperation with the IOM.

In order to protect themselves, participating residents stated that they usually associate with other people from their countries, thus expanding their circle of friends. They observe their behaviour and avoid problematic people. When they go outside the TRC they move in groups and avoid moving alone. Participants claim to feel quite safe in the Green Zone, although sometimes older residents come in front of the zone or open the container door during the night. When it comes to the types of problems that boys or young males may face, they state that sometimes older residents put pressure on younger males not to stay in the Green Zone, but rather to stay in hangars with them.