EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS IN UNFPA SAFE SPACES

Experiences from the Humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina
EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS IN UNFPA SAFE SPACES:
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Impressum

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“Migration can be both a cause and a consequence of female empowerment.” Graeme Hugo, 2000.
1. Introduction

1.1. Empowerment of women and girls in migrant flows

In general, the empowerment of women and girls is recognised worldwide as a justified cause. Considering the level of their deprivation, the empowerment of girls and women in migrant flows (including those internally displaced) must be made a top priority (see Box 1). Among others, their primary needs include specialised medical and psychosocial support, sexual and reproductive health services, goods and information as well as other relevant gender responsive services such as trauma counselling.

Empowerment is one of the factors that lead women and girls to leave their place of residence or country in order to find a better place for living. It includes, but is not limited to, changing the viewpoint of women and girls and getting them to accept that they can raise their status through education, self-awareness and literacy as well as through the promotion of their sense of self-worth, their ability to determine their own choices and their right to influence social change both for themselves and for others. In that sense, the process of empowering girls and women on the move is particularly challenging.

In order to respond properly to the mixed migration that appeared in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNFPA established women and girls centres (WGC) as safe spaces with the aim to provide them with protection and empowerment. To understand the context of mixed migration and the purpose of WGCs in this country it is necessary to read the document ‘WOMEN AND GIRLS SAFE SPACES: A guidance note based on the humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina.’

Almost half of all migrants globally are women and girls.

Female migrants face major risks, including sexual exploitation, trafficking and violence.

Women migrants face double discrimination, both as women and as migrants.

Women do not stop getting pregnant when they are on the move.

Women and girl migrants are more likely to face health problems.

UNFPA, 2018.

The list of abbreviations

| BH | Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| WGC | Women and girls centre |
| GVB | Gender-based violence |
| TRC | Temporary reception centre |
| NFI | Non-food items |
| SRH | Sexual and reproductive health |
| MHPSS | Mental health and psychosocial support |
| PSS | Psychosocial support |

Box 1. Important facts

- Almost half of all migrants globally are women and girls.
- Female migrants face major risks, including sexual exploitation, trafficking and violence.
- Women migrants face double discrimination, both as women and as migrants.
- Women do not stop getting pregnant when they are on the move.
- Women and girl migrants are more likely to face health problems.

UNFPA, 2018.
1.2. The meaning and purpose of empowerment activities in women and girls centres (WGCs)

Empowerment activities' refers to different groups of activities based on the specific needs of women and girls on the move. The overall goal is to empower them for their future life, with special focus on GBV and SRH. Competent members of staff take into account three perspectives of the empowerment activities in order to maximise the impact of these interventions. As shown above in Illustration 1, through the perspective 'Now, in the WGC' staff create a safe and supportive environment for women and girls. This allows for a 'dipper dive' into their past 'Looking back' perspective and the 'Looking forward' perspective, which targets positive planning for the future of women and girls.

1.3. How to use this document

The overall objective of this document is to share the experiences gained through more than four years of empowering women and girls through the WGCs established in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with particular focus on the UNFPA mandate.

Box 2.

- Collecting essential information during registration: Each woman and girl who enters a WGC is registered and their basic information collected, including age, marital status and educational level, number of children, etc.
- Focus group discussions and surveys of the women and girls in order to experience the GBV and SRH in the sample structure.
- How the user can learn from this document

- Become aware of certain things that we may have missed and thatinvolved.
- Understand the type of resources that you need to be able to make choices and their senses of responsibility for their lives as well as the ability to make choices and decisions.
- Strengthen women and girls survivors of violence (especially GBV) and help them to recover from empowerment activities.
- Empower women and girls who experience violence and to 'heal' them by back' perspective

- Empower women and girls through awareness-raising, learning, and skills development in the areas which could help them in their lives (taking into account their needs and preferences). Another capacity that is needed to in order to ensure successful implementation of activities.
- How to handle sensitive topics.
- Understanding the type of resources that you need to in order to ensure successful implementation of activities.
- How to ‘hear’ and understand women and girls in WGCs.
- Improve their awareness of certain things that we may have missed and that should not be.

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2. Empowerment activities: purpose, methods and impact

2.1. Understanding the interconnection between empowerment activities

Bearing in mind that women and girls centres (WGCs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina operate with a very compact teams, comprised of up to 20 members of staff and generate with a very compact team, composed of up to 20 members of staff (usually four or five per centre), it is clear that the focus on each activity is made towards the activities almost perfect, whilst the women and girls observe the team as harmonised. Yet despite a clear distinction between empowerment activities and protection activities in terms of their purpose and methods of implementation those personal roles not engaged in work on empowering women and girls and may have difficulty in understanding where empowerment ends and protection begins.

Implementation of empowerment activities is a good way to prevent and to mitigate the impacts of increased violence (GBV) but also to encourage survivors to report it and to be included in the healing and recovery processes. Similarly, empowerment activities also contribute towards the prevention of SRH issues and encourage women and girls to accept necessary medical assessment and intervention.

For the purpose of clear interpretation, the empowerment of women and girls in WGCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be described through the two sub-chapters. The first is the ‘Pure’ empowerment activities (sub-chapter 2.1) and the second is Empowering girls and women through protection activities (sub-chapter 2.2). As shown below in Table 1, there are at least eight groups of activities orientated towards the empowerment of women and girls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups of empowerment activities</th>
<th>1. Pure empowerment activities</th>
<th>2. Empowerment through SRH activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Creative activities</td>
<td>1. Creative activities</td>
<td>6. Empowerment through SRH activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Educational activities</td>
<td>2. Empowerment through SRH activities</td>
<td>7. Empowerment through SRH activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Recreational and relaxation activities</td>
<td>3. Peer-to-peer empowerment</td>
<td>8. ‘The art of doing nothing’</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Peer-to-peer empowerment</td>
<td>4. Peer-to-peer empowerment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. ‘The art of doing nothing’</td>
<td>5. ‘The art of doing nothing’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Box 4. An example of projection**

A woman from Afghanistan made a drawing of a pigeon flying away from a cage, which she described as her dream. Namely, to fly away and reach members of her family.

2.2. ‘Pure’ empowerment activities

2.2.1. Creative activities

Creative activities play an important role in both intellectual and cognitive development of childhood. They are a critical aspect of developing different skills, such as problem solving, developing imagination, concentration and critical thinking. As women and girls on the move are faced with different difficulties that may manifest in creative activities has the potential to help them to overcome some of them with the assistance of WGC staff.

This group of activities is perfect for creating an atmosphere where women and girls can express their feelings and emotions (see Box 5). It is an atmosphere creative suitable opportunities for professional therapists to detect indicators of GBV or SRH-related issues.

This type of activity can be used as a form of occupational therapy, especially as a form of treatment for strengthening performance abilities (see Box 6). It contributes to improved self-esteem among the women and girls and in a way that shows them that they can create something by themselves. It usually has a positive impact in terms of them being more able to take control of their life in the future.

Creative activities also allow women and girls to apply their imagination, creativity and skills to expressing certain things, helping them to discover their potential, which can be further developed through additional sessions aimed at skills development. As women and girls are often exposed to GBV during their childhood, they are a critical aspect of developing different skills, such as problem solving, developing imagination, concentration and critical thinking.

The link between creative and educational activities is usually emphasised.

As creative activities can be implemented with a group of women and girls of different ages and different backgrounds their effect on socialisation are particularly positive. Although they are usually conceptualised as group activities, women and girls should be encouraged to express their creativity individually.
Crafts. Several examples of these activities can be found in the table below.

During the humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the most popular and most impactful creative activities at WGCs related to painting and arts and crafts.

“Painting calms me down. I forget all my problems for the moment.”

One more important beneficial aspect of creative activities is that they are a great tool for working with GBV survivors when a distraction is needed from repeated thoughts about the violence that these women and girls survived. In this way, women and girls are given a technique that allows them to relax for a while and focus on another topic. At the same time, they are empowered and supported in their recovery process. This mostly benefits those who repeatedly relive the traumatic experiences but are not yet ready to talk about them.

A ‘Dreamcatcher’ is a popular ornament in modern times. It is traditionally created by Native Americans, who hang it above the bed to filter out (catch) bad dreams and only let good dreams pass through. Participants create handmade hoops from paper and plastic plates on which a net with a small hole in the centre is woven. It is decorated in an individual way depending on the creativity of the individual and the available materials. This activity enables women and girls to express themselves, their problems and their dreams in a creative way. Discussions on topics such as the answer to the question ‘What should be kept in your network?’ offer excellent opportunity for staff members to identify potential violence or some other needs of the women and girls.

Let’s make cards with photos of inspirationally successful women who brought about significant changes in society (such as in the fields of science, art, sport and human rights). The same photograph is on two cards and the goal is for the participant to discover both identical photographs during the game. The aim is to encourage and inspire the women and girls. The educational component of this activity is a beneficial side effect.

The women and girls should create a ‘Dreamcatcher’ through drawings or similar. The facilitator can potentially suggest that they draw themselves in the past, in their different countries, as well as themselves in the future when they come to the place where they want to seek to live and then search for the differences in the two draw- ings. This session is about the histo- ry of fashion and makeup. The group discusses fashion, style and makeup in different cultures. What can a certain colour communicate about a person? What can we learn about a person by the way he or she dresses? How is a certain colour connected with our emotions and how can it influence them? The participants match a video on interesting facts about fashion and makeup to their own preferences. Why do we use it?

“Creating a Dreamcatcher” A ‘Dreamcatcher’ is a popular ornament in modern times. It is traditionally created by Native Americans, who hang it above the bed to filter out (catch) bad dreams and only let good dreams pass through. Participants create handmade hoops from paper and plastic plates on which a net with a small hole in the centre is woven. It is decorated in an individual way depending on the creativity of the individual and the available materials. This activity enables women and girls to express themselves, their problems and their dreams in a creative way. Discussions on topics such as the answer to the question ‘What should be kept in your network?’ offer excellent opportunity for staff members to identify potential violence or some other needs of the women and girls.

At the beginning of the activity each participant receives a blank piece of paper in the form of a puzzle (template). Then the women and girls draw/sketch their story or write at their own discretion without the guidance of a facilitator (usually an em-}

During the humanitarian response in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the most popular and most impactful creative activities at WGCs related to painting and arts and crafts. Several examples of these activities can be found in the table below.
**Joint arrangement and decoration of the UNFPA centre**

**Description of activity**

The need expressed for these activities was the women and girls themselves and therefore certain instructions were provided by the women to the entire group. Materials available: Paints, decorations, decoupage boxes, various cotton materials, glue, block paper, scissors, crayons, etc. A safe space for telling the stories: Ideally, it is a WGC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

**Instructions given properly:** The need for these activities was expressed by the women and girls themselves and therefore certain instructions were provided by the women to the entire group. Materials available: Paints, decorations, decoupage boxes, various cotton materials, glue, block paper, scissors, crayons, etc. A safe space for telling the stories: Ideally, it is a WGC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

**Preparations for these activities begin with the joint identification of such activities. To enable the women and girls to express their preferences additional explanations are sometimes required regarding what a particular activity means and how it will be conducted. Sometimes, in accordance with different preferences, the women and girls divide into groups in order to implement more than one creative activity at the same time. The overall impact of the creative activities should be measured, such as, for example, the number of proportion of women and girls empowered to think critically, feel more independent and think more positively about their future.**

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Motivated learners: The purpose of the activity is explained in a motivational way to encourage the women and girls to participate. Materials available: Paper, pencils, boards and a video projector. A safe space suitable for educational sessions. Ideally, it is a WGC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

Preparing lessons for learning local or foreign languages. Lessons should be delivered in a way that motivates the women and girls to continue to learn. It is sometimes necessary to adapt lessons to the needs of different groups of women and girls in order to, for example, take into account their level of education and previous knowledge. Lessons are usually implemented with the focus on vocabulary and daily conversation. At the end, an informal and optional final examination can be organised.

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These activities are specifically designed in terms of raising awareness about healthcare. For example, personal and space hygiene could be taught in different ages (specifically for girls, puberty, and women at menopause). They also develop awareness about the storage and use of food (e.g., storage of dairy products). They also mitigate discussion of various sexual and reproductive habits, such as practicing sports and other recreational activities, so that certain educational activities can be connected with recreational activities. These activities should be delivered with examples and appropriate exercises (e.g.,。

SRH related healthcare sessions
These activities aim to educate the women and girls on various topics related to their sexual and reproductive health. They provide them with methods and techniques of protection, quick detection of symptoms and adequate reaction. Some examples of these sessions could be learning breast self-examination and recognising early symptoms and education about contraceptives, their use, effects and purpose. Education.

Motivated learners: Participants are motivated in a way that presents the benefits and all of the knowledge and information that they would gain by the end of these sessions as well as all the techniques they could use in their lives. Materials available: Microlights, posters and various visual displays that can be used to show examples.

These sessions serve primarily to develop trust with the participants and prepare them for psychosocial and familiarisation with various mental states (especially those already recognised in women and youth) as well as to separate these sessions and organise them separately for girls.

A safe space suitable for educational sessions. Ideally, it is a WGC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles. If possible, such sessions should be organised and implemented in health centres together with competent experts.

Motivated learners: Participants are motivated in a way that presents the benefits and all of the knowledge and information that they would gain by the end of these sessions as well as all the techniques they could use in their lives. Materials available: Microlights, posters and various visual displays that can be used to show examples.

Tip: In sessions that focus on girls, especially those sensitive to the issue of sexuality, it is recommended to separate these sessions and organise them separately for girls.
It is a group of activities aimed at building important life skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership and conflict and problem-solving skills. The exercises are covered over an experimental workshop based on cognitive (verbal) exercises. The exercises are designed for each particular topic by considering the needs of the women and girls. An example of a conflict resolution workshop: Participants take hold of hands that are intriguingly interlaced. The goal is to free the hands (to return to the free position) and the whole activity should be a WGC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

Materials available:
- Inter-active cards, collage paper, pencils, film projectors and other equipment inside the centre and the like.
- A safe space suitable for educational sessions: Ideally, it is a WGC that is established in accordance with the relevant principles.

soft skills activities

GBV educational activities (For more information see 2.3.2 in Chapter 2)

UnPA centre offers a plethora of activities focused on supporting women and girls in a safe space. The coping mechanisms of survivors as well as those who are further enhanced through their inclusion in empowerment activities that encourage them to maintain positive personality traits, competency and self-efficiency. Some of the educational sessions on GBV have the aim to empower women and girls to participate.

It is recommended that the facilitator/teacher (usually an empowerment officer at a WGC) Her/his role is also critical in choosing what activity will be conducted, with whom and under which circumstances. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, it was critical to have related activities aimed at raising awareness in healthcare sessions. It was detected that some sessions related to sexual and reproductive health should be implemented separately for adolescent girls and mature women. This was not only because of the different topics they cover but also because adolescent girls may not feel comfortable speaking in front of older women on issues such as ‘My body’ – session for girls (see example 2.1.2.c in Annex 1).

Every learning activity should be intentional, meaningful and impactful. These activities are supposed to provide the women and girls with the tools that will help them to gain knowledge that can be helpful in their future life. Learning the local language, for example, would help the women and girls to communicate with local residents, in shops, with various authorities, etc., which would make their daily lives much easier and give them a sense of independence and self-care. Learning the local language would also help the women and girls to become familiar with the local cultural context and behavioural habits, which again would benefit the women and girls. Because in many cases they aim to reach EU countries, learning other languages is very relevant to the women and girls as an extra basic knowledge of the local language, for example, would help them to express their needs and establish basic communication.

Active facilitator: A facility in which participants are asked to sign the sessions in a way that is interesting and engaging. The activity is implemented separately for adolescent girls and mature women. This was not detected that some sessions related to sexual and reproductive health should be implemented separately for adolescent girls and mature women. This was not only because of the different topics they cover but also because adolescent girls may not feel comfortable speaking in front of older women on issues such as ‘My body’ – session for girls (see example 2.1.2.c in Annex 1).

A key role in the successful implementation of educational activities is played by the facilitator or teacher (usually an empowerment officer at a WGC). Her/his fundamental task is to get the participants to engage in learning activities that are likely to result in them achieving their desired outcomes. Yet what is studied is does not matter more than what the teacher does. ‘Her’ role is also

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The overall impact of educational activities is reflected in the level of developed skills, increased self-confidence and self-esteem, improved mental and physical health and increased independence of the women and girls. They have better opportunities to stay safe and progress in terms of their social goals. Looking from the perspective of the primary mandate of UNFPA, women and girls involved in educational activities are less likely to face GBV and suffer SRH related issues if it does happen then their chances of overcoming the negative consequences are greatly increased.

2.2.3. Recreational and relaxation activities

Recreational and relaxation activities have a variety of effects on the mental and physical health and condition of the women and girls. Namely, the benefits to the physical health of the women and girls, these activities help them to manage stress and anxiety and to maintain their mental health. Therefore, recreational and relaxation activities are very important within the process of empowerment officer in WGC, practice yoga or aerobics by following the instructions on the video. These activities provide an opportunity to assess the physical condition of the women and girls and to generally agree to participate in some recreational activities. Whilst keeping physically active they also learn about different cultures and traditions.

The purpose of this activity is to make the women and girls to relax and defeat and learning from it, celebrate wins properly, etc. These factors are discussed later on. These activities provide an opportunity to assess the physical condition of the women and girls, including detection of any injuries or illness.

In one of the WGCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of activity</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Assumption</th>
<th>Name of activity</th>
<th>Description of activity</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Assumption</th>
<th>Name of activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Together with the facilitator (empowerment officer at the WGC), the women and girls play sports outdoors. These activities are often carried out in cooperation with local communities, providing recreational opportunities to and language or rehearse different cultural aspects.</td>
<td>The facilitator plays music, usually from the countries of origin of the women in the WGC, which allows them to present their traditions and a film.</td>
<td>The purpose of the activity is to make the woman and girls in a motiva- tional manner.</td>
<td>Together with the facilitator (empowerment officer in WGC), the women and girls play sports outdoors. These activities are often carried out in cooperation with local communities.</td>
<td>Provide an opportunity to assess the physical condition of the women and girls and to generally agree to participate in some recreational activities.</td>
<td>The purpose of this activity is to make the women and girls relax and defeat and learning from it, celebrate wins properly, etc. These factors are discussed later on. These activities provide an opportunity to assess the physical condition of the women and girls, including detection of any injuries or illness.</td>
<td>Providing awareness and identify a safe space.</td>
<td>Dance classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep physically active</td>
<td>Tip:</td>
<td>Materials available:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the impact that recreational activities have on their body and their health is important to take into consideration that some women and girls come from countries where playing certain sports is not culturally acceptable for women and therefore the activities should be discussed in advance. Furthermore, the different interests of women and girls of different ages should be considered when planning sports activities. Judging from the experiences in WGCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, girls are more interested in outdoor sports that usually require more energy (like games with a ball), while middle-age women prefer indoor sports activities with a lower level of intensity. It was also detected that women with young children have less time for sport. The latter is addressed in WGCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the ‘Young Mothers Club’ and the ‘Young Mothers Club’ and solutions found through established services.</td>
<td>It is always good to check beforehand what the film is about. The women and girls should not experience any form of re-trauma- tisation because of the film and it should not stigmatise a certain culture in any way.</td>
<td>Tip:</td>
<td>Movie nights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In general, these activities can be conducted together with women and girls of different ages and backgrounds, depending on their preferences, and yet it is important to take into consideration that some women and girls come from countries where playing certain sports is not culturally acceptable for women and therefore the activities should be discussed in advance. Furthermore, the different interests of women and girls of different ages should be considered when planning sports activities. Judging from the experiences in WGCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, girls are more interested in outdoor sports that usually require more energy (like games with a ball), while middle-age women prefer indoor sports activities with a lower level of intensity. It was also detected that women with young children have less time for sport. The latter is addressed in WGCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the ‘Young Mothers Club’ and solutions found through established services.</td>
<td>It is always good to check beforehand what the film is about. The women and girls should not experience any form of re-trauma- tisation because of the film and it should not stigmatise a certain culture in any way.</td>
<td>Tip:</td>
<td>Movies and theatre nights</td>
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</table>
Women and girls who possess unique or specific skills and knowledge that they practiced before in their home countries and are able. However, the women and girls should be encouraged to apply it individually. In WGCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina organises some activities in locations near the WGC or some

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Description of activity</th>
<th>Assumption /preconditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salsa – dancing classes</strong></td>
<td>Several women from Cuba had outstanding skills in dancing. After undergoing a motivational interview with the empowerment officer, it was determined that the positive impact of sharing their experience with others at the WGC, they were further empowered to prepare and perform salsa dancing classes.</td>
<td>There are women or girl with dancing skills who are willing to lead such classes and those willing to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IT classes</strong></td>
<td>Girls with developed IT skills who are willing to teach older women basic skills related to modern technology, including the potential risks of their use. The empowerment officer must first obtain permission from the girl’s parent before they receive additional training in how to transfer their knowledge in the most impactful way.</td>
<td>There are women or girl with IT skills who are willing to lead such classes and there are those willing to participate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recreational activities can be organised in groups using the equipment available. However, the women and girls should be encouraged to apply it individually. Moreover, it is necessary to ensure that activities are enjoyable on free will and that the participants are encouraged to express their preferences (see Box 8).

In addition to the impact they have on physical and mental health, resilience to stress and on anxiety as well as friendships, these activities redirect the focus of female refugees and migrants away from thinking about their difficult situation in general life. Consequently, it led to an extremely positive influence on the self-confidence of those who are willing to participate.

Furthermore, these activities create opportunities for the women and girls in WGCs to become leaders and to build their skills and encourages them to present. This has led to an extremely positive influence on the self-esteem of those women and girls being recorded in this country.
2.2.5. ‘The art of doing nothing’

In the context of the modern world, which values productivity, the idea of spending time relaxing or ‘doing nothing’ should make us feel uncomfortable. This is not merely a question of being present without any loss of control. Those activities are especially important for GBV survivors when speaking about the trauma they experienced becomes too much to handle or otherwise overwhelm them.

It is advisable to prepare and celebrate important events and holidays and to focus on decoration activities according to the season, holiday or essential event (see examples 2.1.1.a and 2.1.1.b in Annex 1).

The greatest stories told and ideas shared from the experiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina came exactly from moments when the women and girls in the WGCs were apparently ‘doing nothing’. It seems that they shared their stories more naturally than when asked for them during official sessions (see Box 9). WGCs were apparently ‘doing nothing’. It seems that they shared their stories more naturally than when asked for them during official sessions (see Box 9).

These activities are especially important for GBV survivors when speaking about the trauma they experienced. It was noted in these activities those women and girls relaxed more and that later it was easier for them to reach decisions on respective PSS activities (For more examples of these activities see example 2.1.5.a, b, and in Annex 1).

There is no specific plan for the realisation of these activities. They can start in any moment, such as being in nature, practicing yoga or deep breathing, hanging out with others and such like. This is a time for unconnected with something that had happened in their country of origin. Women from Cuba, for example, very often talked about their life there, the social problems, politics and everything that happened to them. Actually, they were traumatised by the events that have happened recently in their country. They usually talked about their experiences on their journey, their personal stories, and about their country of origin, plans such as their future, expectations of the future, their ideas and other things they wonder about during such times.

These activities help the women and girls to share their feelings and thoughts, because the atmosphere is relaxing and supportive and there is no pressure from any side. This visibly helped women from African countries, for example, to move from rigid and closed to open and relaxed. It was noted in these activities those women and girls released more and that later it was easier for them to reach decisions on respective PSS activities (For more examples of these activities see example 2.1.5.a, b, and in Annex 1).

Box 9. Reflections of a WGC participant

“When we started talking about something spontaneously the women and girls just felt a need to come and sit with us and with each other in a relaxing atmosphere telling their stories.”

2.3.1. Empowering girls and women through SRH activities

According to the WHO, “Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) encompasses dimensions of physical, emotional mental and social wellbeing. Consultations are available on a weekly basis, they have an opportunity to learn about the potential consequences, setting worse the already critical situation and making it harder for women and girls to access their basic rights.

Adolescent and underage girls are even more vulnerable in this sense, because they have only limited or no knowledge at all regarding sexual and reproductive health. The lack of SRH knowledge makes them adopt various risk-taking behaviours such as, for example, unhealthy menstrual hygiene practices that cause health effects that include unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs)/HIV, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Knowledge about sexual and reproductive health services for each woman and girl on the move, UNFPA in Bosnia and Herzegovina has included individual consultations with an expert genealogist as part of the world’s girls’ empowerment programme. The programme was created in order to prevent unplanned and unwanted pregnancies, teen pregnancies, entry into early unprotected sexual relations, early diagnosis of uterine cancer, breast cancer, the consequences of sexual and reproductive health. They have an opportunity to learn about the potential risks and the importance of regular SRH examinations. They are encouraged to overcome traditional negative assumptions as well as to be ready for various forms of therapy in the event that SRH issues are detected.

In many countries from which refugee and migrant women and girls come to Bosnia and Herzegovina sexual and reproductive education is almost taboo and a shameful topic to talk about and even unacceptable to be taught in educational institutions. Moreover, the vast majority of refugee and migrant women and girls are vulnerable/confused by sexual, reproductive and mental health-related issues that are often related to unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)/HIV, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

In order to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services for each woman and girl on the move, UNFPA in Bosnia and Herzegovina has included individual consultations with an expert genealogist as part of the world’s girls’ empowerment programme. The programme was created in order to prevent unplanned and unwanted pregnancies, teen pregnancies, entry into early unprotected sexual relations, early diagnosis of uterine cancer, breast cancer, the consequences of sexual and reproductive health. They have an opportunity to learn about the potential risks and the importance of regular SRH examinations. They are encouraged to overcome traditional negative assumptions as well as to be ready for various forms of therapy in the event that SRH issues are detected.

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partner violence, female genital mutilation and sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and HPV.

In order to ensure complete access to this service, the SRH programme also consists of continuously organised gynaecological examinations done in cooperation with local health centres. In this way, preventive gynaecological examinations are available to all women and girls regardless of whether they have the opportunity to participate in education or consultations.

Some women and girls may feel scared prior to the gynaecological examination, especially if it is the first examination. However, after group and individual sessions with a gynaecologist many of them recognise the importance and agree to the examination. The need for adequate support after the examination is also recognised. For example, it is often the case that girls feel ashamed or embarrassed by the first examination and found it useful to talk to the psychologist. They also explained that relaxing activities like mindfulness and meditation are very helpful in terms of their gaining a balanced perspective.

Empowerment sessions should be organised separately for women and girls because gaining a balanced perspective. Women and Domestic Violence. Available at www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/what-is-gender-based-violence.

2.3.2. Empowering women and girls through GBV activities

"Gender-based violence refers to any type of harm that is perpetrated against a person or group of people because of their factual or perceived sex, gender, sexual orientation and/or gender identity." GBV can appear as sexual, physical, verbal, psychological (emotional) or socioeconomic and it can take many forms ranging from verbal violence and hate speech on the Internet, to rape or murder. The perpetrator can be anyone: a person, a member of a family, a friend, an unknown person.

There is well established evidence that women and girls on the move are extremely vulnerable to GBV. According to the results of the Women on the Move's ‘Resilience and safety’ in WGCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an anonymous woman answered that she had already experienced violence and almost every second woman visited a gynaecologist for the first time knew someone who experienced violence, where to ask for help, why they should report it, how to act in case they or someone they know experiences it and who can provide continuous help and support to GBV survivors.

The empowerment officer and psychologist in a WGC can create activities to give women and girls not only to avoid potential GBV but also to encourage them to report it and find a way to be protected and supported as survivors.

2.3.3. Empowering girls and women through MHPSS mental health and psychosocial support activities

The term ‘mental health’ and ‘psychosocial support’ (MHPSS) describe support aimed at preventing or promoting psychosocial well-being and/or preventing or treating mental disorders. These types of activities are very important within the context of 'empowering women and girls' because the women and girls have, in most cases, left their countries of origin where they experienced serious stress and anxiety as well as the risks associated with political insecurity and socio-economic hardship. Moreover, when women and girls undertake very difficult migratory journeys to reach a safer place in the hope of finding a better future both for themselves and their families.

GBV education about different topics: 'The scars we can't see' (see example 2.2.3. in Annex 1), psychological and sexual violence, addressing GBV, legal aid and 'What is gender-based violence?' (see example 2.2.2. c in Annex 1).

Potential activities

GBV activities

- GBV education about different topics: 'The scars we can't see' (See example 2.2.3. in Annex 1), psychological and sexual violence, addressing GBV, legal aid and 'What is gender-based violence?' (see example 2.2.2. c in Annex 1).
- Sixteen days of activism (see example 2.2.2. a in Annex 1).
- Enumerated activities are listed in chapter 2.2.2.
- Group activities focused on compassion (mutual support).
- Learning about ways to protecting ourselves.

Desired impact:

- To make the women and girls aware of the risks that can expose them to gender-based violence (GBV) and that no form of violence is justified as well as to empower them to know how to seek support and use self-help mechanisms when the service provider is not available (such as during their immigration journey). They have to know that many services are available to them, including those that ensure safe accommodation, and that they have the right to be protected and supported in the event that they become a survivor.

Ibid. 21

21 Ibid.


25 Ibid.
Support the mental health of the women and girls.

Focus groups and educational sessions.

Psychotherapy sessions:

1. Psychotherapy sessions: the most common problems that women experience are anxiety. This is most commonly experienced by women and girls who have been confused about the future and crossing the border, depression, interpersonal relationships. The WGC psychologist and psychotherapist organise three types of sessions, namely individual, group sessions and educational sessions.

• Individual sessions: These sessions are usually held when the beneficiary (woman or girl) at the centre needs to share a personal story or a problem in private. This is either because it is something that the beneficiary wishes to keep private and something that others should not know about or because the beneficiary considers that such an approach would help and that others would not be able to assist in dealing with that particular problem. Individual sessions are performed similarly for both women and girls, only the subjects discussed usually relate to the needs of the residents of the centre, certain social issues stemming from their countries of origin, application procedures, legal issues, cultural differences and talk, which usually results in most of them agreeing to come and have an individual session.

• Group sessions: Some issues and subjects can be discussed in groups, such as communication skills, problem-solving techniques and subjects from different countries.

- Educational sessions:

The difference between these types of sessions and group sessions is that they are organised to educate the women and girls on certain socio-cultural issues and scientific knowledge that they are familiar with. Usually, the psychologist prepares a presentation that provides the beneficiaries with certain information about a particular subject. The women and girls can ask questions during this session. The facilitator can also identify areas of agreement and disagreement as they arise, which facilitates data gathering (Elson, 2016).

These types of activities are held at WGCs, for both women and girls. The sessions are organised to encourage beneficiaries to talk, which usually results in most of them agreeing to come and have an individual session.

Psychotherapy sessions are performed similarly for both women and girls, only the subjects discussed usually relate to the needs of the residents of the centre, certain social issues stemming from their countries of origin, application procedures, legal issues, cultural differences and talk, which usually results in most of them agreeing to come and have an individual session.

In this category, it is important to mention the focus groups that are also held from time to time (usually once per month) at the centre. A focus group is a small group of people (from 5 to 12) who have something in common, in this case the participants are young women and girls. The facilitator encourages the participants to talk openly about particular topics that are brought up by the facilitator. They are encouraged to talk as if they were in a normal situation. The topic of conversation could easily go back to its original focus if it goes too far off track. The facilitator can also identify areas of agreement and disagreement as they arise, which facilitates data gathering (Elson, 2016).

The impact of individual sessions can be determined through the feedback that beneficiaries share with the psychologist after each session or after a few sessions. The facilitator can collect data of interest to herself/himself, while the participants can gain useful information from each other, draw certain conclusions about their cultural differences, learn about other countries and the world around them. The facilitator can collect data of interest to herself/himself, while the participants can gain useful information from each other, draw certain conclusions about their cultural differences, learn about other countries and the world around them.

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and then do some breathing exercises with the help of the picture that the drew. In one example would be a woman leaving the room before the end of a creative empowerment session because she did not want to finish her drawing. If the ses-

sion involved colouring a ‘mandala’ drawing, which requires concentration and calmness, we could conclude that she is impatient and unfocused. If she had the tendency to repeat such behaviour then we could conclude that she finds those activities boring or that she has other problems on her mind and instead of being calm she becomes upset. Later, during the individual session the psychologist may realise that this woman has a problem that made focusing on the session, the material and the drawing very difficult.

The psychologist encourages the women and girls to attend all of the activities and explains all of the benefits of the empowerment sessions to them. At the same time, the psychologist suggests to the empowerment officer that the ben-

eficiaries that came to PSS sessions should be encouraged and included in his/ her activities. Very often it only takes one participation in a certain session (PSS or a classical empowerment session) to motivate the participants to come again, which is very important for them. They would be more willing to attend if, for example, a woman who liked to paint but only attended PSS sessions was moti-

vated to come to an empowerment session. In this case the psychologist could inform her that she can paint in empowerment sessions and in this way use her love of painting to overcome her shyness and thereby encourage her to expand her horizon.

> Teaching materials and stationery: psychology texts, workbooks, PowerPoint presentations, different drawings, white and coloured paper for group activities, pens, pencils, scissors, glue, video material, etc.

> Impact: The overall impact that these activities have on the women and girls is very important for them. They would be more willing to attend if, for example, a woman who liked to paint but only attended PSS sessions was moti-

vated to come to an empowerment session. In this case the psychologist could inform her that she can paint in empowerment sessions and in this way use her love of painting to overcome her shyness and thereby encourage her to expand her horizon.

3.1. General facilitation tips

> Adapt to fast changes with minimal consequences: In a humanitarian re-

sponse everything is very unpredictable and can change in a short time. Be pre-

pared to revise your plans and schedules not only during the week but also during the day. Be ready to make compromises. Although at a particular moment you may know that something is the best to apply at that exact moment you may be in a situation where that application method is impossible. Guided by fundamen-

tal principles, it is necessary to make a compromise in the best interests of the women and girls.

> Adapt to the characteristics of a group of participants: Group activities should always be adapted to the age, level of education, marital status, ethnic/cultural backgrounds, etc. We cannot, for example, facilitate sessions for girls and women in the same way, because we need to use different language and different meth-

ods.

> Avoid assumptions: Never assume that the women and girls know or do not know something, regardless of the fact that it is common sense from your per-

pective. It sometimes requires more clarification and input than expected.

> Avoid generalisations: Never conclude that something is so just because the majority of the population has similar characteristics.

3.3. Potential activities

- > Potentials

- > Group sessions focused on learning about a certain topic such as communication, decision making, etc (Anger man-

agement). (See example 2.2.2. b in Annex 1)

> Encouraging and strengthening community and family sup-

port.

> Group activities focused on emotions (learning about emo-

tions, examples for each group).

> PSS + empowerment activities (see example 2.2.2. c in Annex 1)

> Interventions in crises (e.g., panic attacks).

> Learning about different techniques such as mindfulness

> meditation, breathing techniques, etc. Addressing basic needs in a participatory safe and socially appropriate manner.

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> meditation, breathing techniques, etc. Addressing basic needs in a participatory safe and socially appropriate manner.

WIC in Bosnia and Herzegovina said, “We have started almost from nothing, but we were very curious what works and were searching for solutions everywhere.”

> Be trustworthy: Organise your activity as previously agreed with the women and girls, at a specific time, in a specific way, etc. Promise only what you can do. Communicate all changes in a timely manner.

> Planning: Creating a weekly schedule is very important. Although it sometimes can be made for a longer period, it is adapted every day in accordance with the situation and needs.

> Outdoor versus indoor implementation: Technically, many of the empower-

ment activities described above can be implemented either outdoors or indoors. However, it is important to pay attention to not only increasing the understanding of the WIC, as a safe space but also allowing for better concen-

tration. However, if the circumstances and this requires caution. In one WIC in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, there was a group of women from Africa who very much preferred to stay outside during the spring/ summer days.

3.2. Lessons learned and tips for users

> Never assume that the women and girls know or do not know something, regardless of the fact that it is common sense form your per-

pective. It sometimes requires more clarification and input than expected.

> Avoid generalisations: Never conclude that something is so just because the majority of the population has similar characteristics.

Be ‘catchy’: Getting the attention and trust of a vulnerable frightened or injured pop-

ulation is not an easy job. Tell them about a legend and some activity (e.g., the Native American ‘Dreamcatcher’), do something unusual that will help get their attention.

> Be creative: There are no guidelines that can answer any and all questions related to the empowerment of women and girls on the move and therefore it is necessary to use our professional skills in a creative way. As a team member at

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Sometimes the issues that need to be discussed during the activities are considered harmful in the environment in which you work so that you can avoid putting participants in uncomfortable situations. Always be aware of your own experience could be relevant, but in these cases you should be careful to the facts. Even if we have our personal opinion, it is very important to avoid emotionalizing the discussion, especially if we are dealing with emotionally charged topics.

Neutral and open during every discussion.

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3.4. Women and girls within the context of different cultural backgrounds

It is very important to consider the fact that the women and girls come from different cultural backgrounds. It should be considered and used as an advantage for their empowerment. They liked activities where they could express their feelings with WGC personnel who were compassionate regarding their stories and experiences. They were very emotional (especially when they talked about their feelings of oppression). Women from Cuba mostly travelled without children and were very active in all types of activities. Many of them had a higher level of education and they were interested in learning in general. They liked to talk a lot about their culture and their experiences. They were very emotional (especially when they talked about their families that had remained in their country), so they always wanted to share their feelings with WGC personnel who were compassionate regarding their stories and experiences. They liked to help to each other and they were really a community.

for their children or because they wanted to spend more time with them. The girls from Iran and Afghanistan were very active. They liked activities at the WGC especially the ones organised only for them.

Women and girls that came from Africa found it more challenging to adapt. Language barriers were often a problem in terms of communication. They had different preferences compared to the women and girls from the Middle-East. Namely, they usually preferred outdoor activities. Dancing was very popular among this group of women, similar to those from Cuba.

Women from Cuba mostly travelled without children and were very active in all types of activities. Many of them had a higher level of education and they were interested in learning in general. They liked to talk a lot about their culture and their experiences. They were very emotional (especially when they talked about their families that had remained in their country), so they always wanted to share their feelings with WGC personnel who were compassionate regarding their stories and experiences. They liked to help to each other and they were really a community.

4. References


5. Annexes

5.1. Annex 1

Examples of Empowerment Activities (Selected and written by WGC staff members)

Example 2.1.2. c: My body (an activity for girls)

Activity steps

1. We should open the discussion with questions for the girls:
   - Many factors influence how we feel about our bodies. Think about when you were nine years old, how did you feel then?
   - What happens during adolescence, which ranges from 10-19 years of age. Do most adolescents feel carefree and comfortable about their appearance or do they worry about how they look?
   - What kind of messages and images do adolescents receive from films, television or magazines about what boys and girls should be like? Is this pressure more intense for boys or girls?

2. Generate at least eight to ten positive qualities people want others to appreciate and write them on the flipchart. Point out that girls as well as boys want their active participation in the organisation of the sessions. The preparations are done in the company of the refugee/migrant women and girls. Two examples are ‘Nomad’ (very rare) in Iran and Afghanistan and ‘Romani Eid’ (a month of fasting) in Muslim countries. The topics are compiled with the assistance of the refugee/migrant women and girls in order to encourage their active participation in the organisation of the sessions. The preparations should start a few days in advance because for some events the refugee/migrant women and girls have to get ready for cooking, baking, decorating and other arrangements.

3. Ask if the other groups have any changes or additions to add to the list. Help them distinguish between physical and emotional changes. Point out any other changes that were not mentioned.

The session starts with awareness raising on the event or holiday, which involves refugee/migrant women and girls who tell others how a holiday is celebrated in their countries, what the background of the event or holiday is and such like. It is in order for the participants to learn from each other and get a better understanding of the reasons behind the celebrations, which is in a way an educational activity.

The activities performed in the preparation process involve the women and girls making contributions through cooking, baking and decorating, etc. using the items provided to them with the full support and participation of the empowerment officer and the facilitator.

Example 2.1.1. b: Decoration activities according to the seasonal period, birthdays and national days

Activity steps

1. Aim: The main aim of this session is to promote and support socialisation, interaction, team building and enhance their awareness of specific events and holidays.

2. Participants: The participants of the session are refugee/migrant women and girls.

3. Methodology: The empowerment officer and facilitator prepare in advance a calendar of important upcoming events and holidays that are celebrated nationally or globally. The calendar includes the holidays and events that are celebrated in the country of origin of the refugee/migrant women and girls. Two examples are ‘Nomad’ (very rare) in Iran and Afghanistan and ‘Romani Eid’ (a month of fasting) in Muslim countries. The topics are compiled with the assistance of the refugee/migrant women and girls in order to encourage their active participation in the organisation of the sessions. The preparations should start a few days in advance because for some events the refugee/migrant women and girls have to get ready for cooking, baking, decorating and other arrangements.

4. Practical team exercise: Preparations for the celebration involve the women and girls who make contributions through cooking, baking and decorating, etc. using the items provided to them with the full support and participation of the empowerment officer and the facilitator.

Example 2.1.1. c: Creative drawing, painting, seeing, putting on makeup, nail polishing, etc.

Activity steps

1. Aim: These kinds of sessions are held to facilitate and encourage creative ideas on a broad range of topics so that the refugee/migrant women and girls discover their talents and feel free to realise them in practical sessions. The participants of the session are refugee/migrant women and girls.

2. Methodology: Preparations for the session are done after the joint identification of the specific activity in which the participants show interest. Sometimes more than one activity can be held with the participants divided into groups according to preference (such as drawing or applying make up) or they can work individually. Specific items must be arranged in advance for these activities by the empowerment officer and the facilitator, namely for knitting, putting on makeup, nail polish, etc.

3. Practical team exercise: The participants share the roles among themselves according to their skills and wish and contribute to the group work accordingly. The participants present the outcome of their work and share comments and feedback at the end of the activity.
Example 2.1.3. a: Board games and film/cartoon nights

**Aim:** To support refugee/migrant women and girls in maintaining good mental health, which ultimately contributes to relieving their stress and anxiety.

**Participants:** The participants of the session are refugee/migrant women and girls.

**Methodology:** The empowerment officer and the facilitator identify the potential participants for the board games and film/cartoon night activities in consultation with the women and girls. Film/cartoon nights are usually held in the evening hours because after 4 p.m. the centre rules do not allow the women and girls to go out of the centre, which is why it is the best time for them to watch films and cartoons (for girls) and film and cartoons (for boys) and give them a free time in a relaxing way. The choice of film or cartoon is made in consultation with the women and girls to make sure they account for the language and subtitle availability in the film. Moreover, the films serve as an educational opportunity from which the women and girls can learn something new and after the film a brief feedback sharing discussion is held so that they can exchange opinions. Board games and playing cards can be divided into separate groups in order to involve more participants who express interest in this activity. The empowerment officer and the facilitator also take part in the games.

**Practical team exercise:** The women and girls are divided into groups according to their interests and play in a competitive manner. Judging from previous experience, one can divide the groups in separate areas in order to involve more participants who express interest in this activity. The empowerment officer and the facilitator also take part in the games.

**Aim:** The main aim of this activity is to support the refugee/migrant women and girls and their children in the celebration of important events in their lives, which makes them feel better whilst they are far away from their families and relatives. Such activities help the women and girls to relieve their stress, anxiety and loneliness.

**Participants:** The participants of the session are refugee/migrant women and their children and girls.

**Methodology:** Through their daily communication with the women and girls, the empowerment officer and the facilitator find out about upcoming birthdays of the women and girls, their children, and girls at the centre an initiative to organise a surprise birthday party is discussed and agreed. Usually, the initiative comes from the women and girls themselves in order to make their fellow in the centre happy and they propose various ways of organizing such an event. The emotional impact that this event has is very strong because it makes them feel like part of a family in the centre without feeling left alone on such a day even though they are far from their actual family and relatives. Contributions towards organising the event come from all sides and makes it both highly participation and fun. The event is marked with music and songs in the languages of the women and girls (Afghan, Iranian, Arabic, Spanish, etc.) as well as in English. The participants dance their tradition al dances and learn new techniques from each other.

**Practical team exercise:** The women and girls share responsibility for cooking, baking and preparing a gift for the person whose birthday is being celebrated.

Example 2.1.4. a: Peer-to-peer mentoring and support

**Aim:** The main aim of this activity is to provide support to the refugee/migrant women and girls who are facing stress and anxiety for various reasons, including being far away from their home country. The support is provided by their peers, women and girls in the centre who come from the same country, who speak the same language and share the same customs and traditions.

**Participants:** The participants of the session are refugee/migrant women and girls.

**Methodology:** The empowerment officer and the facilitator identify the women and girls with specific vulnerabilities who require the support of a person who comes from the same country of origin, speaks the same language and understands the customs and culture of that country. After identification and a preliminary assessment, the empowerment officer or the facilitator either refer such persons to specialised experts or organisations at the centre (when the person needs specialised MHPSS support) or identifies and engages a woman (mentor) at the centre who comes from the same country to provide support to the women or girl in need. Their support is mostly in the form of individual listening, moral from men, when there are religious or cultural obstacles. The involvement of an external specialised trainer is another possibility if the fitness class or yoga has to be organised in the centre or in nature (a park, etc.). Prior to the activities, the empowerment officer and the facilitator in close coordination with the women and girls divide them into groups according to their interest in a certain activity.

**Practical team exercise:** Most of the sports activities are held in groups in a competitive game. Individual physical activity can also be considered. The empowerment officer participates in the activities jointly with the women and girls.

Example 2.1.3. b: Sports activities

**Aim:** To support refugee/migrant women and girls in maintaining good mental health, which ultimately contributes to relieving their stress and anxiety.

**Participants:** The participants of the session are refugee/migrant women and girls.

**Methodology:** The empowerment officer and the facilitator identify the potential participants for the board games and film/cartoon night activities in consultation with the women and girls. Films/cartoon nights are usually held in the evening hours because after 4 p.m. the centre rules do not allow the women and girls to go out of the centre, which is why it is the best time for them to watch films and cartoons (for girls) and film and cartoons (for boys) and give them a free time in a relaxing way. The choice of film or cartoon is made in consultation with the women and girls so that they can consult with a doctor if there is any sickness or condition that could represent a risk to them (in accordance with the principle ‘no harm’). The availability of sports facilities in or outside the centre should be assessed and the necessary sports clothes have to be provided so that the participants can exchange opinions. Board games and playing cards can be divided into separate groups in order to involve more participants who express interest in this activity. The empowerment officer and the facilitator also take part in the games.

**Practical team exercise:** The women and girls are divided into groups according to their interests and play in a competitive manner. Individual physical activity can also be considered. The empowerment officer participates in the activities jointly with the women and girls.

Example 2.1.3. c: Birthday celebrations and dance parties

**Aim:** The main aim of this activity is to support the refugee/migrant women and girls and their children and girls.

**Participants:** The participants of the session are refugee/migrant women and girls.
Aim:
To transfer the skills and knowledge of refugee/migrant women and girls to their peers at the centre.

Participants:
The participants of the session are refugee/migrant women and girls.

Methodology:
The empowerment officer or the facilitator identifies refugee/migrant women and girls who possess specific skills or knowledge (knitting, hair-styling, makeup, dancing skills, etc.) that might be of interest to their peers at the centre. The facilitator in consultation with these women and girls organises a session during which they agree the preliminary number of participants to take part in the learning sessions. The empowerment officer or the facilitator ensures the availability of the necessary items/materials in line with the subject of the sessions.

Practical team exercise:
The women and girls learn in group sessions and share their learning experience and practice together.

Example 2.1.4. b: Special skills session

Example 2.2.1. a: My Body My Choice

Aim:
The empowerment session 'My Body my Choice' aims to promote the human rights of women and girls, including the rights to dignity, equality, respect for their private life and the highest standards of health. The activity is held within global promotional events on gender equality and human rights, such as International Women’s Day.

Participants:
The participants of the session are refugee/migrant women.

Methodology:
The empowerment officer prepares an awareness raising session during which the participants are provided with background information on International Women’s Day and how it is celebrated in various countries. Gender equality and human rights are highlighted during the session. The informative part is followed by an interactive discussion on examples of how International Women’s Day is celebrated in the countries of origin of the participants of the session and which gender stereotypes or issues women face in those countries. Through interactive discussion the women learn from examples from different countries.

Practical team exercise:
The awareness raising session is followed by a team activity during which the participants draw a colourful poster with the message 'My Body My Choice'. The poster is then placed on the wall of the WGC as a promotional message.

Example 2.1.4. c: Community organisations peer-to-peer support

Aim:
The aim of this activity is to involve external governmental and non-governmental organisations that are available in the community and deal with women’s and girls’ issues in providing support to the refugee/migrant women and girls.

Participants:
The participants of the session are refugee/migrant women and girls and representatives from community organisations.

Methodology:
The empowerment officer or the facilitator identifies local women’s and girls’ organisations from diverse networks and contacts those organisations that might have specific activities relevant to the refugee/migrant women and girls. The details of the potential activities, the existing needs of the women and girls at the centre, the capacities of the local women’s and girls’ organisations and details are discussed in a separate meeting where agreement on formal or informal cooperation can be secured.

Practical team exercise:
Individual and group workshops (if required they should involve MHPSS professionals) and group recreational activities in which women and girls participate and through which they have an opportunity to support each other and distract each other from the daily problems they face and which are otherwise constantly on their mind.
Example 2.2.1. b: Awareness raising on Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October

- Aim: The main aim of the empowerment session on breast cancer awareness is to educate the women and girls about this issue and how to ensure early identification of symptoms that would require a medical check-up.
- Participants: The participants of the session are refugee/migrant women.
- Methodology: The empowering officer organises an awareness raising session for the refugee/migrant women. This involves a gynaecologist who conducts an informative session on breast cancer for the participants in order to enhance their knowledge on the topic and how to identify early stage symptoms that require additional mammographic check-ups. The gynaecologist also shows the participants how to identify the signs of the potential breast cancer in a simple way such as when taking a shower and encourages the women to inform her/him (the gynaecologist) if they find any signs and further necessary check-ups can be done.
- Practical team exercise: The session is followed by making pink ribbons, which is the international symbol of breast cancer awareness. The participants then distribute them to others in the centre and wear the ribbons themselves to make a difference and how we should act in the event that we or someone we know or we do not know becomes a victim of violence.

The 25 November is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. It is marked by 16 days of activism on how to follow a menstrual period calendar.

Concerning the sensitivity of the topic to the refugee/migrant girls should be ensured so that they understand how sensitive the participants may be when it comes to this subject. Moreover, a preparatory private talk with the girls about the topic of the session and their willingness to take part should be also be conducted so that they feel comfortable when listening to and speaking during the session. It is also necessary to inform the parents of the girls about the topic of the session, keeping in mind their possible hesitation caused by cultural and religious taboos. It must be done with their consent, which means that the parents need to be convinced about the benefits and importance of this session for their girls. The session should be conducted in a group but with the possibility for the girls to ask their questions in private.

• Practical team exercises: A group or private discussions/exercises can be organised with the girls using visual medical tools on anatomy as well as guidelines on how to follow a menstrual period calendar.

Example 2.2.2. a: Ending violence against women – 16 days of activism

The 25 November is the ‘International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women’. It is marked by 16 days of activism on the topic of violence against women, which is not only important to raise public awareness and play our role in activities regarding this subject. During this time, we should try to explain the types of violence and share some statistics and facts as well as history regarding violence against women. We can also talk about how we can make a difference and how we should act in the event that we or someone we know or do not know becomes a victim of violence.

These activities could include:
- a presentation for all beneficiaries at the centre,
- posters that we can make during this time,
- a set of sessions that include subjects related to violence against women,
- films about violence against women that we can discuss together later.

Judging from our experience, this set of activities is a very good choice. The women and girls are very active during this period. We talk about this and they make various posters and paintings that we use during our final presentation.

We conclude by repeating everything that we learned during this activity.

Example 2.2.2. b: The scars we can’t see

This activity is dedicated to psychological/emotional violence, which unlike physical violence is not visible and is often considered less important. This is the reason it should be talked about constantly.

First, we can explain why we are talking about this form of violence in particular and what other forms of violence exist. We can also ask the women and girls to suggest some examples of violence. We should also mention domestic violence and some statistics linked to that subject. We should then talk about the signs of emotional violence and ask the women and girls for some examples.

Based on our experience, the women and girls are always willing to share examples of the situations that they have been through in life in connection with this subject. We always talk about the importance of mental health in general and the potential risks and reasons why these women are considered more vulnerable in the terms of violence. We also always mention cultural differences and personality traits, which are considered important aspects of the subject in question. The women and girls always seem very interested in this subjects and we always bring them into any discussion involving questions that we consider important in the context of violence against women.

We conclude by repeating everything that we learned during this activity.
From the perspective of the psychologists working in WGC in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Usually, when we talk spontaneously about what is happening at the centre we speak about the things we can and cannot control in our life. In those cases, the women and girls start to talk about their personal experiences and their stories from the past, how they felt in a certain situation, what they did, what was under their control and what was not, etc. We need 10 minutes for this part.

In the second part, the main one, we ask the participants about all of the different types of GBV that they know. We write a list on the flipchart. Types of GBV can include physical violence, rape, forced/early marriage, domestic violence, sex trafficking, child abuse, harmful traditional practices, sexual exploitation and abuse and emotional violence.

We then divide the group of girls into smaller groups. Each group gets one story about one form of violence, which they need to discuss in their groups in order to recognize all signs and conclude what form of violence it constitutes.

We give the groups 20 minutes to discuss and share ideas about the stories they received. After that, each group then presents the story they were given and the corresponding conclusions they drew.

We then repeat what we have learned and conclude the session.

Example 2.1.5. a: Cultural diversity

From the perspective of the psychologists working in WGC in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Based on our experience, it very often happens that when we talk about nothing in particular the women and girls start to talk about their countries, cultures and diversity (if they are all from different countries). They talk about these subjects and we discuss it and it usually leads to some conclusions. Therefore, it would be good to talk about this aspect, because women and girls like to share their stories, discuss with each other and to meet different cultures. The story usually starts spontaneously and so there is no need for any special preparations.

Example 2.1.5. b: Things I can control

From the perspective of the psychologists working in WGC in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Usually, when we talk spontaneously about what is happening at the centre we speak about the things we can and cannot control in our life. In those cases, the women and girls start to talk about their personal experiences and their stories from the past, how they felt in a certain situation, what they did, what was under their control and what was not, etc. Usually, they start to discuss their actual problems at the centre. This is because these subjects always motivate them to remember where they had some influence, where they did not and what they can do in each situation they face at the moment.

These subjects always serve to remind them about the things that are under their control and the things we should not worry about because we do not have any influence over them. This usually helps them to calm down and rethink things that are happening to them and around them.

Example 2.1.5. c: My future (an activity with girls)

From the perspective of the psychologists working in WGC in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

We can start by talking with the girls about their future, where would they like to go, what destination seems like a good idea to them to go to, to study and what they would like to do in the future.

According to our experience, we can conclude that when the girls come to us they always like to talk about these subjects and to feel that we are interested in hearing about their lives, plans and what they like to do. It always makes them feel accepted and that someone cares about them and that always has a positive impact.

Example 2.2.2. c: What is gender-based violence? (An activity for girls)

In this activity we talk about the concepts of gender, GBV, sexuality and rights. We can presume that the girls know less than the women when it comes to these subjects and therefore it is very important to have these sessions as an introduction to the subjects we will address later.

In the introductory part we do one brainstorming session to check the girls’ knowledge and what they associate with this subject, whether are they familiar with GBV, do they know what it means, how they define it, etc. We need 10 minutes for this part.

In the second part, the main one, we ask, of course, the participants about all of the different types of GBV that they know. We write a list on the flipchart. Types of GBV can include physical violence, rape, forced/early marriage, domestic violence, sex trafficking, child abuse, harmful traditional practices, sexual exploitation and abuse and emotional violence.

We then divide the group of girls into smaller groups. Each group gets one story about one form of violence, which they need to discuss in their groups in order to recognize all signs and conclude what form of violence it constitutes.

We give the groups 20 minutes to discuss and share ideas about the stories they received. After that, each group then presents the story they were given and the corresponding conclusions they drew.

We then repeat what we have learned and conclude the session.

Example 5.2. Annex 2. Checklist for preparing to Implement an Activity

Before the sessions

> Identify the activity through consultation with the women and girls.
> Prepare the necessary materials, facilities and equipment.
> Prepare the rules of the activity, the timeframe and the number of participants required.
> Prepare an evaluation method to get feedback after the session.
> Be ready to manage unexpected situations.

During the sessions

> Clearly and in understandable language explain the process and rules.
> Explain the roles and responsibilities of the participants.
> Ascertain the expectations of the participants in order to formulate the activity.
> Be ready to repeat the tasks, roles and responsibilities and facilitate the process.
> Lead and demonstrate by example if required.
> Ensure a friendly open and relaxed environment for the participants and the facilitator.
Example 2.
Activity: [Blank]
Date: [Blank]

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.

5.3. Annex 3.
Feedback and evaluation forms
These documents are translated into the necessary languages

Example 1.

QUESTIONNAIRE
(please circle your answer)

Activity name: [Blank]
Date: [Blank]

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?

At the end of the session

- Check if their expectations have been met.
- Get feedback on the process and collect suggestions for improvements.
- Give the participants an opportunity to provide feedback individually, if required.
- Debrief after the session with the facilitator and organisers and agree upon action points for follow-up, if required.

Example 3.

Activity: [Blank]
Date: [Blank]

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.