

WOMEN & GIRLS SAFE SPACES

An Experience Based Mentorship Resource on Violence Against Women and Girls



“You see and hear it happening to other people and you feel for them, but you never expect it to happen to you unless it actually does,” says 28-year-old Maddo, the only son to a single mother and victim of Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV).

During the SGBV prevention training in Mtwapa (Aug 2016), we meet with Maddo, the only son to a single mother who escaped the pressure of abortion after conceiving while in high school and who in her agony, faced rejection from family and clan for pursuing her education instead of being married off at a tender age of 13. The mother, according to Maddo, made several attempts to abort in vain.

Maddo now a youth leader in Kilifi County has become an advocate against Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Kilifi. “I came to learn and accept my life, conscious to the painful and torturous experience I learnt my mother went through because of me. Reading from my own script of life.... thanks to them, of course the few friends who stood by my mother, the young girl then, is now offering protection and empowerment opportunities. To date I have made very many friends despite the resentment of being a boy of a single mother without a father in a community where children out of wedlock are considered a curse. As a youth leader and champion of women and girl’s rights, I have made many friends and supported many victims of SGBV and often refer many to relevant institutions including health centres not only for medical services but, also because they need safe environment and psychosocial support.” My passion as a mentor and guide is driven by the fact that, I could have died without seeing this beautiful world, and so I always feel obliged to save a life and address situations that could lower the dignity of human beings especially girls.

Maddo (not real name), a community youth leader and activist on the prevention of SGBV from Kilifi County.



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1. Introduction

The creation of women and girls safe spaces (WGSS) has emerged as a key strategy for the protection and empowerment of women and girls affected by the incidences of gender based violence and especially Sexual Gender Based Violence among boys and girls of school going age. This document provides an overview of what safe spaces are, and highlights what key principles should be followed when establishing such spaces in violence and post-violent contexts. It is aimed at informing the establishment of peer to peer support groups among school going children and community.

This guide is based on the experiences of Pamoja for Transformation Trust (PfT) and the likeminded partners in Kilifi, Kwale, Migori and Kisumu Counties. It also refers to experiences documented by the GBV coordination mechanisms in Kilifi under the Jamii Thabiti programme. Lessons learned from other regions globally are also referenced. Guidance has also been taken from the child protection and referral centres and the Right of a Child (ROC) education program for boys and girls in school.



2. What are boys and girls safe spaces?

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

The key objectives of a safe space are to provide an environment where women, boys and girls can:

- Socialize and re-build their social networks,
- Receive social support and boost their self-esteem,
- Acquire contextually relevant skills, knowledge and information,
- Access safe and non-stigmatizing multi-sectoral GBV response services (i.e. psychosocial, legal, medical) and
- Receive information on issues relating to their rights, health, and services.

These spaces may take different names and forms such as women/girls centers, women community centers, or listening and counselling centres, referral centres, rescue centres to name a few. The safe spaces in this context are not the same as shelters or safe spaces at reception centers or one-stop centers.



3. Why women, boys and girls safe spaces?

In most African societies, women and girls have limited space to meet as peers to discuss personal issues, and public spaces are often inhabited largely by men and sometimes discriminating. In the patriarchal traditional society, women's responsibility include taking care of children, cooking, carrying out household chores, and generally looking after the family. While these roles may change in the modern world or during crisis and violence, where women may find themselves working or becoming the breadwinner, they remain responsible for the household nevertheless.

"For many girls, the opportunity to move freely in the community becomes limited at the onset of puberty". Parents often keep their daughters inside the house, protected from any contact with males." This unofficial restriction on female mobility tends to persist throughout life. While not necessarily codified in a specific way, there are functional curfews for women in many parts of the world especially the impoverished communities.

In Kilifi and Kenyan context, women, boys and girls have become more vulnerable and exposed to risks leading to violent abuse isolated because of several factors including: sex tourism, child labour due to poverty, retrogressive cultures of child marriages, *siniriche-disco matanga* and sex trade, battering, forced and early marriages, rape, incest, violent extremism, drug and alcohol abuse. During our community engagements, women, boys, girls and their family members reported having a lot of fear of sexual violence, harassment, and discriminate attacks.

School going boys and girls in Kilifi are reported to be particularly vulnerable and often suffer from different forms of violence but mostly, sexual violence ranging from forced and early marriages, rape, sex trade, child labour, sodomy and incest habitually from people well known to them as well as strangers. Further, women, boys and girls have had to take on roles and responsibilities beyond their age and social status, such as parenting, working or going out in order to feed their families. While freedom of mobility is not limited for many women, boys and girls, increased fear of sexual assault, harassment and trafficking is further threatening the freedom and development of the adolescent boys and girls going to school. In addition, the proliferation of sex work/trade and sex tourism due to the coastal location and popularity as a tourist destination is perceived to be exacerbating incidences of sexual violence in the region.

Evidence suggests that, the establishment of women- and/or girls-only spaces helps to reduce risks and prevent further harm especially in violent situations. These spaces provide women and girls with an entry point for services and access to appropriate information and services. Safe gathering points also offer them an opportunity to engage with each other, exchange information, and rebuild community networks and support. In this way, safe spaces can be a key way of building women and girls' social assets.

Addressing GBV through Wider Sexual and Reproductive Health (RH) Mandate and Beyond

Survivors of violence suffer significant sexual and reproductive health consequences including forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and resulting deaths, traumatic fistula, and higher risks of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and HIV. Since all these issues are at the core of our VAWG programming mandate, it is possible to take a holistic approach, working directly with health service providers, security agents and teachers in establishing specialized GBV services.

Putting all the stakeholders' mandate into practice ensures that, safe spaces for women, boys and girls are closely linked to respective services provided by the institutions. In some cases, as in the Pamoja-Jamii Thabiti programme, the safe spaces are located within the same schools and community which not only guarantees confidentiality, but also enables the programme to reach a wider audience, provide immediate care and peer to peer support. The programme in Kilifi is supporting multiple actors with comprehensive facilities to ensure that women and girls not only have a safe space to meet, but can also access vital RH services and information.

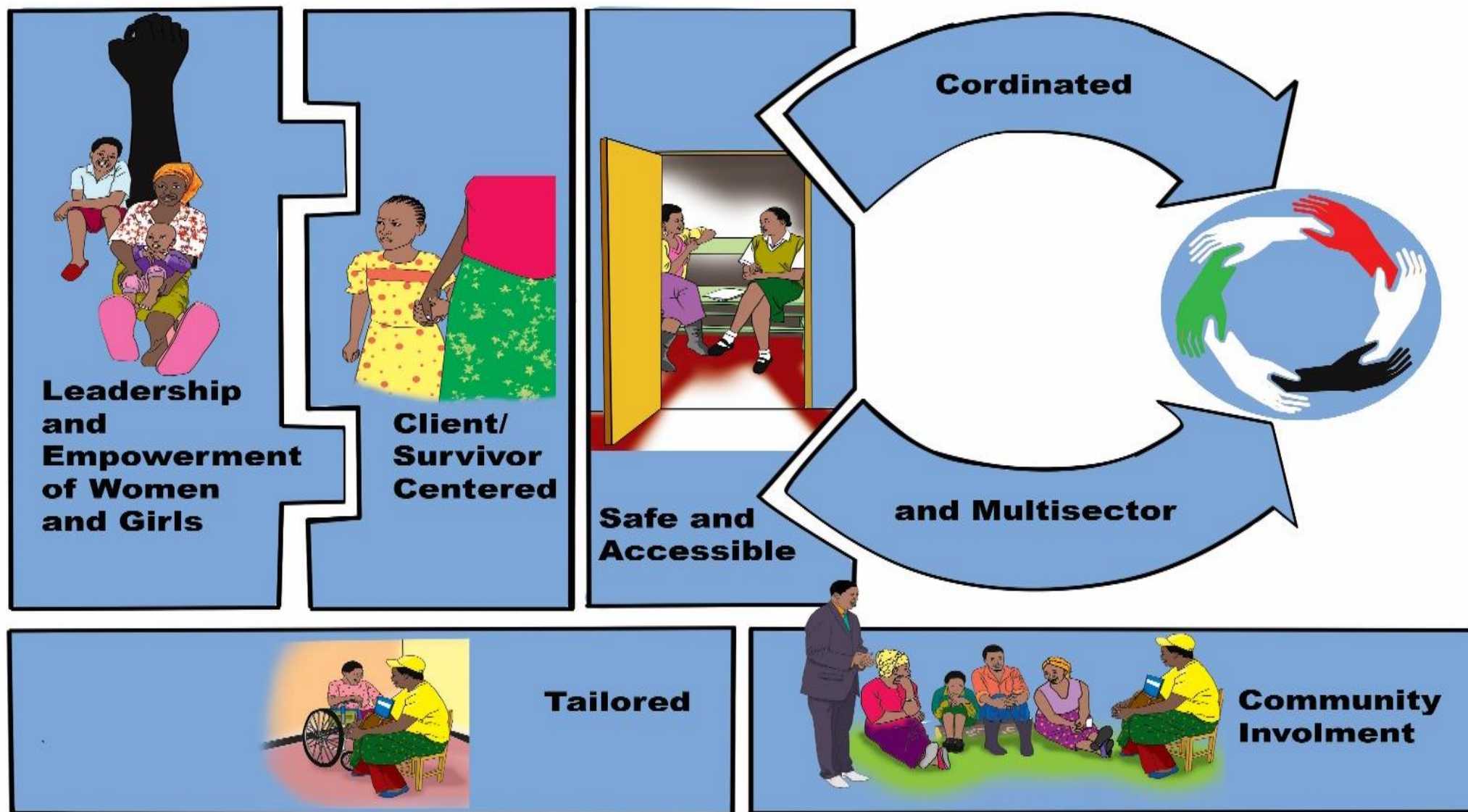


“There are so many things which our children desperately need, such as GBV kits, safety, information on how to preserve evidence from abuse, GBV help line numbers, procedures to report incidences of abuse and most importantly, conducive platforms for psychosocial support, some of which we can now access due to trainings and awareness outreaches by Pamoja” says Prudence Murabu-a teacher at Mbuguni Primary School. She is one of the guidance and counseling teachers handling massive and sometimes traumatising cases of children and family. “My participation in the prevention of gender training by Pamoja empowered me and linked me to networks including the police. I will teach this pattern to all my pupils and effectively guide them on how to overcome risks, protect themselves and report all kinds of abuses in the community. Information and knowledge helps dispel some of our worries.”

A Counselling teacher in Mbuguni Primary School

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

The following basic principles applies when establishing and managing a safe space





Leadership and Empowerment of Women and Girls: A safe space should be women and girl-led and offer an inclusive and empowering environment for them. Women and girls should be included in project planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of the space to ensure relevance and ownership. There should be regular exchange with them about how the space is to be run and managed. Women and girls should decide the opening hours, as well as the types of activities to be undertaken. They should feel a sense of ownership of the space, rather than considering it a centre being run for them by an external source.

Client/survivor Centred: The design of the safe space, the activities and services it offers, and the discussions it organizes should prioritize the safety and confidentiality of women and girls accessing the centre. Any case files, documentation of services, and client data kept at the centre should be properly secured. The centre should be open to all women and girls, and their wishes, choices, rights, and dignity should be respected. They should be provided with information about available services and options. The staff and volunteers should be extensively trained on the principle of non-discrimination among other skills.

Safe and accessible: The safe space should be located in an area that is conveniently accessible to women, boys and girls, and assures safety and privacy. The decision on where to locate the safe space should be led by women and girls. If that is not feasible, they should at minimum be consulted. Accessibility should also consider timings and days that work best for them. If possible, consideration must be made to support the transportation costs to and from the space. The WGSS should ensure that a **Code of Conduct** is adopted and all staff and volunteers trained on it.

Community Involvement: While the safe space should be a space meant for and run by women and girls, its sustainability will require the input and support of many stakeholders. Husbands, parents, and community and religious leaders have a lot of influence over the ability of women and girls to participate in programmes. It is, therefore, essential to understand the perspectives of these individuals while setting up a safe space, and to mobilize community support for the WGSS so that women and girls are able to safely participate in all activities. Ultimately, women and girls spaces should not be isolated units, but an extension of broader community life. Men and boys have an important role in ensuring the success of safe spaces. Engaging them to ensure they understand the purpose, location and benefits of the safe spaces will enable the participation of a larger number of women and girls. Ensuring the involvement of and buy-in from the community for sustainability purposes, is vital to the success of the safe space.

Coordinated and Multi-sectoral: The safe space should take into consideration, the varying needs and experiences of women and girls. It should deliver services that respond to their life cycle, including issues related to GBV prevention and response. The range of possible activities is rather vast and should be decided with the involvement of women and girls, and according to the specific situation. In some cases, a centre may host a range of services from sexual and reproductive health, to psychosocial support, to legal services; at other times, some of these services will be available elsewhere. A clear internal and external referral system, should be in place and staff and volunteers should be able to activate it safely and confidentially, it would be useful to be part of the wider GBV coordination network and standard operating procedure process for an effective referral mechanism.

Tailored

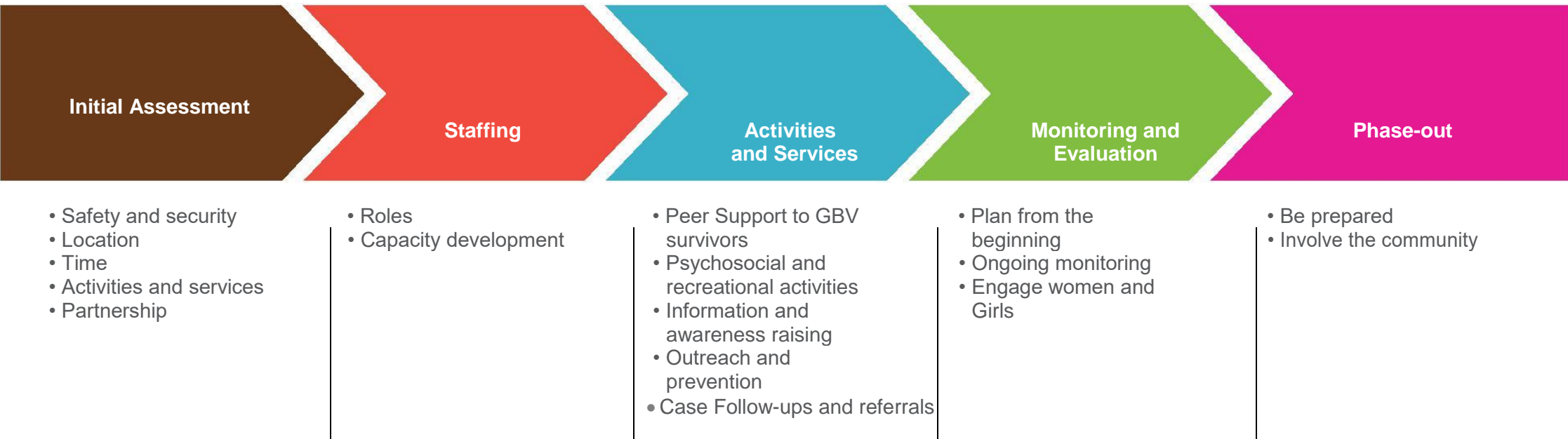
A safe space should be inviting enough for women and girls to feel welcomed and engaged. It is important to maintain a balance between structured activities, services, and times to socialize. Activities and approaches need to be culturally and age appropriate as the needs and interests of a 16 year-old girl are bound to be different from those of a 35 year-old woman. A safe space should also take into consideration, the special needs of women and girls living with disabilities.



It is difficult to simultaneously be both the mother and father, of children from different fathers” said Ameera (not real name), mother of a son and two daughters living in Chonyi Village. “Before I came into contact with Pamoja, I didn’t know about the different forms of violence against women and girls. I didn’t know it could happen within a family too. My husband and I were happy, though we got married when I was very young. After his death, I was unhappy, and their family was very controlling and harassing because of the wealth. I was forced into inheritance by my in-laws. Now, I feel strong enough to stand up for myself and talk about my experience. I learnt new skills. I am even taking a business management course as that will help me find work. It’s my dream to have my own place where I can live with my children.”

A widow in Chonyi community

5. How to establish and run women and girls safe spaces



I. Initial assessment

A first step is to gather basic information about the needs, preferences, constraints, and assets of women and girls so that they are able to access and participate in programmes. A full assessment may not be possible at the onset. However, subsequent data and information might be gathered during implementation. When data is not available, it is internationally recognized that GBV increases in times of crisis.

An initial assessment helps to determine the feasibility of establishing a safe space. Where possible, questions relating to women and girls safe spaces “should be addressed through coordinated, inter-agency assessments within or across clusters and sectors.” This can help address gaps, prevent overlap in coverage, develop common interagency approaches and standards, coordinate training and capacity development, and share and collaborate on tools. Moreover, the coordinating mechanism may also have mapped the locations of WGSS.

How many safe spaces should be established? *There are no official standards as to how many safe spaces should be available. The number could be determined on the basis of factors such as geographical location, intensity and spread of issues and access.*

In summary, an assessment for establishing safe spaces:

- Should be participatory.
- Should actively engage women and girls, as well as other groups such as men and boys, religious leaders, teachers, police and community leaders, etc.
- Should disaggregate data on the basis of gender, age, and other relevant factors for the sake of inclusivity and better programming/establishment of relevant centres.



a. Safety and security: Women, girls and the community should be consulted in order to understand the security risks in the community, and the types of community support systems that existed for them before the violence. This part of the assessment will help to determine the need for such a centre and/or the type of work/resources it may take to engage the community/ensure community buy-in for the initiative. Other questions focusing on groups of women and girls that are most vulnerable, as well as their location, will provide useful information about security considerations before setting up a safe space.

b. Location: Establishing a safe space does not necessarily mean building a new structure. It means identifying a space that is safe for women and girls to use. This can range from a health centre, to school, to community centre, to someone's house, to an open space. Adopting the methodology of safety mapping (community mapping) can help identify where women and girls are most safe. Women and girls should be involved in mapping their community, marking which times and places are safe and which are not. The same can be done with men and boys, not only to understand how the perception of safety varies, but also to ensure community buy-in.

It might be difficult to answer some of the community mapping questions at the onset as centres may have been opened and planned in advance. In the case of rescue centres where it might be necessary to identify a safe space before the population arrives, consultations can still be held with women attending services elsewhere in the location/ County, at least to gather some guidance. In all cases, those planning to establish a safe space, and the protection and/or GBV coordination group, in consultation with women, girls, and community leaders should consider the following options when choosing a location for a safe space. While the physical space of a safe space can be organized in different ways, it is important to consider the range of activities planned when selecting a location and preparing the layout. Some key considerations for physical structure are:

Inside Structure:

- A spacious activity room with the capacity to accommodate a minimum of 20 people;
- A private room for provision of case management and individual counselling services;
- A day care area for children accompanying mothers; and
- A structure that is accessible for women and girls with disabilities.

In Kibaoni: A safety community mapping carried out in Kibaoni primary school in Kilifi North sub-county, identified that a karate club was in the school being used by boys and girls. Based on the recommendations from the teachers and community, the boys from the karate club were included in the Kibaoni for Transformation safe space that is purely led by pupils, majority who have suffered one form of violence or another.

Outside Structure or area:

- Should have a privacy fence or wall to ensure privacy and safety. Discuss with women and girls, how enclosed the space should be; and
- Should preferably have a shaded space around the site to allow for outdoor activities or socialization.

In Kilifi South, Community health workers and educator was part of the safe space. This enabled access to health, especially SRH services.

c. Time: It is important to determine, together with women and girls, what time best suits them, and to organize activities that will help customize the safe space for them. One way of doing so is to map their time use and workload. This will provide an indication of when women and girls have time to come to the centre.

d. Activities and services: Interviews and focus group discussions can be organized to understand what kind of activities will be viable. Initially, some basic group activities can be arranged and further developed together with women and girls. It is important to gain knowledge about the types of activities that women and girls used to carry out before violence rather than making assumptions about what they usually may have done or liked. If activities related to economic empowerment are possible, a prior market assessment would be advisable so as to choose one that is most financially viable.

Pamoja for Transformation has partnered with school administration and community volunteers in supporting safe spaces in schools. Pamoja contributed with economic empowerment; knowledge and skill expertise while the schools under the leadership of school heads and guiding and counselling teachers run the safe space sessions. .

e. Partnerships

Establishing safe spaces means managing complex and context-specific risks. Approaches to safe spaces should be organized and managed in consultation with likeminded stakeholders. In some situations, a formal safe space established by an international organization may be the most accessible and appropriate. However, spaces may also be less formal, within the community, or educational spaces linked to women's leaders and/or networks.

An important consideration in understanding how best to implement a safe space project is the model of implementation. More specifically, it would be useful to decide whether the model will be actualized through partnership with a local institution, a local or international NGO, or through a joint project with a government agency. It may be interesting to partner with an organization that has a different expertise. If possible, specialized organizations working with people with disabilities should also be engaged to ensure access to the centers.



II. Staffing: Roles and Capacity Development

In the case of structured centre, issues of staffing are critical to take into consideration for effective management of the centre. Conflict sensitivity is key. While the staffing structure depends on need and population size, there are certain basic roles that often appear in a safe space. Depending on the situation, it will be worthwhile to strive for a combination of volunteer and paid staff. Some thought should also be given to where the staff comes from.

The selection of staff should be governed by factors like transparency and level of skill. The hiring of female staff should be prioritized; however, the induction of some male staff members as outreach workers can be strategically significant when there is a need to engage with leadership structures, police, and men and boys. When hiring, it is also important to consider who the community/women trust.

An important lesson learned from past experiences was to provide incentives for volunteer staff. Incentives need not be necessarily financial, but could be in the form of trainings and/or material goods.

Arrangements should be made for necessary training and capacity-building of the staff and volunteers so that they are able to safely, effectively, and ethically perform their duties. A comprehensive capacity-building programme with provisions for coaching, mentoring, and regular supervision should be developed to achieve this objective.

For Pamoja, we have preferred that social workers and the volunteers come from their community but live in towns and villages outside of the safe spaces as we felt that this made the services more confidential and aided the building of trust with the victims.

In the case of schools, the teachers come from the same schools, are members of the guidance and counselling department, and have established a high level of trust and rapport with pupils in the school.



Staffing: Roles and Capacity Development

The following guidelines can be helpful:

- Staff and volunteers should be carefully selected and trained on basics of GBV, communication skills, referral pathways, and ways to organize group activities. It is advisable to remember that case managers and response officers will need much more in-depth training and constant supervision;
- It would be suitable to implement a system of engaging 'activity specialists' who visit the safe space for their specific activity only, and general supervisors who stay throughout the day.
- Weekly follow-up visits should be arranged by experienced workers to observe the situation and activities, help animators and community members to reflect on what is or is not working, and advice on how to strengthen activities and handle challenges.
- It is critical to recognize that some workers may themselves have been victims of violence, and will benefit from group discussions.
- More experienced WGSS workers should be brought in to mentor less experienced ones.
- A manager should be appointed for supervision and support.
- Resources such as books and training manuals that enable ongoing learning should be built up and
- All staff should be trained and sign a code of conduct including one on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

A police officer in Kilifi and one of the safe space mentors with Pamoja. "I am deeply moved by the stories of women and girls who report cases of abuse at the police station. It's not easy for them even to trust the police. Many had problems at home, couldn't sleep, and some even lost their trust in their parents and relatives. But I've seen a lot of change in women and girls who participate in the project and now safe spaces. Being able to access a support network, and information lifts a weight off their shoulders as they know they are not alone and are assured of support."



A male police officer from Kilifi police station who handles most of the GBV cases in the station and court

III. Activities and Services

All activities and service should be finalized in consultation with women and girls so that they are responsive to their needs, and are context and age appropriate. The safe space should be a fun place for women and girls. Services should ideally reflect the range of needs, experiences, ages, and comfort levels of people accessing the safe space, as well as organizational expertise and capacity.



While the level of specialization of services provided, and variety will depend on availability of resources and the expertise of each organization, it would be advisable to implement activities and services progressively, starting with basic activities and moving on to more advanced ones.

Guidance may be obtained by studying the different types of activities and services discussed below. These activities should be adapted to the interests of women and girls, and the capacity of the intervention. While many women and girls safe spaces offer specialised survivor support, this is only recommended if there is sufficient expertise. Diversity should also be considered, and women and girls with disabilities should be integrated in all activities.

a. Support to GBV survivors

Having a clear referral pathway articulating services specific to the needs of both adult and child survivors can prove extremely beneficial. All WGSS staff and volunteers should be familiar with the referral pathway, and their respective roles within it. Depending on the specific services available at the safe space, clients may be referred to the following (if they choose): Case worker (for case management services); health provider (for medical care and post-rape treatment, if available); a lawyer or legal association (for legal recourse); and police (for safety).

In the Jamii Thabiti Programme, a series of life skills training package on prevention of violence against women and girls is developed and delivered by Pamoja for Transformation to different stakeholders including the safe space mentors and coordinators.

b. Psychosocial and Recreational Activities

Support Groups. *Women and girls may be brought together to undertake vocational activities to boost their confidence and improve their social support as a group. These might include sewing, moulding, table banking, among others. Children may together participate in debate clubs, sports or any other activity that will boost their esteem and reduce their thoughts and feeling of isolation and stress.*

Centres may also purchase toys for children to play with while their mothers participate in other relevant activities.

All activities, be they formal support groups or recreational, should be customized according to specific needs of women and girls. Activities may include the following:

- **Age-appropriate support group sessions** around a 'centre-piece,' which can include coffee/tea sessions, sewing activities among others for women. Appropriate and desirable 'centre-pieces' should be identified during group-based consultations with women and girls in the targeted communities. Such activities require the leadership of professional psychosocial staff.
- **Recreational activities** led by women and girls in the community, with resources procured by the organization or managed by the communities. Sewing, make-up, hair dressing, computer literacy, language, crochet, painting, drawing, sports, theatre performances are all examples of activities that could be carried out.
- **Formal vocational trainings** in classes that begin and end in cycles. If possible, certificates should be awarded to participants upon completion of the training.
- **Life skills training**, both formal and informal. The training should be customized and age appropriate.

- **Livelihood activities.** These activities should be carefully developed. It should be known that, if the income-generating activities are not based on market analysis, they will not generate income. Yet, they can still be an important psychosocial support for women and girls.
- **Day care services**, when possible, to increase access to centres for women with young children. These services can be provided by either volunteer or incentive-based staff working at the safe space. At minimum, toys can be an offer for children to play with.

Age Segmenting and Intergenerational Cooperation: *The needs and interests of a 17 year-old girl will be different from those of a 45 year-old woman. Separate activities adapted for women, young women, and adolescent girls should be planned. However, safe spaces also offer an opportunity for women and girls of different ages to collaborate. Along with peer-to-peer support, role models of different ages can serve as mentors.*

c. Information and awareness-raising: It is always useful to arrange information and awareness-raising sessions with women and girls. The safe space can collaborate with other sectors to provide information on a range of issues such as health and sanitation or nutrition, provided the integrity of the centre as a space designed for women and girls is not compromised. Different ways can be considered for information-sharing. In fact, it is not always the best strategy to organize formal awareness-raising sessions, often times, and activities too can serve as an entry point for providing information. Topics can include information on available services and how to access them, risk identification and reduction strategies, sexual and reproductive health, women's rights, infant and young child feeding practices, positive coping strategies, life skills and hygiene promotion.

d. Prevention and outreach activities: Prevention and outreach activities can be arranged, both within and outside the safe space. When arranging such activities, it is important to emphasize working with women and girls, and with the community at large, to promote a safer environment, and to encourage community ownership of GBV prevention and risk reduction.



Prevention activities can include: Regular **safety audits** to assess security risks for women and girls, and to identify opportunities with other sectors to mitigate those risks. Safety audits should be coordinated through the GBV coordination mechanisms. Findings from safety audits should be shared with other relevant sectors, such as security agents, health, teachers, social workers, legal experts, community and religious leaders so that they can ensure that the location and any programmatic approaches being implemented therein, are safe for women and girls. The involvement of women and girls from within the community to conduct **safety mapping** is strongly recommended. Such an activity can support women and girls in identifying high-risk locations throughout their communities, and working together to minimize those risks.

- **Safety groups**, such as water or firewood collection group or school accompaniment group. Such groups can empower communities to ensure a safer environment for women and girls. Women and girls need to be meaningfully engaged in the creation and utilization of these groups.

- **Outreach activities.** These activities offer opportunities to access women and girls whose movement may be restricted in some way. Building upon existing women groups and support networks within the communities is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of outreach activities. These initiatives may include:

- Home visits (through volunteer outreach team) and home-based tea sessions to inform community members about activities and services. In this context, it is essential for the outreach teams to be fully aware of the issues of privacy and confidentiality, and of the referral systems.



Activities and Services

- Engagement with community structures, religious and community leaders. Such outreach work should include working with men and boys in the community to prevent GBV and to empower women and girls.
- Development of more informal safe spaces around the main physical safe space. These can take the form of women groups that meet regularly e.g. table banking-*chama*, and are supported to carry out activities outside of the main centre.

Equipment: The safe space centres should be equipped with necessary furniture and materials to ensure women and girls can comfortably and effectively participate in all activities. The following supplies and equipment's may be procured, depending on resources available:

- Lockable cabinet(s),
- Chairs and a tables each for the private and the activity rooms;
- IEC material including posters, charts, and visual aids for any information sessions,
- Special items for women and girls with disabilities, whenever possible,
- Emergency stand, fire extinguisher or blankets in case of emergency and
- Toys and books for children.

"I want to learn new skills and get more information but I'd also like to contribute here," says Yasmeen from Kibaoni Primary school. Yasmeen was experiencing family neglect and reported her parents to the police, she is more concerned about how families and relatives mistreat their children to the extent of not providing the basic needs like food, shelter and education. The safe space-Kibaoni Transformation club offers her more than just courage to speak about the vices affecting her colleagues, but also training to improve her chances of becoming a better leader. She has found a place of growth and a support network. "I try to participate in all activities of the safe space as this is the only time I get for myself. I talk to other girls and boys and forget my worries for a while. Since I didn't have any school uniform, my friends at the club contributed to buy me uniform and gave me clothes they didn't need any more. It's a great relief to have such supportive friends and group."

A class 8 member of the Kibaoni for Transformation Safe Space



IV. Monitoring and Evaluation



The safe space needs to be monitored on an ongoing basis to track its development, identify gaps, and ensure quality activities and referrals. Monitoring the safety of the space is also an important consideration in any context.

Some important points to consider are:

- Availability of a monitoring and evaluation plan.
- Training of selected volunteers and staff on effective monitoring of programme activities.
- Monitoring of the participation of women and girls for each kind of activity.
- Use of client feedback surveys.
- Monitoring the quality of the activities, workers' skill levels and attitudes, and adequacy of supplies and logistics supports.
- Use of participatory methods of monitoring and evaluation that engage women and girls and invite views of community members, and
- Arranging for inter-agency collaborative evaluations, when possible, to improve coordination and yield conclusions that apply more widely.

“There is a lot of discrimination, brutality and resentment against sex workers,” said Marema (not real name), food vender/salon owner from Mtwapa, a town in Kilifi South famously known for its vibrant 24/7 social life. Marema is a volunteer at the **CRH** community health referral centre. “The programme has helped me regain the confidence to speak out about the painful experiences we used to face. I am able to advice my colleagues and to stand up for myself.” She is also working as an outreach volunteer, identifying women who could benefit from the medical, psychosocial and vocational services at the CRH centre. “I’m happy to be able to help other women, boys and girls from Kilifi.”

A commercial sex worker

V. Phase-out

A transition plan that links with broader recovery and sustainability planning should be developed in close consultation with the community and other stakeholders. Using a bottom-up approach will support ownership and transition of the WGSS to the community and/or the local organization. It is important to ensure that the community is aware, from the outset, that a phase-out period and handover will take place, and to share information about when the phase-out or transition will occur.

The following guidelines should be considered during the phase-out:

- Transitioning of the WGSS into community resources such as community centers.
- Inclusion of budgetary considerations in planning the phase-out.
- Empowerment of women and girls, along with communities, to make key decisions about the transition of the WGSS, whenever possible.
- Engagement of women and girls in implementing the strategy.
- Planning enough time for the handover between international, national and local partners; providing opportunities for capacity development of the staff of the safe space and local organization (both institutional and technical training) and
- Adaptation of plans on the basis of the changing context.

Malkia (not real name), aged 23, is from Chonyi, she doesn't feel as isolated ever since she started visiting the clinic in **CRH**. The comprehensive approach of the clinic has encouraged her to get advice on family planning too. "My husband and I discuss having another baby as he wants a girl but I think we shouldn't. However, I now feel more confident discussing the topic with him because I am aware of all available services and options."



6. Examples of Safe Space initiatives



In Mtwapa, CRH works with partners to offer support in reproductive health clinics. Such integration allows greater access for a larger number of women. For example, women can come to the center without having to say they are going to a women-specific space, and they can easily access health (including reproductive health) services at the same time. This comprehensive approach not only allows for a more confidential and less stigmatizing system but also addresses the **security concerns** among sex workers.

In Kilifi, Minda Trust works through Listening and Counselling Centres that were part of the local psychosocial system, thereby ensuring **sustainability** by building the capacity of and strengthening the counselling systems. These centres have also enhanced their services; for example, they offer activities for children while the mothers participate in their own sessions.



In Malindi, GBV Working Group has established safe spaces within existing community based organizations in urban settings as these centres are already known to and trusted by the communities. Special attention and focus has been given to women and girls only activities, but recently, boys have been incorporated. In the communities, specific safe spaces have been established with a focus on **outreach and legal advice**, which has increased attendance of women and girls.

In Kilifi, **CUCs** as a GBV coordination mechanism are **closely linked with Sexual and Reproductive Health services, the legal and security services**. They are either present in the same physical space or are carried out by the volunteers to facilitate referral and make follow up on cases. Further, the approach of the safe spaces, is very comprehensive and includes case management and psychosocial support for survivors of GBV, victims of HIV and Aids as well as legal services in some cases.

In Schools, Pamoja established peer to peer support groups for boys and girls as safe space in close collaboration with the guiding and counselling department's. The aim of the spaces was to empower boys and girls to break out of their social isolation and silence on the abuses they are exposed in the community. The space has become **a place for boys and girls to share their issues**, socialize, and take part in informal awareness-raising. Being linked to the guiding and counselling committee provided an opportunity for them to solve any school-related problems as peers and with the counselling teachers.



Annex I: Do's and Don'ts: A checklist for establishing women and girls' safe spaces

DO 	DON'T 
Ensure women and girls are involved at each stage of the project cycle, and that they lead the establishment and running of the space	Impose a ready-made model without considering women and girls
Coordinate with the government and other agencies that implement GBV programmes, as well as the GBV coordination mechanism	Ignore linking up the WGSS with other services
Adopt a multi-sectoral approach within the centre through a referral system	Isolate the WGSS so that it is only able to provide a certain kind of service or activity
Engage communities, parents, husbands, and community leaders in key decisions	Restrict the scope of the WGSS to being a facility and community engagement
Make the WGSS accessible and inclusive for women and girls; keep diversity as a key consideration, and include meeting the needs of persons with disabilities	Assume that because the WGSS is open to all, therefore it is accessible and inclusive
Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand and adhere to an appropriate code of conduct	Make the WGSS workers sign a code of conduct, regardless of whether they understand or care about it
Ensure that the timing and nature of activities are compatible with the daily routines of women and girls	Predefine the timing and types of activities without consulting women and girls
Ensure that the location is safe and accessible	Assume that any location will work
Ensure that activities are women-lead	Treat women as beneficiaries
Ensure that all staff is supported and supervised, and benefits from continual capacity-building	Assume they are able to do their job
Ensure that mechanisms are in place to monitor activities through participation of women and girls (i.e.: client feedback, staff supervision)	Rely solely on having a complaints box for feedback
Plan for phase-out in advance, and allow for sufficient time	Halt all activities once funds run out

Annex II: Assessment questions

Topic	Questions	To whom
Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main physical and psychosocial threats to women and girls? How do they vary for diverse groups, e.g., by age, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, etc.? • Did women and girls have a place to meet before the crisis? Where did they meet? What did that look like? If not, what would they like it to look like? • Would a WGSS help to prevent or diminish these threats, or could it increase them (e.g., are there risks to women and girls in accessing the WGSS)? • Would a WGSS strengthen the existing support systems, or would it duplicate existing activities and systems? • What is the acceptance of families and communities for this type of intervention? • How does the community view the establishment of a WGSS? Is it likely to develop a spirit of ownership in developing a WGSS? • Who are the key people in the community or camp who support women and girls? Who do women and girls go to when they need help or advice? • Who are the key people in the community or camp to involve when setting up a WGSS? • Which women and girls are highly vulnerable and may need additional support to participate in WGSS activities? • Have appropriate steps been taken to set up complaints and feedback mechanisms through the use of women committees, complaints boxes, etc., to ensure downward accountability to beneficiaries? • How many safe spaces are needed in the location/community in question? How many women and girls are likely to access them? 	Women, girls men and boys
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What places are considered acceptable for women and girls to go to? Under what conditions? • Must they be accompanied to these places? If so, by whom? • Are there specific purposes attached to their going to places (e.g., shopping, running errands for the family, taking siblings or other family members to a health clinic)? • Are there restrictions on the time of the day when a girl may go to certain places? • Who within the family decides whether, when, and where women and girls may go? • How do girls move around the community (e.g., by foot or bus)? • Are girls subjected to harassment, teasing, or verbal abuse while traveling? • Does the place have accessible clean water and child- and gender-friendly toilets or latrines? • Is the site accessible for girls and women with disabilities? What routes do they have to take to get there? • How will the site change over seasons and the calendar year? Does it have particular owners at particular times of the year? • Is it close to or far from any police or military station? • Is it close to other services such as a health centre or a hospital? Are there any child-friendly services nearby? Is there a child-friendly space? • Is it near places where men and boys usually gather (e.g., a football field or a sports court)? <p><i>More guidance on safety and community mapping can be found at www.gbvresponders.org</i></p>	GBV coordination mechanisms, partners, women, girls, men and boys.

Topic	Questions								To whom
Time and Commitment	Activity	Midnight to sunrise	Sunrise to mid-morning	Mid-morning to noon	Noon to mid-afternoon	Mid-afternoon to sunset	Sunset to late evening	Late evening to midnight	Women and girls
	School-related activities								
	In school								
	In transit from/ to school								
	Doing homework								
	Personal care								
	House chores								
	Child care								
	Domestic duties outside								
	Employment								
	Socialization								
	Sleep and rest								
Activities and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you like to spend your time? • What would you like to learn? • Is there any particular kind of information you are interested in? • Are you interested in physical activities? • Would you like to participate in a formal class? About what? How long? • Do you like crafts? What kind? • What type of activities did you do back home? • What kind of support services do you think you or women and girls in your community need? 								Women and girls

Annex III: Women and girls safe spaces versus other spaces

Safe spaces versus safe houses and shelters

Women and girls' safe spaces, as defined above, fulfil a very different objective than safe houses or shelters. Safe shelters are places that provide immediate security, temporary refuge, and support to survivors escaping violent or abusive situations. They constitute a formal response service as part of GBV case management. This service is, through the referral process, made available to women and girl survivors of violence who are in imminent danger. Safe shelters are professionally staffed and accredited. Admission is contingent on specific criteria and strict standard operating procedures of confidentiality. Safe shelters deliver specialized services and provide beneficiaries with personal security.

Safe spaces versus women safe spaces in reception areas

Women and girls-only safe spaces in reception areas of refugee camps differ from safe spaces. The former are a first entry point into the refugee camp. The primary objective of such areas is to minimize the risks for women and girls undergoing the processes of being assigned shelters, receiving initial assistance packages, and entering the camp. These areas can also be used to provide information regarding the services available to women and girls, and ensure connection to other services when specific vulnerabilities are identified.

Safe spaces and child-friendly spaces


Child-Friendly Spaces (CFSs) are widely used in emergency situations as a first response to the needs of girls and boys, and as a forum for working with affected communities. They are established in response to children's immediate rights to protection, psychosocial well-being, and non-formal education. This response is carried out through activities directed at caring for and protecting children, such as the setting up of support groups, peer activities, life skills workshops, and more. CFSs typically cater to children i.e., boys and girls under 18 years of age. In some contexts, however, they may also engage and benefit young people aged above 18 years.

Safe spaces for women and girls and CFSs do, however, share some common elements. At times, they may also cater to similar populations. This is particularly true with regard to adolescent girls. In this respect, it should be appreciated that the purposes of CFSs and those of safe spaces do not overlap, but are seen to be complementary. In the Jordanian context, safe spaces for women and girls typically house very specialized response services for SGBV survivors, while CFSs are less specific and provide referrals to specialized protection services.



Annex IV: Possible locations

Location	Pros	Cons
New structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be chosen with the consent of women and girls • Space can be shaped and organized • New systems can be implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be less sustainable • Require more resources to set up • May take time for the community and women to get to know it and trust
Community centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize access of women and girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could be uninspiring • May not be set up for girls • May not be appropriately located (near a football field or an area traditionally only frequented by men and boys) • May need community negotiation to make women and girl-only times
Mosques and churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respected place for women and girls to meet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May reinforce traditional gender norms
Open-air spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available • Free • Girl groups are very visible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May require back-up for bad weather • Doesn't ensure access to community entitlements and therefore could reinforce girls exclusion • Girl groups are very visible
Schools/ learning institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available • Secure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be set up for girls
Homes of respected community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respected places for girls to meet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May reinforce traditional gender norms • May be restrictive for certain community members

A group of children are playing soccer in a grassy field. In the foreground, a boy in a green shirt is about to kick a ball. Several girls in pink and red school uniforms are watching. In the background, there are rolling green hills, a utility pole, and a body of water under a cloudy sky.

Pamoja for Transformation believes that every woman, boy and girl has the right to have access to affordable health care and be effectively protected from gender-based violence. Pamoja and partners are committed to scaling up efforts to empower and improve the lives of women and youth including by advocating for human rights and gender equality, to better cope with and recover from the GBV crisis.

Pamoja for Transformation: Building Peace and Development Opportunities

