

PROTECTING REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM VIOLENCE

A Collection of Good Practices



IMPRESSUM

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INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of refugees worldwide are women and children. In many cases, they are forced to leave their homes due to armed conflicts, insecurity or generalised violence. For women and girls, their migration experience is shaped by some particular features, the roots of which lie in the gendered forms of violence they may face throughout their journey.¹ Some may leave their country of origin because of experiences of gender-based violence or in fear of such violence, while others may seek to escape the threat of female genital mutilation or forced marriage. Without regular pathways to reach a country where they can seek international protection, women often have to resort to dangerous routes. During their journey, they are exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, psychological violence, trafficking, early and forced marriage, transactional sex and domestic violence.² Women travelling alone and those only accompanied by their children are particularly at risk of abuse, as are pregnant women, adolescent girls, unaccompanied minors and women with disabilities.

Despite their experiences of violence and trauma, refugee women and girls undertake risky journeys to a safer and independent future, showing incredible strength, self-reliance and resilience. However, once they reach their destination, many women and young girls still face risks due to limited access to support services, a lack of effective procedures to identify survivors of gender-based violence and inadequate reception conditions in accommodation facilities.³ The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights highlighted gender-based violence against refugee women and girls as an area of concern in its June 2016 monthly report on the migration situation.⁴ In October 2016, the Agency reported that safety and protection of asylum seekers from violence, exploitation and abuse remains an area in need of priority action by the EU Member States.⁵

Obtaining reliable national data which provides prevalence estimates and insights into the causes and consequences of various forms of violence against refugee women and girls remains a challenge. The EU Fundamental Rights Agency reported in June 2016 that no EU Member State collects data on reported incidents of gender-based violence towards female refugees that have just arrived or need international protection.⁹ Similarly, the UN Special Rapporteur on

violence against women, its causes and consequences, noted in her last report that “there is a lack of data on such human rights violations, a fact that prevents authorities from taking the necessary measures to ensure the safety of refugee women and girls.”¹⁰

The aim of this report is to suggest positive actions that international organisations, local, regional, or national authorities, civil society organisations and NGOs can take to better protect refugee women and girls from violence. This is with the goal of promoting the exchange of good and promising practices and opening up a space for transnational dialogue, experience-sharing and peer-to-peer learning.

We aim to:

- Document and provide accessible information about good and promising practices that are innovative, transferable and effective.
- Facilitate experience-sharing between key actors and stakeholders in this field through a collection of good practices. This collection presents a mix of projects, policies and practices intended as a resource for governments, local, regional and national authorities, policy-makers, NGOs, and civil society organisations.
- Encourage learning, dialogue, and inspiration across regions, countries and communities.



1 MILLION PEOPLE

FROM AROUND THE WORLD MADE THEIR WAY TO EUROPE BY SEA IN 2015: OF THIS, **50% ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN** (19% WOMEN AND 31% CHILDREN)⁶



1 IN 5

PERSONS ARRIVING IN EUROPE BY SEA IN 2015 WERE **FEMALE**⁸

OUT OF THE **1,886,000** FIRST TIME ASYLUM APPLICATIONS REGISTERED IN EUROPE DURING THE LAST 18 MONTHS, **43% (OR SOME 810,000 APPLICATIONS) WERE FILED BY CHILDREN** (AS OF SEPTEMBER 2016)⁷

WOMEN'S VOICES: FATUMA MUSA AFRAH

"Many women come alone to Germany to ask for protection. Most of the women also left their home countries for different reasons. Some of these reasons are war, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. Some are running away in search of freedom of expression and equality. In the refugee camps women experience sexual abuse inside and outside of the refugee camp. Fellow women, we need to speak out and support each other! Women newcomers are in a very difficult situation in refugee camps with no hope. We are at risk of more abuse, we are not in a good position to defend ourselves because of our current difficult situation. Before that happens we need advocacy for women's rights and to develop prevention mechanisms and protection structures. We need to fight for our dignity, freedom and rights. United Women."

– **Fatuma Musa**, 26, is a Somali-born "newcomer", now living in Berlin, Germany

CONCEPT OF GOOD PRACTICES AND METHODOLOGY

Concept of good practices

We define “good practice” in the context of this report as any innovative and inspiring initiative that is considered effective in protecting refugee women and girls from violence throughout their journey and in destination countries, and shows a high potential for transferability to other regions, countries or municipalities. We have paid particular attention to initiatives that pioneer change, show a high degree of innovation and focus on women’s empowerment.

We have adopted a broad definition of “initiative” that includes laws, regulations, action plans, projects, programmes, services or campaigns that are implemented by international organisations, local, regional or national authorities, civil society organisations and NGOs, as well as grassroots and social movements. Initiatives can be local, national, regional or international in nature, and originate in different policy arenas. Particular attention has been paid to initiatives that have been designed and/or delivered in close collaboration with refugee women, with the aim of strengthening their self-empowerment and self-organising. Our aim has been to include initiatives that refer to any form of violence (including physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence) during all phases of the migration cycle (i.e. violence prior to flight, as a cause of migration; violence during the journey; and violence in destination/host countries).

We have included several initiatives that have been recently introduced as a result of the current surge in migration to the European Union. Even if they have not been in place for long enough to evaluate their implementation, these initiatives have a great potential to serve as inspiration. They will be referred to as “promising practices” throughout the report.

Methodology: mapping and assessing good practices

We conducted a mapping exercise of initiatives addressing gaps in protecting refugee women and girls from violence. This mapping exercise comprised two steps: first, a call for nominations was sent out to international, regional and local organisations, NGOs and internationally renowned experts in the field, who were invited to submit nominations of good practices. Second, we collected input through a combination of desk research and stakeholder consultations. For the purposes of this study, we have concentrated on mapping good practices that are currently being implemented in the European Union (in particular, Member States that are currently hosting large numbers of refugees), with a specific focus on Germany as one of the main destination countries.¹¹ We have also included a separate chapter with good practices from other non-European countries which are considered transferable to the European Union.

The mapping exercise was followed by a comprehensive evaluation and assessment process, carried out by the project team, in order to select those initiatives showing a high degree of effectiveness,¹² transferability, and sustainability. In total, 31 examples of initiatives from 13 countries were selected, which reflect a wide range of policy approaches addressing different aspects related to ending violence against refugee women and girls at the local, national, regional, and global level. These initiatives are described in-depth below. Nine additional initiatives are included as short case studies. A key selection criteria has been whether practices have included refugee women’s voices and aim to strengthen their self-empowerment and self-organising.

31 GOOD PRACTICES FROM 13 COUNTRIES

PROTECTING REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS: SELECTED GOOD PRACTICES

Based on the examination of existing research and the information collected through the call for nominations, good practices in the following sections describe wide-ranging strategies that recognise the need for a holistic response both to support survivors¹³ and to tackle and prevent violence. The initiatives have been organised in five themes: Governance, Awareness, Spaces, Services and Connection. Within these five themes, readers will find ideas that can be replicated and adapted, and provide inspiration for new approaches to address this issue.





GOVERNANCE

- EASO Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN)
- Support Hotline “Violence Against Women”
- Minimum Standards for the Protection of Children, Adolescents and Women in Refugee Centres
- The Hamburg Protection Plan
- Baden-Württemberg Humanitarian Admission Programme (HAP): Special-Quota Project
- Hamburg Dialogue Forum “Protection of Women from Violence in Refugee Reception and Accommodation Centres”
- “Women, Health, and Violence” Programme EASO Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN)



AWARENESS

- Information Flyer “Go Your Own Way! Your Rights as a Woman in Germany”
- Zanzu - The multilingual online portal for sexual and reproductive health
- Tilly 4 Girls & Women - Info Cafés for Women and Girls in Refugee Accommodation Centres
- Interactive Play “My Way. My Happiness. My Goal! The Start of My New Life”
- Campaign: “No Camps For Women and Children / Abolish all Camps”
- The Protection Gap Campaign



SPACES

- Les Logis de Louvranges
- Women-only Accommodation Centre for Refugee Women and their Children
- Caritas Day Centre Athens
- Melissa Network Greece Day Centre
- EmpowerVan - Mobile Information and Advice Service



SERVICES

- GAMS (Group for the Abolition of Female Genital Mutilation)
- Children and Family Protection Support Hubs - “Blue Dots”
- “More than Food and Shampoo”: Violence Prevention and Psychosocial Support for Refugee Women and Children
- Living in Essen - Integration Support for Female Refugees and Other Particularly Vulnerable People
- Counselling and Support for Traumatized Female Refugees Affected by Violence



CONNECTION

- CONNECT - “Buddy Programme” for Female Refugees in Berlin
- Girlz4Girlz
- MiMi - Violence Prevention with Migrants for Migrants: Capacity Building for Violence Prevention, Self-Protection and Empowerment for Refugee Women and Girls in Germany



A LOOK BEYOND EUROPE

- Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
- Psycho-Social Services and Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC)
- Empowering Women Refugees in Brazil through Supporting Economic Independence
- Assessment Screen to Identify Survivors - Toolkit for Gender-Based Violence (ASIST-GBV)
- Whistles: a Low-Tech Weapon against Gender-Based Violence in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camps in Haiti



GOVERNANCE

This section explores the role of political leadership in ensuring the protection of refugee women and girls. From regional and national authorities creating protection frameworks to local governments providing frontline services that impact on day-to-day living, public institutions are well positioned to lead the way with innovative policies and programs that ensure that refugee women and girls live a life free from violence.

The initiatives and policies presented in this section are being implemented by innovative, forward-looking authorities at the local, national and regional level. Indeed, public authorities have a big role to play in setting standards for reception conditions and gender-sensitive asylum procedures, developing protection concepts, and funding and implementing projects to prevent violence, abuse and exploitation, as well as to ensure the full integration of refugee women and girls. Authorities are particularly well positioned to provide safe and legal pathways to asylum for women and girls fleeing war, violence, and persecution that would prevent them from resorting to dangerous routes that exponentially increase the risk of violence. It should be of great interest to political leaders to be fully aware of the protection needs of refugee women and girls, including how to address them in policy and programs, and what constitutes good practice in this field.

EASO Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN)

WHO? European Asylum Support Office (EASO)¹⁴

WHEN? Since January 2016

WHERE? European Union

WHAT?

The Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN) Tool¹⁵ is a web-based interactive tool that aims to facilitate the timely identification of persons with special procedural and/or reception needs. It may be used at any stage of the asylum procedure and at any stage of the reception process. The tool is aimed at all officials who are involved and in-

teract with an applicant for international protection. This could include border guards, police officers, registration officers, reception officers, social workers, case officers of the determining authority, etc.¹⁶ It suggests generic guidance on the special procedural guarantees and reception support that could be provided to the individual asylum seeker in the EU context.

HOW?

When the explicit obligation of timely identification of special needs was introduced with the recast Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU)¹⁷ and the recast Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU),¹⁸ many Member States needed support in order to introduce an identification mechanism in their asylum systems.¹⁹ The tool aims to address this protection gap by providing an identification system which refers to all categories explicitly mentioned by the Reception Conditions Directive (article 21), as well as two additional categories, reflecting the elements mentioned by the Asylum Procedures Directive (recital 29) and Member States' practice.²⁰

The tool operates by linking different indicators to the respective categories of persons with these potential special reception needs. It is then for the user to decide which categories to explore further and at which stages of the asylum procedure or at reception. Based on the user's selection, the tool generates results which includes information about each selected category and a list of indicators, or pieces of evidence, which could be relevant for determining the special needs per category, and a checklist and guidance on support measures for the specific stages of the asylum procedure.

WHY?

- This tool addresses a key issue in the process of protecting women and girls against violence: the identification of those with special protection needs such as female survivors of gender-based violence, pregnant women or single women and girls travelling alone.
- It is an interactive, publicly accessible tool that allows a tailored support response to be created which addresses the special needs of the person holistically.
- It generates a report which can be customised and modified and then saved/printed.

Source: Europe Asylum Support Office

The tool can be used to identify 14 categories of persons with special needs, including victims of human trafficking, torture, rape survivors, and persons who have been subjected to other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence – including gender-based violence such as female genital mutilation.

THE EU RECEPTION CONDITIONS DIRECTIVE (RECAST), 2013/33/EU²¹

The recast EU Reception Conditions Directive is the main EU instrument laying down minimum standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (including housing, healthcare, and the right to work) during the asylum procedure. The Directive requires Member States to provide asylum seekers with humane material reception conditions, including “an adequate standard of living for applicants, which guarantee their subsistence and safeguard their physical and mental health” (article 17), and that their fundamental rights are fully respected. Since the Directive only lays out minimum standards, Member States can provide more favourable conditions to applicants than those provided for under the Reception Conditions Directive.

There are several specific provisions regarding the treatment of female asylum-seekers in the Directive: the special needs of all vulnerable female applicants need to be identified in a timely manner; those subjected to serious acts of violence should have access to rehabilitation services to benefit from necessary psychological and medical support; and accommodation facilities are to be gender sensitive.²² Member States need to take into consideration any gender and age-specific concerns in housing applicants in reception and accommodation centres –article 18 (3)– and measures to prevent assault and gender based violence in reception and accommodation centres need to be in place –article 18 (4). In addition, personnel working in reception facilities should be properly trained, in particular to accompany vulnerable applicants such as victims of sexual violence to appropriate care–article 25 (2)–, and authorities in charge of reception should have received the necessary training to deal with both the needs of male and female applicants –article 29.²³ In addition, Member States should provide necessary medical or other assistance to applicants who have special reception needs (including mental health care, article 19). In particular, Member States must ensure that persons who have been subjected to torture, rape, or other serious acts of violence receive the necessary treatment for any damage caused by such acts, including access to appropriate medical and psychological treatment or care –article 25 (1).

In July 2016, the European Commission presented a second package of proposals to reform the Common European Asylum system, which includes a proposal to revise the Reception Conditions Directive to further harmonise reception conditions in the EU.²⁴ The proposal removes all references to the “vulnerability” of the applicants and instead focuses on their “special reception needs”.²⁵

SWEDISH MIGRATION AGENCY, PILOT PROJECT TO IDENTIFY REFUGEES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS BASED ON THE EASO IPSN TOOL (SWEDEN)

The Swedish Migration Agency will carry out a pilot project based on the EASO tool for the identification of refugees with special needs, including women who have been subjected to psychological, physical, or sexual violence, pregnant women, and single women with children.

The aim of the project is to test whether the EASO tool will increase efficiency in identifying applicants with special needs, and provide knowledge on what procedural guarantees and reception needs should be made available to these categories of applicants.

The project will take place in seven different units across six regions in Sweden, with an estimate of 120 staff using the tool. There will be an equal amount of reference units that will use existing tools in order to compare results at the end of the pilot project.

EASO will provide the Swedish Migration Agency staff with training on the use of the practical tool and facilitate the ability to optimise the tool.²⁶

Support Hotline “Violence Against Women”

WHO? Federal Office for Family and Civil Society

WHEN? Since 2013

WHERE? Germany, nationwide



WHAT?

Available around the clock, 365 days a year and free of charge: the support hotline “Violence Against Women”²⁷ offers victims a way of receiving competent advice securely, anonymously and regardless of disability whenever they need. With information material in many languages displayed in reception and accommodation centres, female refugees are specifically targeted and informed about the assistance on offer.²⁸ Highly qualified female specialists and counsellors are also available so female refugees can receive indirect support through the hotline.

HOW?

The support hotline is protected by the Support Hotline Law.²⁹ Callers to the hotline receive necessary assistance from qualified counsellors who provide support and guidance. In order to overcome language barriers, interpreters from 15 languages can be connected to the call³⁰. Counsellors provide women with confidential support and, if needed, can help them find appropriate local support options in their area. One key objective of the support hotline is to improve the overall level of support that women affected by violence receive by providing targeted referrals to specialised counselling centres, women’s shelters, healthcare providers, the police or other support services. Referrals only take place with the express consent of the victim.

Consultations take place around the clock, on all days of the year and only with female specialists. They are also offered in sign language and via instant chat or chat via appointment. The chat function is mostly used by children and young people. All information is also available in simplified language to facilitate access. Most information materials, from stickers to flyers and posters, can be obtained in different languages and are decentrally distributed. There is a specific flyer targeting refugee women available at reception and accommodation centres. Cinemas and TV also run advertising spots for the support hotline. A broad social media campaign using the hashtag #breakthesilence (“#schweigenbrechen”)³¹ takes place every year around the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November) to increase the visibility of the hotline and other support services available to women affected by violence.

The German Federal Ministry for Family, Senior, Women’s and Youth Affairs (BMFSFJ) is responsible for supervising the support hotline’s activities and for performing evaluations to examine its effectiveness.

WHY?

- The service ensures barrier-free access through simple language and sign language options and a pool of translators to overcome any language barriers.
- It is available round the clock, 365 days a year, and free of charge.
- It is protected by law.
- Comprehensive yearly reviews and evaluations of the service are carried out by the German Federal Ministry for Family, Senior, Women’s and Youth Affairs (BMFSFJ).

- **365 DAYS A YEAR**, free of charge, around the clock
- Initial counselling available in **15 LANGUAGES**³³
- **155,000 CONTACTS** have been made to date, including 72,000 specialised counselling consultations
- **27,000 SPECIALISED COUNSELLING CONSULTATIONS** took place in 2015, of which 14,400 involved victims of various forms of violence. 55% of the consultations referred to cases of domestic violence, and 14% to cases of sexual violence
- Over **7,000 CONSULTATIONS** took place in 2015 with victims experiencing acute psychosocial crises
- **12,492 TARGETED REFERRALS** to local support services took place in 2015
- Nearly **1,000 CONSULTATIONS** were held in a language other than German in 2015
- **550,000 FLYERS, POSTERS AND OTHER MATERIALS** were provided in 2015
- **90,000 VISITORS** to the website annually
- Around **11 MILLION PEOPLE** were reached by social media campaign #breakthesilence

CASE STUDY

A social worker in a refugee accommodation centre turns to the support hotline to find a way to help an Arabic-speaking woman. She was coerced into marriage in her homeland three months earlier and forced to flee to Germany with her husband. The woman has been subjected to psychological, physical and sexual violence by her husband since the beginning of her marriage – and he continues the attacks in Germany. A first attempt to separate the woman from the man within the institution has failed because he continues to seek her out and subject her to further sexual and physical violence.

In the course of the consultation, various topics are discussed with the ultimate aim of protecting the woman from further violence. Together, it is worked out that the social worker, with the help of a volunteer interpreter, should have a confidential conversation with the woman in order to encourage her to take further steps to free herself from the violence. She should explain to her that violence and rape within a marriage are punishable in Germany. A plan is to be worked out for how she should act in an emergency. The social worker is encouraged to ensure that the woman gets help on site, for example, at a women's counselling centre. The hotline support worker also informs her that the municipality could move the woman to another institution. In the short term, the social worker should ensure that the woman can lock her room from the inside and, in consultation with her, that the security personnel are informed about the matter. Finally, the social worker is given the contact data of women's shelters to check whether the woman could be received in one. She is also told to inform her that she can turn to the support hotline herself at any time.³²

Minimum Standards for the Protection of Children, Adolescents and Women in Refugee Centres

WHO? Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)

WHERE? Germany, nationwide

WHEN? Since July 2016

WHAT?

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) has developed minimum standards for the protection of children, adolescents and women in refugee centres³⁴ in cooperation with UNICEF and with the specialised support of numerous organisations.³⁵ These protection standards constitute a uniform, nationwide framework to improve the protection of children, adolescents and women from violence, ensure access to education and provide psychosocial support in refugee reception and accommodation centres. The minimum standards include six key elements, covering structural and construction requirements, human resources management, risk-management and standard operating procedures in cases of violence, and the monitoring of progress. Seven regional conferences organised by the BMFSFJ in partnership with UNICEF took place between October and December 2016 to raise awareness about the protection standards and trigger commitment by authorities for their implementation.

HOW?

Minimum Standard 1: Protection Plan

Every refugee reception and accommodation centre needs to develop a protection plan that should be binding on all staff. This includes but is not limited to management, social workers, counsellors, interpreters, janitors and volunteers. External service providers should be contractually obligated to maintain established protection plan specifications. The protection plan should be based on a participatory risk analysis that includes gender and age-specific risks in order to develop appropriate risk mitigation strategies to protect children, youth and women from violence. The plan should be openly accessible and transparent.

Minimum Standard 2: Staff and human resources management

All staff members, volunteers and external service providers are required to sign a statement committing to comply with the internal code of conduct for the protection of children, youth and women from violence. This commitment is an integral part of the protection plan and a binding contractual term for employment and service contracts. In addition, the protection plan needs to be reinforced by the training of all employees, volunteers and external service providers on gender-based violence issues. These issues include but are not limited to the causes and consequences of violence against children, youth, and women, early identification and prevention of violence, adequate response and support services in cases of violence, and accountability for perpetrators.

Minimum Standard 3: Internal organisational structure

The house rules (“Hausordnung”) set out the basic principles for peaceful coexistence within a facility in an easy-to-understand manner. They should be translated in the languages spoken by the residents and available in a child-friendly version. Besides being displayed in the facility, house rules should be signed by all new residents, staff members, volunteers and service providers. In addition, specialised contact persons employed by the facility should be available at all times for survivors of violence and supported by interpreters. An independent office for complaints and an appropriate complaints management mechanism should be established and available to all residents, staff and volunteers in the facility. All residents should be actively informed about their rights and the support services that are available to them in cases of violence. In particular, women survivors of violence must be informed of the option to seek refuge in a women’s shelter. Information should be made available in flyers, posters, individual interviews and regular informational events.

Minimum Standard 4: Risk-management

Standardised operating procedures should be in place for the identification and referral of cases of sexual and gender-based violence, in order to ensure that women and children receive the necessary protection and assistance in a timely manner. All staff members and volunteers must be aware of the steps to take and the relevant contact persons. In particular, women should be informed of their protec-

tion options under the German Protection from Violence Act and the possibility to seek refuge in a women's shelter.

Minimum Standard 5: Humane, protective and supportive framework conditions

All refugee reception and accommodation centres should implement a minimum set of infrastructural and construction measures to ensure the safety of children, youth and women. These include the provision of separate rooms and sleeping areas with lockable doors as well as well-lit, gender-segregated and lockable sanitation and health facilities. All centres should have child-friendly areas and safe "women-only" private spaces for the provision of psychosocial support, trauma counselling, legal advice, and health care services. The implementation of these infrastructural measures can be financed through a credit programme run by the German Reconstruction Bank ("KfW – Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau"). Local authorities can receive discounted investment loans, which they can use to build and reform accommodation centres in line with these guidelines.³⁶

Minimum Standard 6: Monitoring

A key element of the protection concept is the development and implementation of monitoring mechanisms to evaluate success and compliance. Program monitoring allows for the integration of the findings and practical insights gained during the implementation phase into further planning and possible revision of the concept. It should encompass both an internal participatory evaluation that includes all stakeholders (staff, volunteers, residents, external partners, service providers, etc.), as well as an external review by an independent supervisory authority. UNICEF is currently developing a monitoring toolkit to assess the implementation of minimum standards at 25 selected accommodation centres and to identify training needs. The toolkit will help identify and share information on best practices, challenges and practical solutions to strengthen monitoring systems in accommodation and reception centres.³⁷

WHY?

- These minimum standards implement parts of the EU Reception Conditions Directive.
- Reception and accommodation facilities receive precise guidelines for the development, implementation and periodic review of internal protection plans.
- The standards were developed in consultation with a broad network of stakeholders.
- Infrastructural and construction measures are financed through favourable municipal loans from a state bank.
- The guidelines are being widely disseminated through decentralised events for regional and local authorities.

■ **6 MINIMUM STANDARDS**

■ **15 ORGANISATIONS** with expert knowledge involved

■ **7 REGIONAL CONFERENCES** carried out (October to December 2016)

The Hamburg Protection Plan

WHO? Ministry for Labour, Social and Family Affairs and Integration, Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg

WHEN? Since September 2016

WHERE? Hamburg, Germany



Hamburg

Behörde für Arbeit,
Soziales, Familie
und Integration

WHAT?

Together with operators of refugee reception and accommodation centres, victim support services and other specialist organisations, the Ministry for Labour, Social and Family Affairs and Integration of the City of Hamburg has developed a protection plan with strict, binding standards designed to protect refugee women from violence – especially gender-based violence – in reception and accommodation centres.³⁸ On this basis, each facility is obliged to develop an individual protection plan and to define clear responsibilities regarding implementation and compliance. The guidelines relate to safety standards in the accommodation and access to support services for affected women, but also to requirements for employees, including training in violence prevention and response.

HOW?

The City of Hamburg developed a template in cooperation with a broad network of stakeholders for an internal protection plan that could be adapted to each reception and accommodation centre³⁹. This template was made available to all centres, with supporting information and a binding deadline, by which time each facility had to submit its own protection plan to the responsible state authority. State authorities were responsible for ensuring deadlines were met.⁴⁰

The protection plan is obligatory for all facilities where the City of Hamburg accommodates refugees. Facilities must guarantee that violence is not tolerated against women and girls, but also against men, boys and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) people.⁴¹ Permanent contact persons for protection issues are to be appointed and all persons working in the facility must be informed

about the protection plan. A complaints office for residents, staff and volunteers needs to be established. This body can be used for complaints concerning the handling of violent incidents or threats. In addition, standardised and binding procedures in cases of violence are established for staff and volunteers: specific operating procedures (“emergency plans”) with clear steps and referral pathways (including one specific procedure for cases of violence against children) have been developed by the Ministry with contact data for local support services.⁴²

The protection plan lays out a minimum set of infrastructural measures that need to be implemented in all facilities. These include separate rooms and sleeping areas with lockable doors; well-lit, gender-segregated and lockable sanitation and health facilities; and the possibility of gender-separated accommodation facilities for particularly vulnerable persons. All staff need to be trained on gender-based violence prevention and response. In particular, all social workers and special contact persons for protection issues need to take part in a compulsory training module provided by the Hamburg social authorities. The module deals with the causes, forms and consequences of violence, its early identification, the necessary intervention steps, as well as the support system in Hamburg. Furthermore, facilities must provide information on who is responsible for the development and implementation of the protection plan.

WHY?

- A broad alliance of operators, experts and specialist authorities has been involved in the development of the protection plan.
- The process of developing and implementing an internal protection plan is supported (and monitored) by the Ministry for Labour, Social and Family Affairs and Integration.
- The template allows for individual adaptation to each facility.
- Facilities can be closed if the minimum standards are not met.

OTHER PROTECTION PLANS

The protection plan developed by the Ministry for Family Affairs, Women, Youth, Integration and Consumer Protection of **Rhineland-Palatinate** places special emphasis on the self-empowerment and self-organisation of women affected by violence. The initial reception facilities must provide “women-only spaces”, as stipulated in the protection plan,⁴³ which offer the first opportunity for women affected by violence to get help in a safe environment, to exchange ideas and to interact with experts from social services and women’s counselling centres to jointly develop plans for their future.⁴⁴

The safety plan for refugee accommodation facilities developed by the City of **Herne** for the protection of women, children and young people lays out a wide range of protective measures. The plan states that alleged perpetrators – when they are also residents of the facility – must immediately leave the institution. If the perpetrator is a staff member (volunteers included) they are dismissed immediately. If the perpetrator comes from outside the facility, he will be banned from the premises through a restraining order. In addition, women affected by violence can be accommodated with their children day and night in women’s shelters or in alternative facilities.⁴⁵

The Women’s Office of the City of **Darmstadt** has developed a protection plan “Equal rights for women and men / children’s rights” in cooperation with the police, the women’s shelter and the immigration office. Since sexualised and domestic violence in refugee accommodation centres is often fostered by a lack of knowledge about the legal framework and gender equality, focus is placed on information as a means of preventing violence. Refugees and staff are to be informed and trained about the consequences of and support systems in the case of sexualised or domestic violence. This is a binding part of the contract for all operators of refugee accommodation facilities in Darmstadt. To reach both male and female refugees, the Women’s Office developed posters in 14 languages with information on women’s and children’s rights. The posters clearly state that violence against women is not tolerated – and what that means in concrete terms. In addition, the telephone number of the police and that of the nationwide support hotline, which can be reached around the clock in many languages, are printed.⁴⁶

FEEDBACK FROM REFUGEES STAYING IN ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES IN DARMSTADT:

“When we saw the posters hanging,
we were very happy.”

– male and female refugees

“Whoever might have had that in mind immediately
saw that (violence) would have consequences here.”

– male refugees about other men

Baden-Württemberg Humanitarian Admission Programme (HAP): Special- Quota Project

WHO? State of Baden-Württemberg

WHEN? Since March 2015

WHERE? Baden-Württemberg, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein

WHAT?

The Baden-Württemberg Humanitarian Admission Programme (HAP), or Special Quota Project, as it is also known, is a programme by the State Ministry of Baden-Württemberg that has brought almost 1,100 Yazidi women and girls to Germany for treatment after they have escaped captivity by the Islamic State. The programme operates under an agreement with the Iraqi Kurdish Government and is supported by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) in Iraq.

Among the millions of refugees who have fled the advance of ISIS in Syria and northern Iraq, the targeting of the Yazidis in 2014 is of particular concern.⁴⁷ According to estimates by the UN, in one year around 6,300 Yazidis — including 3,537 women — were abducted by the terror group, which still holds around 2,000 women as slaves.⁴⁸ Testimonies from Yazidi women that have escaped captivity include accounts of systematic rape, sexual violence, and sexual slavery, as well as forced marriage.⁴⁹ Many of the women and girls remain in captivity, but those who have managed to escape need comprehensive, long-term psychosocial support and assistance.

HOW?

The federal ministry has issued almost 1,100 resident visas on humanitarian grounds to women and children kidnapped by ISIS. The programme's chief psychologist, Professor Jan Kizilhan, interviewed 1,403 former captives during 14 trips to refugee camps in Northern Iraq,⁵⁰ in order to assess the extent of the psychological consequences from their time as hostages, and whether they could benefit from treatment in Germany.⁵¹ The International Organization of Migration (IOM) in Iraq facilitated the safe and orderly migration of the programme beneficiaries, providing

ETHNO-MEDICAL CENTRE: TRAINING OF INTERPRETERS AND EXPERTS FOR THE CARE OF SEVERELY TRAUMATISED YAZIDI REFUGEE WOMEN IN LOWER SAXONY, GERMANY

The Ethno-Medical Centre⁵³ was commissioned by state of Lower Saxony to provide support to severely traumatised Yazidi women being hosted in the state within the framework of the Special Quota Project. The centre provides therapeutic care and counselling and supports the social integration of the Yazidi women, ensuring that services are culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate. Psychotherapists, social workers, doctors and other healthcare providers receive specialised advanced training on the subjects of trauma and violence in the context of forced migration and displacement. The additional focus on the qualification of interpreters is particularly innovative: the centre has a team of highly qualified interpreters trained in dealing with severely traumatised refugee women.⁵⁴

initial medical screenings, logistical support, and transportation (14 chartered flights).⁵²

Once they arrive in Germany, women are hosted in secret shelters in 22 villages and cities in Baden-Württemberg, as well as in Lower Saxony (hosting 70 women) and Schleswig-Holstein (hosting 30). They receive access to language courses, education, and cash assistance, as well as specially-designed trauma therapy and counselling.

WHY?

- This is the first time that a federal state in Germany has created a humanitarian admissions programme.⁵⁵ Baden-Württemberg's federal administration, led by Prime Minister Winfried Kretschmann, and with the cooperation of the States of Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, is so far the only federal state specifically responding to the plight of Yazidi women.⁵⁶
- The Special Quota Project allows for one group of women survivors of violence to reach Europe without resorting to dangerous routes over land and sea and to receive adequate support.

1,045 WOMEN AND CHILDREN have participated in the programme of which 664 are children and 381 adults (709 females and 336 males).⁵⁷

Hamburg Dialogue Forum “Protection of Women from Violence in Refugee Reception and Accommodation Centres”

WHO? Refugee Assistance Forum, Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg

WHEN? Since May 2016

WHERE? Hamburg, Germany



WHAT?

The City of Hamburg launched the Refugee Assistance Forum to create a meeting place for all those who work with refugees in Hamburg. The forum provides a platform for volunteers, civil society organisations and public authorities to network, exchange information on initiatives and projects, and identify ways of strengthening the protection of refugees in the city.⁵⁸ The coordination of volunteer initiatives with refugee-assisting organisations and city services is vital to ensure good quality assistance that meets refugees' needs. The forum aims to enable direct communication between all actors and to foster a mutual exchange of expertise and experiences.

Under the umbrella of the Refugee Assistance Forum, six thematic dialogue forums have been set up, covering several issues regarding refugee reception and integration: education and employment, welcome culture, communication, language support, sports, and protection of women from violence.⁵⁹ In each of these forums, professional experts are available to answer questions and listen to volunteers' experiences and suggestions. All dialogue forums organise regular events where volunteers can receive direct input from experts and can share feedback and experiences.

HOW?

The dialogue forum “Protection of Women from Violence in Refugee Reception and Accommodation Centres” brings

together city services, organisations and volunteers that work with refugees in the City of Hamburg. Volunteer workers are at the frontline of providing support to refugee women, often establishing relations of trust with them. This increases the likelihood that they will come across refugee women affected by violence. The thematic dialogue forum has several objectives: to increase awareness and understanding of the protection issues facing refugee women and girls and the support services available to them, to enable an inclusive discussion among relevant stakeholders of how these are being addressed and what could be improved, and to provide a space to share ideas for the way forward. The forum has tackled a range of protection concerns through the organisation of several workshops on sexual and gender-based violence, the victim support system of the city of Hamburg, essential communication skills to deal with severely traumatised women and/or survivors of violence, and de-escalation and self-defence strategies.

WHY?

- The forum is a new and innovative partnership among local authorities, volunteers, civil society organisations and other service providers.
- It acknowledges that multi-stakeholder engagement, coordination, information-sharing and awareness-raising are essential to meet the needs of refugees.
- The forum increases awareness of local support services available to refugee women and girls in order to facilitate access through frontline workers.

MAY 2016:

Kick-off event and specialised training session on the Hamburg victim support system.

JUNE 2016:

First round of workshops on sexual and gender-based violence and communication skills to deal with traumatised women and/or survivors of violence.

NOVEMBER 2016:

Second round of workshops on self-defence and de-escalation strategies.

“Women, Health, and Violence” Programme

WHO? City of Bilbao, Office of Equality, Cooperation and Citizenship

WHEN? Since 2008

WHERE? City of Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain

WHAT?

Developed by the Office of Equality, Cooperation and Citizenship of the City of Bilbao, the “Women, Health, and Violence” programme focuses on promoting sexual and reproductive health and preventing gender-based violence through the empowerment of migrant women, with the overall goal of fighting the intersectional discrimination that migrant women face as both women and migrants.

HOW?

The core element of the programme is the training of migrant women as “agents of empowerment”. The training takes place over six weeks and covers sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), awareness and identification of gender-based violence and its causes, processes, and indicators. A key element of the training is to empower migrant and refugee women in managing their own life, health and relationships.⁶⁰ The trained empowerment agents then commit to approaching their communities and creating spaces for conversation among women to spread information and raise awareness on sexual health and gender-based violence within their own environment. In this way, the programme has a “multiplier/snowball effect” and is able to reach migrant women within their communities through the empowerment agents.

The selection of empowerment agents takes place with the involvement of local community NGOs. Women are selected for their leadership potential and their ability to connect with other women in their communities.⁶¹ The programme trains agents from “strategic” communities, relevant for their numeric importance, and “focal” communities, defined as particularly vulnerable communities of difficult access.⁶²

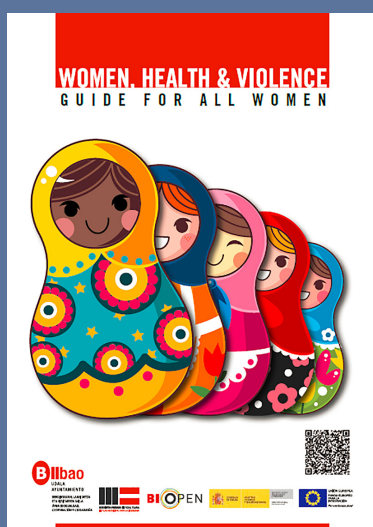
The programme has also run several information and awareness workshops with the project’s stakeholders’ network on gender-based violence prevention and women’s

health. It has produced a print and online multilingual guide, “Women, Health, & Violence: Guide for all Women”, which has been widely distributed among migrant and refugee women and is available at schools, socio-health services of the city, and at all institutions that focus on women.

Since 2013, the programme also includes courses on intervention on female genital mutilation (FGM). Two annual workshops on FGM prevention are organised with the participation of trained empowerment agents from FGM-practising countries, all of whom are FGM survivors themselves. This has the aim of opening up a space for learning and dialogue on the harmful consequences of this practice and, through the “multiplier effect”, reaching mothers and daughters from communities at risk. In 2015, an interinstitutional protocol on FGM prevention (the first of its kind in the Basque Country) was adopted by the City of Bilbao within the framework of this programme.⁶³ In addition, evaluations of the programme and feedback from participants showed the need to include men from migrant and refugee communities in the FGM-prevention trainings to avoid the practice, since men hold co-responsibility both legally as parents and socially as active subjects. To address this gap, in 2016 the programme ran its first workshop for men, with successful results: 8 men were trained as FGM-prevention agents who reached 302 men in their communities through the multiplier effect.

WHY?

- The programme uses innovative methodologies such as empowerment training and the “multiplier/snowball effect” methodology.
- A horizontal approach is adopted to reach out to difficult-to-access communities.
- The initiative focuses on migrant women as protagonists and leaders in managing their own lives, health and relationships.
- Health and violence issues are addressed together.
- They are able to continuously adapt to new needs through the evaluation and feedback from stakeholders and participants.



Source: City of Bilbao, Office of Equality,
Cooperation and Citizenship

324 EMPOWERMENT AGENTS have been trained.⁶⁴

52 WOMEN AND 8 MEN have participated in the training on FGM prevention, becoming Health Agents on FGM Prevention.

1,701 PEOPLE from migrant and refugee communities have been educated and informed through the multiplier effect (1,399 women and 302 men).

The **“WOMEN, HEALTH & VIOLENCE: GUIDE FOR ALL WOMEN”** has been published in 8 languages: English, Spanish, Euskera, French, Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese and Romanian.

AWARDS:

- Selected as one of ten exemplary local integration measures by the European Migrant Integration Academy in 2014
- Selected as “good idea in integration” in 2012 by Cities of Migration (joint project of the Bertelsmann Foundation and the Maytree Foundation)
- City of Bilbao’s Department of Equality, International Cooperation and Citizenship received the United Nations Public Service Award in 2012 as 2nd place winner in the category “Promoting Gender Responsive Delivery of Public Services”



AWARENESS

This section highlights good and promising practices that address violence against refugee women and girls through information and awareness raising campaigns. Even though most European countries have protection measures for women who are affected by gender-based violence (including national helplines and women's shelters), women refugees and asylum seekers often face a number of practical challenges that act as barriers to access these services. The main problem is the scarce information provided to women refugees, who often lack an understanding and awareness of their rights and the services available to them.⁶⁵ The provision of information thus becomes a matter of legal empowerment: refugee women and girls should be informed about the status and the rights that they have and the services to which they are entitled.⁶⁶

In addition, raising awareness of the different forms of violence against refugee women and girls is an important element in the prevention of such violence. It also serves the purpose of reaching the general public and key audiences such as political authorities, and thus can lead to policy change. In this section, we feature initiatives that are using practical and innovative approaches to accomplish these objectives, including multilingual websites and "info cafés", flyers and posters, interactive theatre pieces, bus tours, demonstrations and rallies.

Information Flyer “Go Your Own Way! Your Rights as a Woman in Germany”

WHO? Refugee Council of Lower Saxony⁶⁷

WHEN? Since March 2016

WHERE? Germany

WHAT?

The flyer “Go Your Own Way! Your Rights as a Woman in Germany” was designed with the aim of supporting women refugees by better informing them about their rights. The role of women in host countries may differ in part from the traditional gender roles in their countries of origin. Many refugees come from countries where human rights violations against women are widespread. Information about their own rights as women is a first step towards empowering female refugees to live a self-determined life free from violence.

HOW?

The flyer “Go Your Own Way! Your Rights as a Woman in Germany” provides information about the fundamental human rights that women have in Germany. The basic principle of gender equality, guaranteed in article 3.2 of the German Constitution, is explained in plain and accessible language:

“This means that a woman has the same rights as a man. It also means that every woman has the right to be treated in a way that respects her dignity. Nobody may deny her these rights. Every woman has the right to make her own life decisions, to speak freely, to act on her own behalf and in her own interest. She does not need a man to do all this for her.”

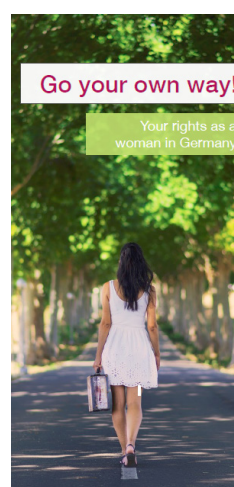
The flyer clarifies that this also applies to the asylum procedure, since every woman has the right to apply for asylum in Germany independently and on her own behalf, without a male relative, husband or representative.

The brochure explains what the right to education entails (*“Every girl has the right and the obligation to attend school for at least nine or ten years. Nobody may force her to leave school if her grades are good enough to continue her academic education”*) and the freedom to choose an occupation and be financially independent (*“Every woman has the right to*

choose her profession. Every woman has the right to open her own bank account and manage her own money“.)

In addition to the right to education and work, the flyer covers issues of everyday life, relationships and marriage, as well as sexuality and health. It is highlighted that every woman has the right to spend her free time any way she likes, to be outside at any time of the day or night, to choose her partner freely and to have sexual self-determination. The section on health explains that it is against German law to threaten, harass, beat or otherwise intentionally cause physical or psychological harm to a woman or girl, and that any woman who has been subjected to violence has the right to report the perpetrators, even if it is her husband or her or her husband's relatives.

The flyer includes a final section with “emergency information”, which explicitly highlights that women should not feel ashamed to ask for protection or support. It displays the number and website of the free support hotline and information on seeking refuge in women's shelters. The flyer is available in several languages and can be downloaded free of charge.⁶⁸



Source: Refugee Council of Lower Saxony

THE FLYER is translated into German, English, French, Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, Farsi / Dari, Serbian and Somali.

It will be available in the following languages soon: Hausa, Croatian, Kurdish, Macedonian, Pashto, Romani, Russian, Tibetan, Tigrinya, Chechen, Ukrainian and Urdu.

WHY?

- The flyer provides clear information on the fundamental human rights of women in plain and accessible language.
- The flyer is available in many languages to ensure that information is widely shared.

Zanzu – The multilingual online portal for sexual and reproductive health

WHO? German Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) and Sensoa, the Flemish Expertise Centre for Sexual Health

WHERE? Germany and Belgium

WHEN? Since November 2015 in Belgium, since February 2016 in Germany

WHAT?

Zanzu is a multilingual portal that provides comprehensive information on sexual and reproductive health and rights. To maintain one's sexual and reproductive health, people need access to accurate information: the aim of Zanzu is to provide accessible information in various languages to enable the user to make informed choices regarding their sexual health. The website is directed towards medical professionals and healthcare providers who work with refugees and migrants that do not speak German, French or Flemish, in order to ensure that they are properly informed about subjects such as safe sex, sexually-transmitted infections, contraception and perinatal care.

HOW?

The online portals ZANZU.de and ZANZU.be provide direct access to comprehensive information on sexual and reproductive health.⁶⁹ Visitors can choose between 13 different languages, and the various issues are illustrated by pictograms. Topics range from body parts and hygiene to family planning, pregnancy and birth, as well as sexually transmitted infections, contraception, sexuality and relationships. The website has a text-to-speech function, allowing the users to have each page read out.

The website is intended to assist medical professionals in individual counselling sessions when there are language barriers. The website can be used in a computer or tablet during counselling, or a tailor-made brochure can be printed out in each language via the print function. The website also includes a dictionary with the most important terms connected to sexual health: each term and its definition can be translated and read out. Importantly, Zanzu contains an extensive help database, where practitioners can search by theme for specialised support services and counselling centres in order to make a referral. The most important useful addresses connected to the relevant subject are included under each article on the site.

The website also includes a country-specific section on “rights and law,” which provides detailed information on fundamental sexual and reproductive rights, access to healthcare, and the different forms of gender-based violence that are forbidden by law (including sexual and domestic violence, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced prostitution and trafficking, and honour-based crimes).⁷⁰

WHY?

- The website provides accessible information in 13 languages.
- It allows to overcome language barriers in the context of individual counselling sessions.
- The website ensures full accessibility through the use of simplified language and the text-to-speech function.
- The site includes a comprehensive database with country-specific specialised support and counselling services.



Body



Family planning and pregnancy



Infections



Sexuality



Relationships and feelings



Rights and law



- 13 LANGUAGES
- 890,000 USERS OF ZANZU.DE
since February (as of 21 September 2016)
- 751,500 USERS OF ZANZU.BE
since February (as of 9 November 2016)

Source: Zanzu.de

- 16 INFO CAFÉS (July – November 2016)
- 160 REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS have participated
- In 50% OF THE INFO CAFÉS counsellors identified a victim of human trafficking, forced marriage or domestic violence.

Tilly 4 Girls & Women – Info Cafés for Women and Girls in Refugee Accommodation Centres

WHO? JADWIGA Nuremberg⁷¹

WHERE? Nuremberg

WHEN? Since July 2016

WHAT?

Tilly 4 Girls & Women is an initiative that organises women's and girls' "info cafés" in refugee accommodation centres with the aim of fighting human trafficking amongst asylum-seekers in Nuremberg and of protecting women and girls against human trafficking, re-trafficking,⁷² early and forced marriage and the violence and exploitation associated with them.

Women and girls in the asylum procedure are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and forced marriage. Women may be forced into prostitution, labour exploitation or marriage by their own families. Perpetrators exploit their helplessness, lack of language skills and little knowledge of their rights and the available support services. Identifying vulnerability and responding accordingly is the task of the professionally-trained counsellors of Tilly 4 Girls & Women. The highly accessible "info cafés" provide women and girls with basic information on their rights, as well as on the options to access specialised support services and protection measures. Raising awareness among vulnerable refugee women and girls, in combination with specialised training of staff and volunteers working in refugee accommodation centres, can decrease the risk of being trafficked or subjected to violence.⁷³

HOW?

Women's and girls' info cafés are advertised in refugee accommodation centres as "café mornings" with coffee, tea and cakes. The cafés intend to create a relaxed atmosphere where social workers and language and culture mediators interact with participants. The initiative is structured in phases: initially, informal individual or small group discussions are conducted to establish trust. Later on, participants are informed in small groups about the key aspects of the initiative, in particular the provision of confidential, free of charge, and anonymous individual advice. Basic information on women's and girls' rights is provided during these



Source: Jadwiga Nuremberg, Illustrator Leonie Peteler

sessions, and brochures are distributed in the refugees' native languages with relevant information and contact addresses for counselling and support services.

Detailed information on the issues of forced marriage and human trafficking can be learned directly from counsellors through interactive lectures. Potential victims of human trafficking will learn that they are entitled to protection in a potentially exploitative situation, irrespective of their residence status. In later stages, there is the possibility of asking more detailed questions or turning directly to counsellors in order to receive immediate individual advice. It is also possible to arrange separate consultations at Jadwiga's counselling centre in person or by telephone. In this way, refugee women and girls can select the safest option for them according to their individual situations. All those requesting assistance are immediately supported by the counselling centre's staff. This includes the establishment of trust, the joint assessment of possible threats, advice on legal issues, and referral to other specialist services, including medical care and therapy. Women are supported by cultural mediators in the course of all administrative procedures, medical and therapeutic appointments, and meetings with the police, courts and other authorities.

WHY?

- The "info cafés" format allows to build trust in an informal environment as a first step towards providing specialised counselling.
- The initiative is structured in phases in order to gradually provide holistic support and advice to refugee women and girls at risk as required by their individual situation.

Interactive Play “My Way. My Happiness. My Goal! The Start of My New Life”

WHO? TERRES DES FEMMES⁷⁴ in cooperation with Mensch: Theater!⁷⁵ and YASEMIN⁷⁶

WHEN? October 2016 – January 2017

WHERE? Baden-Württemberg, Germany

WHAT?

TERRES DES FEMMES has worked with theatre educators from the expert group “Mensch: Theater!” and the Counselling Centre for Young Migrant Women in Conflict Situations (YASEMIN) to produce a theatre piece that focuses on violence against girls and women in the context of forced migration. The project covers 12 schools in Baden-Württemberg. The interactive theatre performance “My Way. My Happiness. My Goal! The Start of My New Life” is intended to stimulate dialogue among young people, with and without a refugee background, as well as between students, teachers and social workers, and to raise awareness about the topic. Young people are given the space to thematise their experiences and to reflect on their own behaviour, ideas and values. The play is intended to support them in their search for a self-determined path, to

raise awareness about cultural differences in everyday life and thus to promote successful integration. The project is funded by the State Ministry for Social Affairs and Integration in Baden-Württemberg.

HOW?

The interactive play covers in different scenes themes that are important for young refugees. These were developed in collaboration with an advisory group of girls who came to Germany themselves or whose families came as refugees. The life stories and experiences of these young women provide the basis for the themes treated in the play, thus ensuring proximity to reality. Themes include changing concepts of life in a new environment, prejudices, uncertainty, dealing with experiences of violence and the search for a self-determined life.

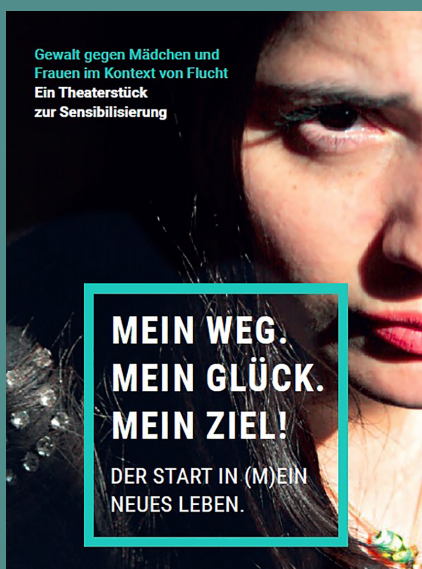
The play is designed as an interactive form of forum theatre, which actively engages the audience by letting them influence the course of the scenes. The aim is to bring the stories of young refugees on the stage, offering a rare opportunity to people on the fringe to be in the centre, where, being the experts of their own lives, they can be engaged in a dialogue with the audience to explore collectively how to deal with issues of violence. Together with the actors, students develop solutions for the problems posed in scenes.

The theatre performance creates the space to deal with experiences of violence in the context of forced migration, a theme that affects mainly women and girls. The performance is designed to encourage young refugees to express their fears and concerns and to turn to counselling centres if they need help. After each performance, there is a follow-up discussion between social workers, students and teachers. In this way, teachers and students gain a critical awareness and deeper understanding of the topic, which creates a space for young refugees to deal with the issues involved and, if necessary, to seek help. In addition, there is the possibility of deepening the experience via pedagogical theatre workshops.



Canan Kir and Tobias Gerstner from Mensch: Theater!
Source: Mensch: Theater!

- **12 PERFORMANCES**
at schools in Baden-Württemberg
- **TARGET GROUP:**
young people aged 14-21
- **Over 900 STUDENTS**
have been reached



Source: Terre des Femmes

WHY?

- The interactive theatre performance is an innovative way of learning for students that focuses on participation, reflection, and sharing personal experiences.
- The performance creates a space for dialogue and follow-up discussions involving both students and teachers.
- Women and girls that have experienced forced migration and displacement were involved in the design of the play, thus ensuring that it is grounded in real life experiences.

Campaign: “No Camps For Women and Children / Abolish all Camps”

WHO? Women in Exile / Women in Exile & Friends⁷⁷

WHEN? Since October 2010

WHERE? Germany

WHAT?

Women in Exile is an initiative founded in Brandenburg in 2002 by refugee women to fight for their own rights. The decision to self-organise has its roots in the multiple/intersectional discrimination that refugee women face, both as refugees and as women. The organisation is one of the very few groups where refugee women mobilise their peers to go public with demands for better living conditions.

With the campaign “No Camps for Women and Children”, Women in Exile aims to document the situation of women in refugee accommodation centres/camps and to raise awareness about the conditions in which they live, which often includes narrow and overcrowded spaces, shared sanitary facilities, and a lack of privacy and autonomy that are a breeding ground for conflict.⁷⁸

HOW?

Women in Exile raises awareness on how refugee women experience sexual and physical violence in the camps and aims to gain public attention through press releases, demonstrations, rallies, and online petitions. Since 2014, Women in Exile has conducted several “bus and boat tours” to visit different refugee camps throughout Germany. The aim is to meet and interview refugee women in order to document their living conditions in camps, as well as to inform them about their rights. Women are encouraged to talk about their experience of violence with other refugee women, file claims with the police and join protests and rallies to bring these issues into the public eye. The 2015 bus tour around refugee camps in the region of Brandenburg culminated in the publication of a “documentation report”⁷⁹ containing a list of grievances about living conditions in camps expressed by refugee women during the interviews. The report highlights concerns that camp housing extremely limits privacy and autonomy of the refugees and thus is a breeding ground for sexual violence and exploitation. In 2016, Women in Exile visited more than 15 cities

IN SUMMER 2016, WOMEN IN EXILE:

- **VISITED REFUGEE CAMPS** in more than 15 cities in Germany.
- **MADE CONTACT** with almost 1,000 refugee women and more than 2,000 people and organisations working with refugees.
- **TRAINED** more than 100 refugee women as multipliers in 3 years.
- **PRODUCED** a 20-page report with many concrete examples on the situation for women refugees in refugee camps throughout Brandenburg.



Source: Women in Exile

in Germany and made contact with 1,000 refugee women and more than 2,000 people and organisations working with refugees.⁸⁰

Additionally, they organise empowerment training and peer education workshops “from refugee women to refugee women”. More than 100 refugee women have been trained in the last three years. Trained women then organise workshops for other refugee women in camps, providing crucial information on support structures and legal and social advice, as well as information about response services and complaint mechanisms in case of violence. Refugee women are encouraged to talk about their experience with other refugee women, with the media, to file complaints and to join the protest groups and rallies to bring these issues to the public’s attention and place them on the political agenda.

WHY?

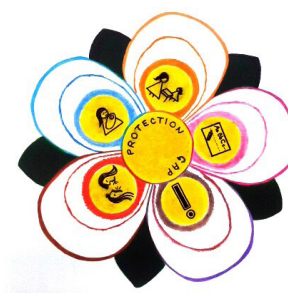
- It focuses on self-empowerment and self-organising of refugee women through a “peer-to-peer” approach.
- A self-organised group of refugee women are mobilised to speak with their own voice and gain public attention on a number of political demands.
- The initiative focuses on camps as forms of housing with particular dangers for women.

The Protection Gap Campaign

WHO? The Charter of Rights of Women Seeking Asylum, supported by 360 organisations

WHERE? United Kingdom

WHEN? Since 9th December 2014



WHAT?

Women and girls fleeing conflict, war and violence fall through a protection gap in EU asylum systems. Even though there has recently been a significant move towards recognising the need to tackle sexual violence in war zones, when women and girls escaping these same conflicts seek asylum in Europe, they encounter serious barriers.⁸¹ During the asylum procedure, women often have to tell their stories to male interviewers and interpreters, who have little to no training on the impact of shame and trauma on disclosure, and refugees often receive no information on their rights as a woman in the asylum system. Childcare is not provided, leaving women to choose between withholding important information and disclosing traumatic details in front of their children. These factors can have a major impact on the credibility assessment for women asylum seekers and lead to the rejection of the application for international protection.

In order to raise awareness about this issue, the Charter of Rights of Women Seeking Asylum, a coalition of 360 UK-based organisations, launched “The Protection Gap” campaign in December 2014, calling for better protection for women refugees who have experienced rape or gender-based violence. The campaign, led by Asylum Aid UK, denounces the treatment of refugee women survivors of violence in the UK and calls for a series of measures to ensure a gender-sensitive asylum procedure.⁸²

HOW?

The five campaign demands are that no woman seeking asylum should have to tell her story: in front of her children; to a male interviewer or interpreter if she is not comfortable with this; to someone who doesn't understand how trauma affects memory; without being given counselling; and without information about her rights as a woman in the asylum system.

The campaign works on a number of different levels, both directly by reaching women seeking asylum and at a policy level with Members of Parliament (MPs) and Home Office officials.⁸³ It highlights the important role of direct participation of refugee women in shaping the policies that affect them. The demands are supported by a group of refugee women, the 'Protection Gap Advocates', who play a key role in the coalition's activities in campaigning for these reforms. The Advocates have run two workshops with women asylum-seekers in initial accommodation centres to provide them with support and information about their rights as women within the asylum system. They have also produced a leaflet for asylum lawyers representing women, run skills sharing workshops for Protection Gap Advocates members, and produced an advocacy film about credibility assessments in women's asylum cases.⁸⁴

At the policy level, an extensive postcard campaign voicing the women's narratives led to the distribution of 1,223 postcards to MPs, in order to provide parliamentary pressure on the Home Office. As a result, in March 2015 the Home Office included the five measures in its Women's Asylum Action Plan. It is currently procuring childcare during initial asylum interviews on a national basis to commence in 2017, running a pilot counselling project for women in London and running a pilot information project for women in Glasgow, both with the intention of national rollout.⁸⁵

In December 2015, Asylum Aid was invited to present the campaign at a hearing of the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM Committee) on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU.⁸⁶ On 8th March 2016, International Women's Day, Members of the European Parliament voted in a resolution⁸⁷ on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU. The resolution called for a gender-sensitive asylum procedure and for various measures to ensure that women's specific needs are met throughout the

asylum process and in reception centres. Crucially, this resolution includes all the demands from Asylum Aid's campaign to close the Protection Gap.⁸⁸

WHY?

- The campaign highlights the important role of direct participation of refugee women in shaping the policies that affect them.
- The campaign operates at different levels and reaches a wide range of target audiences, among them policy-makers, government officials, asylum lawyers and refugee women themselves.



Source: Asylum Aid UK

- **1,223 POSTCARDS** were sent out to MPs and delivered to the Home Secretary.
- The 5 Protection Gap measures were included in the **HOME OFFICE WOMEN'S ASYLUM ACTION PLAN IN MARCH 2015** and are gradually being progressed through Parliament.
- **10 PROTECTION GAP ADVOCATES** have been empowered to present the campaign to influential people and to women seeking asylum.
- The 5 campaign demands were included in the **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION** of 8th March 2016 on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU.



SPACES

This section highlights practices and initiatives that aim to create safe spaces for refugee women and children. A safe space is a formal or informal place where women feel physically and emotionally safe. “The term ‘safe’ refers to the absence of trauma, excessive stress, violence (or fear of violence), or abuse. It is a space where women and girls feel comfortable and enjoy the freedom to express themselves without the fear of judgment or harm.”⁸⁹

Women-only accommodation centres create a “safe space” for refugee women and their children, both physically and emotionally. These centres offer a refuge for single women travelling alone or with their children, as well as deeply traumatised women that are in need of specialised treatment. The support and services provided by these centres are needs-led, encourage peer-support, are informed by the lived experiences of women, and focus on empowerment and independence. Creating a safe space for women can also be achieved through mobile units and day centres, which provide a temporary but crucial haven for women to receive support and information on their rights and constitute an area for women to meet, interact and share experiences. The concept of “safe space” can also refer to the way in which collective reception and accommodation centres are designed, adhering to protection standards such as separate sleeping areas with lockable doors as well as well-lit, gender-segregated and lockable sanitation and health facilities.

Les Logis de Louvranges

WHO? Caritas International Belgium⁹⁰

WHEN? Since July 2010

WHERE? Louvranges, Belgium

WHAT?

In 2010, Caritas International Belgium decided to establish an accommodation centre that would only host vulnerable women refugees and asylum-seekers and their children. During the implementation of their long-term individual accommodation project (which has been operative since 1999), they realised that it was more difficult for their specialised teams to address gender-based violence issues and to respond to the needs of vulnerable refugee women when they were scattered geographically in individual houses or when they were housed in collective reception centres.

Les Logis de Louvranges is a multiple-unit housing complex where women refugees and asylum-seekers and their children live in individual apartments. This allows them to enjoy a general degree of privacy, safety, and responsibility and allows for the multidisciplinary team to be in the proximity and provide close support.⁹¹ The project provides personalised support to women through an extensive network of partners, ranging from lawyers to psychologists, doctors, police, youth institutions, and volunteers, in order to reinforce their self-reliance as well as to reduce their vulnerability.

HOW?

The project helps women to regain their self-confidence and self-esteem and empowers them to act autonomously through a wide and diverse range of on-site and external trainings (in financial management, language, rights awareness, etc.). Women can also undertake professional training. Each month, women receive a financial allowance that is transferred to their bank account and is meant to cover their daily expenses (food, transport, clothing, school, etc.). Rent, charges, and a provision for a housing deposit are deducted from this allowance.

For women with young children, a day nursery is organised within the facility that enables women to spend time and energy to actively take part in workshops and trainings to improve their professional skills. Adapted and frequent legal support is also provided by a specialised social assistant

according to the needs of the women, with the intention to turn them into actors/owners of their own asylum procedure. Finally, a full mental and physical health check-up is provided and psychosocial support is accessible in partnership with specialised organisations.

WHY?

- The initiative focuses on women regaining a feeling of self-worth through an empowerment approach.
- The housing complex combines privacy of individual housing with easier service delivery of central accommodation.



© Isabelle Corthier

- **21 APARTMENTS** able to accommodate 25 women and 45 children (maximum 70 persons).
- In 2015, **27 FAMILIES AND/OR SINGLE WOMEN** were hosted in Les Logis de Louvranges. 75% of these families and/or single women have been recognised as refugees or have been granted subsidiary protection status.

Women-only Accommodation Centre for Refugee Women and their Children

WHO? Joint Cooperation Project for Refugee Assistance, led by Condrobs⁹², Frauenhilfe München⁹³ and pro familia Ortsverband München.⁹⁴

WHEN? Since January 2016

WHERE? Munich, Germany

WHAT?

On behalf of the city of Munich, the organisations Condrobs, Frauenhilfe and pro familia have jointly established a women-only accommodation centre for refugee women and their children. The project aims to enable vulnerable refugee women to live a self-determined life free from violence, outside of mixed-gender accommodation centres with their often inadequate protection standards. The women-only centre provides refugee women with a safe space free from violence and supports them in organising their everyday lives on their own. They receive assistance when dealing with authorities as well as access to medical care, German courses and educational opportunities, along with one-on-one psychosocial counselling and other specialised support services. The long-term goal of this culturally-sensitive and women-specific initiative is the successful integration of these women and children into society.⁹⁵

HOW?

The centre provides accommodation to traumatised refugee women and their children. Female asylum seekers with and without children can apply for separate accommodation and are transferred to the centre on a voluntary basis, with the approval of the appropriate authorities. The most innovative element of this initiative is the provision of specialised trauma therapy that takes into account the intergenerational effects of trauma in the mother-child relationship. A trauma therapist and a psychologist with a focus on trauma stabilisation and mother-child bonding provide individual counselling and support to the women.

Women are assisted by the centre's staff in the course of administrative procedures, medical appointments, and meetings with the police or other authorities. The centre also supports women during the asylum procedure and helps

them prepare their interviews, which are often very stressful since they have to disclose traumatic experiences. With the help of language mediators and interpreters, they are explained what to expect and what their rights as women are. In addition, women receive detailed information in their mother tongue about their rights, duties and opportunities. In the medium term, they will be able to cope independently and develop plans for a self-determined life.

The centre organises in-house German courses with the support of a pool of volunteers. There are also weekly public excursions (shopping, local transport, cafés, orientation in the urban area, etc.), where interactions with the host community take place, German skills are applied practically and inhibitions are reduced. This facilitates orientation within, contact with and access to a new culture, thus providing the first steps towards integration and independence. An important part of fostering self-determination is cooking in the shared kitchen, which requires interaction between the women. They are also responsible for cleaning and maintaining the rooms, lounges and cooking areas themselves, as well as for shopping, laundry and child care. Such everyday structures, coupled with therapy and specialised support, return the women their stability step by step. Feedback sessions are held regularly and supported by interpreters to allow women to express their wishes and concerns, which are taken on board by the centre's staff. In this way, they can contribute to the organisation of their everyday life and their living space.

WHY?

- The centre provides a safe space for women travelling alone and their children.
- Close psycho-social supervision and specialised trauma counselling goes hand-in-hand with the provision of a wide range of empowerment services (rights awareness workshops, language classes, educational and professional skills training).
- The project aims at strengthening the women's everyday independence and encourages networking among them and with the host community.
- Decision-making within the centre takes into account refugee women's voices.





Source: Condroids

3 ORGANISATIONS

jointly running the centre

60 PLACES:

- 58 regular places
- 2 places in a "crisis unit"

35 WOMEN aged 19-35

23 CHILDREN aged 0-11

- 11 babies
- 8 preschoolers
- 4 teenagers

Caritas Day Centre Athens

WHO? Caritas Athens

WHEN? Since February 2016

WHERE? Athens, Greece

WHAT?

The Day Centre for Refugee Families is part of the emergency response program for refugees run by Caritas in Athens. Located in Victoria Square, the main meeting point for refugees in central Athens, it is a safe and welcoming place, with a secluded area where refugee women can eat, sleep, rest, breastfeed, take a hot shower, feed their children, get clean clothes and hygiene products, have access to the internet in order to communicate with their families and consult a social worker. The Day Centre is designed to look and feel like a home. It is an apartment with a rest area, children's area, TV, kitchen, family space, toilets and showers. The overall goal is to provide refugees with a safe, quiet and relaxing space where they can feel welcomed, respected and "at home."

By creating this relaxing and welcoming environment, women have the opportunity to decide if and when they would like to express their needs, experiences of violence or trauma to the social worker. They can do this without an appointment and at their own pace. The goal is to make women feel free to share their story without being pressured by time or specific procedures. Once they reach out, their request is addressed on the spot. The whole procedure aims at empowering women to talk about their issues freely, to ask for guidance, and get the right information in order to organise their new life.

HOW?

The Day Centre for Refugee Families is designed as a home and not like a social service or an office, though it serves all three of these functions. It has a secluded area for women. In a separate space, the volunteers of the Day Centre play with the children, thus giving the women some time to relax and unwind. Outside the secluded area, there is a family space where men (husbands or relatives) can wait for the women while having tea or snacks and access to Wi-Fi and computers. If they wish, the women can also be in that space together with their relatives.

There are leaflets on services available to survivors of violence and the staff is always alert to respond to reported cases of violence. Women can ask for help if and when they wish to through having a chat with a staff member who will then discreetly refer them to the social worker. The staff of the Day Centre (one coordinator; one social worker; as well as two interpreters/caregivers and a cultural mediator who are refugees themselves) shares the same space with the women. There are no closed offices, only an open space where staff and refugees are always able to interact. If a woman wants to discuss confidential issues, a special separate space is assigned. Through the everyday “cohabitation” of the staff and the women, there is constant feedback on the satisfaction as well as on any change in needs. The program is designed according to these identified needs of the refugee women and thus is needs-oriented, not service-oriented.

The relationship that is created among the staff and the women is not limited to the level of first aid support. The trust built and the stability established empowers the women to build on their skills and organise their new lives. The program is constantly updated and redesigned in order to achieve maximum results.

Women are not asked for their personal information in order to use the Centre’s services, unless it is needed for a specific intervention. There is no limit on their number of visits to the Centre, nor do they have to make a prior appointment. The Centre is the only organisation in the area that provides psychosocial support through a specialised social worker. The Centre provides support and expertise on asylum, relocation, and family reunification procedures.

WHY?

- It provides a simple yet effective intervention that can be adopted in both an emergency response context or in an integration level context.
- The Centre creates the atmosphere of a welcoming home, which makes the intervention unique.

FROM FEBRUARY TO AUGUST 2016:⁹⁶

- **11,322 BENEFICIARIES**, of which almost 80% are women and children
- **4,530 SHOWERS**
- **4,000 HYGIENE ITEMS/ UNDERWEAR** distributed
- **3,331 PSYCHO-SOCIAL INTERVENTIONS** (shelter, legal, doctor, education, psychologist, etc)

Source: Caritas Athens

Melissa Network Greece Day Centre

- WHO?** Melissa Network of Migrant Women in Greece⁹⁷
- WHEN?** Since September 2014 (day-centre operating since July 2015)
- WHERE?** Athens, Greece



WHAT?

Melissa is a grassroots initiative and was founded as a civil non-profit partnership in September 2014. It was created with the direct involvement of migrant women leaders and is aimed at women from over forty different countries, who live and work in Greece. The name “Melissa” stems from the

Greek word for honey-bee as the migrant women see themselves as hard-working bees. They come from all over the world, bringing skills and talents, dreams and ideas, unique stories and extraordinary strengths. The name emphasises a positive view of migrant women who are agents of change in their own lives, their families, their communities, as well as for the society that hosts them. Despite the adversities that they have faced and continue to face in the current crisis, migrant and refugee women are multipliers and integrators: what they create with their work, their dedication, their talents, their efforts and ambitions, contributes to the host society in countless visible and invisible ways.

Melissa’s three main functions are: a) networking among the migrant women’s groups and creating bonds with the host society, b) capacity-building through skill-sharing and expert support, and c) advocacy and the promotion of positive role models. The Melissa Day Centre opened its doors in July 2015 as a newly opened hub where migrant and refugee women can meet, share and support each other in the pursuit of their common goals. One of the Centre’s most successful initiatives is the “Alef” project, a community integration pathway for newly arrived female refugees. The project is funded by Mercy Corps and supported by the municipality of Athens.⁹⁸



Source: Melissa Network Greece. © Vanessa Zochiou

HOW?

The Alef project targets refugee women between 16-28 who have suffered various forms of violence, exclusion and educational deprivation in their country of origin. After almost a whole year of operation and active involvement on a volunteer basis with refugee women and children, Melissa members decided to shift the focus to integration.⁹⁹ With the aim of looking at the life-stories behind the numbers, and trying to build a bridge between refugees and their host communities, they started Alef. Women come to learn Greek and participate in different activities ranging from art therapy to media workshops, finding ways to navigate the city and plan their lives in a new place.

The innovative element is its community-driven character due to the involvement of migrant women's groups, who become the cultural mediators facilitating the transition. The centre offers psychosocial support, art, drama and music therapy, playback theatre, Greek and English language classes, dance and poetry workshops. It also provides media workshops and information sessions on social and legal rights, reproductive health and gender-based violence, yoga and meditation classes — often led by migrant women themselves, who are paid for their time.¹⁰⁰ Classes are free and on-site day care for children as well as creative educational activities are provided.

WHY?

- Melissa operates as a community-led grassroots initiative based on the involvement of migrant and refugee women's groups.
- The project facilitates age specific and very diverse and empowering activities and learning opportunities for young women and adolescent girls.

- **256 MEMBERS** from 45 countries
- **50 NEW MEMBERS** every month from newly arrived refugee communities

EmpowerVan – Mobile Information and Advice Service

WHO? Dolle Deerns¹⁰¹

WHERE? Hamburg

WHEN? Since June 2016

WHAT?

The EmpowerVan¹⁰² is a mobile information and advice service in a multi-van that regularly visits initial reception centres and accommodation facilities in the city of Hamburg. Its goal is to counteract the isolation of girls and women in reception and accommodation centres since, especially in mass accommodation, they often find no safe “women-only” private spaces. The van is used as a safe space to assist women – with everything from medical appointments to finding new accommodation if a woman has experienced abuse. It also provides an area for women to meet, interact and share experiences.¹⁰³ The EmpowerVan started as a grassroots initiative, since the local authorities were responding too slowly to the needs of refugee women and girls. With initial funding from filia. die frauenstiftung, the organisation bought a multi-van and drove directly to refugee reception and accommodation centres, to meet refugee women right where they are. The Ministry for Labour, Social and Family Affairs and Integration of the City of Hamburg now supports the EmpowerVan and will finance its operational costs and one social worker for the next two years.¹⁰⁴

HOW?

The EmpowerVan empowers women with basic knowledge about their rights. It provides them with initial advice and individual counselling, and organises day trips and group activities.¹⁰⁵ Through cooperation with local organisations and volunteers a broad support network has been created for the provision of specialised counselling services regarding trauma and violence, medical care and pregnancy, as well as orientation in everyday life. Many of the social workers involved in this initiative have a refugee or migrant background themselves and translate when required. In addition, childcare is guaranteed during consultations and group activities.

A key element is to strengthen the self-organising of refugee women, and the EmpowerVan is equipped with a tent that opens a space for women to get together. There is also a desire to make women more familiar with their neighbourhoods and to encourage interaction with the local community and the development of interpersonal relations. To this end, EmpowerVan facilitates a “buddy programme”: a buddy is assigned to newcomer women to accompany them on their way to successfully integrate into society. The EmpowerVan’s mobility means that the service can quickly be adapted to changing circumstances, e.g. reacting to the construction or relocation of accommodation centres and providing on-site support to female refugees.

WHY?

- It is a mobile counselling service that meets refugee women right where they are.
- It connects refugee women with a network of volunteers and local support services.
- Several team members have their own refugee/migration experience and have an intimate understanding of the intersectional discrimination that refugee women face in host countries.
- Childcare is provided to enable women to take part in group activities and attend individual counselling sessions.

- The service is aimed at women and girls aged **12 AND UP**
- Operates **3 DAYS PER WEEK**
- Visits regularly **5 ACCOMMODATION CENTRES**

FROM JULY TO OCTOBER 2016:

- **522 WOMEN AND 120 GIRLS**
have been reached through the service
- **23 WOMEN**
have sought individual consultation
- **20 WOMEN**
were referred to specialised counselling services
- **56 WOMEN**
and girls have participated in day trips within Hamburg
- **46 WOMEN**
have participated in 4 group activities



Source: EmpowerVan



SERVICES

This section highlights practices and initiatives that provide gender-sensitive services to refugee women and girls that address their short- and long-term needs. A key selection criteria has been whether refugee women's voices and their complex and multi-layered narratives have been taken into account in the design, implementation and evaluation of services. This ensures that women receive support tailored to their needs that will help them establish a life free from violence.

We feature initiatives that are needs-led, informed by the lived experiences of refugee women, and that aim to enhance their independence and empowerment. These initiatives provide services that are culturally grounded and linguistically appropriate, delivered by trained staff and interpreters. Wherever possible, services are provided by female professionals and through the assistance of female interpreters. We have aimed to include examples of services that address the long-term needs of refugee women and girls beyond the initial reception stage, aiming to ensure their full integration in host societies, avoid isolation and prevent abuse, exploitation and violence.

GAMS (Group for the Abolition of Female Genital Mutilation)

WHO? GAMS Belgium, Group for the Abolition of Female Genital Mutilation (Groupe pour l'Abolition des mutilations sexuelles féminines)¹⁰⁶

WHEN? Since 1996

WHERE? Belgium

WHAT?

In 2014, the UNCHR estimated that 71% of female asylum seekers from FGM-practising countries have already been affected by female genital mutilation (FGM) at the time of their arrival in the European Union.¹⁰⁷ In addition to this number, a significant number of women presenting an asylum claim are doing so based on a fear of undergoing FGM in their countries of origin.¹⁰⁸

GAMS Belgium is a group of African and European women and men that fights for the abolition of FGM. GAMS works with various groups: women affected by FGM, girls at risk, religious and community leaders, the wider African communities at stake, schools and parents' organisations, the Belgian federal agency for the reception of asylum seekers, asylum centres, professionals of the social, legal, law enforcement and health sectors, the Belgian authorities and the public.¹⁰⁹ The organisation provides healthcare and psychological support to women who have fled from or undergone FGM, forced marriage, and other forms of gender-based violence in their home country.

HOW?

GAMS offers individual and adapted aid to all women personally affected or concerned by female genital mutilation and/or forced marriage. The underlying philosophy is that GAMS is a place of welcome. The women meet with the staff individually, over a period of time to develop a relationship based on trust where they have a safe space to tell their stories. They may be referred to partner doctors for a gynaecological consultation or to lawyers specialised in FGM issues. GAMS also focuses on girls at risk of undergoing the practice and gives counselling to parents, explaining the Belgian law and advising them on how to protect their girls.

IN 2015:¹¹⁰

- GAMS reached more than **6,000 PEOPLE**.
- **378 WOMEN** living with FGM and 31 men registered and received individual counselling.
- **184 GIRLS** "to be protected from FGM" were registered.
- **350 WOMEN, MEN, GIRLS AND BOYS** came to GAMS for literacy classes, adults and youth workshops, prenatal classes, etc.
- **61 TRAINING SESSIONS** were organised involving 1628 professionals from health, asylum and social sectors.
- **17 MEN PEER EDUCATORS** have been trained during 10 sessions of training in the framework of the European project 'Men Speak Out.'



Source: GAMS Belgium

In addition, GAMS offers a diverse range of community workshops. Monthly meetings are held with women refugees and asylum seekers in order to raise awareness of the medical and psychological consequences and complications of FGM, as well as to facilitate social integration in the host society and enhance women's self-esteem. The preparation for childbirth workshop targets pregnant women as well as survivors of sexual violence and/or FGM who are asylum seekers or refugees. It consists of preparatory sessions to provide women with a space to ask any questions regarding the care and support available during pregnancy and at birth in Belgium. These sessions can also be a place for discussion about the pregnancy and the protection of the child with regard to certain traditional practices (female genital mutilation, forced marriages, gender-based violence).

Additionally, training for professionals from different sectors (medical, asylum, social, legal, early childhood, etc.) is offered throughout the year. The aim is to educate professionals to recognise, prevent and treat social-cultural, medical and psychological aspects of FGM.

WHY?

- GAMS focuses on building trust over time through sustained engagement as a way to ensure access to healthcare and psychosocial assistance.
- GAMS is a community-based organisation. Half of the team are people affected by FGM and more than 40 peer educators work as volunteers to sensitise their own communities.

Children and Family Protection Support Hubs – “Blue Dots”

WHO? United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and international and local NGOs at country level

WHEN? Since January 2016

WHERE? Western Balkan route (Greece, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia)

WHAT?

As part of a joint effort to step up protection for the growing numbers of refugee women and children on the move in Europe, UNHCR, UNICEF, and the ICRC launched the “Blue Dots” initiative in November 2015.¹¹¹ Eleven special support centres under the “Blue Dot” label have been set up since January 2016 along the most frequently used migration route in Europe, and nine more are in the pipeline. All 20 will be operational within the next months.¹¹²

The first hubs were set up along the Balkan route with a view to providing essential services for vulnerable women and children on the move towards Northern Europe. The hubs aimed to address the obstacles hindering refugee women and children from accessing basic services along the route, including lack of clear information, lack of coordinated service provision, and low quality of services. After the closure of borders, Blue Dot centres address the refugee population stranded in countries that once were merely transit points and may lack the infrastructure to host large numbers of refugees and ensure access to quality services, safe environments and identification of survivors of violence.

HOW?

This initiative strengthens the identification and supports interventions for refugee children and women in need. It aims to provide refugee and migrant children and families along the Balkan route with a set of standards and key interventions that include the following minimum package of services: family tracing and reunification, child friendly spaces, dedicated mother and baby/toddler areas, psychosocial first aid and support (e.g. for victims of violence), and legal advice. The centres also serve as information advice points and have a referral system in place for cases of violence or specialised medical assistance.¹¹³ The hubs are set up in partnership with local organisations in order to support capacity building of local service providers.¹¹⁴

The hubs offer ways to improve accessibility and quality of a standardised minimum package of services provided by different organisations, as well as an easily identifiable means of indicating the predictability of these services through a recognisable label – the Blue Dot.¹¹⁵ The hubs are located in selected strategic sites, such as border entry/exit points, registration sites, strategic urban centres, and refugee camps. The Blue Dots ensure that minimum services are provided, especially to refugees with specific needs or facing particular risks. The predictability and accessibility of these services is also key in the context of clandestine movement along the Western Balkans.

Regular consultations with refugees and migrants are organised to guarantee that the provision of Blue Dot services responds to their needs and is conducted in an accurate and culturally appropriate manner.

WHY?

- The initiative allows a swift response to the protection needs of vulnerable refugees in regions receiving high migration flows that may lack the necessary infrastructure to provide minimum services.
- Blue Dot ensures improved accessibility and quality of services in selected strategic sites (border entry/exit points, registration sites, strategic urban centres, and refugee camps).



CHILDREN AND FAMILY SUPPORT HUB IN VICTORIA SQUARE, ATHENS (GREECE)

In September 2016, the “Blue Dot” drop-in centre for women and children in Victoria Square, Athens, reached an average of 53 children a day who were able to access psychosocial support, recreation and other activities. Women and children also benefited from various referrals to other services, including medical, legal and housing support. The centre offers mother-baby feeding corners with breastfeeding support, child-friendly spaces and play areas, showers and counselling. From July to September 2016, a total of 650 women and children have benefited from these services.¹¹⁶



Source: UNHCR

11 “BLUE DOT” HUBS HAVE BEEN SET UP IN 3 COUNTRIES:

- FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (2)
- SERBIA (2)
- GREECE (7 are fully operational and 9 are in the pipeline)

“More than Food and Shampoo”: Violence Prevention and Psychosocial Support for Refugee Women and Children

WHO? Johanniter Austria¹¹⁷

WHEN? Since January 2016

WHERE? Vienna, Austria

WHAT?

With the initiative “More than Food and Shampoo,” the Johanniter provide psychological support to women and children in emergency accommodation for asylum seekers. The initiative encompasses two projects: (1) a programme to address trauma and post-traumatic stress disorders through psychosocial support and holistic measures; (2) a violence prevention programme that addresses patriarchal gender roles and issues of gender inequality among refugees.

HOW?

The trauma project is being implemented in the emergency accommodation centre of Vienna-Währing, which hosts 150 refugees. The project targets in particular refugee women and children that are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders. In addition to multiple exposure to traumatic events prior to their flight and during their journey, accommodation in emergency centres in destination countries can cause post-migration stress, particularly since it is coupled with limited access to education and the labour market, inactivity, isolation and marginalisation, and weak social integration. The project applies a holistic approach to foster the emotional and psychological well-being of refugee women and children. Individual counselling sessions are conducted in the refugees’ mother tongues, in cooperation with a sociopsychiatric outpatient clinic and with the Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre in Vienna.¹¹⁸ These sessions are combined with leisure and sports activities as well as dance and creative workshops, in order to support the self-reliance of refugee women and children. For example, dance classes take place in safe private spaces and enable women to increase their self-awareness, with a focus on stabilising mind and body, enhancing their ability to interact with others, expressing their emotions and releasing psychological stress. The photography project “Us in the Refugee Home” encourages women and children to reflect on and voice their

own stories and those of their surrounding community in the accommodation centre. In this way, photography is used as a therapeutic technique to foster self-development and personal expression.

The violence prevention programme addresses issues of gender inequality and gender-based violence (including domestic and sexual violence) among the 300 refugees residing in the emergency accommodation centre in Vienna-Liesing. A handbook on identifying, documenting and responding to cases of gender-based violence is being developed, and staff are being trained on recognising, documenting and intervening in cases of violence.¹¹⁹ In addition, workshops and lectures train male and female refugees to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. Topics include forced marriage, sexualised violence, non-violent parenting and anti-violence workshops for boys.

WHY?

- The trauma programme applies a holistic approach that combines the provision of specialised psychological support for traumatised refugee women and children with creative workshops to foster self-reliance and empowerment.
- The violence prevention programme involves men and boys in training activities.
- The development of a handbook on violence prevention and response goes hand-in-hand with the training of all staff working in the accommodation centre.



- **15 PEOPLE**
in psychotherapeutic treatment
- **1 PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT**
with 100+ photos
- **WEEKLY WORKSHOPS**
with theatre, music and dance
- **25 WOMEN**
have participated in workshops
on the Violence Protection Law
- **40 MEN AND WOMEN**
have participated in workshops
on violence-free parenting
- **20 GIRLS**
have participated in a workshop
tailored for refugee girls

Living in Essen – Integration Support for Female Refugees and Other Particularly Vulnerable People

WHO? VIBB Essen¹²⁰

WHEN? Since April 2016

WHERE? Essen, Germany

WHAT?

The main goal of the project “Living in Essen” is to assist women refugees in integrating into society in Essen at the end of the asylum procedure, with a focus on women that have experienced violence or are suffering from physical and psychological stress or illnesses. In particular, the project aims to support women during transfers between different accommodation arrangements (e.g. from the initial reception centres to community accommodation centres or decentralised/private housing). During these transitions, there is often the risk that women lose touch with previous support structures and that they – for example, in private housing – are completely on their own and do not know of any nearby support services (including local women’s shelters and counselling centres). The project seeks to prevent this isolation via a holistic approach involving psychoeducational and empowerment measures.¹²¹

HOW?

The project aims to support refugee women to develop new life perspectives and a stable connection with the various social and health services in the city of Essen and the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. To this end, participants are empowered and assisted in tackling everyday tasks in the fields of housing, income, work and language learning, as well as in the development of new social relationships and participation in sociocultural life.

The programme provides three coordinated services during a period of 8 months:

- Individual counselling on different topics, including housing, income, language learning, finding health care and/or treatment facilities (possibly with mother-tongue doctors and a referral to community psychiatric services).

- Group meetings, occasionally with guests, for mutual exchange and for the discussion of topics relevant to integration
- City tours to get to know important and interesting places in Essen.

The programme has now expanded to include a regular women’s group with socio-pedagogic supervision, as well as a weekly sports course. After the end of the project, the participants will continue to be given access to regular services. In addition, refugee women who are interested can establish a closer cooperation with the organisation and act as a “multipliers”, in order to reach out to other women in similar situations and help them access these services.¹²²

WHY?

- The initiative fosters the self-reliance of female refugees.
- The project fills a crucial protection gap: the loss of support structures during transfers into new accommodation arrangements.
- Counselling is provided in 17 languages (Arabic, Bengali, Berber/Amazigh, Bulgarian, English, French, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Malayalam, Farsi/Dari, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Turkish and Urdu)
- The goal is to provide female refugees with a long-term support network.



Source: VIBB Essen

- **3 COORDINATED SERVICES** over a period of 8 months.
- **35 WOMEN** are currently participating in group sessions and individual counselling.

Counselling and Support for Traumatized Female Refugees Affected by Violence

WHO? SUANA/Kargah¹²³

WHEN? Since April 2016

WHERE? Hannover, Germany

WHAT?

It is essential to meet female refugees who have experienced violence on an equal footing – this is the approach of SUANA/Kargah,¹²⁴ an organisation run by migrant women. The organisation provides counselling and support to traumatised female refugees that have experienced violence, with the aim of breaking down linguistic and cultural barriers within care services. The goal is to counter the isolation of women refugees and to facilitate access to public life, thus making integration easier through long-term engagement.

HOW?

Suana's staff members are migrant women who speak different languages, know first-hand the realities of refugee women and have knowledge and experience regarding different family structures, cultural gender roles and issues of family law in different countries of origin and in Germany. This facilitates access for refugee women and creates trust. In close

cooperation with social workers, counselling services are provided in collective accommodation centres in the form of information events, meetings and group discussions.¹²⁵

The main goal of the project is the formation of a sustainable women's group in collective accommodation centres in order to foster their self-organisation and self-reliance to cope with everyday life. The focus of the information and education sessions is on topics such as domestic, sexual and psychological violence, trauma, and forced marriage, as well as violence against children and children's rights. Advice is also offered on asylum law and on persecution based on gender. Good networking and cooperation with other institutions ensure the continuous provision of further support. Additional services under the umbrella of Kargah, such as language courses, professional qualifications, political education and cultural activities, contribute to the strengthening and stabilisation of refugee women.

WHY?

- The counselling services and additional activities aim to support independence and self-reliance of refugee women residing in collective accommodation centres.
- The organisation is run by migrant women themselves and provides multilingual and intercultural advice, meeting refugee women "on an equal footing".



Source: Kargah



CONNECTION

This section highlights projects that encourage the formation of social networks that link female refugees to women in the host society. Many refugee women often have to overcome a number of gender-specific integration obstacles. They hence require additional, diverse kinds of support adapted to their needs in order to successfully adapt to life in their new homes.

The interaction of refugee women and girls with local communities can be fostered in a variety of ways: “buddy” programmes help to improve social participation and create new friendships, hip-hop courses for girls bring young people into contact with each other, and intercultural mediators act as bridge-builders and help newcomers overcome language and cultural barriers. The following initiatives and projects seek to empower refugee women and girls to play an active role in their new society by fostering connection, interpersonal relationships and dialogue.

CONNECT – “Buddy Programme” for Female Refugees in Berlin

WHO? TERRE DES FEMMES

WHERE? Berlin, Germany

WHEN? 2016 – 2019 *promising initiative

WHAT?

The Connect programme for female refugees¹²⁶ is a promising initiative to support integration via connecting newly arrived refugee women with women living in Berlin. The programme pairs female mentors with refugee women to offer them support in navigating their new life in the city. Volunteer “buddies” support recently arrived refugee women and accompany them on their way to successfully integrate into society. The overarching goal of the project is to ensure that refugee women are able to live a self-determined life free from violence in Germany.

HOW?

CONNECT addresses refugee women above the age of 18 – regardless of their residence status – and women living in Berlin willing to participate as “buddies” on a voluntary basis for at least one year. Through regular meetings, refugee

women are supported in their integration, allowing them to build a future in Germany and lead a self-determined life. This includes support in the search for suitable housing, language courses, training and employment opportunities, childcare and integration into a social network within Berlin. Since the project is intended to encourage the development of interpersonal relationships, these informal meetings can also be used to do something together outside the German bureaucracy. In order to reach women refugees, information flyers in different languages have been widely distributed in refugee accommodation centres across Berlin, as well as in district and counselling centres.¹²⁸

Future “buddies” are carefully selected and trained to assist in overcoming integration obstacles. Trainings provide information on the German asylum law (including gender-specific reasons for asylum), as well as information on training and work opportunities, health care, childcare and social networking opportunities. Mentors also receive training on gender-specific forms of violence and are informed about local support structures so they can react appropriately in the case of a threat.

In addition to their preparatory training, “buddies” are in regular contact with the project team. Four group meetings will take place yearly, bringing mentors, refugee women and the project team together to facilitate communication and exchange. The project will ideally have a multiplier effect:

WELCOME MAMAS: A PROMISING INITIATIVE FOR PREGNANT REFUGEES

Another “buddy” programme, Welcome Mamas,¹²⁷ aims to enable pregnant refugees to access the social, medical and legal support that are available to pregnant women in Germany. Pregnancy – especially in the context of being a refugee in a new environment – is a particularly demanding phase of life. Welcome Mamas is a very promising initiative that aims to provide pregnant female refugees with confidence, safety and trust during these months. The project pairs pregnant refugee women with women who have already given birth to a child in Germany and can hence offer advice on prenatal appointments, bureaucracy, birth options and maternity leave.



PILOT “BUDDY” PROGRAMME IN TYROL, AUSTRIA: A PROMISING PRACTICE

The state of Tyrol in Austria is piloting a “buddy” programme for refugee women in the district of Schwaz. Local women volunteer as mentors for female refugees for six months and support them with orientation and daily life in their new communities. “Buddies” are trained for this task and are supervised on an ongoing basis. The goal is to support refugee women to lead independent lives. The project is also intended to help reduce mutual fear of contact.¹²⁹ The “buddy” model is accompanied by monthly “intercultural women’s cafés,” open meeting places for women both with and without migrant backgrounds. Here, women can communicate, learn from each other and build friendships. In addition, accessible information is provided on topics relevant to integration, such as health, education and the legal framework. Services aimed exclusively at women are complemented by leisure activities that are also open to their families and husbands.

after participating in the programme, refugees will share their experiences with their communities, reaching more newcomers, and even volunteer to be “buddies” themselves.

WHY?

- The project focuses on integration through the formation of interpersonal relationships.
- Buddies are carefully selected and received specialised training and detailed information on issues of gender-based violence, support services and the asylum procedure.
- The project applies a “multiplier approach”: those finishing the programme pass on their experience to their communities and participate as “buddies” themselves.

Girlz4Girlz

WHO? Jugendtreff am Biederstein¹³⁰
WHERE? Munich / Schwabing, Germany
WHEN? June 2015 – September 2016

WHAT?

Girlz4Girlz¹³¹ is a dance project run by girls and young women directed at female refugees in the same age group living in refugee accommodation centres in Munich. Many young refugees live in these centres without any contact with young people in the host society. This applies to refugee girls and young women who are primarily in contact with adults during their arrival in Germany – they lack interaction with their peers. Workshops focused on youth culture (hip-hop dance, movement, singing, occupation of space, participation) can help them build confidence and a sense of community.

Since young men dominate in street cultures such as break-dance, street art and skateboarding, the workshops are intended to break down clichés about gender roles and to encourage girls and young women to participate in and actively plan youth activities. In addition, girls and young women have a greater chance of finding out from their peers about the rights of women in Germany in practice. They build up personal relationships that give them the opportunity to find, where necessary, contact persons whom they trust and who are outside their own family structures. This is particularly relevant since many forms of violence against girls and young women are conditioned by family structures (from forced marriages to domestic, sexualised and psychological violence).

HOW?

In this “peer-to-peer” model, girls are trained as workshop leaders and teach refugee girls on an equal footing. The workshops enable refugee girls and young women to get in contact with their peers, as well as to form friendships and community and build skill sets like teamwork, confidence, and self-determination. Dancing connects people, promotes positive body awareness and strengthens self-confidence. In this way it is possible for refugee girls to relax during the workshops and beyond, to step out of themselves, to move freely and undisturbed and to dance.¹³² The workshops are non-formal education opportunities through which the

- **150 REFUGEE GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN** have participated in the workshops
- **10 WORKSHOP LEADERS** aged 16-20



Source: Girlz4Girlz

girls can learn singing, breathing and dancing techniques and practice their language skills.

WHY?

- The project applies a “peer-to-peer” approach, encouraging interaction and exchange between girls with and without a refugee background.
- It creates a meeting space for girls and young women of the same age group, fostering a sense of community for newly arrived refugee girls.
- Its goal is to strengthen self-determination and confidence, empowering women to participate in social life and countering gender roles.

MiMi – Violence Prevention with Migrants for Migrants: Capacity Building for Violence Prevention, Self-Protection and Empowerment for Refugee Women and Girls in Germany

WHO? Ethno-Medical Centre¹³³ and Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University Villingen-Schwenningen¹³⁴

WHEN? Since March 2016

WHERE? Germany, nationwide

WHAT?

This project aims to inform refugee women and girl about the different forms of violence and possibilities for protection in a way that is culture, language and gender-sensitive through intercultural mediators. The mediators, who themselves have refugee or migrant backgrounds, speak refugees’ respective mother tongues. They form an intercultural service network to help bridge the gap that newly arrived refugees often experience as they settle into their new homes: women and girls often lack information about their rights as well as about existing counselling and support services, and they may not be familiar with effective self-defence techniques to prevent violence. The mediators assist refugee women in navigating the German support system, helping them overcome language and cultural barriers and connecting them with local support networks.¹³⁵

HOW?

The project applies the award-winning MiMi (“With Migrants for Migrants”) approach, developed by the Ethno-Medical Centre in 2003, to the specific needs of newly arrived refugee women. The MiMi approach aims to train and support individuals from within refugee and migrant communities to become intercultural mediators, with the goal of making the German health and support system more accessible to newly arrived refugees and migrants while simultaneously empowering their communities by prompting their direct participation in the process.¹³⁶ This aspect of the programme improves access by refugee and migrant communities and ensures sustainability.

The MiMi violence prevention project kicked-off with a mapping exercise of the specific needs of refugee women and girls recently arrived in Germany. Several focus groups were conducted with migrant women who were refugees themselves in the past, alongside individual interviews with recently arrived female refugees who had experienced violence and in-depth conversations with protection and counselling experts. The programme is being piloted in 6 municipalities (Hannover, Gütersloh, Hamburg, Berlin, Dresden, and Mannheim).

Candidates for the mediator training are recruited from local refugee and migrant communities and then provided with over 50 hours of training. Once they are certified, they can begin to plan and conduct information sessions with refugee women and girls, which often take place in reception and accommodation centres. These sessions are tailored to be culturally sensitive for the particular community and are held in their native language. At these events, a multilingual guide to the prevention of violence is distributed to participants. The goal is to help refugee women and girls increase their use of available resources and strengthen their self-defence techniques.

In addition, further training events in each project location are held for local counselling and protection experts, along with tandem events with trained intercultural mediators. This aids the creation of local networks. MiMi regularly conducts scientific research and surveys of participants in order to revise components or specific modules as needed. The result is that the content is always being updated and continues to reflect the needs of target communities. Evaluation results are transparent and will be published.

WHY?

- The MiMi approach is an innovative strategy to reach migrant and refugee communities through intercultural mediators and provide them with culturally and linguistically appropriate information regarding violence prevention and response.
- The programme successfully engages with refugee and migrant women and helps them assume leadership roles in their communities.
- Regular monitoring and transparent evaluation ensures that the programme is adapted to the needs of target communities.

- **102 MIGRANT WOMEN** have been trained as intercultural mediators at 4 different project locations

- **INTERCULTURAL MEDIATORS** speak 10 languages: Arabic, Farsi/Dari, Pashto, English, French, Kurdish, Russian, Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian, Turkish and Albanian



Source: Ethno-Medical Centre

THE THREE-GENERATION PROJECT: A MIMI HEALTH PROGRAMME IN LOWER SAXONY, GERMANY

The “Lower Saxony Three-Generation Project” is another project of the MiMi family developed by the Ethno-Medical Centre that focuses on health.¹³⁷ The programme offers culturally sensitive advice on health promotion and prevention to migrants and refugees in Lower Saxony. The majority of refugees living in Germany faces language as well as social and cultural barriers within the health system. MiMi aims at making the health system more accessible for them, increasing health literacy and empowering them through participative processes. The programme uses a three-generation approach to health promotion. Since traditions of health are anchored in the family, the intercultural mediators trained by the programme target three generations –grand-parents, parents and children – with the aim of countering the socio-cultural obstacles that prevent them from using the German health system.

The programme trains and supports mediators with a migration or refugee background since they are key bridge-builders to communities. The majority of the mediators are women, and refugee women are increasingly participating in the trainings. Once they are certified, they can begin to plan and conduct multilingual information sessions with migrant communities in their own language. These sessions are held in common social gathering places or easy-to-reach locations (for example, in churches or mosques, cultural associations, language centres, and refugee accommodation facilities). In these sessions, cross-generational topics (such as child health, age, care, diabetes, mental health, diet and exercise) are discussed and detailed information on the German health system is provided. Health topics specific to women, such as breast cancer screening and treatment, pregnancy and family planning, are also discussed. The programme is also training selected MiMi mediators as community interpreters in health care.¹³⁸



A LOOK BEYOND EUROPE

The previous sections have focused on good practices that are currently being implemented in the European Union. In this section, we take a brief look beyond Europe in order to highlight particularly interesting initiatives that we have come across during our research and stakeholder consultations.

Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

WHO? Care International in Egypt

WHEN? Since January 2016

WHERE? Cairo, Egypt

WHAT?

Sexual and gender-based violence has become a growing concern in the refugee community in Egypt, with instances of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment in both public and private spaces, early marriage, and exploitation of single and female headed households. Although the available statistics on the prevalence of violence among refugees in Egypt is limited, an increase in incident reporting has been witnessed since 2014.¹³⁹

Since January 2016, Care International in Egypt has carried out an intervention to strengthen the prevention and response mechanisms for sexual and gender-based violence in Cairo by adopting a combination of rights-based, survivor-centred, and community developed approaches. The project is aimed at African, Iraqi, and Syrian refugees living in Greater Cairo with a particular emphasis on women, girls, and boys affected by sexual and gender-based violence, and aims to engage boys and men as actors of change.

HOW?

Sexual and gender-based violence survivors receive specialised services (including legal assistance, psychosocial support, and safe housing) through a comprehensive case management system that applies a survivor-centred approach. The project also seeks to enhance the well-being and resilience of survivors and the wider refugee community through social empowerment and engagement in income-generating activities. Innovative measures such as art therapy, psychodrama, village savings and loans (VSLA) groups and awareness sessions are used to equip refugees with social and life skills to empower them to make their own life choices and stay safe from abuse and exploitation. In addition, the project builds the capacity of community-based organisations' staff, volunteers, and active community members in order to strengthen the community's leading role as a driving force for change.

WHY?

- The project applies a community development approach to enhance the participation of the refugee community in preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence.
- Innovative measures such as art therapy and psychodrama are used to tackle sensitive issues and delve into the roots of problems that may be considered taboo topics among refugees.

FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2016:¹⁴⁰

- CARE's case management system assisted **151 NEW CASES**.
- **38 FAMILIES** were provided with a safe space.
- **97 LEGAL CONSULTATIONS** and **11 LEGAL ACTIONS** were carried out.
- **179 SYRIAN WOMEN** attended the health awareness sessions.
- **THE WOMEN FRIENDLY SPACE** acted as a recreational and an educational hub to a total 948 women, 189 girls, 21 men and 133 boys.
- **3 VSLA GROUPS** with a total of 49 Syrian women, 9 boys and 4 girls were founded.

Psycho-Social Services and Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC)

WHO? Psycho-Social Services and Training Institute

WHEN? Since 2009

WHERE? Cairo, Egypt

WHAT?

The Psycho-Social Services and Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC)¹⁴¹ is an organisation affiliated to Terre des Hommes (TdH) in Egypt and an implementing partner of the UNHCR. The institute trains and facilitates a team of over 100 refugees from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, and Syria as community-based psychosocial workers to identify vulnerable African, Iraqi, and Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Greater Cairo, Greater Alexandria, and Greater Damietta. The team provides emergency and ongoing community and home-based support *to refugees by refugees* in their own language and in accordance with their culture and traditions.

PSTIC's community support model seeks to address the specific challenges that refugees face in an urban context. Refugee women in particular residing in urban areas often face numerous disadvantages, including difficulties accessing social security and health insurance schemes, affordable housing, health services and education; lack of community support systems and decent employment opportunities. They may also be vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse.¹⁴²

HOW?

PSTIC psychosocial workers assist an average of 1500 cases (reaching 5000 people)¹⁴³ a month providing community-based psychosocial support, mental health care, protective housing, child protection, and health advocacy. In addition, they offer support to people in detention after failed efforts to migrate by sea to Europe and have activities to build awareness in the national population about refugee issues.

95% of the PSTIC team is made up of refugees with a clear focus on “refugees assisting refugees”. The team is able to respond 24 hours a day / 7 days a week and offers crisis intervention for issues arising due to eviction, sexual and gender-based violence, detention, serious mental illness, domestic or community violence, etc. The team provides referral and accompaniment to medical, legal, human rights and education services, and coordinate several community support groups for women, youth, children, and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

WHY?

- PSTIC is a good example of the possibilities of community intervention in an urban context.
- PSTIC's model of community psychosocial workers is an effective system to provide culturally grounded and linguistically appropriate support *to refugees by refugees*.

FACTS

- Team of over **100 REFUGEES**
- PSTIC is involved in **1500 CASES** per month (reaching 5000 people)

Empowering Women Refugees in Brazil through Supporting Economic Independence

WHO? UN Global Compact, UNHCR and UN Women

WHEN? November 2015 – June 2016

WHERE? Brazil

WHAT?

Playing an active role in the labour market is considered one of the main tools in promoting refugee women's integration in the host country¹⁴⁴ and countering vulnerability to abuse, exploitation, economic violence, and trafficking.¹⁴⁵ However, many countries restrict or bar refugees from accessing the labour market. Brazil is an exception as refugees enjoy the same labour rights as any other citizen from the moment they declare themselves to be asylum-seekers.¹⁴⁶ But even when refugee women have legal rights, the gender segregation of the labour market and the feminisation of domestic and care work influences the employment opportunities available to women.¹⁴⁷

The UN Global Compact Network Brazil, UNHCR and UN Women started a pilot project in November 2015 to empower refugee women to access the labour market in Brazil by offering guidance and channels to job opportunities and networking.

HOW?

Project partners teamed up with local and international companies and NGOs to offer refugee women several workshops on career guidance and information regarding educational and job opportunities in Brazil.¹⁴⁸ Women also received coaching and mentoring sessions and participated in networking meetings with representatives from partner companies. The project also aimed to raise awareness among participating companies of the importance of hiring refugees and the added value they bring to the workplace.

WHY?

- The project empowers refugee women by fostering economic independence, which reduces the dangers of women becoming victims of violence or exploitation.
- It focuses on strengthening the skills of refugee women to access the labour market.
- It provides refugee women with career guidance and information about educational and job opportunities.

FACTS¹⁴⁹

- **33 REFUGEE WOMEN** have participated in the training workshops.
- **21 WOMEN** have received career coaching sessions.
- **200 BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES** have participated in 3 awareness raising events and a webinar.
- **18 JOB INTERVIEWS** led to 6 direct hirings and 3 indirect hirings.

Assessment Screen to Identify Survivors – Toolkit for Gender-Based Violence (ASIST-GBV)

WHO? International Rescue Committee and John Hopkins University

WHEN? 2011

WHERE? Dadaab Camp, Kenya

WHAT?

Sexual and gender-based violence is epidemic in conflict-affected areas: recent research estimates that one in five displaced or refugee women have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. This number increases when including women who have experienced violence or threats of violence by intimate partners or other family members.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, survivors are often reluctant to disclose their experience of violence or seek support services due to victim-blaming stereotypes and the stigmatisation of gender-based violence in their communities. Unfortunately, healthcare workers are not routinely trained to identify and engage survivors of gender-based violence.

In response, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) partnered with John Hopkins University (JHU) in 2010 to develop the “Assessment Screen to Identify Survivors – Toolkit for Gender-Based Violence” (ASIST-GBV) – a screening tool which seeks to proactively and routinely identify survivors of gender-based violence.¹⁵¹ The underlying idea is that instead of passively waiting for survivors of gender-based violence to seek out care (which they often do not do, either because they are not aware of the treatment and services available to them or because they are afraid of disclosing their experiences of violence), active identification of survivors of gender-based violence means health care providers ask women simple questions about their experiences with intimate partner violence, sexual violence, exploitation, forced abortion and other types of gender-based violence when they seek health services.¹⁵²

Qualitative research was conducted to help the development of the tool. These methods included in-depth interviews in a safe and confidential environment, with refugee or displaced women who were survivors of gender-based violence. This aimed at gaining a better understanding of gender-based violence from the perspective of the survivors themselves and identifying barriers and facilitators to ac-

FACTS

- **89.3% OF WOMEN WHO WERE OFFERED SCREENING** for gender-based violence accepted the intervention.
- **2.5% (213 OF 8,369) OF WOMEN SCREENED** were identified as a survivor of at least one type of gender-based violence within the past 12 months during the intervention period.
- The health facilities **INCREASED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE REFERRALS BY 241%** compared to the same period the previous year.

cessing health services. JHU has partnered with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and other implementing partners to test and implement the screening tool in six countries across sub-Saharan African, Middle East, North African and Latin American regions.¹⁵³

HOW?

The IRC coordinated the pilot testing of the tool among female refugees in Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. The project included the adaption and translation of the screening tool, training of staff, community sensitisation, and the pilot implementation of the tool as a routine action by the camp's service providers. The intervention phase lasted six months and was followed by three months of formal evaluation and data analysis. The tool was tested with all women over the age of 15 seeking healthcare in the camp that gave their consent to the screening. After a sensitive introduction of the purpose of the questions and an explanation of gender-based violence, women were asked seven questions concerning their experiences of different types of gender-based violence, including questions about the perpetrator and the location, within the past 12 months. Depending on their answers, the women were offered care or appropriate referrals based on their needs and wishes. The project received favourable feedback from women and service providers, and has produced several positive outcomes: the number of gender-based violence cases identified and referred rose significantly during the intervention period, and women also demonstrated greater willingness to report gender-based violence and began speaking openly about the issue with service providers.¹⁵⁴

WHY?

Gender-based violence screening by health providers has the potential to:¹⁵⁵

- Create a confidential environment where survivors can speak openly about their experiences of violence – overcoming cultural barriers of stigmatisation.
- Ensure competent care and referrals are based on the individual needs and wishes of survivors.
- Increase community awareness about gender-based violence issues, thereby reducing stigma and improving attitudes as well as services offered.
- Increase knowledge about what the main risk factors for violence against women are, and/or who are perpetrators, to address root causes and reduce violence.
- Easily transfer to any environment where medical care is delivered to refugees.

Whistles: a Low-Tech Weapon against Gender-Based Violence in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camps in Haiti

WHO? KOFAVIV,¹⁵⁶ in partnership with MADRE¹⁵⁷

WHEN? Since September 2011

WHERE? Haiti

WHAT?

KOFAVIV, a community-based organisation founded by and for rape survivors, has been distributing whistles among women in internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps in Haiti as a tool to establish a “whistle alert system” whereby women blow their whistles to alert each other of an attack and to deter potential perpetrators.¹⁵⁸

KOFAVIV and other organisations have reported an “epidemic of sexual violence” after the January 2010 earthquake against Haitian women and girls living in IDP camps, as well as their increased vulnerability to rape due to abysmal camp conditions.¹⁵⁹ The whistle project, supported by the international women’s rights organisation MADRE, is part of a wide array of ad hoc services developed by the women in the camps themselves to respond to this epidemic, which also includes community-based security patrols and psychosocial support, legal advocacy, and medical care for rape survivors.

FACTS

7,087 WOMEN AND CHILDREN received goods sent to KOFAVIV by MADRE.

These goods included whistles, medical supplements such as prenatal vitamins, health and hygiene supplies, solar flashlights, lanterns, cell phones, tarps, and rape kits.¹⁶³

HOW?

KOFAVIV’s team of community outreach workers provided training on how to use the whistles as alert mechanisms as well as how to respond should they hear someone else calling for help.¹⁶⁰ Outreach workers are community members: this is rooted in the organisations’ underlying philosophy that empowering women living in IDP camps to work as advocates and community workers ensures that the solutions developed are Haitian-led, rooted in reality, and respectful of the dignity of those most directly impacted by the disaster.¹⁶¹

The project has received positive feedback from women using the whistles in camps as a simple yet empowering tool that has created a system of solidarity among displaced women in camps: “Personally”, one woman said, “I feel like I am a strong, fearless woman when I have my whistle, especially when other women are responding with their own whistle.”¹⁶²

WHY?

- It is a low-tech, simple and cost-effective intervention that can be easily replicated.
- It enhances solidarity among women living in IDP or refugee camps.
- By making incidents of violence “audible” to the public, the overall awareness of the issue increases.
- It is combined with other measures addressing health issues, supporting law enforcement, providing psychosocial support, and creating a safer atmosphere with patrols and lamps.

CONCLUSION: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of best practices for this report has provided important insights into the key elements of the best initiatives to protect refugee women and girls from violence. The following are some key findings and recommendations with regard to good policy-making and practices on protecting refugee women and girls from violence.



Governance

- Safe and legal channels to potential host countries must be made available for women fleeing war, violence and persecution, in order to prevent women and girls from resorting to dangerous routes that exponentially increase the risk of violence. Legal alternatives may include resettlement, medical evacuation, humanitarian admission programmes, private sponsorship, student scholarships, and labour mobility schemes.
- Swift and effective family reunification schemes need to be implemented in order to ensure that women and children can safely travel to join their families in safe countries without having to live in transit countries in insecure and dire conditions for extended periods of time, often without adequate access to housing, education, healthcare and vulnerable to exploitation and violence. Family reunification should not be delayed or denied through restrictive eligibility criteria or onerous bureaucratic, expensive, or excessive documentation requirements, and it should be available for all beneficiaries of international protection. Access to legal aid should be provided for family reunification cases.
- National, regional, and local authorities should develop and implement protection measures to ensure the safety of refugee women and girls in reception and accommodation centres and to guarantee a gender-sensitive asylum procedure. These measures should follow a comprehensive approach based on international standards.
- Sufficient financial and human resources should be allocated for the implementation of policies and programmes, as well as regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure measuring of progress and to assess the need for change.
- Access to the labour market, the health and social security systems (including psychological support and trauma therapy), appropriate housing (including women's shelters in case of domestic violence), and access to training and education should be guaranteed in host countries.
- Exemplary policy-making and governance should be the result of an inclusive process where all stakeholders take part, including civil society organisations, and in particular women's advocates and NGOs. The perspectives of refugee women should be acknowledged and involved in project and policy development, implementation, and evaluation.
- Public institutions should support innovative projects implemented by grassroots women's organisations, since they are often better positioned to reach migrant and refugee women. Sustainable and adequate funding should be provided to women's NGOs providing services to refugee women.
- Policy-makers should explore good practices from all corners of the world and adapt those that are transferable to their local conditions. Thus, they can learn from experience gained by others and increase the effectiveness of measures taken.



Awareness

- Refugee women and girls should be provided with comprehensive information on their rights and the services they are entitled to in a language and manner that they can understand. Awareness-raising among refugee women themselves is a matter of legal empowerment and involves a bottom-up approach to equip women with the knowledge, confidence and skills to realise their rights.
- Raising awareness on gender-based violence against refugee women and girls should take place at all levels. This includes reaching a wide range of target audiences such as reception and accommodation centre staff, health-care practitioners, social workers, refugee communities, policy-makers, the general public and the media.
- Women's experiences should be the absolute centre of awareness-raising campaigns concerning them. Refugee women and girls should be included in the design and delivery of these campaigns, in order to be able to influence the policies and practices that affect their lives.
- Women's NGOs (especially refugee-led organisations) should assist in creating spaces for refugee women to meet and self-organise at a grassroots level. Sustainable funding should be provided to these organisations.



Spaces

- The vulnerability of refugee women and children should be taken into account in order to offer adequate reception conditions, including accommodation in women-only centres and centres for vulnerable persons on the basis of their informed consent. Women-only accommodation centres should create a "safe space" for single women and girls travelling alone or with their children, and offer a comprehensive and holistic range of services that are tailored to their needs and focus on enhancing their empowerment and independence.
- Mobile units and day centres should be available in order to provide a temporary but crucial haven for women to receive support and information on their rights and access essential services. Sustainable funding should be provided to women's organisations running these units and centres.
- Private and decentralised housing solutions should be preferred over collective accommodation. Single refugee women travelling alone or with their children should be given priority when providing these housing options.
- Collective reception and accommodation centres should, as a minimum, include separate rooms and sleeping areas with lockable doors as well as well-lit, gender-segregated and lockable sanitation and health facilities. All centres should have safe "women-only" private spaces for the provision of psychosocial support, trauma counselling, legal advice, and health care services. A zero tolerance policy against gender-based violence should be implemented and enforced within each centre.
- The network of family and friends plays an essential role in stabilising and protecting women who experienced violence. This should be taken into account when distributing refugees among reception and accommodation centres. Existing networks should not be separated if this is not in accordance with their wishes.
- Long-term solutions that go beyond emergency or temporary responses to reception need to be developed and implemented, i.e. access to individual and decentralised housing outside shelter infrastructures should be supported.



Services

- Services should be gender-sensitive and address the short- and long-term needs of refugee women and girls. Refugee women's voices and their complex and multi-layered narratives need to be taken into account. Services should focus on the empowerment of women and enhance their independence.
- Women and girls should be informed about and guaranteed access to essential services throughout their migration route and upon arrival in host countries.
- The provision of services needs to counter the multiple barriers that refugee women and girls may face when accessing services (i.e. linguistic and cultural barriers, infrastructural and institutional barriers, etc.), through the provision of low-threshold, culturally grounded, and linguistically appropriate services. Childcare options should be available to refugee women with children, since lack of childcare support is one of the main factors which impedes refugee women's access to services.
- Services should be provided by gender-sensitive staff that are trained on violence against women, gender equality, and women's empowerment. Wherever possible, services should be provided by female professionals and through the help of female interpreters.
- Services that target long-term needs of refugee women and girls in host countries beyond the initial reception response need to be available and should be funded in a sustainable manner.



Connection

- Initiatives should foster intercultural exchange and encourage the formation of social networks that link female refugees to women in the host society.
- Mentoring or "buddy" programmes that encourage the formation of one-to-one relationships should be launched and supported. Buddies should be carefully selected and receive specialised training and detailed information on issues of gender-based violence, the asylum procedure and local support services. This is to ensure that refugee women have contact persons who are adequately trained and can react appropriately in cases of violence.
- The interaction of young refugee women and girls with those in their age group should be promoted. Initiatives applying a "peer-to-peer" approach support an informal, creative exchange among peers on an equal footing. These programmes encourage the formation of interpersonal relationships that meet the specific needs of young people and which offer constructive answers to age-specific questions (e.g. regarding life planning, education, parental conflicts, sexuality, etc.).
- The voices and experiences of women with a refugee or migration background should be included in the planning and implementation of projects and their role as bridge-builders should be strengthened.
- Initiatives should apply a low-threshold, culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate approach in order to ensure access to and participation in these programmes.

ABOUT US



The World Future Council consists of 50 eminent global change-makers from governments, parliaments, civil society, academia, the arts and business. We envision a sustainable, just and peaceful future where universal rights are respected. To achieve this, we research, identify and spread the best and most sustainable policy solutions worldwide. The World Future Council was founded 2007 by Jakob von Uexkull, Founder of the 'Alternative Nobel Prize'. The WFC is a charitable foundation and relies on private and institutional donations to fund its work.

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

We identify and spread innovative policy solutions that contribute to ending one of the most pervasive human rights violations: violence against women and girls. Our goal is to facilitate the introduction and implementation of evidence-based legal and policy frameworks that provide justice, support, protection and remedies to survivors and hold perpetrators accountable. To do this, we engage with policy-makers, parliamentarians and civil society partners to build the capacity to prevent and respond to violence and to raise awareness of its causes and consequences.

In 2014, we partnered with UN Women and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to dedicate our Future Policy Award to the world's best policies to address violence against women and girls. The Future Policy Award highlights the best policy approaches to the most pressing political challenges that the global community is facing today. Each year, we identify one topic on which policy progress is particularly urgent. In 2014, the award was dedicated to celebrate the best laws and policies that are effectively addressing violence against women and girls.



EMPOWERMENT AND SELF-ORGANISING –HOW FILIA.DIE FRAUENSTIFTUNG SUPPORTS REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS

"Women differ from each other. They have different cultural and social backgrounds, belong to different generations and see and experience the world from different perspectives. We are convinced that the creative potential for change lies precisely in the variety of experiences and competences. We wish for a society that welcomes migrant women and is committed to their lively participation." (filia-preamble 2001)

filia.die frauenstiftung relies on the expertise of women and girls in its grant-making activities. Women and girls often develop sustainable solutions to social challenges that benefit everyone in society. filia supports innovative, inspiring and effective initiatives by and for women and girls, in Germany and worldwide. This also applies to initiatives that respond to the special needs of refugee women and girls. filia has reflected on how the foundation can strengthen newly arrived refugee women

and girls as self-determined actors and agents of change, since they are the experts for their own situation. Therefore we do not speak of “help” and “care” but of “support” and “accompaniment”. Refugee women and girls are survivors – and not victims per se. filia takes into account the situation of all women and girls, since even women and girls that have grown up in Germany are exposed to violence and injustice. Therefore, filia supports initiatives that promote the self-empowerment and self-organisation of all women and girls.

Miriam Edding, director of the foundation Stiftung: do and a sponsor of filia, has been cooperating with self-organised groups for many years. She supports filia in women-specific work and voices one of the main concerns for refugees under the heading “dignity instead of help”: “... refugee-organising should essentially aim at defending autonomy and obtaining the same rights as people in the host communities...” filia would like to accompany refugee women and girls on their path towards equal rights. This subject knows no bounds. filia has been a member of Prospera, the International Network of Women’s Funds, since its formation. The members of this global hub of women’s funds mobilise \$64.2 million annually to realise women’s rights. Linking women’s groups and social stakeholders, women’s funds are key agents of change. For many self-organised innovative initiatives, women’s funds are the first and most important partners – this is also the case for refugee women and girls.



The UN Women National Committee in Germany is an independent public-benefit organisation that supports the work of UN Women at national level. It promotes women’s empowerment and gender equality throughout Germany. Currently, there are National Committees for UN Women in 14 countries. National Committees support the mission of UN Women through their public awareness initiatives about UN Women and global women’s issues, and fundraising efforts to support UN Women programmes worldwide.

UN Women National Committee Germany collaborates with policy-makers, parliamentarians, civil society organisations and corporate partners in its efforts to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. In particular, the German National Committee ensures that the Government complies with its international obligations related to the human rights of women and actively brings gender equality to the public agenda.

UN WOMEN’S PRIORITY AREAS INCLUDE:

- Expanding women’s leadership and participation.
- Enhancing women’s economic empowerment.
- Ending violence against women.
- Strengthening the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.
- Making gender equality priorities central to national planning and budgeting.
- Implementing global standards and international agreements.

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