

# WOMEN & GIRLS' SAFE SPACES:

## A TOOLKIT FOR WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS



### IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS WOMEN & GIRLS' SAFE SPACES (WGSS) ARE :

A structured place where women and adolescent girls' physical and emotional safety is respected and where women and adolescent girls are supported through processes of empowerment to seek, share, and obtain information, access services, express themselves, enhance psychosocial well-being, and more fully realize their rights.

### TO EMPOWER WOMEN AND GIRLS, WGSS WORK TOWARDS THESE 5 OBJECTIVES:

- 1.To facilitate access for all women and adolescent girls to knowledge, skills and a range of relevant services.
- 2.To support women's and adolescent girls' psychosocial well-being and creation of social networks.
- 3.To serve as a place where women and adolescent girls can organize and access information and resources to reduce risk of violence.
- 4.To serve as a key entry point for specialized services for GBV survivors.
- 5.To provide a place where women and adolescent girls are safe and encouraged to use their voice and collectively raise attention to their rights and needs.



### WGSS HAVE SPECIFIC GUIDING PRINCIPLES THAT SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS TO DESIGN, IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR WGSS IN AN EMPOWERING, SAFE AND INCLUSIVE MANNER:

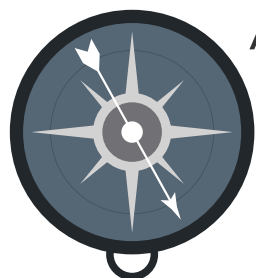
**EMPOWERMENT:** A WGSS offers an empowering space for women and adolescent girls in all their diversity, thus transforming them from beneficiaries to members, recognizing them as active agents of change.

**SOLIDARITY:** Grounded in feminist theory and practice WGSS provide a space for diverse networks of women and adolescent girls who support and inspire one another to come together providing them with the opportunity to combine their power by encouraging sharing, mentoring and cooperation.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** In WGSS, accountability has multiple meanings and is ensured through various mechanisms which ensure the integrity and transparency of WGSS

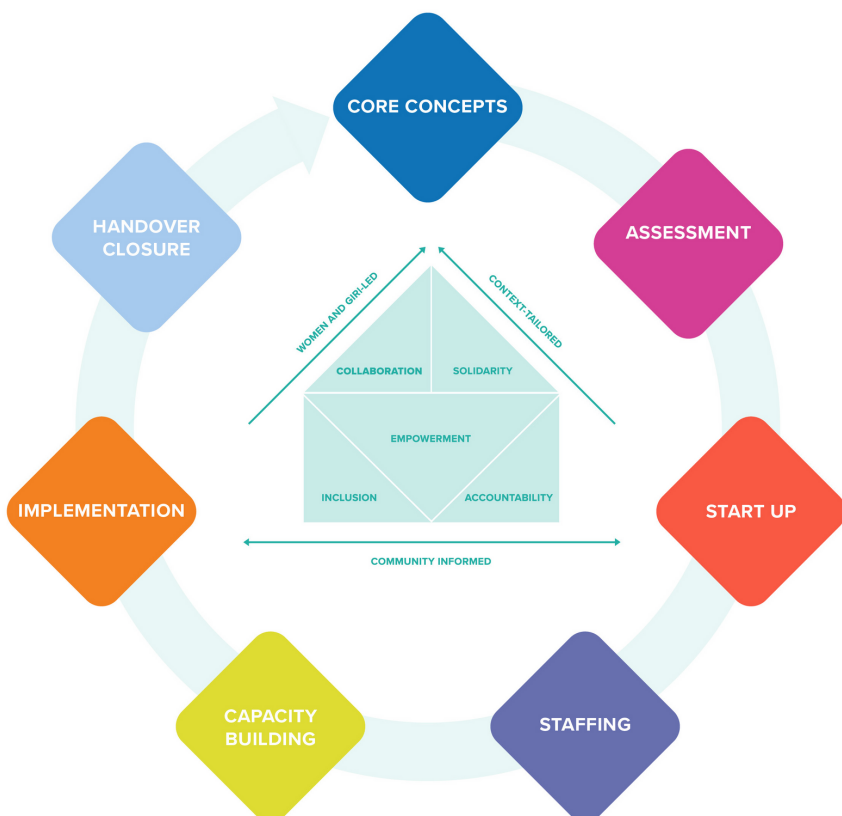
**INCLUSION:** WGSS are committed to celebrating diversity and improving how women and adolescent girls access, participate and shape WGSS services. Equally diverse WGSS staff and volunteers demonstrate impartial and inclusive attitudes, beliefs and practices

**COLLABORATION:** This concept underpins WGSS service providers' feminist perspective to collaborative relationships. To bring women and adolescent girls from the margins of humanitarian aid to the center of the response and their communities, WGSS strategically foster and leverage relationships which expand women's and adolescent girls' ability to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable individuals and institutions that affect their lives.



# WOMEN & GIRLS' SAFE SPACES:

## A TOOLKIT FOR WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS



### TOOLKIT STRUCTURE:

The toolkit offers a global blueprint for women led, context tailored, community informed programming which supports women's and girls' sense of self and empowerment.

It offers staff with different WGSS frontline, support or supervision roles a choice of 38 tools and databases with step by step instructions and guidance across 6 key project cycle phases.

91% of WGSS staff who participated in the development and piloting of the WGSS agreed that the new toolkit improved their capacity to implement WGSS programming.

### WHO IS THE TOOLKIT FOR? IN WHICH SETTINGS CAN IT BE USED?

We welcome the broad range of international, national, local and community-based organizations as well as national institutions implementing WGSS in humanitarian settings to use the toolkit.

The content is applicable to both static and mobile models of WGSS and valid for WGSS implemented through either standalone or integrated approaches, as well as through direct implementation or in partnership approaches.

This toolkit can be implemented for WGSS in humanitarian settings brought on by natural disasters or conflict at the onset of an emergency, throughout the relief and recovery phases of humanitarian responses, as well as in development settings with large populations of internally displaced or refugee women and girls. The content is applicable to WGSS implemented in camps, informal tented settlements, rural and urban environments, or border areas.

The toolkit also supports the work of staff with different WGSS frontline, support or supervision roles. The guidance provided seeks to ensure that all those implementing WGSS in humanitarian settings, regardless of experience, staff strength and size or available technical support, equally have access to the knowledge, competencies and skills necessary to implement the tools.

With support from the U.S. Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, the International Rescue Committee and International Medical Corps combined expertise, decades of experience and support from hundreds of staff, women and girls and community members across eighteen women and girls' safe spaces in current humanitarian settings to ground the approach.

Available in English and French November 2019 at: [www.gbvresponders.org](http://www.gbvresponders.org)