Chapter 7

Safe Spaces for Adolescent Girls

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Introduction

The second decade of life bridges childhood and adulthood. It is a powerfully formative transitional phase between childhood and adulthood when attitudes are consolidated, skills are acquired, health behaviors are formed, and life courses are charted. It is a period marked by creativity, energy, and resilience, which if properly tapped, can lay the foundation for a healthy future. Yet in many settings, adolescence is a time when the world expands for boys and contracts for girls, and gender disparities in opportunity and expectations become particularly pronounced. Adolescent girls have narrowed social networks and few collective spaces in which they can gather to meet with peers, receive mentoring support, and acquire skills. Girls' lives become increasingly restricted to the domestic sphere—nominally in order to protect them from dangers outside the home.

This disparity between girls' and boys' access to their peers and to public spaces begins in childhood and is exacerbated in adolescence. Cultural norms and conditions determining that it is unsafe and/or unacceptable for girls to go out in public curtail girls' physical mobility. While parents are concerned about the well-being of all of their children, they tend to control their daughters' movements more tightly than their sons'—in some instances for good reason. Fearing the watchful gaze of males, the temptation of unapproved or unsanctioned activities, or more generalized violence in the community, parents tend to protect their daughters by sequestering them at home. The result is that

girls' mobility is restricted, thereby narrowing their options for full participation in public life[1].

Adolescent girls are often invisible and unwelcome in public spaces. Subjected to familial pressures to protect their "marriageability" and to carry out onerous domestic responsibilities, these girls have few safe spaces in which to continue their social and economic development. Often their younger sisters enjoy more freedom and safety in public spaces, as well as a greater variety of activities in which to participate. This exclusion not only dampens adolescent girls' spirits, it also reduces their chances for full participation in society as adults. Moreover, it short-changes communities of the energies and talents of young females who are at a critical life stage—a time when they are young enough to hold on to optimism about their future and are eager to learn and grow. This paper will focus on the distinctive needs of adolescent girls for safe spaces.

Safe and Supportive Environments

Adolescent girls (and boys) need safe and supportive environments—a concept that has received considerable international attention and has been articulated by the World Health Organization as follows:

> A safe and supportive environment is part of what motivates young people to make healthy choices. "Safe" in this context refers to the absence of trauma, excessive stress, violence (or fear of violence) or abuse. Supportive means an environment that provides a positive, close relationship with family, other adults (including teachers, and youth and religious leaders) and peers.

[1] This unofficial restriction on female mobility tends to persist throughout life. While not necessarily codified in a specific way, there are functional curfews for women in many parts of the world—be it in an urban park in a Western country or in an impoverished community in the developing world.

For girls especially, this is a critical issue, given the burdens and limitations placed on them by parents and social institutions, which intensify as girls approach adolescence. In some instances, girls may require sanctuary from social, parental, and institutional influences that explicitly restrict and restrain their lives. Safe and supportive environments can offer them this sanctuary. These spaces provide girls with a place where they are treated with respect and dignity and where they can:

- develop new and valued life and livelihood skills
- form friendships, receive and give peer support, and increase their social networks
- enjoy freedom of expression and movement
- receive mentoring support from appropriate, trusted adults, who can serve as girls' advocates
- take advantage of new learning and educational opportunities

Safe spaces can serve as venues for girls to learn about a whole spectrum of topics, and may be natural and acceptable environments in which to teach them about reproductive health and rights. These environments can act as arenas for girls' self-expression—particularly important in settings where females are defined almost exclusively in terms of their relationships (daughter, wife, mother, etc.) rather than as individuals with unique qualities. In short, safe spaces outside of home or school can offer girls myriad social, economic, educational, and developmental opportunities.

Safety in Public Spaces

A separate, yet related issue has to do with girls' social visibility and access to public space. While in many countries "public space" is not legally defined, there are designated places where citizens can go for recreation, education, entertainment, and participation in political life. Typically, the kinds of public spaces that are seen as legitimate venues for females—markets, health clinics, etc.—are those that confine

females to fulfilling their domestic roles as homemakers and mothers. In contrast, appropriate public spaces for males are less narrowly defined and are not necessarily linked to their gender roles.

Whether public spaces are recognized formally or informally, safe access to these sites breaks down along gender lines. Females have much less access to, and are sometimes completely excluded from, public spaces that men can visit freely—town halls, parks, sports stadiums, etc. Often females can only enter these spaces if accompanied by a male. In particularly restrictive environments, visiting places outside the home may actually be risky for girls. While the local town hall, park, or sports field may have been intended for general public use, all too often girls and women feel too intimidated to use them, for fear of physical or psychological retaliation by men and authorities. In this way, "public space" de facto becomes "men's space."

With the exception of very restrictive settings, where girls are not even permitted to leave their homes, interventions (or parts of them) will likely take place in some type of public space. Even interventions that begin in the home or other relatively insular settings are likely to evolve over time such that female participants will find themselves in public at some point.

Our experience shows that interventions aimed at drawing girls into new activities and roles will challenge assumptions about girls' use of public space. While local facilities and public resources may not have been designated for girls' activities, efforts by the Population Council and others suggest that these resources can be tapped and channeled to benefit girls.

For example:

- In Egypt, an experimental intervention, entitled, "Safe Spaces to Learn, Play and Grow" aims to increase girls' (particularly out-of-school girls') mobility in public and to promote change in community norms and institutions in the direction of making them more welcoming of girls. Key local institutions (youth centers and schools) that were previously not hospitable to adolescent girls are being transformed into safe and supportive environments for them.

- In Kenya, the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), a community-based organization that includes a girls' football team, collaborated in an effort to increase girls' participation in sports activities. This initiative has demonstrated that girls' presence in public spaces (i.e., playing fields) linked to an historically male-dominated domain (football), can challenge norms and expectations regarding girls' capabilities and roles, transform the ways in which girls view themselves, and enhance perceptions of girls within their communities.

Examples of Safe Spaces

The types of settings that can serve as safe spaces for girls will vary from place to place. They might include community centers, schools, parks, sports fields, faith-based centers, or homes of trusted community members. Often such spaces exist in communities, yet they may not have been regarded as potential venues for girls' programs.

In selecting a site to serve as a safe space for girls, the characteristics of the environment are more important than the physical setting itself. Ideally the setting would be culturally acceptable to parents and other gatekeepers, yet free from parental pressures. It would be a place that is conveniently located, known by potential program participants, and not subject to intrusions by males and/or unwanted authority figures. Finally, the space must not put girls at any risk of physical and/or emotional threat or harm and must offers girls some degree of privacy and confidentiality.

Once an appropriate space is identified, programmatic experimentation can begin. While program content will vary depending on local needs, the range of possibilities is

considerable. For example, a program might include basic literacy and/or numeracy classes; vocational skills training; livelihood and economic-skills-building activities; team sports activities; leadership training; health (including reproductive health) education; community service activities; or some combination thereof.

Experimentation with program content and design is needed to strike a balance between comprehensiveness and feasibility. A number of experiments underway in all regions of the world, including those highlighted above, have begun to test the appropriateness and effectiveness of different program venues and type, as well as combinations of program content. Our experience to date allows us to describe some basic steps to consider when programming for girls in safe spaces.

Developing a Base of Information for Programming

A first step in designing programs that use the safe-space concept as an organizing principle is to develop a solid base of information about the constraints and challenges faced by girls in the particular setting. In some instances, data may already exist, but more often than not, available data will likely be from health and demographic surveys, which (as important as they are) are not likely to yield insights into some critical aspects of girls' lives.

Based on our research and programming experience, we have identified at least four key dimensions of girls' lives that appear to influence their access to and participation in programs. These are:

- girls' safe physical mobility
- girls' time use and work loads
- perspectives of parents, boys, and community leaders
- girls' aspirations and expectations

Our experience shows that at minimum these dimensions of girls' lives need to be well understood by programmers prior to launching new initiatives. This understanding should inform program design. To develop an information base for programming purposes, it may be necessary to undertake some type of diagnostic exercise. Such studies can be as simple or as complex as time, resources (human and financial), and technical capacity permits. Below is a brief overview of the kinds of questions and issues that should be considered in relation to the four key domains of girls' lives identified above.

Girls' mobility

The question of girls' mobility and safety in public is of particular relevance for program design; thus, it is important to understand the dynamics of girls' movements: where they go, with whom, how they go, and what time of day/night they move about, etc. A first line of inquiry might include the following:

- What places are considered acceptable for adolescent females to go to? Under what conditions?
- Where are girls permitted to go? Must they be accompanied to these places? By whom?
- Are there specific purposes attached to their going places (e.g., shopping, running errands for the family, taking siblings or other family members to a health clinic)?
- Are there restrictions on the time of day when a girl may go to certain places?
- Who within the family decides whether, when, and where girls may go?
- How do girls move around the community (e.g., by foot or bus)?
- Are girls subjected to harassment, teasing, or verbal abuse while traveling?
- Do girls in this community belong to any organized group (e.g., a savings club, work group, youth center, etc.)?

These sample questions are generic—each setting will require a different set of questions customized to that specific locale—but they illustrate the kinds of questions that program planners need to consider vis-à-vis girls' mobility when they are designing interventions and selecting venues for them.

One very basic way of capturing some of this information is to devise a simple chart (for illustrative chart see below). One axis corresponds to various public places where a girl might go; the other axis corresponds to whether a girl needs permission to go to a particular destination, whether she must be accompanied to it, and if so, by whom. This framework is illustrative; refinements and modifications will be needed depending on the locale, the purpose of gathering data, and the depth of information desired. A chart such as this can be made more or less elaborate; however if using data derived from a large survey, data coding and interpretation can be a considerably complex process.

Important insights into girls' mobility can be gleaned from interviews with girls. The following are sample questions that could be asked in such interviews:

- Have you ever been to any of the following places in the past month?
- If yes, did you need permission to go there? If so from whom?
- If no, what prevented you from going?
- Did you go alone? If you went with someone, who was it?

We have experimented with the following type of chart to record information on girls' mobility in several locales, including sites in Egypt, India, Mali, and Vietnam (destinations and some other parameters listed in the chart differ from place to place). The information contained in this chart is helpful in designing interventions that maximize girls' access to programmatic activities.

Girls' Mobility: Sample Chart

Destination	Have you been to these places in the last month? (Y or N)	If needed, did you have permission to go? (Y, N, N/A)	For each destination, did you go alone or with someone? If you went with someone, who was it?				
			Alone	With female friends	With family members only	With male relatives only	Other
Relatives' houses							
Local market							
Health center							
Clothes store or tailor							
Youth/community centers							
Religious sites							
Recreational/sports venues							
Entertainment sites (cinema, theatre, music venues)							

If program planners wish to learn about gender disparities in mobility, they could conduct interviews with boys as well as girls. The Population Council has conducted such exercises in several settings, and from the data we have collected thus far, a picture is beginning to emerge of general differences between boys and girls in terms of where they go, for what purposes, and whether or not they need to be accompanied to public places. Generally speaking it appears that boys have greater freedom of movement, go to more places with greater frequency, and usually do not need to be accompanied in public.

Girls' time use and work loads

Girls' time use and work loads (notably their household chores and other domestic responsibilities) represent another key consideration for program planning. While sophisticated time-use studies have generated precise data on the number of hours that people spend per day doing certain activities, one might want to get a general sense of how girls spend their time during a typical day. Detailed data on the ways young

people spend their time is notoriously difficult to gather. At one extreme, one can train adolescents to keep "time-use diaries", recording the exact times that various activities were begun and ended over the course of one or several days. This approach can yield good information, but it involves difficult and time-consuming training and analysis periods. At the other extreme one can ask a young person during an interview a series of questions about whether he/she did or did not perform certain tasks and activities the day before. This approach is simple and quick but the data gathered is rudimentary. A middle ground between the two is to develop some sort of grid that will capture, at least in relative terms, how the individual spent his/her time in the specified reference period (generally the previous 24 hour period). This will elicit information necessary for determining what times of day girls have available to participate in programs.

A number of different time-use schedules have been developed. Some break the day into hourly segments; others divide the day into morning, afternoon, and evening; still others divide the day into sections demarcated by significant culture practices (prayer times, for example). While capturing data on time use can be time-consuming, it can provide important insights into individuals' day-to-day lives. To select or develop a useful 24-hour recall schedule, it is important to weigh how much detail is needed for programming purposes. The following is a sample time-use schedule that could be employed to learn about the structure of girls' days:

Girls' Time Use During Previous 24 Hours: Hours Spent in Different Activities

Activity	Midnight to sunrise	Sunrise to mid-morning	Mid-morning to noon	Noon to mid-afternoon	Mid-afternoon to sunset	Sunset to late evening	Late evening to midnight
School-related activities							
In school							
In transit to/from school							
Doing homework/studying/ being tutored							
Activities not related to school							
Personal care (e.g., bathing, dressing, eating)							
Duties at home (e.g., food preparation, cooking, cleaning/washing clothes, home construction/maintenance, yard work, care of children and/or sick/elderly family members)							
Domestic duties outside the home (e.g., going to market, delivering messages, fetching water, washing clothes)							
Work that contributes to income of parents/family (e.g., working on family farm or in family business)							
Employment outside family (includes wage-earning work and looking for such work)							
In transit (other than for domestic duties or for school)							
Socializing and recreation (e.g., playing, attending family gatherings, gossiping, participating in religious activities, attending parties and meetings, watching television, listening to radio)							
Rest/sleep (includes sick time)							

Note: Check if adolescent is currently enrolled in school and check if recall is of events that occurred more than 24 hours ago

Another simple chart (see below) can be used to get a sense of the kinds of household and other domestic chores that girls and others do, and who is mostly responsible for these tasks.

Domestic Chores: Who Does Them?

	You (A)	Sister (B)	Brother (C)	Mother (D)	Father (E)	Other female (F)	Other male (G)	Servant /maid (H)	NA (X)	Person mainly responsible
Cooks the meals										
Cleans up after meals										
Cleans the house										
Washes clothes										
Gets water										
Buys clothes										
Tends crops										
Tends animals										
Buys food and other household items										
Gets wood or other fuel for cooking										

The precise tasks and individuals listed in the above chart will vary by setting. If one wants to compare the chores done by boys and girls, one needs to ask the exact same set of questions to adolescents of both sexes.

A combination of the 24-hour recall of activities and the listing of domestic chores will give a good picture of how girls spend their days. Again, this is important for program planners to know so that they can schedule activities at times that girls are most available to participate.

Perspectives of parents, boys, and community leaders

Building and sustaining programs requires the input and support of several constituencies. Parents, boys, and community leaders often exert considerable influence over girls' movements, safety, and ability to participate in programs; thus, it is vital to understand the perspectives of individuals in these groups. This is particularly the case for parents, who often serve as girls' main gatekeepers. Indeed, our experience in Kenya and Egypt indicates that engaging parents in discussions about the content and rationale of programs is critical to successful implementation.

To understand parents', boys', and community leaders' perspectives on girls' mobility, safety, and roles, several questions should be posed to members of each group. Because it is difficult to capture such information easily in a survey format, qualitative research techniques—such as focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews—are better suited to this type of exploration. The kinds of questions one should address include:

- What is the history and rationale behind the limitations placed on girls in the community?
- What are parents' perspectives on their daughters' mobility?
- Where do parents allow their daughters to go?
- What do boys think about girls who are seen outside the home?
- What are the circumstances or situations that foster harassment of girls?
- What are the pressing worries/concerns parents have about their daughters?
- What ambitions or hopes do parents have for their daughters? For their sons?

Girls' aspirations and expectations

In the absence of information about, or experience of, the world outside of their immediate (i.e., domestic) environment, it is often difficult for females (regardless of age) to articulate or perhaps even identify their expectations or aspirations for the future.

However, when questions are put in terms that are not abstract and that relate to specific areas of girls' lives—e.g., marriage, education, work, and childbearing—girls' expectations and aspirations begin to emerge.

While it is often not easy to elicit this information from girls, doing so adds an important dimension to programming efforts. Various methods have been used to obtain information about girls' expectations and aspirations, including carefully worded, in-depth interviews; participatory learning activities; and a technique called "future search." The latter technique, comprised of various group activities and role-playing exercises, has been used in Egypt and elsewhere to get a general sense of girls' aspirations.

Research suggests that girls' notions about marriage, future partners/husbands, and family responsibilities are beginning to change in some settings. When girls are asked the age at which they would like to marry, they very often identify an age that is at least a few years beyond the actual average age of marriage in their community. Moreover, many girls say that they would like to participate in decisions (traditionally made by parents and other elders) concerning their marriage, their future husband, their schooling, and their potential for employment. Some girls express a desire to have a marriage that is different from their parents'—i.e., one that is more of an equal partnership with shared responsibility for decision making.

The kinds of questions that one could ask girls to elicit information about their expectations and aspirations include:

- Would you like to work for pay?
- Do you think it is okay for women to work outside of the home?
- What type of training or skills would you like to acquire?
- If vocational training programs were available in your community, would you like to attend?
- If you had the opportunity for more schooling would you want to continue?

- What do you expect from a future husband?
- What are the characteristics of a good husband?
- Do you expect to share in decision making with your husband?

Building Programs

Effective programs are built upon good ideas, as well as upon a solid understanding of girls' lives and of the norms and beliefs prevailing where programs plans to operate. Drawing on our research and programming experience, we have devised a plan for developing a base of information upon which to found programs that create safe, supportive spaces for girls. We have suggested lines of inquiry and have highlighted some of the key dimensions of girls' lives that need to be considered. Below we identify guiding principles and key steps in planning and implementing programs for girls:

- Get girls to participate
- Set the terms of participation
- Protect girls' safety, reputations, and marriageability
- Offer girls trusted female mentors and role models
- Encourage girls' self-expression and decision making
- Experiment with ways to make boys more respectful
- Test the feasibility and effectiveness of a package of interventions

Get girls to participate

Our experience in Kenya, Egypt and elsewhere strongly suggests that girls are eager to participate in new activities and programs. In Egypt, girls expressed a longing to learn new things, meet new friends, and become more "cultured." In several countries, when girls were asked if they would participate in a new activity or program, most said, yes, they would—if they were allowed to. This points to the fact that while girls' interest and motivation is often there, engaging them in programs is challenging, largely because

of parental concerns and social norms concerning the appropriateness of girls' participation in certain activities and their presence in public spaces.

To design feasible programs that will attract girls, planners must gain an understanding of the factors that will impede or permit girls' participation. They must consider what would be appropriate times and places for programmatic activities, given where girls live, what they do in the hours of their day, and what their responsibilities are. In consultation with parents, planners need to identify ways in which to accommodate girls' schedules, domestic responsibilities, and mobility constraints. Girls' parents or guardians play a critical role in this regard: Evidence from numerous settings suggests that it is absolutely essential to earn parents' approval and support in the early stages of program design.

Set the terms of participation

Program planners must set realistic goals in terms of the degree and length of participation that is expected from girls. In this regard, programs must be mindful of girls' age upon entry into the program, the average age of marriage in the community, and where along the path to marriage girls are. Planners need to be flexible in setting the terms of program participation, allowing girls to enter or re-enter a program easily (to the extent that this is logistically possible and not disruptive to the program itself or to other program participants). Planners also need to enlist the help of parents and community leaders to ensure that girls are able to participate to the maximum extent, so that they can reap the intended benefits of the program.

In Egypt, for example, to the extent possible we have garnered the support of parents, who have agreed to allow their daughters to remain in the program for a

minimum of two years. If a girl becomes engaged or married during the course of the intervention, the program will work with parents to help keep the girl in the program as long as possible.

Protect girls' safety, reputations, and marriageability

Enabling girls to enjoy greater freedom of movement while at the same time maintaining their safety and dignity is one of the most complex and socially significant challenges that programs face. At a very basic level, some simple measures can be taken to bolster the safety of program participants. Scheduling program activities at appropriate times of day (determined by the community, but generally before dusk) is one such measure; making suitable arrangements to transport and escort girls safely is another. Teaching girls to recognize potentially dangerous situations is a key to ensuring their safety. One way to approach this is by way of an exercise in mapping safe and unsafe areas of a community, accompanied by "transect walks" with groups of girls to identify places that are and are not safe. Instructing girls to stay together in groups is another means to help lessen their vulnerability.

As programs evolve, the likelihood is that an increasing number of girls will want and need to travel beyond the confines of their community or village to participate in programmatic activities. Programs should plan on this and take advantage of what could be viewed as an incredible opportunity for many girls. With this in mind, one project in Uttar Pradesh arranged for girls to go on "exposure visits" to other communities as part of the intervention. These visits allowed girls to meet with other girls and to see first-hand the kinds of activities and programs that were being offered.

Offer girls trusted female mentors and role models

Programs need to identify and attract trusted adult females from the community who have an interest in working with adolescent girls and an ability to do so. These individuals should be aware of the challenges that girls face and should be willing and able to act as advocates on their behalf.

As a program evolves, and girls feel increasingly confident in their environment, they often develop a significant degree of trust in the female mentors and role models they meet in a program. Over time, girls will increasingly come to these older females for advice and assistance with problems that they are having at home or school. Increasingly these women will serve as mentors to the girls.[2]

Often program staff (e.g., facilitators, teachers, trainers, and coaches) end up playing roles that go beyond those originally intended for them. For example, sports instructors whose main task is to teach girls how to play or coach often find themselves in the role of information provider, teaching girls about hygiene, menstruation, and other reproductive health issues. Programs should recognize this phenomenon and invest in training staff members so that they will be confident in responding to and advising girls.

Encourage girls' self-expression and decision making

When boys are around, many girls (even those with equal education) hold back in participation and performance, consciously or not. Some girls may withdraw from or ignore situations involving physically or verbally aggressive boys. This pattern is most evident when girls are in the minority, but it persists even when they are in the majority.

[2] A mentor is a trusted counselor, guide, tutor, or coach.

To promote girls' self-confidence and self-expression, programs can build on girls' current skills and knowledge while helping them to develop and practice new skills. The following are examples of practical skills that programs can provide girls with opportunities to learn and practice. Some of these skills provide a foundation upon which leadership roles can be developed:

- Speaking in front of groups
- Leading or moderating discussions
- Planning meetings
- Expressing ideas and views to others
- Convincing and influencing others
- Defending your views
- Teaching/tutoring others
- Coaching a sports team
- Initiating a project, starting a group
- Resolving conflicts

Another important consideration is girls' decision making experience. Insofar as decision making is an indicator of agency, learning about the degree to which girls participate in decision making, particularly concerning key issues in their lives, is important. Generally girls have limited experience in making major life and/or household decisions, yet many girls express a desire to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Perhaps the most critical decision making domains in girls' lives are education, work, marriage, and health.

Experiment with ways to make boys more respectful

Building girls' skills and agency will go only so far, however, in changing the structure of opportunities available to them; these new powers will be of limited effect if girls find themselves living in the same old restrictive environment. Boys are particularly important in this regard, since their behavior in public spaces and in the home bears

strongly on girls' mobility and participation in public life—and because boys are the future husbands and partners of the girls we hope to reach. Thus, programs attempting to improve the prospects of girls must consider interventions for boys as well.

Valuing girls more highly is good for girls and also for communities. Seeing girls in new roles, boys can learn about the strengths, capabilities, and contributions of girls and women, and this may begin to reshape their perceptions of females. Anecdotal evidence suggests that changing gender norms may help to decrease the pressure many boys feel to conform to traditional roles, behaviors, and ways of thinking (see Chapter 6).

Test the feasibility and effectiveness of a package of interventions

An example of an experimental, research-based intervention that embraces many of the elements discussed in this paper is the "Ishraq: Safe Spaces to Learn, Play, and Grow" project in Egypt. In four villages of rural Upper Egypt—a conservative, traditional setting where girls' mobility is restricted and early marriage is common—we have embarked on an ambitious, multi-pronged, and targeted intervention that aims to change the structure of opportunities available to girls. Working with 13–15-year-old out-of-school girls, we are testing a package of interventions that includes a basic literacy program, skills-building activities, reproductive health awareness, and a first-of-its-kind (in Egypt) organized sports program—indeed, a remarkable first for girls in this traditional setting.

Baseline and end-line survey data will be collected on the girls; additional qualitative data on boys and parents will also be collected. Recognizing the influential role of parents and male peers, we have designed interventions targeting both of these groups. Our work with boys includes on-going group discussions that focus on a few key

themes, harassment of girls being one of them. The intervention targeting parents focuses on improving parenting skills, including communication with daughters and sons. On-going discussions with girls' parents address gender disparities in the community; problem-solving activities will be undertaken to discover ways to deal with this.

We are collecting baseline data on marriage, mobility, decision making, agency, and gender norms, among other things and will measure changes in these areas after the intervention has been running for two years. To date, interest in the program has been dramatic; more girls have expressed interest in participating than can be accommodated. This extremely positive response on the part of girls is one indication of how great the need is for such interventions.

Conclusion

Our experience has demonstrated that creating safe, supportive spaces for girls is both feasible and urgently needed. Such spaces have numerous direct and indirect benefits for girls and for their communities. This paper provided some basic, guiding principles and highlighted some key issues to consider when designing programs for girls in different settings. We believe that by developing new interventions that seek to give girls "a safe space of their own," while bringing them safely and confidently into the public domain, we will begin to positively influence the life trajectory of adolescent girls.

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