

Regional Safe Spaces Network workshop:

Strengthening SGBV/Child Protection
Case Management and Information in
the Americas

San Jose, Costa Rica 3-5
December 2018

Objective

The Regional Legal Unit of the Americas Bureau, UNHCR hosted “*The Regional Safe Spaces Network (RSSN) Workshop: Strengthening SGBV/Child Protection Case Management and Information Management in the Americas 2018*” from 3rd to 5th December in San José, Costa Rica to *launch the RSSN Toolkit* as a contribution to the global campaign *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence* that takes place annually from the 25th of November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to the 10th of December, Human Rights Day. The workshop provided an opportunity for the RSSN members, allies and interested partners to meet face to face, take a stock of the achievements so far and plan for next steps to strengthen coordination around SGBV/Child Protection Case and Information Management in the Americas.

Participants



Group Picture RSSN workshop 2018

A total of **forty-five (45) participants** from **seventeen (17) countries** in the Americas region gathered in San Jose, Costa Rica to discuss the content of the RSSN toolkit, plan its implementation and share good practices. IOM, UNFPA, UNFPA, the Ministry of Women of Peru, the Child Protection Welfare Department of Venezuela, NGOs and UNHCR focal points were among them. The UNHCR’s Division of International Protection, and the Regional Office Nairobi, Kenya joined the event as well. The Human Rights Center of UC the Berkeley School of Law provided support to the event.

In 2017 the Regional Safe Spaces Network (RSSN) was established in the Americas with the support of the Regional Legal Unit of the Americas Bureau (RLU) to standardize care and harmonize protection delivery along the displacement cycle for the most vulnerable population, including women, girls, but also men and boys survivors of SGBV, children at risk, LGBTI individuals at risk, and other people with specific needs. The Network includes more than 50 partners from a diverse range of service providers and organizations such as UN agencies, national institutions, civil society, faith-based organizations, and community volunteers working on SGBV, child protection and human rights in the North of Central America (NCA), Venezuela and neighbouring countries.

Content

The first day: the event opened with an *overview of the Regional Safe Spaces Network (RSSN)*, its origin, objectives, key principles, membership and activities. The *presentation of the RSSN toolkit* by RSSN focal points from different countries followed the opening session. Key tools discussed by participants included the standard RSSN Terms of Reference, the RSSN self-audit check-list, the RSSN online map, the interagency protection referral form, the SGBV and CP interagency referral pathways, the SGBV and CP case management flowchart, and the Regional Information Sharing Protocol.



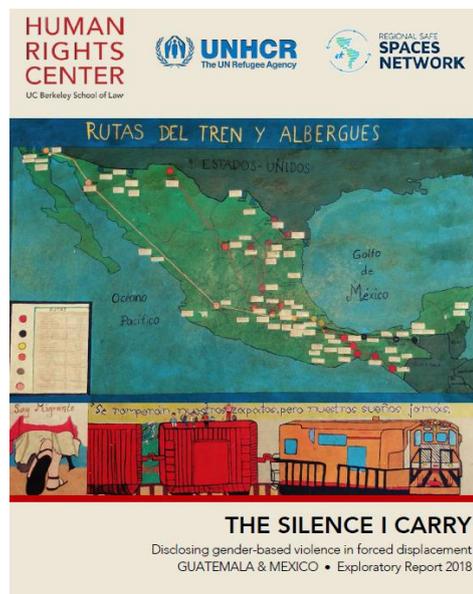
Day 1 RSSN Focal Point present the Network in Peru

The first day concluded with *an open Gallery Walk*. The session provided an open space for RSSN members, government agencies and NGOs to present their best practices and products related to the RSSN and/or SGBV and Child Protection case and information management. The gallery walk proved to be an efficient tool to promote regional collaboration and cross-fertilization of successful practices.



Material used during the RSSN workshop 2018

On the second day, a guest speaker, Kim Thuy Seelinger, the Director of the Sexual Violence Program at the Human Rights Centre, UC Berkeley School of Law provided a presentation on an exploratory research to assess challenges and strategies related to *SGBV disclosure in forced displacement* affecting refugees and other migrants in Central America and Mexico. The session was well appreciated and participants had the opportunity to practice the implementation of one of the proposed tools.



Cover of the Research "The Silence I Carry" 2018

The second day included **interactive sessions** such as a review of the **SGBV/CP core principles**, a **work-group to create safe spaces for refugee children and other children on the move**, and a reflection on **self-care** in the humanitarian context and the stress gap between women and men in the workplace. Case and information management principles, child's best interests procedures, data protection, coordination and peer support strategies were discussed.

A **world café** session was also held to discuss other key challenges and best practices related to Mandatory Reporting, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Complaint Mechanisms, and Survival Sex.



Day 2: a group of participants present their ideas on Safe Spaces for refugee and displaced children

The **third and last day** of the workshop, participants received hands on training on the SGBV and Child Protection modules in proGes v4, where they were able to simulate creating an **SGBV or CP case in the modules via the proGes v4 training environment**. In addition, a preview of a **safety audit tool** that can be used to identify and reduce the protection risks people faced during displacement and in camp settings was presented, and a discussion on the implementation by the RSSN facilitated. The workshop ended with a productive brainstorming session on RSSN indicators for **monitoring and evaluation, and next steps for the RSSN**.

Participant's Views

During the workshop, participants mentioned the usefulness of the RSSN workshop and that they wanted to replicate the activities presented in their own operations. They also appreciated the inclusive methodology applied and were grateful that they could work as a team throughout the workshop. There was an overwhelming positive response to the training session on the SGBV and CP modules in proGes v4.



ProGes V4 Outline

Overall, participants found that the workshop provided them with a great opportunity to network with other colleagues in the region and share best practices. New comers from the US and Ecuador had the opportunity to plan how to become active RSSN members, and the RLU SGBV/CP team gained a lot of valuable **input on how to continue supporting members of the RSSN**:



Conclusion and Next Steps

The RSSN will continue expanding to other countries in the region and finding ways to improve coordination on the prevention and response for refugees, migrants, internally displaced, and other people on the move, especially on protection and safe spaces for SGBV survivors, children at risk and individuals with specific needs. At the end of the workshop, the participants agreed to certain steps to achieve these goals ([see text box](#)).



Related links:

The Regional Safe Spaces network in the Americas: Lessons learned & Toolkit ([English only](#))¹

Lessons Learned Sustainability and Recommendations ([English](#), [Spanish](#))

The Silence I carry: Disclosing gender-based violence in forced displacement ([English](#), [Spanish](#))

RSSN Map ([English](#), [Spanish](#))

For further information, please contact:

Ana Belén Anguita Arjona, Senior Regional Protection Officer, Regional Legal Unit Americas Bureau Anguita@unhcr.org

Elizabeth Hang, Protection Officer (SGBV), Regional Legal Unit, hang@unhcr.org

SGBV/CP section of the Regional Legal Unit of the Americas Bureau at rlu@unhcr.org.



² RSSN online Map

1. Continue **expanding the RSSN** using a **phased approach** that adapts to new scenarios in the region.
2. Enhance coordination by **partnering with broader coordination structures**.
3. Seek **feedback on the RSSN Toolkit** from members and partners and **update it accordingly** after the first year.
4. Continue supporting SGBV and CP **cross-border case management and information management** (Regional information Sharing Protocol (**RISP**), ProGres V4, KoBo).
5. Participate in the **development** of a **Regional PSEA/SH protocol** as members of the RSSN.
6. Continue **prioritizing capacity building and coaching** of RSSN members and allies.
7. Develop **an RSSN awareness campaign** for **communities** and partners to use in different operational contexts
8. Improve **monitoring and evaluation** through the implementation of **Safety Audits** and the development of common **activities indicators** for the RSSN.
9. Organize a **3rd annual Regional Safe Spaces Network Workshop in 2019**.

¹ KoBo forms (BIA, IAF, Interagency referral form) in ES is can be accessed from the link available in the toolkit. The Spanish version of the Toolkit will be disseminated at the beginning of 2019.

² The acronym refers to Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/ Sexual Harassment.