



Public Community Spaces for Children, Families, and Communities Guidance Note

Introduction

The present document outlines guidance for the implementation of the **Public Community Space model**¹ by interested actors in Lebanon, as drawn from existing global literature on the topic.

The introduction of the Public Community Space model in UNICEF Lebanon's Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence (CP and GBV) programming was first explored during a review of UNICEF Lebanon's CP and GBV service delivery portfolio in the second half of 2018. Inspired by the Isibindi Safe Park model piloted by the NGO Himaya in Lebanon, it was seen as an opportunity to foster **community engagement** to prevent violence, exploitation and abuse and promote **social and behavioural change**² for the protection and wellbeing of boys, girls and women. A Public Community Space connects people and families from different age/sex/socio-economic groups to multi-disciplinary debates, activities and services. Public Community Spaces are also in line with UNICEF Lebanon's current programmatic priorities of **integrated programming** and **mobilization of local institutions**. A Public Community Space presents the advantage of being a **tangible reference for child rights and child friendly services** within a community, clearly **visible** and equally accessible to community members, as users, but also to local institutions³, as promoters of child-sensitive governance.

The document below outlines the **concept, definition, key objectives** and **content** of the model, **roles and responsibilities** and **categories of costs** for UNICEF Lebanon Country Office (LCO) to guide its staff and partners in the implementation of Public Community Spaces.

The Concept

All Children, girls and boys, have a right to be children, to play, dream, meet together, grow safely, be protected and have their opinion heard. Various articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child require all ratifying countries to recognize and support those rights.

In Lebanon, many girls and boys (including adolescents) are exposed to violence and exploitation, forced to take on adult responsibilities or deprived of basic services, including public spaces to play, so vital for healthy child development. Their caregivers as well as broader community members also face deprivation and lack opportunities to gather among themselves and with their children, dialogue and release stress. The Public Community Space concept seeks to remedy this reality for children and communities by providing them with **the time and the place to play, grow ,safely interact with peers and adults** a develop a sense of community belonging at the local level.

Definition

A Public Community Space is a **space** for children, girls and boys, to go to before or after school and on the weekends where they can do their homework, play, do sports, sing, dance, engage in learning activities or simply interact with peers, receive care and support. It is also a space for adults and families to meet, dialogue and release stress. Such space is meant to serve as a **protective environment** fostered by a circle of trained

¹ Known also as Public Parks

² This reference to Qudwa, the National Plan on Social Behavioral Change.

³ Local institutions are local authorities, local governmental agencies such as SDCs, PHCs and other private sector agencies, education, etc.,



mentors and qualified adult supervisors, pursuing children's physical and psycho-social development and wellbeing.

Objectives

The core objective of the Public Community Space model is ensuring that girls, boys, women and men are provided with opportunities that help them survive, develop to their full potential and participate effectively and equitably in the life of their community and society at large. This is done through an integrated package of quality services and activities that are tailored to the needs and preferences of children and adolescents within the community and do not fail to include the most marginalized girls, boys and families within communities.

Cross cutting the lifecycle, a Public Community Space can help fulfil the following functions:

- A place where all girls and boys, children and adolescent can have the opportunity to engage in activities that would expand on what they can do and be, **away from gender expectations and roles**;
- An opportunity to **enhance life-skills** such as independency, resilience, self-esteem and self-reliance, while participating in family, cultural, city/community and social life and growing into responsible and contributing citizens who create peaceful, non-violent families and communities;
- A context where girls and boys can be empowered to **participate and speak out** on all their issues, rights, concerns, views and ideas, towards change in their communities and enhance their sense of belonging;
- A space where adolescent girls and boys **volunteer as educators and Qudwa role models** for younger children, enhancing their own positive leadership skills;
- A place to foster the **wellbeing for children** and where **peer to peer support** comes naturally for caregivers;
- A platform where the threats of marginalization, exploitation or violence are prevented or responded to, through monitoring of child wellbeing and **safe cross-sectoral referral to an integrated network of accessible and quality services** (including health, food security and nutrition, mental health and protection, early childhood development, education, economic empowerment, sports and leisure);
- An **inter-generational** context of **inclusion** where children can socialize with peers and adults, regardless of their ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or ability;
- A place equipped for **structured socializing**, which helps addressing and preventing unhealthy and risky behaviours (ex: drug use, alcoholism, delinquency, etc.,) of certain individuals or population groups living in disadvantaged communities; this also includes dedicated timeslots for groups who may require a gathering on their own for gender, age or specific interests' reasons;
- An environment where men, fathers, women, mothers, boys, girls and entire families can **release stress, hold dialogues**;
- An opportunity to **deepen communities' and families' commitment** and capacity to provide a nurturing and supportive environment for children, through interactive engagement and expansion of community support systems;
- A provision of basic **livelihood opportunities** to community members who will engage in the minimal construction and maintenance work required to establish and run such spaces. Moreover, these spaces can be used to promote local products by community members.

Model

Public Community Spaces are established through complex participatory processes, strategic spatial solutions and a wide range of optional activities.

The **process** of designing, activating and managing a Public Community Space should follow the principles below:



- i. **Participation and ownership by community, community groups/leaders and local institutions** at all phases: definition of needs and objectives, identification of the space, set-up of the space, identification of existing strengths in the communities and relevant networks implementation of and participation in activities, management of the space and maintenance. This approach, built on systematic consultations, requires time to consolidate and has the virtue of transferring participatory tools for just decision-making processes engaging community members equitably;
- ii. **Shared allocation of resources** (e.g. public land allocated by local authorities (eg municipal police officers), costs for equipment sponsored by private sector or by multiple actors, as relevant to their respective mandates);
- iii. **Multi-disciplinary human resources** among child/adult volunteers and mentors, social workers, teachers and other professionals, trained at fostering community engagement and participatory activities; ensuring staff and volunteers are both female and male;
- iv. **Clear regulatory and management rules** to be agreed and signed off before the space is set-up. This fosters ownership, clear accountabilities in the management, use and maintenance of the space, and sustainable use of the space. This could take the form of a multi-stakeholder committee and internal by laws on modalities of election and responsibilities of the committee, accountancy rules, business plan, schedule of use of space, security and maintenance accountabilities; the regulatory framework could also include memoranda of understanding with surrounding local authorities or service providers (e.g. municipality, SDCs, PHCs) as well as codes of conduct and contracts with volunteers.

Spatial solutions of a Public Community Space would ideally include the below features:

- i. **Mixed out/indoor space** to ensure maximum utilization throughout year/weather conditions and by categories of users who may require particular privacy;
- ii. **Low-cost** locally produced materials, **innovative design** solutions, **context-appropriate** technology, **eco-friendly**; Inclusive and **disability-friendly**;
- iii. **Display of messages** from the schedule of activities to the code of the space or positive messages;
- iv. **Minimal, but well-planned maintenance** makes the space more sustainable, revealing and enhances community knowledge, culture, needs, visions, aspirations and skills.

Activities and programmes run in Public Community Spaces would rove around fostering child rights and protection. It should include Qudwa activities (but not limited to it). Below is the combination of the activities that could be implemented:

- i. **Sports clubs** organized, disability and gender-friendly sports and games, including tournaments, which channel children’s energy into constructive group activities and positive competition;
- ii. **Community theatres** a mean for communities to see a reflection of themselves (or a similar reality) and how they have the power to change. The following types of community theatre will foster dialogues, expression of feelings and give member of communities a sense of how change would be. Forms of theatre could include: 1) Playback Theatre 2) Theatre of the oppressed 3) Forum Theatre 4) Image Theatre
- iii. **Puppet shows** A set of characters embodying the Qudwa values for frontline workers and communities to utilize the puppet shows as a way to initiate healthy and constructive dialogues around the topics of violence against girls, boys and women, child marriage and child labour.
- iv. **Outdoor cinema:** A list of movies, documentaries and short films used by communities for outdoor cinemas. Discussion guidelines were developed for community members or frontline workers to generate discussions.
- v. **Qudwa caregiving Toolbox** a multi-media interactive toolbox for the education of parents on good parenting practice. For use by child protection practitioners, families and children across Lebanon, to leverage the educational tools and techniques to promote better parenting practices.
- vi. **Structured recreational activities** strengthening the psychosocial wellbeing of children.



- vii. **Traditional cultural activities** such as traditional games (Chess, dominos, Tawlet,...etc.), cultural dances and songs, storytelling by elders.
- viii. **Homework supervision** and tuition for groups or individual children.
- ix. **Food security programs**, including community food gardens where children learn gardening skills, as well as feeding schemes;
- x. **Participation-fostering activities** including the election of child representatives, regular children's meetings, child-led initiatives, activities for children and adolescents as agent of change;
- xi. **Holiday and events programs** for engaging children throughout long school holidays;
- xii. **Group and individual discussions** on a variety of public health topics relevant to adolescents (e.g. road safety, teenage/adolescent pregnancy, drug use, alcoholism, Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs);
- xiii. **Life Centre Programs** where adolescents engage with societal issues affecting them and build their strength and capacity to make positive choices in life;
- xiv. **Orientation and referral by Child Care Advocates or Professionals** to assure that families and children can become aware and access relevant resources and services made available by government, civil society or private sector as relevant to them;
- xv. **Men Caregiving programmes** to promote male caregiving and engage fathers and other male family members to support children's right and healthy development;
- xvi. **Collective commemoration** of public holidays, **events and community festivals**.

Branding and Design

The branding and design should follow the Qudwa branding guidelines, attached is an Annex to this document. Each entity (NGO, Municipality, Ministry, company...etc) should be briefed by UNICEF on Qudwa, its key messages⁴, and activities. The Qudwa spirit should be part of the design and planning of the public community parks. It is important to note the Qudwa brand is not a UNICEF Brand. It is a community brand that focuses on "behaviors that promote the wellbeing, dignity and equality of women, girls and boys are practiced and become the norm in Lebanon".

The Integrated Approach based on the Life Cycle

Life cycle approach

The life cycle approach takes into consideration the goals of development for each categories of ages as listed in the table. Based on stages of development of children services and activities will be identified. The table below summarizes the needs for each age category and the proposed ways of interventions.

This approach will guide the synergy and the integration between all the sectors. It can be split to 3 categories as below. The park will be an entry point for identification and referral. CP, youth and education activities can be done inside the park, in a specific room close to the park or outside. The park in this model will be the gateway for identification for children in need of services. Outreach can be done through recreational activities, CBPSS, registration days, social Media and public events.

	Activities to be implemented inside or around the park	Goals for interventions
Early childhood	- Conduct ECD interventions (education) - Conduct NFE programs (education) - Referrals to PHCs and outreach for health services	- Improve child cognitive and psycho-social development.
0 to 8	(health) - Conduct CBPSS and FPSS (CP)	- Increase school enrollment at the appropriate age.

⁴ See attached Annex for Qudwa key messages in Arabic and English



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct family assessments through social workers (CP) - Conduct recreational activities and child rights events (CP, Coms and C4D) - Conduct parenting program for caregivers of children accessing the park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce dropout and repetition rates in lower primary school. - Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education. - Increased quality parenting programs that reduce harmful discipline
Childhood 9 to 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At this age children Move toward independence as they progress to middle/junior high school. - Shift their school focus from play-centered activities to academics. - Begin to look to peers and media for information and advice (friends greatly influence them.) - Develop increasing capability for social conscience including understanding complex issues such as poverty and war. - Experience feelings of insecurity and Often experience a significant drop in self-esteem. - At risk of school dropout based on low school performance related to challenging behaviors such as hyperactivity and attention deficit. <p>Based on that we need to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct Retention support programs (education) - Having specific activities for street and working children (CP) - Conduct NFE programs outreach activities (back to schools...) - Conduct CBPSS and FPSS (CP) - Conduct family assessments through social workers (CP) - Conduct recreational activities and child rights events (CP, Coms and C4D) - Conduct parenting programs for caregivers of children accessing the park using the toolbox <p>In addition to that we should outreach for health services through health awareness events (health)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide quality education and quality monitoring of the education system to retain children with challenging behaviors in schools. - Provide careful observation in and outside the schools to address violence and neglect from parents or peers. - Provide PSS in and outside schools to improve children self-esteem and empower them protect themselves from peer pressure and bullying including the cyberbullying. - Provide case management for children who experienced violence and extreme poverty
Adolescents 13 to 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All young people, in or out of school, whether low-income or affluent, need a mix of services, support and opportunities to stay engaged. Based on that child participation activities should be done inside the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve their education by providing them BLN and retention support.



	<p>parks, children committees' meetings, child parliaments, child led events...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They need relevant and reliable information to make informed decisions and to report any violence exploitation and neglect. Based on that, CB and FPSS sessions need to be delivered inside the parks and outside. - They need Education because Educated girls are less likely to: marry early, get pregnant as teenagers and more likely to have healthy children when they eventually become mothers. Based on that we should outreach for children in need of education services inside the parks through registration days, education events and social workers. - For protection of adolescents sustained parent-adolescent relationships is among the key factor of adolescent good wellbeing. Based on that parenting programs should be delivered inside the parks through the caregiver toolbox - Conduct youth activities inside the parks such as vocational orientation events and referrals for vocational trainings. - Conduct life skills outdoor sessions - Conduct awareness sessions and events around civic engagement and volunteering - Conduct events for all volunteers in the area where the park is located and celebrate their work and achievements. <p>In addition to that we should outreach for health services through health awareness events (health)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having specific activities for street and working children (CP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve their wellbeing by providing them PSS and awareness on Adolescents sexual and reproductive health. <p>Protect them from violence, sexual abuse and exploitation by Providing GBV services and improve awareness on GBV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empower them by provision of Life skills, TVET and Sports for development activities. - Increase their participation by encouraging them on conducting adolescents led initiatives, being advocates for children rights and being volunteers in the community to contribute to the improvement of children wellbeing
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Roles and responsibilities throughout the process

The chart below suggests as an example of the phases and tasks associated with establishing and running Public Community Spaces, including a tentative timeline and allocation of responsibilities, within an integrated model.

Tasks	Timeline	Responsible actors
PREPARATION (8 months)		
Identify a relevant vulnerable area and an actor who can facilitate the whole process	Months 1-2	UNICEF field offices
Conduct a community based <u>participatory needs assessment</u> to identify needs and a specific location which could become a Public Community Space (PCS) and a <u>stakeholders' analysis</u> that contributes to strengthens existing resources contributing positively to the process	2-4	PCS-facilitator (NGO or local actor specialized in community engagement and development, social mobilization, child-friendly local governance)
Network with local authorities to explore collaboration (authorization to use public space, available budget and relationships that can support implementation)	3-4	PCS-facilitator
Engage in progressive and inclusive consultations with diversified community groups to identify relevant/priority activities and modalities for community contribution (volunteers, expertise).	3-5	PCS-facilitator
Design and budget the PCS, mobilize resources for the establishment and implementation	5	PCS-facilitator, with community representatives, local authorities, private sector and other donors
Outline roles and responsibilities to run, use and maintain the PCS and establish a committee (shared among local authorities and community gatekeepers) to manage it	5-6	PCS-facilitator, with local committee
Conduct the works required to refurbish/create the PCS	6-8	Contractors or labour from local community, under the lead of PCS-facilitator
Draft the required codes of conduct, feed-back mechanisms and safeguards for children and women and train volunteers and animators (among peers and adults)	6-8	PCS-facilitator or child rights expert
Connect service providers in the surrounding area to the PCS and population groups	8	PCS-facilitators and service providers
IMPLEMENTATION (from month 9)		
Launch the PCS with a public event	9 onwards	Local authorities and PCS committee
Run regular activities and ad hoc community events	9 onwards	Identified actors, volunteers, facilitators
Continue to build/connect partnerships around the PCS with existing relevant actors (scouts' groups, groups (called previously committees) at the local level, child based organizations, etc.,)	9 onwards	PCS-facilitator and the PCS committee
Maintain the PCS and monitor activities	Ad hoc	PCS committee and local authorities



EXIT STRATEGY (from Year 2)		
Identify self-financing opportunities	13 onwards	PCS committee, local authorities and PCS-facilitator
Train the PCS Committee at internal governance and organizational skills	13-15	PCS-facilitator
Monitor and update PCS schedule and programmes	15 onwards	PCS committee and local authorities



Categories of eligible costs and cost range/ceilings for UNICEF partners

The chart below outlines categories of costs associated with establishing and running Public Community Spaces with eligibility criteria for costs sustained by the stakeholders involved.

Category of cost	Eligibility/ceiling of costs for LCO's		Accountabilities of non-UNICEF actors
	CP/GBV partners	Other programmes' partners	
Land and utilities	NA	NA	Municipality (with/without support by other local institutions or private sector)
Construction works (over 20,000 \$) e.g. creation or expansion of existing building or transformation of existing space/land	Ideally not charged on UNICEF's partners (exception could be considered in areas where the needs are high but municipality resources too limited or absent)		Municipality (with/without support by other local institutions, private sector or donors)
Refurbishment (below 20,000 \$) to tailor functionality of space to need of activities	Up to 10,000 \$ per sector programme once		Municipality (with/without support by other local institutions, private sector or donors)
Maintenance	NA Maximum 500 \$ per year, on an exceptional basis	NA Maximum 500 \$ per year, on an exceptional basis	Municipality, users of the Public Community Space, other contributors as agreed prior to the set-up of the Public Community Space
Staffing	CP and/or GBV personnel at the scale required by the activities' plan, within budget availability	Other sectors' personnel at the scale required by the activities' plan, within budget availability	Municipality (municipal police officers, municipal council members) or other local institutions' personnel (permanent or through regular ad hoc presence) such as SDCs, PHCs, schools
Running costs including basic equipment and materials to use during	Maximum cost per child/adult regular user*	Maximum cost per child/adult regular user* would be 70/50 \$ respectively.	At the discretion of non-UNICEF actors involved.



<p>the activities, snacks and refreshments, insurance, cleaning materials</p>	<p>would be 70/50 \$ respectively.</p> <p>*attending activities for a minimum of 10 times during 2-3 consecutive months</p>	<p>*attending activities for a minimum of 10 times during 2-3 consecutive months</p>	
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