

# Session 5



## Identifying the impact of Sexual and Gender based Violence on Refugee Women and girls



Presented by Dr Linda Bartolomei and  
Adjunct Professor Eileen Pittaway  
Forced Migration Research Network UNSW

# The Aim of the Session

To identify all of the barriers to participation caused by SGBV, or fear of SGBV, in any given site



*“Violent conflict has an enormous and traumatizing impact on people and societies, and people know the difference between war and peace very well. They resent researchers who sanitize their situation and euphemistically speak of conflict, food insecurity and gender-based violence when they really mean war, hunger and rape” (Hilhorst 2018:7).*



# What do we mean when we say SGBV?

***Sexual violence is a form of gender-based violence and encompasses any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. Sexual violence takes multiple forms and includes rape, sexual abuse, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, forced abortion, forced prostitution, trafficking, sexual enslavement, forced circumcision, castration and forced nudity.***



[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/OnePagers/Sexual\\_and\\_gender-based\\_violence.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/OnePagers/Sexual_and_gender-based_violence.pdf)

*Intellectual property of E Pittaway and L. Bartolomei; Reuse is permitted with author attribution*

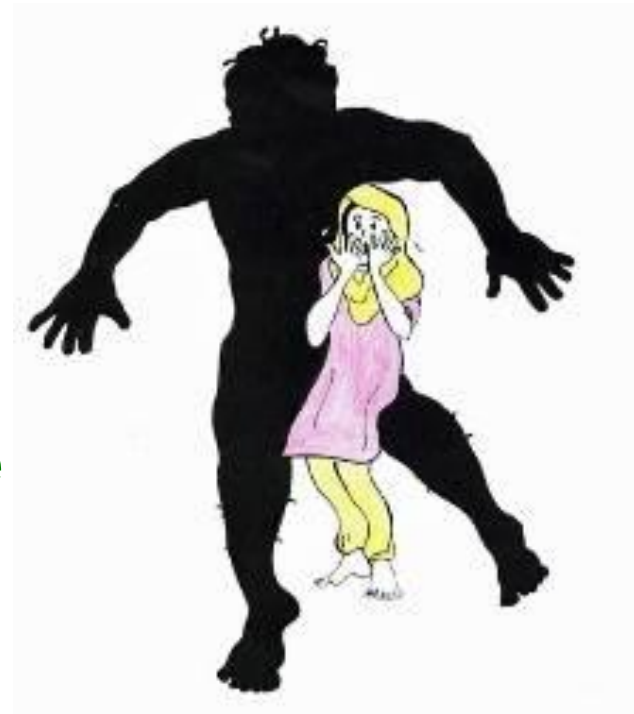


# Key findings from our research over 30 years in 22 countries

**Sexual and Gender Based  
Violence (SGBV) is a/the major  
barrier to Gender Equality.**

**Meaningful participation for  
women and girls is not possible  
without gender equality.**

**Gender equality is not possible  
unless we acknowledge and  
address SGBV.**



# The difference between refugee women and women in host countries.

It has been argued that, while tragic, the experience of refugee women and girls is often no different to the women in the host countries to which they have fled.

There is of course one major difference. Refugee women are citizens of no-where. They do not have even the minimal protection that this can offer. They are placed into situations of extreme vulnerability. Many men are killed or away from their families. Women are raped to shame or punish the men in their families and communities.



# Evidence








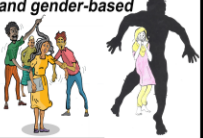





**Refugee women and girls face SGBV in all areas of their lives.**

**In 2018, using the Matrix Tool, we conducted consultations with over 400 refugees and 100 local stakeholders, in Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh, examining barriers to gender equality in a number of key thematic areas.**





# SGBV was identified as a major concern in all of the areas indicated below

	<b>Girls 0-12</b> 	<b>Girls 13-18</b> 	<b>Women 19-24</b> 	<b>Women 25-50</b> 	<b>Older women</b> 	<b>LBTI women</b> 	<b>Women with a disability</b> 
<b>What are the issues and impacts of sexual and gender-based violence?</b> 	1.1 <b>SGBV</b>	1.2 <b>SGBV</b>	1.3 <b>SGBV</b>	1.4 <b>SGBV</b>	1.5 <b>SGBV</b>	1.6 <b>SGBV</b>	1.7 <b>SGBV</b>
<b>Barriers to shelter, water, food and fuel</b> 	2.1 <b>SGBV</b>	2.2 <b>SGBV</b>	2.3 <b>SGBV</b>	2.4 <b>SGBV</b>	2.5 <b>SGBV</b>	2.6 <b>SGBV</b>	2.7 <b>SGBV</b>
<b>Barriers to education</b> 	3.1 <b>SGBV</b>	3.2 <b>SGBV</b>	3.3 <b>SGBV</b>	3.4 <b>SGBV</b>	3.5	3.6 <b>SGBV</b>	3.7 <b>SGBV</b>
<b>Barriers to livelihoods and jobs</b> 	4.1	4.2 <b>SGBV</b>	4.3 <b>SGBV</b>	4.4 <b>SGBV</b>	4.5	4.6 <b>SGBV</b>	4.7 <b>SGBV</b>
<b>Barriers to protection, health, and documentation</b> 	5.1 <b>SGBV</b>	5.2 <b>SGBV</b>	5.3 <b>SGBV</b>	5.4 <b>SGBV</b>	5.5 <b>SGBV</b>	5.6 <b>SGBV</b>	5.7 <b>SGBV</b>
<b>Barriers to participation in meetings capacity building, decision making about refugee lives</b> 	6.1	6.2 <b>SGBV</b>	6.3 <b>SGBV</b>	6.4 <b>SGBV</b>	6.5	6.6 <b>SGBV</b>	6.7 <b>SGBV</b>

**“Before the GCR, Refugee women were constantly being “mainstreamed” into oblivion” They still are!**

**SGBV changed to GBV, most commonly used in the refugee context to mean domestic and family violence. The scope of abuse experienced by refugee women was diminished and not addressed.**

**GBV and AGD have become meaningless acronyms, easy ‘tick boxes’**

**There is a constant battle to stop SGBV being sidelined, and ignored.**





# Women won't talk about Rape -Short video

Over the years, we were constantly told we were mistaken – that women would not and did not talk about rape

At one UN meeting, in desperation, our film maker threw together a short film, which we were allowed to loop as governments came into the chamber.

This is the result. Grown men cried!



# Root causes & Contributing factors to the barriers caused by SGBV

- Privileging male leadership in refugee camps and urban settings
- Decreased International Aid contributes to food, water and fuel insecurity and increased risks of SGBV including rape, abduction, trafficking, forced and early marriage
- The lack of appropriate SRH services including lack of sanitary materials also contributes to high rates of maternal and infant deaths, HIV, and illegal abortions, especially for young women and adolescent girls
- In 2023, Only 0.01% of humanitarian funding was for gender-based violence prevention and response programmes, 2/3s of GBV programmes in humanitarian appeals received no funding at all



# Some major response barriers



- The lack of standardisation and recording including lack of AGD disaggregated data
- The scale of SGBV is underreported due to many barriers to disclosure including stigma, shame, lack of understanding of SGBV
- Policies addressing SGBV often fail to consider factors associated with forced migration e.g. fear of authorities, fear regarding immigration status, of self or family members being deported/left behind,
- Current SGBV services in all sites do not offer clearly defined referral pathways

(Hourani et al 2021; Phillimore, Block, et al (2022);Izugbara et al. 2020)

## - continued

- Lack of context **and culturally appropriate SGBV services** developed in partnership with refugee women and girls
- **Funding** is limited and not available to local organizations addressing SGBV (IRC 2019)
- **Gender sensitive mental health and psychosocial support services** remain sparse in all settings.
- **Women and girl safe spaces** play an important role in camps but there are not enough
- **Limited employment and educational pathways** despite the evidence they play a key role in protection



# Adolescent Girls

- **Child marriage, domestic violence, and sexual violence are the most prevalent forms of gender-based violence against adolescent girls – *often leading to early pregnancy and death in childbirth***
- **There is no clear division of labour between actors from the SGBV and child protection sector. adolescent girls, in particular older girls, are often overlooked in both sectors.**
- **SGBV in displacement settings is one of the least funded areas of humanitarian response.**
- **(Stark, L., I. Seff and C. Reis 2021)**



# Using the AGD Matrix Exercise to identify problems and barriers









The matrix can be used to gather evidence about a number of issues in one sitting, which can take a full day, or you can tailor it to what you are particularly exploring in a session.

We have found it an excellent exercise to gather information about how SGBV affects diverse groups.

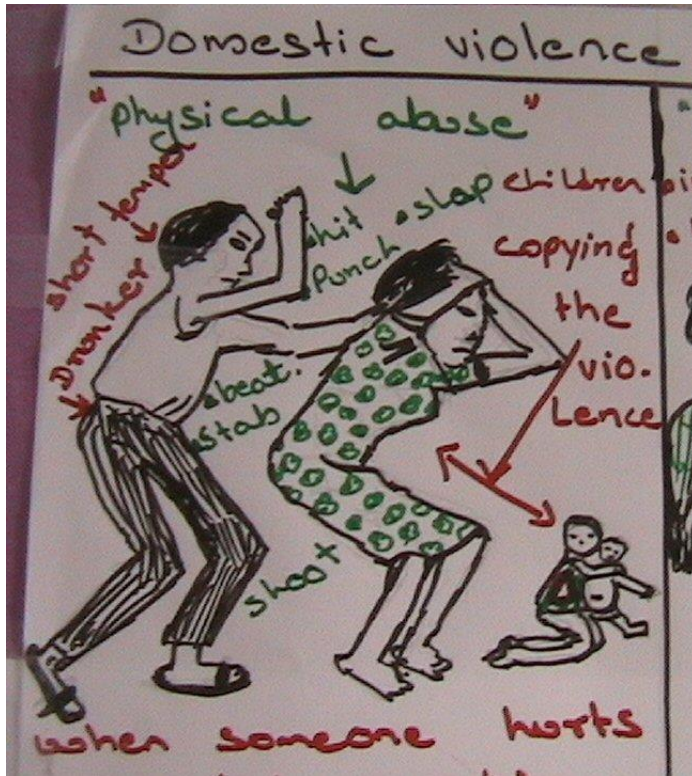




# List how SGBV affects each diverse group on the top of the Matrix

	<b>Girls 0-12</b> 	<b>Girls 13-18</b> 	<b>Women 19-24</b> 	<b>Women 25-50</b> 	<b>Older women</b> 	<b>LBTI women</b> 	<b>Women with a disability</b> 
<p><b>What are the major impacts of SGBV on refugee women and girls.</b></p> 							

# Storyboarding



**Storyboarding moves from problem identification to problem solving. It is an excellent way to engage members of refugee communities in identifying appropriate local solutions.**

# Participants use storyboards to identify problems and suggest solutions

- What is a story board?
- How story boards can be used to solve problems with refugee communities
- Preparing story boards



# How does it work?





# From Problem Identification to Solutions. The Storyboard Tool

Participants draw and present their responses to questions about a problem facing their community, what is available to respond to this problem, their ideas for other solutions, and what role the community, NGOs or other groups could take in these solutions.

The verbal presentations are documented and form core research data.



# Storyboarding questions could cover:

1. Depict a problem of concern experienced by people in your community. (An example might be the lack of education for women and girls)
2. How does it affect the people concerned, what happens to them, how does this affect their families, their communities?
3. What happens to these women and girls now? (What help is available to them and is it effective?)





# Storyboarding questions continued:

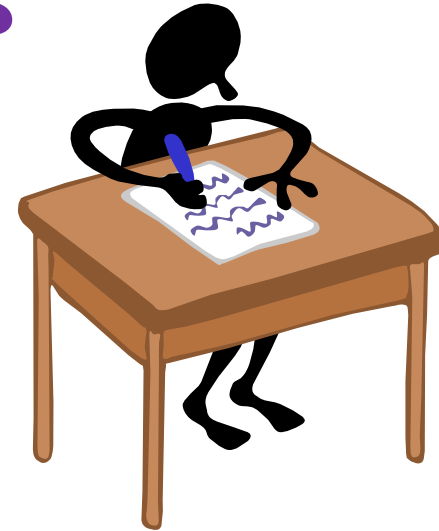
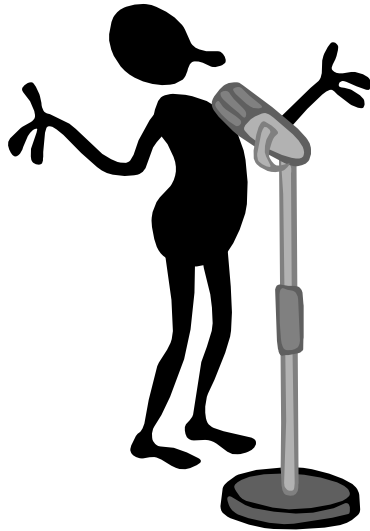
4. If you were in charge of services for this group of people, what would you provide for them, their families and the community, to address this issue?

5. Who else do you think could provide these services, Who would you want to do this, What help would WRLOs need to address it?

6. If all these services were available what would be the best outcome for these participants?



# Documenting the discussion of the drawings



**Participants need to be given enough time to fully explain and discuss what they have drawn.**

**With the permission of participants, this must all be carefully documented and becomes evidence for future actions.**

# Some examples



**A 12 years – old girl is married to a 40 years-old man.... She got pregnant shortly after the wedding. Being pregnant is not good for her health. This time her physical condition is not well. A lot of bleeding from her body. The women facing some problem such as [early pregnancy], they will be physically un-well, they will die, baby will be die when delivery time (Refugee women Camp 18).**

# You don't even need the dialogue!



**The topic  
was abuse  
including  
rape by an  
employer**

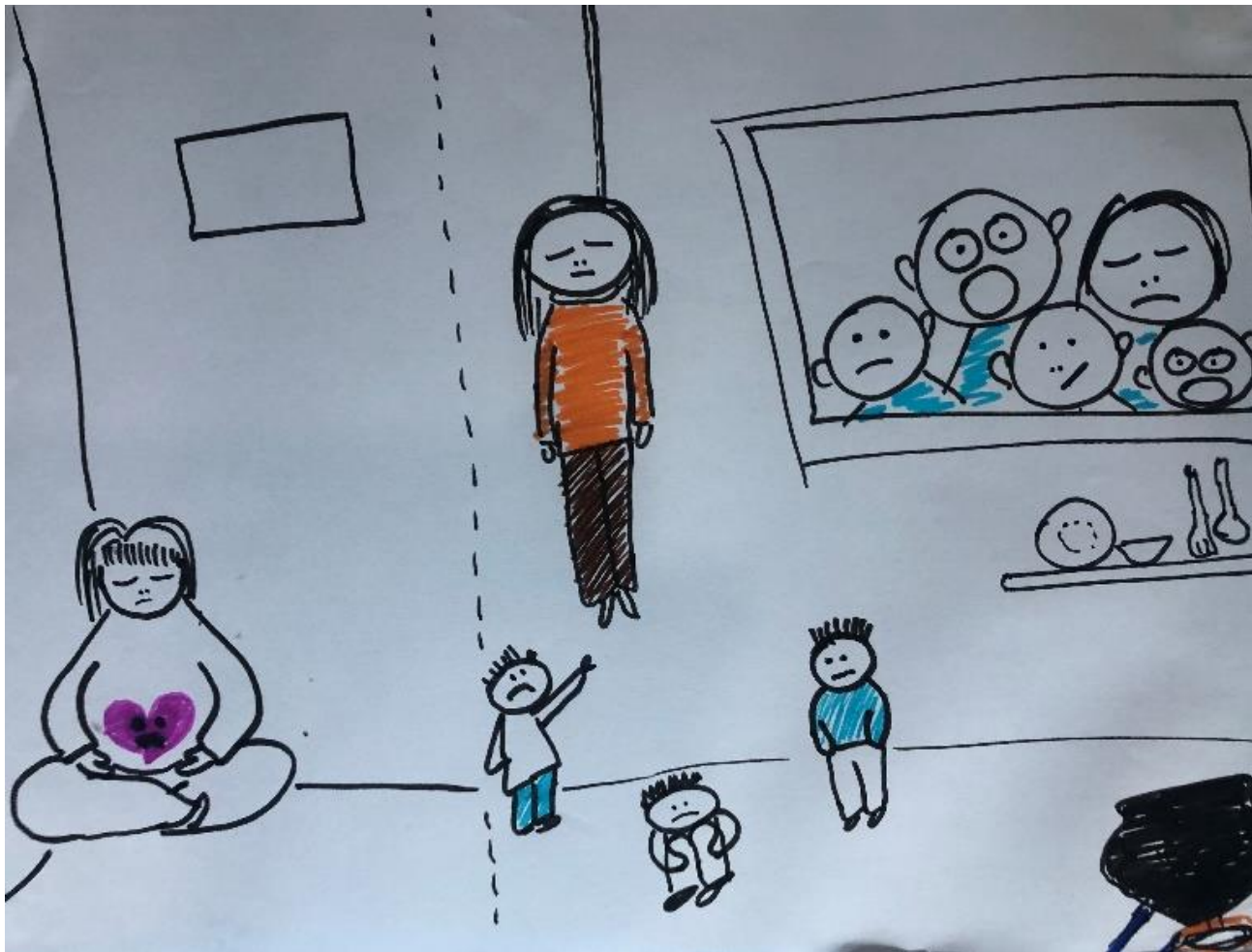
**Refugee Group, Kuala Lumpur 2018**

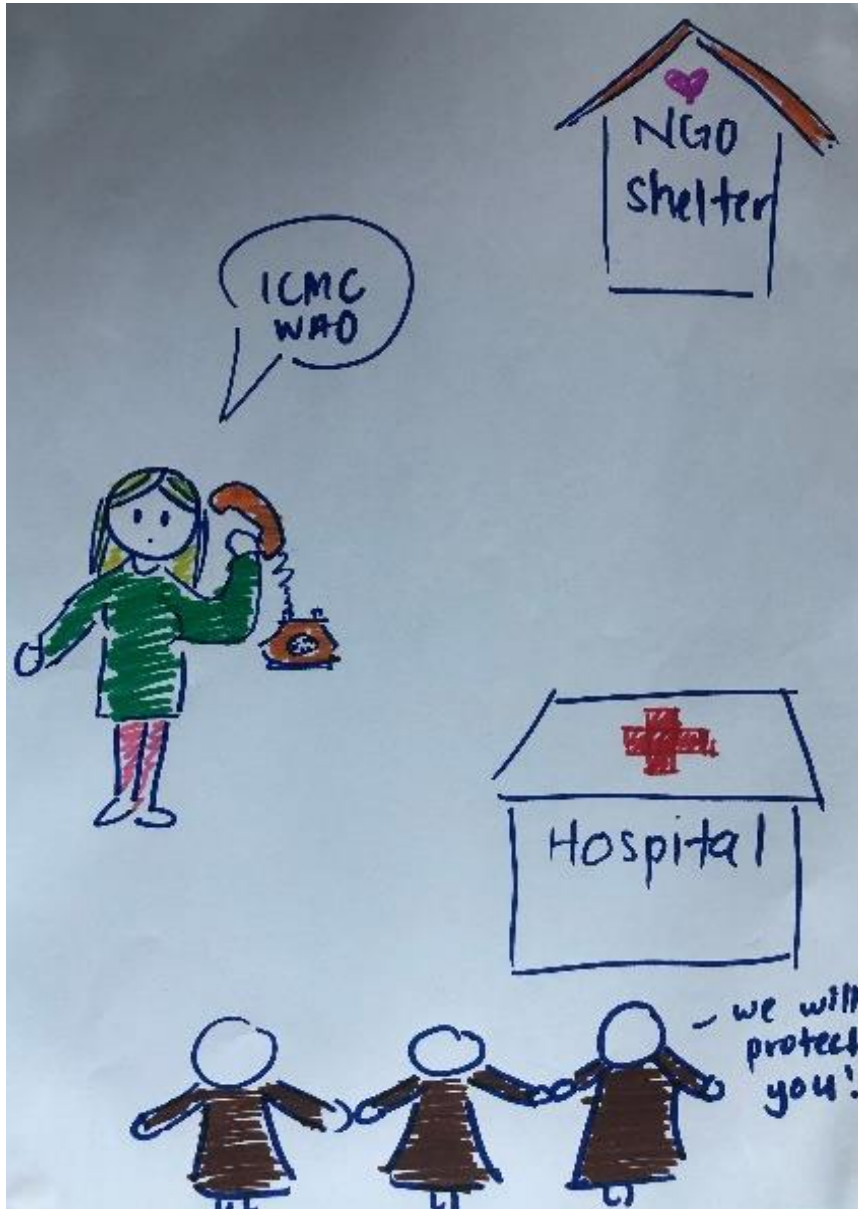
*Intellectual property of E Pittaway and L. Bartolomei; Reuse is permitted with author attribution*





# Her response when she finds herself pregnant and the impact on her family

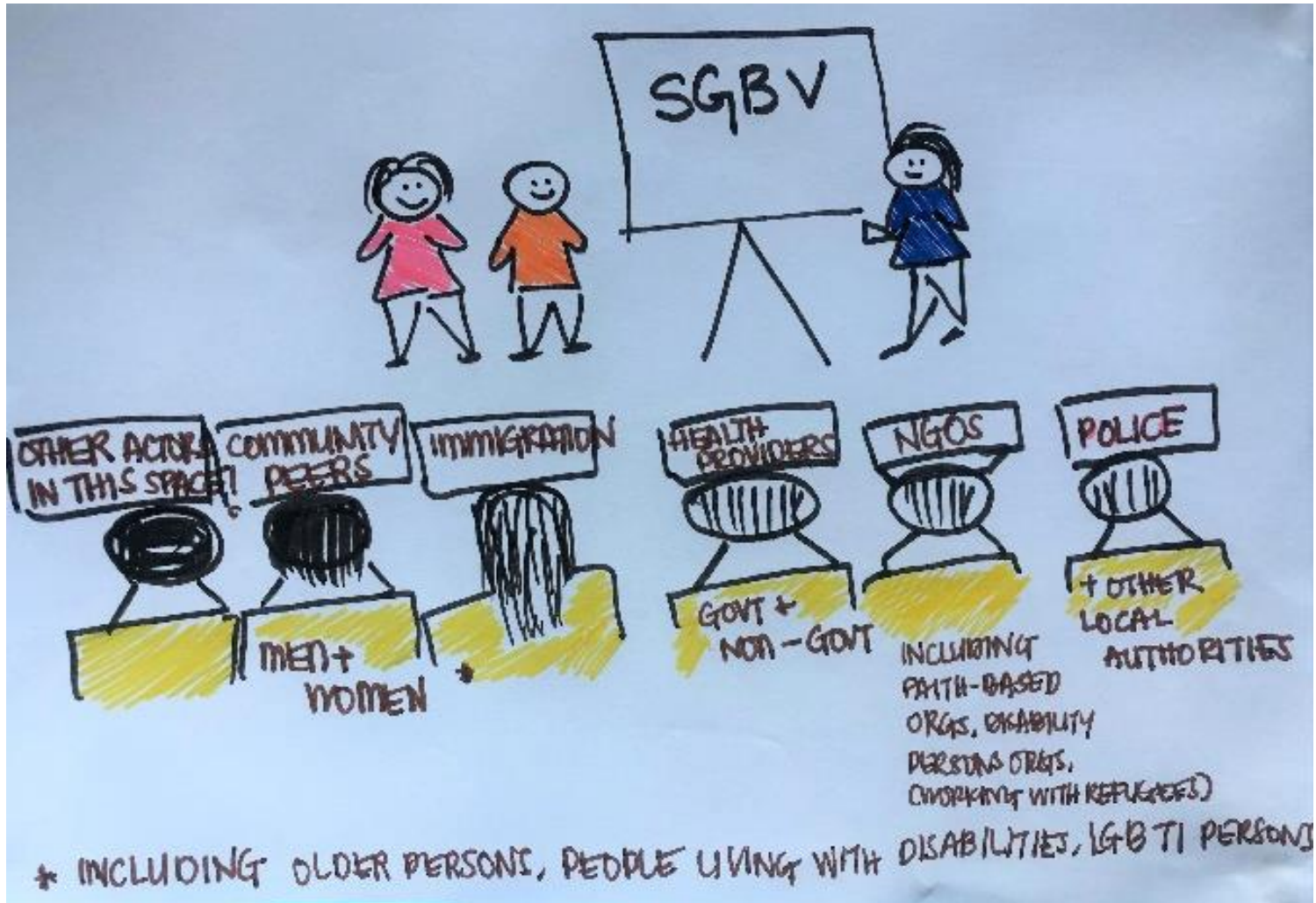




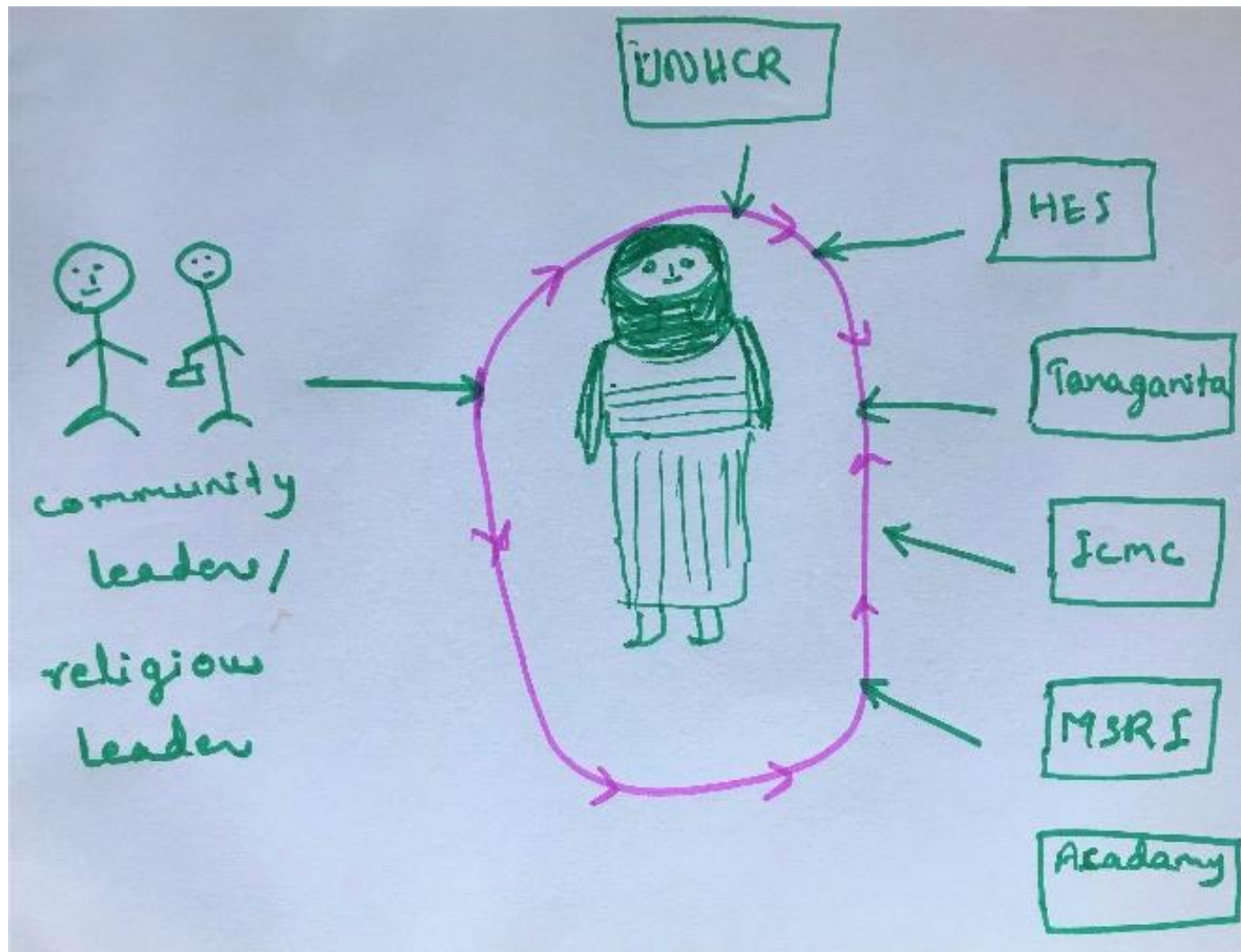
The help  
the  
women  
wanted,  
but  
could  
not  
always  
access.



# How to achieve change



# Comprehensive Protection and Care



# Moving forward – addressing the links between Livelihoods and addressing SGBV





# Using the data collected

The outcomes of the story boards will form the basis of the next stage of the risk analysis and response.



# How to use the evidence

**Combine and classify the data collected, and take it forward into strategic planning, to inform new programs and approaches.**

