## Participatory Safety Walk Guide

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| Purpose | To enable adolescent girls and women to identify and articulate the safety concerns and problems they face in certain geographical areas and in accessing services. Where safe and appropriate to do so, this tool empowers them to communicate directly with service providers and other duty bearers regarding their safety needs and to engage in joint problem solving and decision-making regarding safety and protection. |
| Sources of information | Girls and women who regularly use the area that is being assessed  * Service providers and decision-makers |
| Additional information | The safety walk should take approximately three hours. If the area to be covered is too large to cover in this time, consider dividing it up into smaller areas and having more than one team work at the same time in different parts of the camp or community.  A safety walk can also be conducted to assess one route and amenity, such as a market, school or WASH facility.  Where safe to do so, obtain visual records of unsafe areas/facilities to use when explaining the problem to others, for example in a community safety planning workshop.  More time will need to be allocated when working with women with disabilities, elderly women or any group where the members speak a variety of languages. |
| Parts | **Part A: Steps in Conducting a Safety Walk**  **Part B: Tips for Conducting a Safety Walk** |

**EPS FOR CONDUCTING A SAFETY WALK**

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| **Part A: Steps in Conducting a Safety Walk[[1]](#footnote-1)** |
| **Step 1: Plan the safety walk**   * 1. Identify the purpose of and route for the safety walk. The route should be decided with girls and women from the community and should include areas they have identified through focus groups, key informant interviews or other means as unsafe (such as areas where incidents of sexual harassment or assault have taken place, areas that women avoid, and other areas that are considered risky or dangerous).   The size and number of areas chosen for assessment will determine how many teams will be needed to conduct the walk. For example:   * If the walk is focused on one location only, such as the school, only one team will be required. * If the walk is assessing a whole camp or community, it will be necessary to recruit multiple teams based on the size of the area to be assessed.   1. Identify 6 – 8 girls or women per team who regularly use the route and/or facilities that are going to be assessed. For example: * If the purpose of the walk is to understand safety issues for girls travelling to and while at school, identify girls who attend that school. * If the purpose of the walk is to understand safety issues associated with females’ access to and use of WASH facilities, identify females of different ages to participate.   1. If the purpose of the safety walk is to inform duty bearers about safety issues and advocate for solutions to them, make sure one or two representatives from relevant authorities or agencies are present. For example, a safety audit of WASH facilities should include a representative from the authority managing the site/community and a representative from the agency responsible for WASH services.   2. Make sure each team is briefed on the purpose of the activity, the route and/or locations they will be visiting. Make a rough map of the route to be covered and explain the issues and the route to the group.   3. Ensure each team has a team leader or facilitator who will lead the process. Also designate someone to take notes and to work with the team leader to consolidate the information. |
| **Step 2: Conduct the safety walk – 2 hours**   * 1. As a group, follow the route identified, and ask participants to identify locations where they have safety concerns and why. At each location identified by participants, stop and discuss why they feel unsafe in this area. The following questions may be helpful: * *What is your first reaction to this place?* * *What three words best describe this area?* * *How well-lit is the area? Are there spaces which are poorly lit?* (Mark on the map where there is lighting and where it is dark.) * *Does this make you feel safe/ unsafe? Why?* * *Are there a lot of people using this area?* * *If so, what are they doing (e.g., walking, working, meeting)?* * *Does this make you feel safe/unsafe? Why?* * *Are there particular spaces where people could hide?* * *Does this make you feel safe/unsafe? Why?* * *Are there certain groups of people hanging around who make you feel unsafe? Who are they?* * *What is their sex? (e.g., groups of young men)* * *Why are they hanging around?* * *Why do they make you feel unsafe? Why?* * *Are community leaders/ authority figures present and visible in the area?* * *Does this make you feel safe/unsafe? Why?* * *Would you know where to go for help?* * *Are there any other things about this space that makes you feel unsafe?*   1. If appropriate, take photos of the site/area. These may be helpful for explaining the problem and context to others and for monitoring changes.   2. After the discussion, mark the area on the map. Consider using different colours or symbols to highlight areas where participants feel very unsafe, quite unsafe, or safe. |
| **Step 3: Debrief and identify next steps – 1 hour**  3.1 Immediately after the walk, hold a short meeting to debrief with the team. Facilitate a discussion on:   * What participants observed during the walk; * Key safety concerns identified; * Possible solutions to the problems; and * Next steps. For example, if representatives from authorities and service providers are present, identify what actions and follow-up they will take and by when to implement solutions.   3.2 Document the issues and next steps, and use the information to inform:   * Community safety planning; * Advocacy with duty bearers and other actors/sectors; and * UNICEF and partner programming. |

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| **Part B: Tips for Safety Walks** |
| **What to take**   * Paper and pens/pencils * Maps * Red, orange and green stickers to mark safe/unsafe areas on map * Camera/video camera * Voice recording device, if appropriate   **Tips for facilitators**   * Provide refreshments and time for creating a friendly atmosphere that promotes dialogue and makes participants feel welcome and at ease with the facilitators and with one another. * Ensure each participant has safe transportation to and from the meeting point. * Take notes or use your camera to document positive features as well as problem areas. * If it is difficult for you to take notes, use a tape-recorder if safe and appropriate and if participants give their permission. * It is important to talk to other women you meet during the walk. Introduce yourself. Tell them that you are looking at women’s safety in the area and would like to know what they think. * Encourage participants to: * Stay together so that each person is listened to and heard; remember, note-takers cannot note what they have not heard. * Voice their personal opinion about an area. * Respect what others say; remember, each person’s experience of an area is different, and the goal of the group is to note each person’s opinion about an area. * Be mindful of the person taking notes; speak loudly, simply and slowly. * Avoid making negative comments such as “Nothing ever gets done.” * Remember that sometimes a place is so poorly designed that there may not be any satisfactory solutions – only measures that will make the area a little better. It is still important to note that there is a problem. * Take notes on everything, including comments on the process of the walk itself. |

1. Adapted from ActionAid International, *Making Cities and Urban Spaces Safe for Women and Girls: Safety Audit Participatory Toolkit,* AAI, Johannesburg, 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)