

Amna

Nurturing Joy & Belonging





Our Goal

Improve access to empowering, quality, community-led healing/psychosocial spaces for refugees.

Our Vision

Refugees can determine their futures, unbounded by the impacts of conflict and displacement.

Our Mission

Build community capacity for collective healing.

Amna

BAYTNA

Early Childhood
Development for
displaced families



Our Methodology

- Healing through play
- Rituals to restore safety
- Culturally sensitive creative expression practices:
 - Rhythm & Music
 - Dance and movement
 - Storytelling
 - Arts and sensorial play
 - Mindfulness and grounding



All done in community to nurture belonging and joy



A 'Baytna' session

- **Welcome/ Greeting rituals**
- **Free Play:** Initiated and led by the children; open-ended, self – directed, voluntary play that allows children to develop their creativity, imagination, social skills, emotional intelligence, and motor abilities
- **Circle time:** “We” time. Group gathers in a circle for shared rituals that facilitate connection to each other, feeling states and ideas. Group includes children, caregivers and facilitators.
- **Creative play:** Combine structured and unstructured healing play activities that combine creativity, rhythm, music, movement, storytelling.
- **Relaxation time:** that support participants to leave Baytna rested and soothed.
- **Closure / Leaving rituals**





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Window of Tolerance

- Dan Siegel's 'Window of Tolerance' refers to the optimal zone for us function in our everyday lives;
- We all have a window of tolerance with a different 'width';
- When trauma is held in our body or we are under extreme stress, our window gets **narrower** and we are more likely to move into states of **hyper-arousal** or **hypo-arousal**.



HYPERAROUSAL

- Abnormal state of increased responsiveness
- Feeling anxious, angry and out of control
- You may experience wanting to fight or run away



DYSREGULATION

- When you start to deviate outside your window of tolerance you start to feel agitated, anxious, or angry
- You do not feel comfortable but you are not out of control yet



DYSREGULATION

- You start to feel overwhelmed, your body might start shutting down and you could lose track of time
- You don't feel comfortable but you are not out of control yet



HYPOAROUSAL

- Abnormal state of decreased responsiveness
- Feeling emotional numbness, exhaustion, and depression
- You may experience your body shutting down or freeze

Play examples from 'Baytna'



Baytna Impact Report- University of Virginia

Humanitarian
Collaborative, 2023



Amna's vision and unique approach

Amna's vision is that refugees are empowered and resilient, determining their futures, unbounded by the impacts of conflict and displacement. As a humanitarian organization, Amna is unique in a number of ways.

Refugee-leadership	Core to Amna's approach has been representing lived experience in all aspects of its work – from its board to facilitators – and increasingly in the partner organizations, it works with.
Values-based	All interactions are guided by Amna's values - respect, understanding, curiosity, and connection which contribute to refugees regaining a sense of security, agency, belonging, and self-worth. These values are defined in <i>Annex 2</i> .
Identity-informed	Amna welcomes and honors the multiple, different identities in one person and within groups. Its healing spaces support people connect to identities from home, whilst exploring those developed through displacement and living in a new country.
Trauma-sensitive	Refugees may have experienced trauma and may show signs of toxic stress. Amna supports people to regulate and find physical and emotional safety and provide opportunities for expression and meaning-making in a safe environment.
Learning organization	Amna's team engages in ongoing reflective practice, which alongside partner organizations' feedback informs program improvements.

Impact on children's well-being & psychosocial development

Caregivers reported that they observed a number of positive changes in their children, especially in terms of their emotional wellbeing and psychosocial development. These findings were corroborated by facilitators' observations.



Improved Wellbeing

Their children's sleep improved, and they were generally calmer and happier.

"My child is more happy now. She is smiling more often and when we discuss about Baytna in our house she smiles."



Improved Social Skills & Relationships

Children felt safe interacting with others and had opportunities to develop social skills and forge positive relationships with peers and facilitators.

"She has changed. She can now interact with anyone. She isn't afraid to go out anymore. She learns and interacts with other children."



Improved Self-Regulation

Children learned to name their feelings and manage difficult emotions, demonstrating fewer and less intense internalizing and externalizing behaviors (e.g., withdrawal, aggression).

"My child has changed his behavior. He listens to me more now when I talk to him at home, and he is calmer. He does not react as before with voices and explosions"

Children enjoyed Baytna

Across all the organizations, caregivers reported that children enjoyed Baytna and were excited to attend sessions. Many caregivers said their children's demeanor changed just knowing they had Baytna to look forward to; for many families, going to Baytna was one of the only opportunities they had to leave their home or the camp.



"Every morning he asked me if we are going to Baytna today."



"The kids love the facilitator, and that's why they want to come to Baytna"



"When she is coming back from Baytna, she wants to be a teacher to us at home"



"She speaks all the time about Baytna and what [the facilitator] said during the sessions"

"Several things set Amna apart from other humanitarian organizations. It offers psychosocial support that is values-based and identity-informed. It sees refugees not only as beneficiaries, but also as essential to the design and delivery of its programs – and engages them in these processes. It takes a systems perspective, considering whole-organization and family systems when designing its activities. And, it is constantly learning and quick to adapt to ensure services are responsive to community needs. In sum, Amna seeks to be an “antidote” to the humanitarian sector status quo."



