



# Laaha: A virtual safe space for women and girls

FUNDING: US\$750,000 TO UNICEF USA



IN SUPPORT OF



Laaha is a virtual safe space intervention developed with women and girls to provide accessible, culturally relevant information and resources on sexual and reproductive health, violence against women and girls, women's rights, mental health, and online safety. Globally, 1 in 3 women experience Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in her lifetime, 140 women and girls are killed every day, and in conflict settings, GBV rates can be up to 21 times higher. Online, 58% of girls report harassment, and 76% identify men and boys as perpetrators, underscoring the urgent need for safe digital interventions.



# Specific Objectives

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The program aims to achieve two primary outcomes:

1. Women and girls – especially those with disabilities or in conflict settings – are given access to safe spaces which provide rights-based information, services, and peer support, while barriers prevent them from accessing physical safe spaces due to displacement, insecurity, restrictions on movement, and other obstacles.

2. The platform's mobile-first design allows it to be accessed without installation or registration barriers, making it easy to share via link and use discreetly. Laaha's emphasis on anonymity and privacy enables safe access to critical information, even in conservative or high-risk settings.



# Who has Benefited

Since its inception, Laaha has reached 553,000 women and girls directly across **20 countries** and **14 languages**, with **1.7 million total users** reached and 963,400 YouTube views. During the July 2025 to October 2025 reporting period, 12,000 unique users engaged on the platform and 17,100 YouTube views generated 320 hours of watch time. Usage has expanded beyond formal deployment countries to the United States, China, Singapore, India, and Germany, demonstrating global demand.

Laaha offers **160+ interactive modules**, anonymous browsing, an emergency “Exit” feature, WCAG-compliant accessibility, low-bandwidth functionality, and vetted service directories. User research has found that 76% of Laaha users felt safer and better informed, demonstrating the platform's potential to help adolescent girls and women reduce their risk of violence. For example, in Lebanon’s newly launched moderated forum, 95% of users expressed interest in the topics, 87% appreciated the design, and 63% felt comfortable with the login process.

## LAAHA: GLOBAL REACH AND IMPACT

553,000



Women & girls reached

20



Countries

1.7 million



Users

963,400



YouTube views



### WHAT LAAHA OFFERS



160+ interactive modules



Anonymous browsing



Emergency “exit” feature



WCAG-compliant accessibility

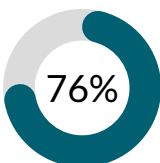


Low-bandwidth functionality

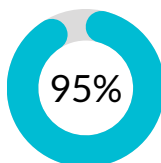


Vetter service directories

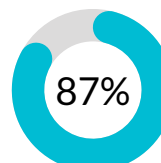
### LEBANON USER INSIGHTS



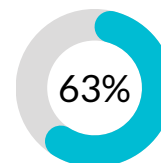
of Laaha users felt safer and better informed



of users expressed interest in topics



of users appreciated the design



of users felt comfortable with the login process

# Fast Facts

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## In October 2025

UNICEF deployed Laaha across over 14 countries and territories: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.



## Languages

Arabic, Burmese, Dari, English, French, Kurdish, Pashto, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Lingala.



## Since June 2025

Laaha has been implemented in schools in partnership with Ecuador's Ministry of Education as part of efforts to prevent teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence within the educational community. The first phase involves sharing the tool with student counselors in public schools with the highest figures of violence and teenage pregnancy, so they can encourage its use among adolescent girls and mothers.



## Democratic Republic of Congo

Laaha was integrated with Toyokana, a government-led program providing safe spaces for women and girls, strengthening coordination between digital and physical protection services.



## Ghana

Laaha will be deployed in five languages (Twi, Dagbani, Ewe, English, and Hausa) under the UNFPA-UNICEF Ghana joint programme for girls and the Ghanaian government, funded by the Government of Canada, to empower adolescent girls through comprehensive sexuality education and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services. It will be available soon in Ghana.



## Italy

includes links to the PlaySafe app developed by UNICEF Italy, an educational game that informs adolescents and young people about online gender-based violence and harassment.



## Myanmar

Laaha was disseminated during Severe Tropical Storm Wipha at the end of July in eastern Bago, Kayin, and Mon regions, demonstrating the platform's utility in emergency response.

# Strategies for Success

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## Diverse interactive content

Over 160+ modules covering health, mental health, violence prevention and response, safety, digital literacy, parenting skills and rights – all offered in different learning preferences and literacy levels to adapt to the user.

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## Safety-by-design

Comprehensive security safeguards including an "Exit Website" button that takes users to Google's homepage, age self-declaration, anonymous browsing without requiring personal data given, and a web-based platform (rather than a downloadable app) to protect user privacy.

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## Optimized for low-connectivity settings

Designed to function in remote areas with limited internet access, addressing the reality that access to electricity and economic factors affect women and girls' ability to use digital platforms.

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## Maximum accessibility

Voiceovers and captions for users follows “web content accessibility guidelines” standards to address varying literacy levels and abilities.

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## Culturally contextualized content

Each country iteration includes tailored visuals, illustrations, terminology, and content reviewed by local partners, government ministries, and women and girls themselves to ensure cultural relevance and acceptance.

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## Service directory

Lists vetted local service providers for counseling, legal aid, and other support services.

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## Maximum accessibility

A forum where women and girls can ask questions and receive answers from GBV specialists in real-time, responding to user demand for peer connection and expert guidance.

# Future Expectations

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In a rapidly shifting humanitarian landscape, Laaha remains a vital tool to help women and girls access the information, connection, and care they need—safely, on their own terms, and wherever they are. UNICEF is focused on strengthening the platform’s foundations for scale, safety, and sustainability.



Following a comprehensive scalability assessment—and informed by insights from adolescent girls, frontline responders, and technology partners—key priorities for the coming year include:

- **Governance for accountability and inclusion:** UNICEF is establishing a Girls’ Council and an interagency advisory board to ensure Laaha remains responsive, community-driven, and aligned with sector-wide good practices.
- **Expanding inclusive access:** AI-powered translation and voiceover tools are being piloted to reach speakers of underrepresented languages like Swahili and Creole. This is part of a broader commitment to language justice and linguistic inclusion.
- **Reaching girls beyond the digital divide:** Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems are under development to support offline access in low-connectivity or device-constrained settings, particularly in rural or humanitarian contexts.
- **Planned deployments in 2026:** Laaha will be rolled out in six additional contexts — Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Sudan, and Syria—through close collaboration with local partners, UNICEF Country Offices, and government counterparts.
- **Additional content development:** As Laaha is deployed in new contexts, additional content has been identified through consultations with women and girl, including a series of modules providing information on the safety, health and rights of adolescent girls on migration journeys, and content on climate change and its impact on women and girls.
- **Deepening integration with education systems:** Through this project, UNICEF identified a clear need to pilot a systematic integration of Laaha into education settings in humanitarian contexts.



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When I got my period, I thought I was dying because no one told me about it. If I had something like Laaha, I could have known," said one user. While girls in Syria described it as "impossible to find a secure, reliable, comprehensive platform like this one" and expressed relief at "finally being able to access a platform without fear.



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