

## Findings on How to Adapt M&E Systems to Mitigate SEA risk

### Questions and Answers

The questions below were posed by participants during the Virtual launch of Empowered Aid's Toolkit for Planning and Monitoring Safer Aid Distributions, which took place on the 13th of July 2021. This is a summary of the Q&A chat box from the launch.

#### 1. Will the toolkit be available in languages other than English?

The toolkit will be available in French, Arabic and Spanish, translations forthcoming and will be posted on the website as they are ready. It is also remediated for accessibility by people living with low vision.

#### 2. Regarding sex-segregated distribution lines: Wondering whether the binary division creates any challenges (or dangers) for those who do not fit neatly into one category or the other (e.g., third gender or trans individuals).

Both contexts can be dangerous for people of diverse SOGIEs, for example:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-57604310>. This challenges public identification, but sex-segregated lines can offer safety for those who identify as women/girls. One example, from phase 1, of what refugee women in Uganda shared: *"...when the women and girls go to get the food; they stand in lines. While they are standing in the line, sometimes there are some men who are slapping their buttocks or touching them and some women get annoyed because there are some people who are not used to such behaviors. So, they just get annoyed and sometimes walk away or they just cry; like the young girls, they keep crying because their bodies are being touched... like in the current registration for account opening, there was a girl who was just standing in the line; and some men or some boys came and pulled that girl out of the line. They slapped her and the girl was crying. So, a certain woman came and took that girl in front to be served fast."*

Due to the fear of being harassed and/or abused while waiting in line, women and girls leave the lines and wait for the men and boys to get their assistance first. This example also highlights the links between SEA and different forms of GBV. Women stand outside of the lines and wait until everyone else gets their assistance, so they end up going home late. Consequently, their male partners accuse them of infidelity and lying which leads to the women being abused at home by their male partners. In that example you can see a link between SEA and intimate partner violence.

**3. Once the M&E tools made clear that risk of SEA was high (thinking here particularly of the ways COVID has made more respondents say they feel unsafe), did implementers use findings to adjust their program?**

Yes, new approaches have already been adopted like the sex segregated lines during food distribution and deploying more female security guards. We also implemented the door-to-door distribution modality, pre-assigned times for women and girls, and other recommendations as well.

To know more about the recommendations implemented to our distribution pilots in Lebanon and Uganda and the findings that came out from the pilots, visit GWI's [website](#).

**4. Can you also say a little more on sustained action, so that respect for rights becomes a culture?**

In terms of sustainability, we always ensure to go back to our women and girls' advisory group to not only check-up on them, but to also learn from them and directly understand their experience as co-researchers in our project. Many of them appreciate the skills they have learnt as part of our participatory workshops and use them to empower the community around them. As the project is coming to an end, we are making sure that Empowered Aid ideas live on through the activism of the women and girls and the different women centers we collaborated with.

Through our national Technical Advisory Groups (TAG) both in Lebanon and Uganda, our global TAG, the PSEA network, and the dissemination of our research, the Empowered Aid findings can continue to be used and be further disseminated globally.

**5. What are the transportation risks that women and girls face in Lebanon?**

Empowered Aid's Phase I findings revealed that SEA occurs not only at the distribution points, but also moving to and from distributions. Transportation actors, most notably taxi drivers, were identified as perpetrators of SEA. Our Phase 2 findings, notably from post-distribution household surveys and point of distribution questionnaires, revealed that taxi drivers were highly associated with SEA risk. Women and girls also mentioned the cost of transportation as a barrier to receiving aid and noted fear around taking taxis. In Uganda, women and girls often reported using "boda bodas" or motorcycle taxis, while in Lebanon they often use car taxis.

**6. How do the truck drivers in Uganda become potential perpetrators of GBV and how do they get into contact with the beneficiaries?**

In the distribution process according to the Bidibidi context, it takes 2-5 days to offload these trucks at the different distribution points in the settlements and hence have a long window where they move within the communities. This can lead to SEA-associated abuses.

**7. About truck drivers in Bidi Bidi, is there no possibility to provide them accommodation within a humanitarian compound of the hiring organization so that they don't mix with beneficiaries?**

Our NGO partner says this may be possible, if the trucks loaded with food are guaranteed safety and then the drivers are transported back to the nearing towns until the next day. This can be explored, but the ideal practice is to plan well and receive the trucks that can be offloaded there and then.

**8. Is a training guide for the truck drivers included in the toolkit?**

Yes, a training guide for the toolkit as well as one specifically for transport drivers is being finalized and will be uploaded to our Empowered Aid resources [website](#) and shared Box folder [here](#). For further information and details on training for transportation actors, please get in contact with any of the team members (emails below).

- Fatuma Nafish, *Empowered Aid Research Project Officer*, [nafish.fatuma@rescue.org](mailto:nafish.fatuma@rescue.org)
- Fred Nyero, *Gender and Protection Officer*, [fred\\_nyero@wvi.org](mailto:fred_nyero@wvi.org)

**9. What was the actual feedback from the truck-driver and other actors after the training? Do you think there are adaptations to be done?**

The truck drivers responded positively to the training we organized for them, and even stated that what the Empowered Aid findings report is happening does indeed happen. They recognized certain behaviors they were carrying out as harmful and pledged to stop and instead become change agents and cascade the knowledge they gained to other drivers who have not had the chance to participate in such trainings. Since this was the first training carried out, a review and consultation with the different stakeholders involved took place and informed the training facilitation materials being piloted.

**10. Does the agency hire the trucks from elsewhere or are they part and parcel of World Vision? Doesn't World Vision have its own set of transportation?**

Transporting food is the mandate of the World Food Programme, of which World Vision is a partner. World Vision does not organize the transport of food, but rather is tasked with organizing and overseeing distribution sites to which food is delivered.

**11. Is there an opportunity to promote community radios as a means of effectively disseminating information?**

There is one in the settlement where we work in Uganda, but the coverage is limited. This recommendation will be investigated for possible implementation.

In Bidi Bidi, we also have motorcycles mounted with radios (called “*boda boda talk talk*”) that we use to disseminate information in the communities. These motorcycles move around the settlement with key messages and can reach a big number of people, so this is used in areas with limited radio coverage.

**12. Is World Vision implementing these recommendations in other places where they do programming, or only in Bidi Bidi/Uganda?**

This has been a pilot in Uganda to generate knowledge and tools, which are now being disseminated to other World Vision programs.

**13. How do you work to ensure a balance between on the one hand protecting the women and girls (by e.g. distributing aid to their houses) and on the other hand not isolating the women and girls?**

After our findings revealed that there are risks of SEA in all points of the distribution, the door-to-door distribution modality was adapted in the Lebanon context to decrease risks when it comes to access of aid. However, the women and girls are still able to participate in other activities and access other services. For example, IRC in Uganda has women and girls’ centers where women and girls can access different services. Despite adapting the door-to-door distribution modality, women and girls are still being engaged deliberately in different spaces and through different activities.

The essential element of the Empowered Aid project is participation and the key to not isolating women and girls is to ensure they have accessible avenues to participate in designing and implementing the project, and are recognized as experts in contextual safeguarding. We are not only following women and girls’ expertise in this project, but we are also disseminating all findings to stakeholders and community members and leaders to make sure that everyone plays their part and holds each other accountable to putting in place women and girls’ recommendations.

It's also important to make sure that we work with other members of the community and ensure that the burden of safety is not only placed on the women. Therefore, engagement with other community groups and leadership structures within the settlement is essential. So is overall community engagement, so that when a woman or girl experiences violence, she is supported and not blamed for the violence that she have experienced. This holistic community engagement ensures safety of women and girls while they are accessing services.

**14. What is the efficiency of having gender segregated lines during the distribution? Is there a risk of having women and men in the same queue during distribution?**

The gender segregated lines are very efficient, it has even reduced the time the beneficiaries line up for food and easy crowd control, risks include bad touches to women and sexual comments.

**15. What kind of distribution is supposed to be done from door-door? What is the challenge in carrying out door to door distribution and how to tackle it?**

The door-to-door distribution was one of the recommendations that the women and girls gave us to decrease the risk of SEA, but at the same time it was an effective adaptation considering COVID-19. Women and girl refugees said that they felt much safer when the distribution team came to their homes. When you implement the door-to-door distribution, you eliminate the transportation risks since the women and girls don't have to travel to and from the site. Some of the challenges with the door-to-door distribution, is the risk of an all-male-team coming to the door of the houses. A recommendation would be to ensure a gender-mixed team distributing at the household level. This is very feasible in the Lebanon context where there are smaller settlements.

**16. Does the door-to-door approach require a lot of human resources and staff members and also take lot of time?**

It can be the case however, depending on the specific context, we have found it can also increase efficiency in some situations. We welcome you to get in touch with us to speak further, and to look at the results of the Lebanon pilots for food and for fuel vouchers, for more details there. These are on our [website](#) and in the Toolkit annexes in the [shared Box folder](#).

**17. Any findings on SEA reporting and referral mechanisms and its effectiveness within the refugee community?**

There is a section on "Safety and services" in each of the Phase 1 reports that includes findings on SEA reporting and response mechanisms, and their use by survivors, their families, and communities. Here is the link to the Uganda findings report:

<https://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs1356/f/downloads/GWI-IRC-Empowered%20Aid-Uganda%20Results%20Report-remed.pdf>

...and the Lebanon findings report:

<https://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs1356/f/downloads/GWI-CARE-EmpoweredAid-Lebanon-Results%20Report-remed.pdf>.

**18. How do we empower illiterate and semi-literate women and girls to report incidences of SEA? What are the most effective reporting mechanisms for reporting such mostly when perpetrators are influential aid workers?**

Within Empowered Aid's research, we emphasized prevention and listening to women and girls' as to what risks of SEA exist. We did not ask about specific incidents or perpetrators, but We always had referral mechanisms in place in case a specific case was reported. Our focus was on understanding the

contexts in which SEA is more likely to occur and putting in place mechanisms to make these situations safer.

To ensure that illiterate and semi-literate women and girls are aware of the available reporting mechanisms, in the distributions in Lebanon, different forms of visuals were used such as posters, dramas, and art so that the information was not only written out but also visualized. Since CARE International in Lebanon is part of the PSEA network, we had identified the PSEA focal point beforehand and ensured that all data collectors collecting data during distributions have the number of the focal point on hand and were able to provide it to the women and girls they talked with during distribution and post-distribution monitoring activities. The data collectors also had the hotline number and details on a small discrete flyer with graphics that make it more accessible to low-literacy populations. Another example is from UNICEF Lebanon, who applied Empowered Aid's findings in a large-scale cash assistance program, where they visualized the information for reporting mechanisms in all the offices for the financial service providers.

Another method is to ensure confidential toll-free lines that are run by trained team members who are aware of how to conduct case management.

**19. Through your interviews and work directly with women and girls, did you have specific recommendations for girls/children, in particular mitigation for risks to child-headed households? Are there any specific practices for children which you can recommend?**

We worked with girls aged 15 and above. Our findings during COVID highlighted an Increase in teenage marriages and pregnancies. We were keen to work with different partners who work with children and be part of networks for children safeguarding. Doing that allowed us to ensure having conversations with community members about these issues.

We saw the issue of early pregnancy resulting from SEA specifically in Uganda. We conducted an exercise around power, and some of the girls brought out that the decision over what to do with that pregnancy belonged to their community or their families. For those working on early pregnancies, forced and early marriage, there is a lot of overlap here worth to bring further. It is also important to make sure that children or adolescents are included in research. A great resource for doing that (to which Empowered Aid was proud to contribute an example) is from Save the Children here: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/so-you-want-involve-children-research-toolkit-supporting-childrens-meaningful-and-ethical>. Another recommendation given by the women and girls was to ensure childcare was available at distributions so that they are able to attend and receive aid without worrying about their children.

**20. This is great work! I am delighted to note that recommendations were implemented, and monitoring and evaluation and change has already been registered. Can you please say a little more about the course that you are planning to deliver?**

Due to COVID-19, we were not able to travel and share our findings in the ways we initially planned. In lieu of that, we have developed an open access, free online course that uses interactive case studies, videos, and testimonials from our research teams and TAG members sharing how they used Empowered Aid's tools and findings. This is directed at researchers and humanitarian workers interested in participatory research in humanitarian settings, with the key target audience being humanitarian actors wanting to implement safer distributions. This will be launched within the next few months and will be shared through our usual channels and on the GWI website.

We would also like to add a live component to the course so that members of the team and colleagues of Empowered Aid can be involved in taking the course members through the modules and having supported discussions.

### **21. Moving forward, do you plan to continue this research in other countries? (or in other areas of Lebanon/Uganda)**

We are hoping to secure funding to scale up Empowered Aid in different parts of Lebanon and Uganda to work specifically with other population groups, some of the groups that live with certain vulnerabilities, but also, we are looking to expand in each region in different countries: Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa and Jordan and Turkey in the MENA region, and Bangladesh in South Asia.

We hope to support aid actors in the implementation gap, not only with monitoring tools, but also with analyzing the data and using the data to act.

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#### **For further questions and information sharing, the team can be contacted through:**

The Global Women's Institute team:

- Alina Potts, *Research Scientist at GWI and Empowered Aid Project Lead*, [apotts@email.gwu.edu](mailto:apotts@email.gwu.edu)
- Elizabeth Hedge, *Empowered Aid Research Associate*, [ehedge@gwmail.gwu.edu](mailto:ehedge@gwmail.gwu.edu)
- Amelia Reese Masterson, *Independent research consultant on the Empowered Aid project*, [aresemasterson@gmail.com](mailto:aresemasterson@gmail.com)

The Lebanon team- CARE International in Lebanon:

- Loujine Fattal, *Empowered Aid Research Manager*, [loujinefattal@careliban.org](mailto:loujinefattal@careliban.org)
- Tala Chammas, *Empowered Aid Research Project Officer*, [tala.chammas@careliban.org](mailto:tala.chammas@careliban.org)

The Uganda team- International Rescue Committee:

- Hope Harriet, *Empowered Aid Research Manager*, [hope.harriet@rescue.org](mailto:hope.harriet@rescue.org)



- Fatuma Nafish, *Empowered Aid Research Project Officer*, [nafish.fatuma@rescue.org](mailto:nafish.fatuma@rescue.org)

The Uganda team- World Vision:

- Godfrey Twesigye, *Refugee Response MEAL coordinator*, [godfrey\\_twesigye@wvi.org](mailto:godfrey_twesigye@wvi.org)
- Brian Matsiko, *Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Officer*, [brian\\_matsiko@wvi.org](mailto:brian_matsiko@wvi.org)
- Fred Nyero, *Gender and Protection Officer*, [fred\\_nyero@wvi.org](mailto:fred_nyero@wvi.org)

To access all Empowered Aid Resources, please visit this [website](#). There you can find our toolkit, translated to French, Arabic, and Spanish. Additionally, you can find all our guides, briefs, and findings reports for both Lebanon and Uganda.

**Other websites and resources that include Empowered Aid examples or resources related to SEA:**

- [The Resource and Support Hub](#), The Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub (RSH) aims to support organizations in the aid sector to strengthen their safeguarding policy and practice against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH). The Hub is an open-access platform bringing together relevant guidance, *tools and research, and signposting quality-assured safeguarding support*
- [Save the Children handbook](#), the handbook contains guidelines on Including children in research on violence against children - A Resource Pack for Research Practitioners.
- CHS have also recently updated their [PSEAH Handbook](#), which now includes an example from Empowered Aid.