

EMPOWERED AID

TRANSFORMING GENDER AND POWER DYNAMICS IN THE DELIVERY OF HUMANITARIAN AID

Participatory action research with refugee women & girls to better prevent sexual exploitation & abuse—Lebanon Results Report

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EMPOWERED AID: TRANSFORMING GENDER AND POWER DYNAMICS IN THE DELIVERY OF HUMANITARIAN AID

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ACRONYMS

ATM: automated teller machine
CBO: community-based organization
CEDAW: Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
GBV: gender-based violence
GW: Global Women’s Institute
IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IRB: Institutional Review Board
IRC: International Rescue Committee

KII: key informant interview
NGO: non-governmental organization
NFIs: non-food items
PAR: participatory action research
PGD: participatory group discussion
POC: Protection of Civilian
PSEA: protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
QI: qualitative interview
SEA: sexual exploitation and abuse

SOP: standard operating procedure
TAG: Technical Advisory Group
UN: United Nations
UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR: United Nations Refugee Agency
URDA: Union of Relief & Development Associations
WASH: water, sanitation and hygiene
WHO: World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, a United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and Save the Children assessment first exposed the magnitude of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) perpetrated by members of the international humanitarian aid community among refugee populations (United Nations (UN), 2002). Almost two decades later, steps taken to strengthen protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) have focused on response mechanisms and punitive action toward perpetrators. While important, another critical aspect is understanding context-specific risks and taking proactive measures to mitigate them, while actively engaging affected populations in these accountability measures.

EMPOWERED AID EXAMINES SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN RELATION TO FOOD, WASH, AND SHELTER AID IN UGANDA AND LEBANON; AS WELL AS FUEL & FIREWOOD ASSISTANCE IN UGANDA, AND CASH ASSISTANCE IN LEBANON. THE TYPES OF AID WERE CHOSEN BY THE REFUGEE WOMEN & GIRLS INVOLVED.

THE RESEARCH

Empowered Aid is a multi-year, multi-country participatory action research project led by the Global Women's Institute (GWI). Operational partners in the first phase are CARE International in Lebanon and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Uganda. The study examines the mechanisms through which humanitarian aid is delivered, and how these processes might inadvertently increase the risks of SEA within affected populations, in order to address them. Its goal is to support the creation or adaptation of aid delivery models that actively work to reduce power disparities and give women and girls—as those most affected by SEA and other forms of gender-based violence—a sustained voice in how aid is delivered. The Lebanese non-governmental organization (NGO) Union of Relief & Development Associations (URDA) is joining the collaboration in Phase II, to put these findings into action by piloting refugee women and girls' recommendations.

Empowered Aid first sought to better understand how food, cash, shelter, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) aid delivery processes may increase risk of SEA for refugee women and girls living in northern Lebanon. The report shares findings from this phase of the study. It is participatory action research and engaged a core group of 26 Syrian refugee women and

girls living throughout urban Tripoli – Lebanon's second largest city located in the north of the country – as part of the research team. These women and girls shared their expertise through a series of participatory focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Participatory group discussions were also held with other community groups, such as refugee men and boys; host community women, girls, men, and boys; and vulnerable refugee women. Key informant interviews were conducted with key stakeholders from community leadership structures and humanitarian actors.

RESULTS

Over three months of data collection, the study found that sexual exploitation and abuse by aid and non-aid actors is pervasive in all four types of aid explored and across all points of the distribution process. Results showed that sexual exploitation and abuse was most frequently mentioned in relation to accessing shelter and cash assistance; during interactions at distribution points or moving to and from distributions. However, SEA also occurs in relation to trying to find out about or receiving information on collecting aid, registering for aid, or when storing aid.

Perpetrators were identified as aid or distribution actors but also taxi drivers, NGO-contracted repairmen or construction workers, landlords, religious leaders or staff at places of worship, and foreign men ("men from the Gulf") coming to Lebanon. Little clarity of or faith in reporting mechanisms, lack of support from families or communities, loss of aid, the normalization of SEA, and confusion around the identity of the perpetrator all serve as powerful deterrents to reporting sexual exploitation and abuse. Other forms of gender-based violence were mentioned in relation to accessing aid during data collection. While outside the specific scope of this study, this is important, actionable information for the range of actors working on gender-based violence (GBV) in Lebanon and is included in **Annexes 4 and 5**.

"IF THEY CAME TO HER HOUSE, SHE SHOULDN'T BE ALONE. THEY MAY HARASS HER IF SHE WAS ALONE, ESPECIALLY IF THEY WERE MEN AND MOST PROBABLY, THEY WILL BE MEN. THEY MAY ASK FOR SOMETHING IN RETURN FOR FIXING A CERTAIN DAMAGE, AND IF SHE DOESN'T AGREE, THEY MAY HURT HER. THEY MAY TRY TO GET CLOSE TO HER TO PROVIDE HER WITH THE SERVICES THAT SHE NEEDS." -QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW WITH REFUGEE ADOLESCENT GIRL

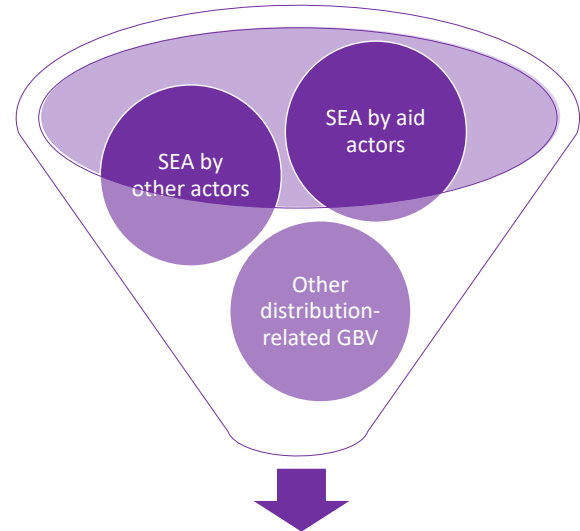
Overall, current distribution mechanisms are failing to create an environment in which women and girls are actively protected from sexual exploitation and abuse by aid and non-aid actors, as well as gender-based violence, when accessing life-saving aid. By adopting a **contextual safeguarding approach** when delivering aid, and prioritizing risk mitigation activities, key humanitarian stakeholders can improve the safety and dignity of aid delivery mechanisms.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **SEA and GBV was most noted in relation to shelter aid and cash distributions, followed by WASH and food.** This may reflect women’s exposure to shelter and cash assistance as aid delivery fluctuates in Tripoli, but also that the desire for cash among Syrian refugees to pay for basic necessities – rather than relying on food or non-food items (NFIs) – can put women and girls at risk of SEA and GBV. Workers visitation of homes for shelter or water and sanitation assessments, repairs, or construction, particularly when women and girls are alone, was noted as a situation of increased risk. Being able to maintain shelter aid, both in rent and repairs, was particularly notable in relation to how inadequate provision opens up space for SEA. Other forms of GBV were also most mentioned in relation to assessing shelter and cash assistance.
- **SEA was most frequently mentioned in relation to interactions at the point of distribution; and also mentioned across all other points of the distribution cycle including transporting items home (second-most mentioned), finding out about aid (access to information/communication), during registration/verification exercises, and safely storing or maintaining aid.** Traveling to/from distribution sites is one area that highlights how SEA risks extend from the ‘formal’ aid structure into the everyday reality of how these different types of aid are accessed. For example, while taxi drivers who perpetrate SEA are not a formal part of the aid system, without them the distribution would not function. If women and girls do not take taxis or other forms of public transport, they tend to walk long distances through unfamiliar neighborhoods, which can put them at higher risk for sexual harassment and assault, or other forms of GBV.
- **Women and girls were acknowledged as those most vulnerable to SEA by all participants.** Adolescent girls—especially those without parents—and widows were noted as especially at risk, as well as women and girls who are a family provider or caretaker (head of household) and those who lack income (either themselves or from a spouse).
- **Findings align with other recent assessments** such as studies by Amnesty International (2016) and the International Rescue Committee (2014) documenting Syrian women’s protection and security risks, including SEA, in Lebanon.

The full range of targeted recommendations put forward by women and girls is in the **Recommendations section** (page 14) of the main report.

Intersecting Dynamics of SEA and GBV



Women & girls faced with sexual abuse & exploitation in order to access life-saving aid

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN AID STAKEHOLDERS

- **Aid distribution systems must be adapted to more fully meet women and girls’ needs for shelter materials, cash assistance, WASH and food items in ways that minimize opportunities for exploitation and abuse by aid as well as non-aid actors. The most important way to do that is to ensure women & girls are part of program design.** Important considerations are outlined in their Recommendations at the end of this report, and include: actively supporting women and girls to safely and successfully access and withdraw cash assistance; offering transport or travel planning support for women and girls required to travel long distances in taxis, as well as taking action to reduce those distances; and mobilizing more female staff or mixed-gender teams for home repairs or maintenance of facilities.
- **Increase access to GBV services—such as healthcare, psychosocial support, and case management—while ensuring access to such services is not contingent on reporting specific instances of abuse, in recognition of the powerful deterrent this can be.** Shame and stigma, as well as the threat or fear of losing access to the aid they so desperately need, are part of the enabling environment for abuse that silences survivors. On a practical level, many women and girls described situations in which they do not know the exact identity or role of the person exploiting them, only that he is *telling* them he has power over how much aid they receive, or if they receive any at all. PSEA systems that prioritize information about the perpetrator’s identity over a response to the survivor’s other needs may inadvertently minimize reporting as survivors do not know, or are afraid to share, that level of detail but want help nonetheless.

- **Recognize women and girls as experts in contextual safeguarding and actively engage them in mechanisms designed to improve aid processes and protect against SEA.** A response to SEA that focuses only on reports related to specific persons misses many opportunities to respond to dangerous *situations*, which women, girls, and other community-based actors already know well and design their own strategies for avoiding (such as discouraging movement after dark, or self-organizing to travel in groups). In addition to bringing better accountability to perpetrators, there is also an urgent need for ‘contextual safeguarding’¹ approaches to mitigate and prevent SEA.
- **Specifically, senior management and safeguarding leads must take responsibility to reflect on their organization’s role in creating a ‘conducive context’ for abuse.** They must attend to the settings and people who represent ‘causes for concern’, dig deeper into these concerns, and act on them. They must also ensure perpetrators are held to account. **Monitoring & evaluation staff** also have a key role to play, as transparently monitoring safety and risk at all points in the distribution process and sharing this information among humanitarian actors as well as community structures, allows for proactive responses to dangerous situations and contributes to greater accountability in mitigating SEA (and other forms of distribution-related GBV) before they occur. Finally, these findings and the study tools (shared online) should be used for further **training and education**, particularly with social workers and frontline staff.

NEXT STEPS

Phase II of Empowered Aid will put this information to use in demonstrating how contextual safeguarding approaches can be applied to aid distribution systems, in collaboration with NGOs active in distributing food and NFIs. We will ‘pilot’ application of two of the recommendations from Phase I of Empowered Aid, and adapt post-distribution monitoring tools in order to better capture women and girls’ perceptions of risk and safety in relation to accessing information about distributions, registration/verification exercises, travel to and from distribution points, safety at distribution points, and safe storage of the items they receive. Outcomes of the work will include adapted program design, implementation, and M&E materials and tools, forming an evidence-based ‘toolkit’ that can be further adapted by other humanitarian actors to fit their context.

As noted in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) [Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action](#) (2015),² all humanitarian actors have a responsibility to mitigate risk of GBV. These findings, as well as the participatory approaches and tools shared, can support actors to further put the IASC GBV Guidelines recommendations into practice and better serve women and girls.



Women and girls are experts in contextual safeguarding. Here, adolescent girls discuss the community map they have made identifying points of safety and risk in their community.

¹ For further resources and information on contextual safeguarding, see: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/about/what-is-contextual-2-safeguarding>.

² To view the full IASC guidelines, see: <https://gbvguidelines.org/en>.

BACKGROUND

In 2002, a UNHCR/Save the Children assessment first exposed the magnitude of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) perpetrated by members of the international humanitarian aid community among refugee populations (United Nations (UN), 2002). This galvanized the creation of internal mechanisms to prevent and respond to SEA, including an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from SEA, the adoption of standards of behavior for United Nations (UN) staff, partners and contractors, and a 2006 Statement of Commitment endorsed by 42 UN and 36 non-UN entities (IASC, 2006). In response, NGOs began to institutionalize SEA reporting and complaint mechanisms. The IASC *Minimum Operating Standards for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* were established, codes of conduct created, and community-based complaints mechanisms developed. However, the coverage and effectiveness of these mechanisms has been limited, with minimal uptake in reporting abuses due to a lack of access (including limited participation during programs and no available feedback mechanisms), information, and trust in the process or organizations involved (Harvey, 2015; Lattu, Martin, Ahmed, & Nyambura, 2008; Spangaro, et al., 2013). As Harvey (2015) notes, “People in these contexts perceive an unclear or unjust rationale for who receives aid and who doesn’t, and there are disincentives, stemming from a sense of resignation or disempowerment, to report instances of corruption and abuse of power.”

While existing SEA response mechanisms are an important step in creating accountability in the humanitarian sector, much of the focus on addressing SEA has primarily rested on establishing reporting mechanisms and punitive actions against perpetrators of such violence rather than pro-active measures to mitigate risk and prevent abuse and exploitation from occurring. For example, **there has been little examination of the mechanisms through which humanitarian aid itself is delivered and how these processes might increase the risks of SEA within the affected populations.** At best, efforts to improve aid delivery models to reduce rates of SEA in humanitarian contexts have been limited and conducted in ways that do not allow for meaningful, long-term engagement with affected women and girls. **More consideration is needed to create aid delivery models that actively work to reduce power disparities and give women and girls a sustained voice in how aid is delivered.**

Existing data on SEA provides some insight into a complex and multifaceted issue. Research in South Sudan by GWI and partners shows approximately 20% of respondents in Juba and nearby protection of civilian (PoC) sites reported exchanging sex for goods, services and/or favors; and due to fears around reporting this is likely an underestimate (GWI and IRC, 2017).³ In 2004-5, CARE Burundi used an innovative ‘invisible

theatre’ technique, which identified “Fear that they would be excluded from the lists [as] the main factor which led women to submit to requests for sexual favors” (Zicherman, 2006, p. 31). Their recommendations led to improvements in how food distributions were organized, indicating participatory action research is an effective tool for change on this issue. In Syria, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported that women and girls face sexual exploitation and abuse at aid distributions, while at work, and when attempting to secure housing; SEA is further exacerbated by lack of income and poverty (UNFPA, 2017). Empowered Aid responds to the need for increased efforts to document the lived experiences of women and girls and their interactions with the humanitarian aid system, in order to understand the power dynamics that exist between those delivering aid and those receiving it.

ABOUT EMPOWERED AID

Empowered Aid is a multi-country, participatory action research project led by the Global Women’s Institute (GWI) at the George Washington University, in partnership with CARE International in Lebanon and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Uganda. It seeks to further examine the mechanisms through which material aid—in Lebanon: **food, WASH, shelter and cash assistance**—is delivered, and how these processes might inadvertently increase the risks of SEA within affected populations, in order to address them. Its goal is to support the creation or adaptation of aid delivery models that actively work to reduce power disparities and give women and girls a sustained voice in how aid is delivered. The phases of the project are further described in Figure 1.

Intersecting Dynamics of SEA and GBV

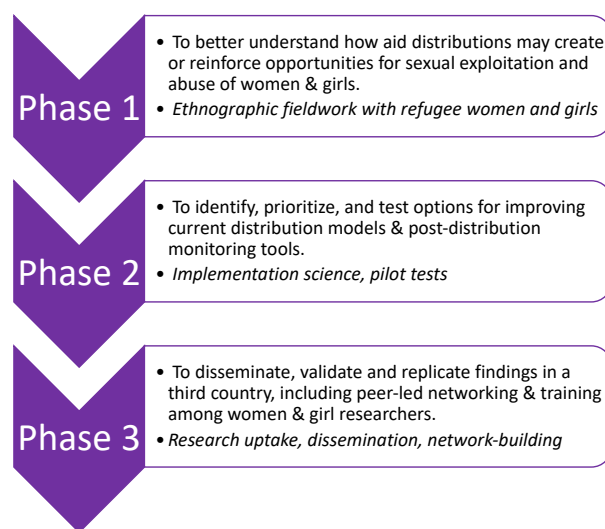


Figure 1: Phases of Empowered Aid

CONTEXT IN LEBANON

As of 31 December 2019, UNHCR had registered 914,648 Syrian refugees in Lebanon, of which 52% are women and girls (UNHCR). However, there are likely a high number of

³ Summary report & policy brief also available at: <https://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu/conflict-crisis>.

refugees who are not registered given that UNHCR suspended registration in May 2015 following a Government decision. Although unregistered refugees are still eligible for assistance, they face additional risks due to lack of documentation such as restrictions on their freedom of movement. A large number of refugees live in makeshift tents (19%) and in non-residential structures such as construction sites, animal sheds, and garages (15%), which offer little protection from the elements and leave them exposed to extreme weather conditions, lacking access to basic services and in-kind assistance, and faced with other protection concerns. Distributions are often not well coordinated as information on distribution availability and eligibility criteria, timing, and accessibility is often not available, confusing, or difficult to find. In Lebanon, a 2014 IRC study reported that sexual exploitation and harassment was one of the three biggest challenges Syrian women and girls faced in their daily lives (International Rescue Committee, 2014). In addition, SEA incidents are often under-reported due to the fear of stigmatization and lack of effective feedback and complaint mechanisms as well as clear reporting pathways.

METHODS

Empowered Aid utilizes participatory action research (PAR), a method that proactively acknowledges and addresses power imbalances between the affected population and researchers/humanitarians. Just as participation lies at the center of humanitarian response, it is a critical element in applied, operational research. The project is grounded in formative ethnographic work with refugee women and girls, to safely take an active role in asking and answering questions about their own lives.

Ethics and safety were at the center of the research throughout. The George Washington University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved the research protocol, and a local Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was set up to review all tools and advise the research team. Ethical and safety considerations included participatory risk-benefit analysis among stakeholders; specialized training for research team members, based on leading guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) and PATH (2005); involvement of CARE's SEA focal point and a clear referral pathway for any cases of SEA or other needs identified; and ongoing reflection processes with participants to allow them to raise concerns in a variety of ways. The data collection process began in April 2019 with Participatory Action Research (PAR) Workshops held in Ruwwad Al Tanmiya, a local organization and CARE programming partner in Tripoli, with refugee women and girls from Syria, selected through participatory discussions facilitated by CARE's Community Based Organization (CBO) partners including Ruwwad Al Tanmiya, Basmet Amal and SHIFT-Social Innovation Hub. The PAR workshops shared power with women and girl members of the research team by discussing study objectives, key themes

and concepts; organizing the data collection process and jointly reviewing tools; and inviting them to vote on the four types of aid to be focused on. Women and girls first took part in a participatory group discussion (PGD), involving exercises (free listing & ranking, open-ended stories) around the challenges and violence women girls face when accessing aid.

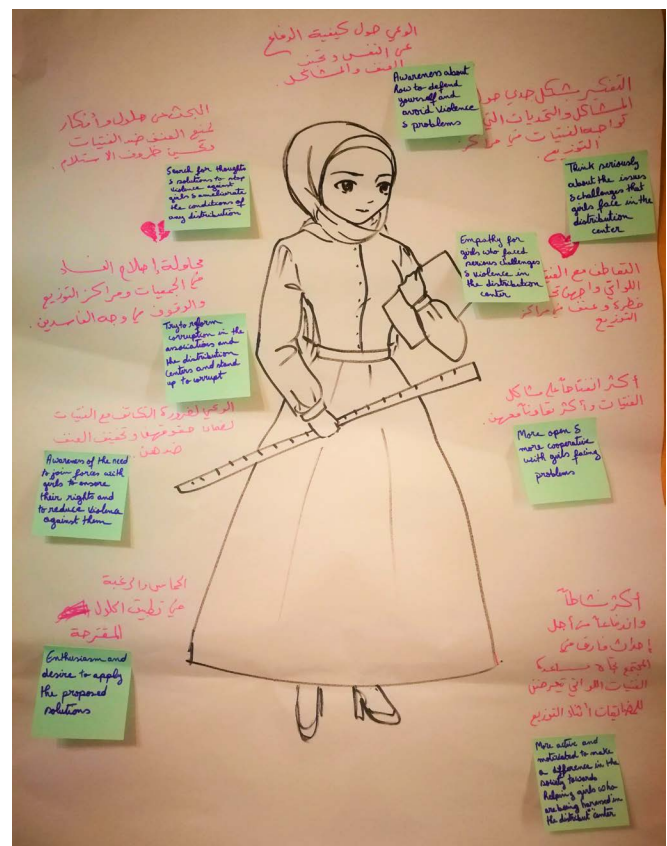


Figure 2: Example of body mapping exercise with adolescent girls.

They then carried out structured observations around each type of aid, meeting approximately every two weeks to share these with staff-researchers through semi-structured qualitative interviews (QIs). Afterward, a second round of PGDs were held, using methods such as community mapping to identify risks and safe/unsafe places in their communities; as well as body mapping to reflect on their participation in the study. Mid-point reflection workshops were held with staff, women, and girls in June so that they could step back and reflect on the process, as well as provide the staff-research team with inputs and feedback to improve data collection for the rest of the project. To solicit input from other members of the refugee, host, and humanitarian community, PGDs were held with refugee men, boys; vulnerable refugee women; and host community women, girls, men and boys living in Tripoli. In addition, the research team conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with community leaders and humanitarian personnel.

The research team included staff from GWI and CARE, as well as 26 women and girls from the refugee community.⁴ Overall, eight

⁴ Initially one more woman and two more girls participated, but stopped due to returning to Syria or pursuing further studies.

were adolescent girls aged 16-17 years, eight were women aged between 18 - 34 years, and ten were between the ages of 35 - 52. Four women aged 18-19 years preferred to take part in the girls' research team due to comfort and relatability in group discussions. Twenty-two of the 26 women and girls participating responded to a series of demographic questions: of those responding, half of the women were married (50%), seven were single and one widowed. Five (5) of the adolescent girls reported being single. All of the women who reported being married had children, including children under 18. Due to contextual sensitivity, single women and adolescent girls were not asked if they had children. The women and girls reported living in Lebanon an average of seven years (range of 5 to 10 years), and 12% (2 women and 1 girl) identified as having a disability. Data collection took place between May and August, with 95 interviews and 10 participatory group discussions (PGDs) held with this core group of 26 women and girls, as well as 7 community PGDs and 11 key informant interviews (KIIs) with community leaders and humanitarian personnel. A total of 70 participants took part in the data collection process. See **Annex 2** for further details.

Qualitative data was first transcribed in Arabic and then translated into English for analysis. It was analyzed by GWI and CARE researchers using Dedoose, a mixed methods software tool, to apply thematic codes and synthesize into preliminary findings by type of aid, point in the distribution process, and information related to safety and services. The results of the analysis were then represented visually to share with women and girls during Action Analysis workshops, so that literacy was not a barrier for participating in the analysis process. Women and girl team members validated findings and prioritized their own recommendations for how to make distributions safer (see below and **Annex 3**). These recommendations will be utilized in Phase II of Empowered Aid, in which GWI, CARE, and a Lebanese distribution partner Union of Relief & Development Associations (URDA) will test the recommendations by using them to adapt distribution models and measure whether these adaptations increase women and girls' perception of safety (and/or decrease their perception of risks) when accessing aid. Findings of this qualitative study should be interpreted while keeping its limitations in mind. While participants were asked to speak freely with their responses kept anonymously, social desirability bias may have led them to be less critical of humanitarian aid staff than they otherwise would. Furthermore, while the data collection teams noted that only de-identified data would be shared through this research, participants may have been concerned about potential repercussions from perpetrators of SEA if they disclosed information about these abuses. The degree of critical feedback shared indicates this may not have been the case, but it is important to note. Recall bias may have also affected respondents' abilities to remember some events. To maximize safety, and in line with the study's participatory action principles, women and girls already interacting with NGOs/CBOs were approached to ask

if they wanted to participate. Those who chose to participate were of diverse ages, marital status and several identified as living with disabilities, and disabled peoples' organizations were also interviewed for the study. Despite this intersectional approach, there are other groups whose experiences may not be represented. Further, study participants lived in an urban context and it is likely that those living in other areas of Lebanon would have other experiences.

Despite these limitations, findings are consistent with those from Empowered Aid in Uganda, which was conducted among a rural, refugee settlement (camp)-based population, indicating that the main themes identified here hold true across contexts. Findings are also consistent with other studies in Lebanon (see the section on triangulation within the Discussion). Qualitative research is not meant to provide generalizable statistics around prevalence, therefore the inability to do so is not a limitation; gathering quantitative data safely and ethically is especially challenged by the strong deterrents to reporting described here, as well as general challenges to quantitative accuracy such as the lack of census data in Lebanon. Overall, this study can be seen as one "piece" of a larger "puzzle" in which we can better see the ways in which SEA manifests among women and girls living in refugee contexts.

FINDINGS

This section describes findings regarding sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). Women and girls also spoke of other forms of GBV; this information is captured in **Annexes 4 and 5**.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & ABUSE ASSOCIATED WITH TYPES OF AID: FOOD, WASH, SHELTER, CASH ASSISTANCE

Women and girls reported sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) before, during and after they access the four types of aid explored in this study. The women, girls, and other refugee and host community members consulted revealed the multiple faces of SEA perpetration by those who use their connection (or insinuated connection) to aid to exploit and abuse others: humanitarian workers, security actors, government employees, host community members, landlords, contractors, religious leaders, foreign men, and fellow refugees. SEA and other forms of GBV (see Annexes 5 and 6) were most frequently reported in relation to shelter and cash assistance.

When accessing food aid

Although more than half of the refugee population in Lebanon receive food assistance through cash or voucher installments by WFP and partners, often entities such as national or foreign religious groups, or local organizations, distribute food parcels as in-kind assistance in targeted locations. Therefore, in the

initial workshop food aid was one of the types of aid women and girls selected to be the focus of this research. During the course of the research, refugee women and girls, host community girls, and key informants reported that sexual exploitation and abuse occurs before, during and after women and girls access food aid. When attempting to access food aid, women and girls noted they may face SEA if they travel outside the region where they live to collect food because they are not familiar with the area of distribution. During food distributions, women and girls stated they are asked for sexual relationships or to “please” aid workers sexually in exchange of food. Moreover, disorganization, chaos, and overcrowding at the distribution points reportedly open up a space for harassment and targeting of women and girls by refugee boys and men who are there to benefit from the distribution, in addition to aid workers.

“I saw with my own eyes, an old man letting a young woman walk before him. He may tell her that if she goes out with him, he would give her a box daily.”

-Participatory group discussion with refugee women

Reports also show that transportation is yet another challenge which leaves women and girls vulnerable to harassment and abuse by taxi drivers who attempt to sexually exploit them on their way to or from food distribution centers.

“This was what the driver offered me. He asked if I needed money, I refused. Then he asked if I needed food, I told him that I could manage. Also, he offered to take me on a cruise, I refused. I had a strong enough personality to face him, but not all women are strong.”

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

When accessing WASH assistance⁵

Participatory group discussions with refugee and host community women and girls’ groups and refugee boys identified WASH aid workers—specifically suppliers or service providers—as perpetrating SEA by making water and sanitation repairs or assistance contingent on sex. Widows and female heads of household were noted as particularly vulnerable.

“If they came to her house, she shouldn’t be alone. They may harass her if she was alone, especially if they were men and most probably, they will be men. They may ask for something in return for fixing a certain damage, and if she doesn’t agree, they may hurt her. They may try to get close to her to provide her with the services that she needs.”

-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl

Women and girls also reported workers at distribution points offering to distribute WASH items more quickly to younger women and girls than to others (by serving them first or

taking them to the front of the line) in exchange for sex. According to one adolescent girl respondent, aid workers take advantage of girls most often because they are still young and impressionable, and often think about their family before themselves, therefore may be more susceptible to exploitation because their family needs the assistance.

When accessing shelter assistance

Similarly, shelter aid was reported by refugee women and girls, refugee men and a key informant as a means of sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers, landlords, “owners” of private organizations, taxi drivers, and foreign men or sheikhs who visit Lebanon. For example, it was noted that aid workers come to do shelter assessments or repairs – or come under the pretext of house repairs – but instead ask women and girls for sex or a sexual relationship in exchange for money or shelter aid. This more commonly occurs when women and girls are alone in the house with no men or boys present. Offering of rent payments, winterization aid, and/or higher placement on a registration/distribution list was highlighted by respondents as the main promises made in exchange for sex.

In specific cases, foreign men or sheikhs (often reported to be “from the Gulf”) who visit Lebanon—sometimes to distribute aid—offer to pay rent or other expenses in exchange for sexual relationships that can result in marriage, pregnancy, or abandonment. One key informant identified Lebanese men in this, saying they offer to marry Syrian women and/or hire them in exchange for sex, in order to “protect” them from being exploited by other men. Widowed, divorced or single women and adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to this type of exploitation.

“Yeah it can be for example, houses where there are girls that are, you know, the contractors that are doing the shelter repair might like to come back to that house, you know, more times, you know, do extra more thorough work that takes more visits. We also have had some cases around where women have tried to offer themselves to the people who are assessing the house to see whether they are, what’s the word, could be put on the list for upgrades or housing, then some of the women would have felt the need for them to be on the list, they’d get to offer themselves, so there I know, the cases that we heard.”

-Key informant interview with humanitarian actor

When accessing cash assistance⁶

Accessing cash assistance was cited as a challenge for women and girls by refugee and host community women and girls, as well as key informants. Women and girls reported sexual exploitation and abuse by workers registering them for cash assistance or distributing automated teller machine (ATM) cards,

⁵ WASH assistance in Lebanon includes in-kind distributions—which have reduced in scale but are still carried out, especially by local and non-traditional actors (for example of menstrual and other hygiene materials)—as well as construction and maintenance of shared and household-level WASH facilities.

⁶ “Cash assistance” refers to the many ways in which cash is provided within humanitarian assistance in Lebanon, for example through multi-purpose cash cards, on an as-needed basis in association with protection or other basic needs, etc.

who offer cash assistance in exchange for sexual relationships and/or threaten women and girls with other types of violence if they refuse. It was noted in three participatory group discussions that vulnerable women - specifically those who are economically vulnerable, widows or divorced - may enter into sexual relationships in exchange for cash assistance offered by aid workers because they are in need.

“Employees who work in the United Nations or another organization, ask women for something in return for aid, like an amount of 100 000 LBP or 100 dollars, in return for going out together. A lot of things like that happened. A lot of women were deprived of aid. I know a girl who was deprived of aid. She used to receive 100 dollars a month, and the person who was giving her the money, asked for her hand in marriage, but she refused, because he has a family, and she didn’t want to ruin his family, so he stopped giving her the 100 dollars.”

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

“FACILITATOR: What are the types of violence that women and girls are exposed to when withdrawing money from this card?

PARTICIPANT: They might be asked for something in return, in order to receive the cash assistance... they might be harassed or something.

FACILITATOR: What do you mean? Can you tell me more?

PARTICIPANT: She might go to the center or to the organization to receive the assistance and the employee there might ask her to do something in order to grant her the assistance... although she is registered and has the right to take the assistance, he asks for something in return... he might ask her to go out with him, for example... she is obliged to...”

-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE DISTRIBUTION PROCESS

Distributing aid is a multi-faceted process that starts with ensuring those affected by conflict or disaster know about the aid they are entitled to and continues through ensuring they can safely store and use the items they receive. In recognition of this, women and girls involved in Empowered Aid fieldwork made structured observations around SEA at different points in the distribution process, for the four types of aid focused on. Below we share findings regarding sexual exploitation and abuse in relation to:

- How distribution information is communicated;
- How registration is understood and conducted;
- The point of distribution;
- Transportation to and from the point of distribution;
- Storing or maintaining distributed items.

When communicating or giving information about distributions

Aid workers may sexually exploit and abuse women and girls by using information on registration or distribution to their advantage, making women and girls believe they will not gain access to aid unless they enter into sexually exploitative relationships. They may create confusion (or fail to dispel it) in regard to distribution criteria, or take advantage of the information they have about women and girl’s vulnerability status. This was mentioned during participatory group discussions (PGDs) and qualitative interviews (QIs) with refugee women and girls, as well as PGDs with refugee men and vulnerable refugee women, and key informant interviews. Refugee women, girls and men reported that this can happen in homes when aid workers or contractors visit to inspect and gather information on the state of shelter or WASH facilities. Additionally, in a PGD with adolescent girls, they reported SEA by some people who pretend to set up organizations that distribute aid. One respondent, a refugee woman, noted that

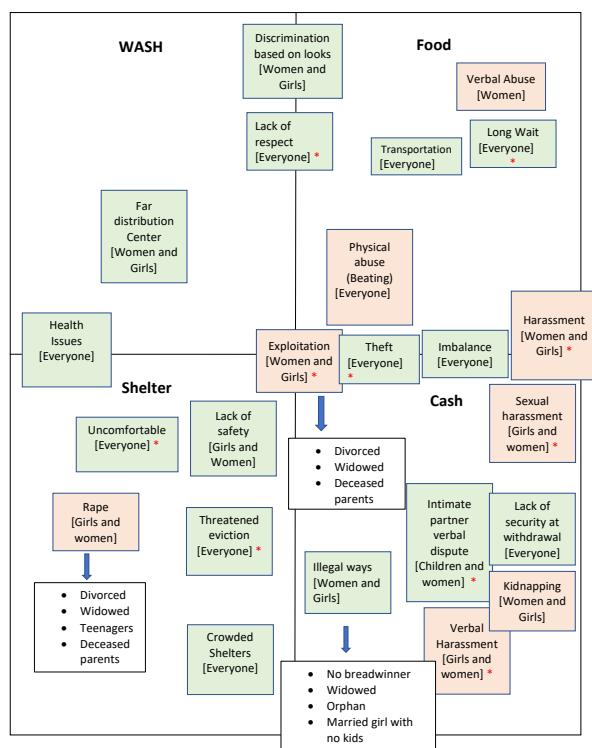


Figure 3: An example of the free listing and ranking exercise during a participatory group discussion with refugee women, exploring the different risks and violence women and girls face when accessing WASH, food, shelter, and cash aid. **Key:** green sticky notes = challenges; orange sticky notes = types of violence; white sticky notes = vulnerable groups.

Women and girls generally spoke positively about having ATM cards and being able to withdraw cash from any ATM machine across Lebanon and spend it on their essential needs, food or otherwise. However, due to lack of awareness on how to use the cards, they stated they might face sexual exploitation when they go alone to the ATM. Adolescent girls stated that women and girls can be vulnerable to SEA when they are not able to withdraw the full amount of money because they don’t know how to use the ATM.

taxi drivers may ask for information on where distributions may take place in order to sexually exploit women and girls going to distributions.

FACILITATOR: *If we want to talk about the kinds of violence a girl could face when she registers for food aid or after that, what kinds of violence might she face on her way or when receiving it?*

PARTICIPANT: *Mostly what I've mentioned before such as flirting, harassment, racism, and exploitation.*

FACILITATOR: *In what ways?*

PARTICIPANT: *It's mostly by the owners of the organizations.*

FACILITATOR: *So, what would they tell the girls?*

PARTICIPANT: *Well, if they have all of the information about her and know she is in great need and she has no other resource, they might threaten not giving her anything but for something in return, and of course he would use her being a girl.*

FACILITATOR: *And what if she refused?*

PARTICIPANT: *The least thing that could happen is that she gets nothing. But I don't know if he would do other things to her or force her. So, the least thing is that she doesn't get aid, unless he has her in mind, since then he might not wait her to accept and would just force her. He waits for her to accept at first, but if she didn't, he would force her."*

-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl

During registration exercises

Refugee women, girls, and men, as well as key informants from the humanitarian community, reported that aid workers or individuals involved in registration or verification exercises sometimes offer to register women and girls more quickly in exchange for sex. Several refugee women and girls also reported that refugee women, specifically those who lack familial support or a male companion, may enter into a sexual relationship with aid workers to speed up their registration because they urgently need the promised aid or money. It was also highlighted that workers tended to identify and favor girls they are interested in or deem "attractive," for example by taking them to the front of the line.

FACILITATOR: *Do you face any challenges while receiving aid there?*

PARTICIPANT: *Yes, overcrowding and turns. The employee working there has a very ugly character. He is a Sheikh, yet he used bad language and despises women and lets beautiful girls only pass. All women are complaining from this man, but no one dares to speak a word."*

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

At the point of distributions

The point of distribution was by far the most frequently mentioned point in the distribution process at which SEA occurs. Refugee women and girls, and key informants from the humanitarian community, reported instances in which male aid workers come into homes to undertake shelter or water and sanitation repairs and perpetrate SEA. They may visit frequently because they know a woman or girl is at home alone, make unwanted verbal and/or physical advances, ask for sex, or request to marry a girl in the home, with the implication or explicit statement that further assistance is dependent on this.

Other examples included aid workers or employees at places of worship (such as mosques, which can be the site of distribution activities) offering aid to refugee girls or women—particularly divorced or widowed women, or young girls—in exchange for sex either at the site or later.

"For example, maybe in exchange of the food aid they will degrade her as though she's not capable of defending herself...because she's weak and not living in her own country, he would want to take advantage of her. Like, if you want to take food aid you have to let me harass you or something. Or because she's there and she's taking food aid from him, he takes advantage of the opportunity and acts that way because she's in need."

-Community participatory group discussion with host community adolescent girls

Specific incidents reported by refugee women and girls highlighted arranged marriages by men who distribute assistance, which are used for sex and end as soon as a few days later, when the men may return to their home countries if they are foreign. These are often called "convenience marriages" and girls and widows were identified as particularly vulnerable groups.

Transporting items home

Traveling to distribution sites and transporting aid home was second to point of distribution as the part of the distribution process in which SEA was most frequently mentioned, with refugee women, girls, and men; host community women; and key informants from the humanitarian community noting this as a particularly risky point in the distribution process. This was mentioned most frequently in relation to food aid as women and girls struggle to transport heavy food rations, with reports stating that aid workers or taxi drivers offer to pick up or transport food home and then demand sex in exchange. Women also reported taxi drivers may offer financial support and a comfortable livelihood to them in exchange for a sexual relationship. Taxi drivers will also reportedly drive women and girls into isolated and unknown places and then ask for sex in exchange for returning the woman or girl safely. Lastly, in the participatory group discussion with refugee men, it was reported

that fellow passengers in taxis offer to pay for a woman or girl's fare in exchange for sex.

"I went to receive the food assistance. I took a taxi, and the driver said this... he asked me if I accept the offer... he swore that he wouldn't say a word to my husband... he said that he would give me the amount I ask for \$1000... \$2000... I didn't accept... I didn't accept at all... I am married and I hate it... I have a lot to worry about, I don't want to have something new to worry about... I am done with all of this..."

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

Storing or maintaining the aid received (including upkeep of shelter and WASH facilities)

Women and girls involved in the study shared examples of aid workers, landlords, or employers offering to repair houses or pay rental fees in exchange for sex / sexual relationships. According to them, women and girls are forced into sexual relationships to earn money so the family can provide for themselves, pay for rent, and maintain the apartments and space they need to store aid. This is one of the ways in which being able to safely maintain the aid received, such as shelter aid, can also lead to risks of sexual exploitation and abuse. In the example below, we can see how the quality of the aid provided has a direct relationship to the level of risk.

"PARTICIPANT: [Speaking about a woman who was sharing housing with others and wanted to improve her living conditions]: I know someone who didn't accept to live with people and decided to find a job, but her boss makes her stay until a late hour and obliged her to do something..."

-Participatory group discussion with refugee adolescent girls

Additional quotes on SEA during the distribution process can be found in **Annex 1: Further Quotes from Qualitative Analysis**.



Figure 4: A visual representation of findings used in the Action Analysis workshops with women and girls to facilitate sharing and participatory analysis. Here, you see the ways in which aid distributions may increase risk to women and girls, including while obtaining transport to/from the site, or while registering.

SAFETY AND SERVICES

Safety Risks and Unsafe Places Identified by Women and Girls

Women and girls were asked about factors or places of SEA risk within distribution processes, and groups that are most vulnerable. According to participatory groups with refugee women, girls, host community men and women, and vulnerable refugee women, as well as qualitative interviews with refugee girls, refugee women and girls without a male provider, spouse, or familial support (i.e. single, divorced, and widowed women and orphaned girls) were identified as targets by perpetrators willing to exploit their vulnerability by seeking sexually exploitative relationships in exchange for aid.

"PARTICIPANT: There isn't any girl who feels safe, honestly.

FACILITATOR: Maybe someone protects her... maybe she is experiencing....

PARTICIPANT: Girls who live with their parents are protected by them... married women are protected by their husbands... mostly girls who aren't married and who don't have parents live in danger.

FACILITATOR: So, girls who feel the least safe are girls who don't live with their parents, you mean orphans... girls who aren't married... alright... who are the girls who feel safe the most?

PARTICIPANT: Only married girls do; the others have a tough life..."

-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl

Adolescent girls were commonly cited by key informants, refugee women and girls, and refugee boys as particularly vulnerable to SEA and GBV as they have less access to information and less decision-making power, may be singled out by those distributing aid, and are more likely to stay silent for fear of community or family backlash. Younger women and girls who are perceived as attractive can also be targeted at distribution points or when workers come into homes.

Lack of a support system may coincide with economic vulnerability, which can be further exploited by targeting women and girls who lack money for basic needs (i.e. expenses such as rent or money to pay for food for them and their children), or for whom the aid amount is insufficient:

"Focusing on the refugee community living here, so there's two elements to get to there, so we can talk about the economic situation which the access to work is really, really low of the Lebanese laws and of the competition and the tensions between the host community and the refugee communities. So, access to employment for economical, more economically we can say empowerment, is really very narrow in terms of opportunity. And there are a lot of jobs that put women at risk, because of desperation to find anything to work. Women and girls are exposed to a lot of abuse in all terms."

-Key informant interview with local humanitarian actor



SEA perpetrators were most frequently identified as aid workers sexually exploiting women and girls by offering access to aid (or denying aid if a woman or girl said no), an increase in the quantity of aid, or better quality items (i.e. water tanks or repairs done in an apartment), in exchange for sex.

"FACILITATOR: No equality in distribution?"

PARTICIPANT: They may give you, and then not give you before a while.

FACILITATOR: It depends on the support they get. What else?

PARTICIPANT: Harassment may occur, or they may ask for something in return for cash assistance.

PARTICIPANT: They may take advantage of the situation or ask for something in return."

-Participatory group discussion with refugee adolescent girls

Taxi drivers were also identified as perpetrators who may attempt to sexually exploit them by driving to a remote location, offer money in exchange of sex, and/or offer to deliver the aid personally to their house and demand sex as a form of payment upon arrival.

Women and girls identified men who claimed to be the "owners of organizations" that control the distribution operation, i.e. deciding who did and did not receive aid, as perpetrators. According to key informants, some government officials who have access to humanitarian aid were also identified as perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse, providing women and girls with access to aid in return for sexually exploitative relationships. As well as "men from the Gulf" who come bringing aid or promises of aid in order to enter into sexually exploitative relationships with refugee women and girls; and men from the host community or even the refugee community who take advantage of their need for assistance, shelter, or "male protection" to enter into relationships with them.

"SEA has been [reported] to us in the programming by the government officials. For example, 'I would not let you get through the check point unless I sleep with you or unless you give me money or unless I harass you.'"

-Key informant interview with humanitarian actor

"FACILITATOR: What are other problems that pose danger to women and girls?"

PARTICIPANT: Mostly, being exploited by the owner of the organization. He would offer to deliver the box for her in return for something."

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

Figure 5: A community map drawn by refugee adolescent girls during a participatory group discussion, in which they first drew a map of their community, then identified distribution sites, safe and safe/unsafe areas, types of violence that may occur, and places girls could go for support.

Limited or no knowledge on their rights as refugees, and the mere fact of being a refugee dependent on aid, were also identified as risk factors by refugee women and girls, host community girls and boys, and refugee men.

In addition to the above risk factors, refugee women and girls may also become vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse when moving in certain places, or even in their own homes. In qualitative interviews with refugee women and girls and participatory group discussions with refugee women, girls, and men, being at home alone with male service providers, workers, or contractors who are visiting was deemed as unsafe and an enabling environment for sexual exploitation and abuse. Other unsafe or risky places and times were identified as being inside distribution centers where aid workers are distributing food, WASH, or shelter items; traveling to receive aid in isolated areas; and riding inside taxis alone with drivers.

Perpetrators of SEA

In participatory group discussions with refugee women and girls, host community men, and refugee men, and in one-on-one interviews with refugee women and girls and key informants,

How families and communities respond to SEA

The ways in which survivors' families and communities respond to SEA can be helpful or harmful, as described in interviews and group discussions with refugee women, girls, and men; host community women, boys and men; and community leadership. Some family members will support the survivor and help connect her to services or reporting mechanisms. Others might blame or shame the survivor, limit her freedom of movement, choose not to believe her, and, in some cases, force her to marry the perpetrator or perpetrate further violence against her. During individual interviews, women and girls described that economically vulnerable families may neglect, encourage or force their female family members into relationships because they need the assistance and/or money.

"FACILITATOR: *If the girl tells her parents that someone took advantage of her, what would their reaction be?*

PARTICIPANT: *Some people don't mind, if they're in need. Things like that happen a lot, by the way. Some people refuse to be taken advantage of, even if they're poor and in need, but a lot of people accept, because they need money to provide for themselves and pay the rent."*

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

Community support also comes in different forms. Stigma as well as blaming and shaming were reported as common reactions from the community, with even some community members claiming that they did not believe SEA was a form of violence and instead deemed it as a consensual relationship:

"I don't think that she referred to anyone. How can she make a complaint about him, if it was consensual? Of course, he asked for something in return for installing a water tank for her."

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

Several women expressed the desire for their daughters' lives to be different:

"Does the woman exist for this? I am confused, honestly. I don't even want to marry my daughters; I want to educate them and help them learn and be independent... I want them to live their lives, to get jobs, and to be able to live the way they want without being humiliated..."

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

Women and girls identified caseworkers and NGO staff members as someone they could talk to without feeling judged, in comparison to family or community members. Some community members, leaders in the community, and police reportedly believed women or girls when they report sexual exploitation and abuse, while some might take advantage and exploit her further when she does report.

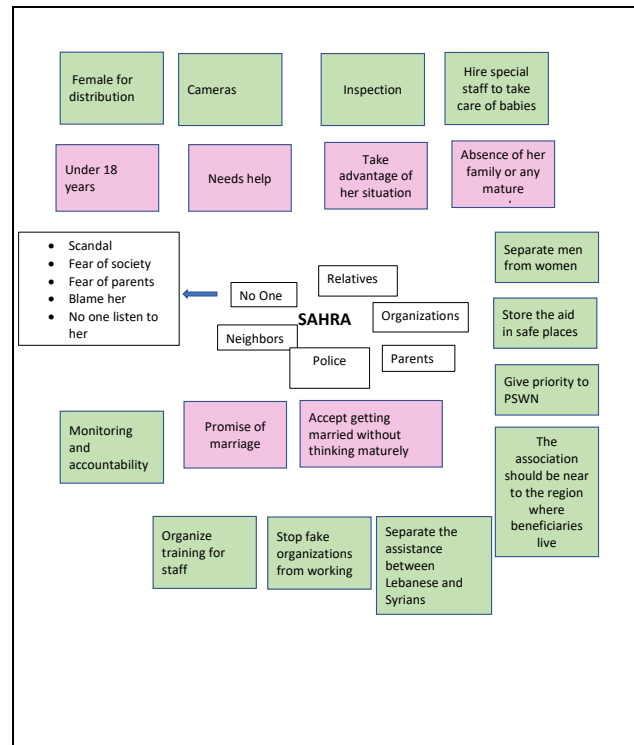


Figure 6: An example of one of the participatory exercises used within group discussions, in which participants discuss an open-ended story about a refugee girl accessing food aid and experiencing SEA. They "complete" the story by sharing how those around her may respond, and where she is more or less likely to go for help, as well as factors that can increase vulnerability. This technique, also known as a "vignette", is a participatory and safe way to discuss sensitive issues such as the experiences of survivors. This example is from a participatory group discussion with refugee adolescent girls. **Key:** pink and white boxes = risk factors and survivor / women and girls' responses; green = their recommendations for improving SEA prevention and response.

Survivor, women, and girls' responses & accessing services

Given the range of possible reactions from family and community, SEA survivors tend to be fearful of reporting or pursuing services. Survivors may experience shame around SEA and worry about being blamed for the incident. Refugee women, girls and men spoke of the negative mental health effects survivors of SEA may struggle with, including depression and suicidal thoughts or attempted suicide.

During participatory group discussions with refugee women, girls and men, a lack of confidence that SEA complaints would be pursued or taken seriously (i.e. organizations ask for further proof or do not respond to the complaint) further discourage them from reporting.

"The other day, a man from an organization visited a woman at her home at afternoon and he asked to see the house. He took advantage of her; he offered to give her more money in return of sexual favors from her. But she's an honorable woman, so she refused and asked him to get out of her house. We went to the organization and told them about what happened, but the employee did not believe us. He said he worked with honorable people that wouldn't do such a thing. We insisted that we were telling him the truth and we took the woman to talk to him. We convinced her to trust him and tell him what happened but when he grabbed her, she yelled at him and went outside where she cried. She has six kids and she was expelled from the organization. Even the manager didn't believe her."

-Community participatory group discussion with refugee men

WOMEN AND GIRLS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW TO MAKE DISTRIBUTIONS SAFER

During Action Analysis Workshops, women and girls participated in the analysis process and further made meaning out of the data they collected. A participatory prioritization exercise was used, in which women and girls (in separate, age-specific workshops) voted for their top three recommendations by placing three (3) stickers on their first priority recommendation, two (2) stickers on their second, and one (1) sticker on their third. These were tallied and the overall rank is shown below. A full description of votes is in **Annex 3**.

WOMEN & GIRLS' RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE AID DISTRIBUTIONS

- 1 Financial aid through cash assistance to reduce known SEA-related vulnerabilities women and girls face
- 2 Pre-determined, assigned times to groups of families to go and collect aid from distribution points to avoid overcrowding and disorganization that makes women and girls vulnerable to SEA.
- 3 Aid delivery or assistance (i.e. with repairs) to women and girls' homes, so they can avoid going to distribution points. This can also present other risks, so any services at household level should be done by at least two aid workers/contractors, either both women or one being a woman if the other is a man (mixed-sex teams)
- 4 Transportation support to take food, WASH, or other items home from distribution points.
- 5 Closer supervision of distributors/workers at aid distributions points, including filing and following up on complaints.
- 6 More women aid workers, volunteers, and women's leadership/groups (i.e. women's committees) involved in aid distribution processes.
- 7 Formal/informal accompanying systems when women and girls go to receive aid or during aid worker or contractor visits to their homes, such as information sharing with women and girls to support them to have someone else at home or leave their homes in groups.
- 8 Cash-specific: Information sessions on safely and securing withdrawing money from ATMs.
- 9 Separate (sex-segregated) lines at distribution points for women/girls and men/boys to avoid women and girls being pushed out of line, harassed, or targeted.
- 10 Better information and communication of complaint and reporting mechanisms, so that women and girls have correct knowledge if they want to report SEA.
- 11 More security personnel at distribution points, including ATMs where women and girls collect cash assistance.

The threat or perceived threat of violence from the perpetrator also inhibits women and girls from reporting. According to participatory group discussions with refugee women, vulnerable refugee women, and host community girls, perpetrators may threaten the survivor or her family as well as spread rumors about her to "spoil her reputation."

On the other hand, SEA is often normalized within refugee communities, and women and girls may not report due to the perception that the sexually exploitative relationship is benefitting them. They may fear that aid will be taken from them if they move to end the sexually exploitative relationship. Women and girls may feel unsafe reporting to police, as police are sometimes the *perpetrators* of violence. These fears, combined with a perceived lack of accountability for perpetrators and lack of knowledge of reporting mechanisms, contribute to a chilling effect on SEA reporting.

If a SEA survivor decides to come forward, she often confides in friends, female family members, and religious or community leaders first to seek counsel on next steps. Refugee women and girls identified caseworkers, the organization in charge of the aid worker or distributor, and the hotline number as places where they *could* report. Women and girls also reported a preference for accessing services from NGOs that support women; specific mentions of trusted helpers included caseworkers and therapists.

1. Financial aid through cash assistance for women and girls to reduce risk of SEA. Particularly targeting vulnerable groups of women and girls, such as female-headed households, widows, or orphaned girls, to reduce their risk of SEA.

2. Pre-determined assigned times to groups of families to go and collect aid from distribution points to avoid overcrowding and disorganization that makes women and girls vulnerable to SEA. Disorganized and chaotic distributions may leave women and girls vulnerable to SEA by aid workers that offer to speed up their distribution by taking them to the front or serving them first. Creating systems that allow for organized, timely distributions could decrease exposure to SEA; this is especially important given the number of ad hoc distributions still frequently carried out by non-traditional aid actors.

3. Aid delivery and/or repair assistance at the household level may mitigate risks women and girls face when leaving their homes, if conducted in gender-sensitive ways, e.g. by at least two aid workers, with at least one being a woman. At-home delivery of aid and/or repair assistance can reduce SEA risk in that women and girls do not have to leave their homes, but it can also increase risks of SEA happening in the home. To mitigate this, women and girls requested teams of women aid workers or women workers to accompany male aid workers when working within people's homes.

4. Provide transportation support for those traveling long or isolated distances to collect aid, especially for vulnerable groups. The obligations of the humanitarian community to provide protection and support do not end at the gate of distribution sites. While taxi drivers are not a formal part of the aid system, without them the distribution would not function. Likewise, safe access to WASH and shelter repair services cannot be achieved if sex is demanded in exchange. As shown in this study's community mapping exercises, women and girls have expert knowledge of safe & risky places and times in their communities. Distance & other transport-related needs can be better considered by planning distribution mechanisms in collaboration with women's committees and leaders and discussing possible support (in-kind or cash/vouchers) for groups identified as particularly vulnerable.

5. Closer supervision of distributors and workers at aid distributions points, including filing and following up on complaints. Increased accountability of aid workers through more oversight by NGO/UN staff who understand the risks that could lead to SEA and the importance of creating a safe environment in which women and girls can access aid.

6. Ensuring more women aid workers, volunteers, and leadership structures are involved in aid distribution processes. The issues that women and girls face during distribution could be reduced by better engaging women and girls throughout the process. This includes ensuring meaningful numbers of

female staff and volunteers within distribution teams, as well as representatives from women's committees or other leadership structures also being actively engaged in decision-making and supported to serve as key linkages to the wider communities. Women aid workers may also increase accountability and reduce the fear and risk of SEA during at home visits.

7. Create and support formal or informal accompaniment systems and social support mechanisms for sharing share information between women and girls. The creation of formal or informal accompaniment systems was identified as a way to mitigate risk by helping women and girls move together to collect aid or have someone else at home when aid workers or contractors are visiting women and girls' homes. Supporting them to maintain or increase social networks with other women and girls can also foster information sharing and support, including 'sounding the alarm' and getting help when risky situations arise.

8. Information sessions on safely and securing withdrawing money from ATMs. Empowering women and girls with the information to withdraw money from ATMs correctly and securely to reduce the possibility of SEA occurring.

9. Sex-segregated lines at distribution points. Women and girls repeatedly asked for separate lines when waiting at distribution points, to reduce sexual harassment, their being pushed out of line by men, or men offering their space in line in exchange for sex or a sexual relationship.

10. Better information and communication of complaint and reporting mechanisms, so that women and girls have correct knowledge if they want to report SEA. This includes ensuring information is provided through multiple channels (loudspeaker, radio, visual, written in multiple languages, community meetings, health facilities, etc.) to increase the number of people in a community who hold this information and power. In addition, employing diverse ways of sensitizing communities to GBV/SEA reporting mechanisms that reach beyond traditional leadership structures, to ensure this information is accessible to those who most need it.

11. More security at distribution points, including ATMs where women and girls collect cash assistance. Female and male teams of well-supervised security personnel, who are trained to proactively mitigate SEA and other forms of violence, receive and respond to complaints, are needed to make distribution points and the area around them safer.

DISCUSSION AND FURTHER IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

OVERALL FINDINGS

Both SEA and other forms of GBV were mentioned in relation to accessing the four types of aid asked about: food, WASH, shelter, and cash assistance. SEA and GBV were most noted in relation to shelter distributions, followed by cash. This may reflect the transition to cash assistance in the humanitarian space as well as the need for regular rent payments and maintenance to homes. In-home visits by aid workers or contractors for shelter or WASH repairs or assistance were frequently highlighted by women and girls as decreasing their feelings of safety and increasing their vulnerability to SEA, particularly if they are in the home alone or without male relatives.

In terms of the distribution process, the most mentions of SEA were in relation to being at a distribution point or other site where aid is provided—which included their own homes, when visited by aid workers for assessments or repairs—followed by traveling to and from distribution sites. SEA was also mentioned in relation to the other points in the distribution cycle, including finding out about aid (access to information/communication), during registration/verification exercises, and safely storing or maintaining the aid received. Traveling to/from distribution sites is one area that highlights how SEA risks extend from the ‘formal’ aid structure into the everyday reality of how these different types of aid are accessed. Exploitation by taxi drivers or fellow passengers stems from the necessity of transporting bulky and heavy food aid home. While drivers are not a formal part of the aid system, without whom the distribution would not function. On the other hand, if women and girls choose to walk, they travel long distances and through unfamiliar neighborhoods, being put at risk of sexual harassment, assault, or other forms of GBV.

Women and girls were acknowledged as those most vulnerable to SEA by all participants. Adolescent girls—especially those without parents—and divorced, single, or widowed women were noted as especially vulnerable.

TRIANGULATION WITH OTHER STUDIES

In a 2016 report by Amnesty International, Syrian refugee women in Lebanon reported experiencing sexual harassment in public spaces irrespective of their marital status; however, many women heads of household said they also experienced more targeted harassment from men who knew they did not have a husband or other adult male relative living with them. The majority of refugee women said that they would not feel safe to

report a crime to the Lebanese authorities. One woman said, “I wouldn’t go [to the police] because, once they find out you are Syrian, they will treat you badly and claim you have no rights”. Another woman, whose husband had travelled to Europe, told Amnesty International: “Since my husband left, people look at me weirdly, even the people who distribute aid. They put conditions on the aid – to see me later on. They say they will give aid if I will see them later on or if they have good [political] connections, they say they won’t give me any aid” (Amnesty International, 2016, pp. 48-49).⁷

In a November 2015 review of Lebanon’s implementation of its legal obligations on women’s rights, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women found that all women and girls in Lebanon face obstacles in accessing justice for crimes of sexual or gender-based violence and expressed concern at the “lack of disaggregated data on the number of reports, investigations, prosecutions and convictions in cases of violence against women, including sexual harassment, domestic violence, assault and rape, including by security forces” (2015, para. 27).⁸

Intersecting Dynamics of SEA and GBV

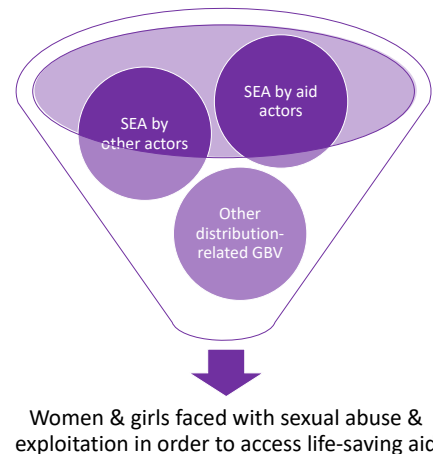


Figure 7: Intersecting dynamics of SEA and GBV.

Another study reported access to aid and supported health services seemed to be limited for those registered with UNHCR. This was a barrier to services because some women did not register for fear that their names would reach the Syrian regime, or they would be affected by lack of official papers. Moreover, women commented on the discrimination in distributing goods by some local NGOs or international agencies: “The distribution is very haphazard, not equal to all; they discriminate and prefer some people over others” (Usta, Reese Masterson, & Farver, 2017, p. 3772).

A rapid assessment by the International Rescue Committee in 2012 noted that many Syrian women living in Lebanon as refugees reported they were incapable of leaving their homes due to restrictions placed on them by family members (IRC,

⁷ Based on focus group discussion conducted by Amnesty International in Mar Elias, Beirut, on 8 October 2015 (footnote 173, pg. 49).

⁸ Obstacles include lack of legal assistance and lack knowledge and sensitivity to women’s rights from justice officials.

2012). The research by Amnesty International indicated that female-headed households are among the most vulnerable in terms of shelter. Due to the precarious legal status of most female Syrian refugees in Lebanon, landlords have a considerable amount of power over their female tenants. Amnesty International found that landlords often exploit their female tenants and routinely increase rent. Women who are unable to pay high rental fees often face eviction or are propositioned for “survival sex” - an offer to reduce rent in exchange for sex (Amnesty International, 2016).

AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR SEA, AND THE NEED FOR CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

These examples demonstrate how a distribution system that does not meet women and girls’ needs for shelter, cash assistance, WASH and food items in safer ways inadvertently opens up space for exploitation and abuse by aid as well as non-aid actors. This can happen, for example, when a shelter repair worker decides to take advantage of a woman who is home alone; when a taxi driver knows a young girl is dependent on him to transport her the long, isolated distance to an ATM and uses this power over her; or when a landlord tells his tenants that if they allow their daughter to marry him, he will not charge them rent.

This contributes to an enabling environment for SEA in which perpetrators largely escape punishment due to impunity, and/or the many barriers to reporting faced by survivors including shame and stigma, as well as the threat or fear of losing access to the aid they so desperately need. On a practical level, many women and girls described situations in which they do not know the exact identity or role of the person exploiting them, only that he is telling them he has power over how much aid they receive, or if they receive any at all. PSEA systems that prioritize information about the perpetrator’s identity over a response to the survivor’s other needs may inadvertently minimize reporting as survivors do not know, or are afraid to share, that level of detail but want help nonetheless.

The SGBV Task Force, in 2014, endorsed *Inter-Agency Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for SGBV Prevention and Response in Lebanon*, which briefly discuss SEA vis-à-vis mandatory reporting, and the necessity for adopting codes of conduct and SOPs organizationally. While inter-agency SEA Referral Pathways and, more recently, minimum standards guidance for community-based complaints/feedback mechanisms have been drafted, these documents as well as inter-agency PSEA SOPs remain to be finalized; the PSEA SOPs pertain to UN agencies and their implementing partners. The PSEA Network plans to address this and, in the interim, there is coordinated information, education and communication efforts around SEA and how to report it.

⁹ The study’s national Technical Advisory Group (TAG) noted, in their review of the findings, that the recent civil unrest has led to women and girls reporting that they are more afraid to go to ATMs (especially in rural areas where they must travel farther) due to retaliation and anger from host communities as well as possibly encountering “gangs” there. Overall, the civil unrest has exacerbated existing tensions between refugee and host communities, potentially exacerbating risk of SEA as well. While the unrest occurred after fieldwork for this first phase of qualitative research was completed, the TAG highlighted this changing context as important to note in this report.

¹⁰ For further resources and information on contextual safeguarding, see: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding>.

However, a response to SEA that focuses only on reports related to specific persons misses many opportunities to respond to the situations conducive to such abuse happening. For example, let’s look back at the risks described at the beginning of this section around repair workers, taxi drivers and landlords. Ways to mitigate these risks include supporting more women and girls to access safe cash assistance & livelihood opportunities; offering transport or travel planning support for women and girls required to travel long distances to access ATMs or in-kind aid, as well as taking action to reduce those distances; and mobilizing more female staff or mixed-gender teams for home repairs or maintenance of facilities.⁹

Thus, in addition to finalizing inter-agency guidance and bringing better accountability to perpetrators, there is also an urgent need for ‘**contextual safeguarding**’¹⁰ approaches to mitigate and prevent SEA. Senior management and safeguarding leads must take responsibility to reflect on their organization’s role in creating a *conducive context* for abuse. They must attend to the settings and people who represent *causes for concern*, dig deeper into these concerns, and act on them. They must also ensure perpetrators are held to account. This participatory action research demonstrates how **women and girls are experts in contextual safeguarding**, who can and should be actively consulted to inform ways in which distribution systems can be safer for them.

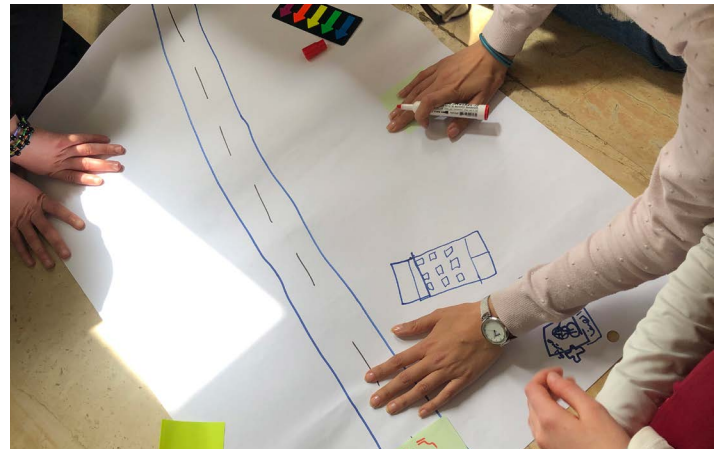


Figure 8: Women and girls are experts in contextual safeguarding. Here, adolescent girls discuss the community map they have made identifying points of safety and risk in their community.

If humanitarian actors stop at monitoring whether the food aid was distributed, or whether water is accessible without examining whether it is *safe* to access it, then the whole picture of safely delivering aid and mitigating abuse and exploitation is not yet captured. For example, are those whose role it is to caretake children and prepare household meals—largely women and girls, in many contexts—able to access the food and WASH services they need, including safely transporting and storing them? Monitoring safety and risk at all points in the distribution

process could be a form of greater accountability in mitigating SEA (and other forms of distribution related GBV).

HOW CAN THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM WORK TOWARD GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY IN MITIGATING OR PREVENTING SEA?

- **Aid distribution systems must be adapted to more fully meet women and girls' needs for shelter materials, cash assistance, WASH and food items in ways that minimize opportunities for exploitation and abuse by aid as well as non-aid actors. The most important way to do that is to ensure women & girls are part of program design.** Important considerations are outlined in their recommendations at the end of this report, and include: actively supporting women and girls to safely and successfully access and withdraw cash assistance; offering transport or travel planning support for women and girls required to travel long distances in taxis, as well as taking action to reduce those distances; and mobilizing more female staff or mixed-gender teams for home repairs or maintenance of facilities.
- **Increase access to GBV services—such as healthcare, psychosocial support, and case management—while ensuring access to such services is not contingent on reporting specific instances of abuse, in recognition of the powerful deterrent this can be.** Shame and stigma, as well as the threat or fear of losing access to the aid they so desperately need, are part of the enabling environment for abuse that silences survivors. On a practical level, many women and girls described situations in which they do not know the exact identity or role of the person exploiting them, only that he is telling them he has power over how much aid they receive, or if they receive any at all. PSEA systems that prioritize information about the perpetrator's identity over a response to the survivor's other needs may inadvertently minimize reporting as survivors do not know, or are afraid to share, that level of detail but want help nonetheless.
- **Recognize women and girls as experts in contextual safeguarding and actively engage them in mechanisms designed to improve aid processes and protect against SEA.** A response to SEA that focuses only on reports related to specific persons misses many opportunities to respond to dangerous *situations*, which women, girls, and other community-based actors already know well and design their own strategies for avoiding (such as discouraging movement after dark, or self-organizing to travel in groups). In addition to bringing better accountability to perpetrators, there is also an urgent need for 'contextual safeguarding'¹¹ approaches to mitigate and prevent SEA.
- **Specifically, senior management and safeguarding leads must take responsibility to reflect on their organization's role in creating a 'conducive context' for abuse.** They must attend to the settings and people who represent 'causes for concern', dig deeper into these concerns, and act on them. They must

also ensure perpetrators are held to account. **Monitoring & evaluation staff** also have a key role to play, as transparently monitoring safety and risk at all points in the distribution process and sharing this information among humanitarian actors as well as community structures, allows for proactive responses to dangerous situations and contributes to greater accountability in mitigating SEA (and other forms of distribution-related GBV) before they occur. Finally, these findings and the study tools (shared online) should be used for further **training and education**, particularly with social workers and frontline staff.

NEXT STEPS: EMPOWERED AID PHASE II

Phase II of Empowered Aid will put this information to use in demonstrating how contextual safeguarding approaches can be applied to aid distribution systems, in collaboration with NGOs active in distributing food and NFIs. We will 'pilot' application of two of the recommendations from Phase I of Empowered Aid, described in the previous section, and adapt post-distribution monitoring tools in order to better capture women and girls' perceptions of risk and safety in relation to accessing information about distributions, registering and/or being verified for them, traveling to and from distribution sites, safety while at points of distribution, and safe storage of the items they receive. Outcomes of the work will include adapted program design, implementation, and M&E materials and tools, forming an evidence-based 'toolkit' that can be further adapted by other humanitarian actors to fit their context.

By listening to the recommendations that come from affected women themselves, Empowered Aid contributes to the goal of reducing power disparities within humanitarian programming and more actively engaging women and girls in decision-making processes; thereby reducing their vulnerability and creating a more enabling environment for non-exploitative interactions with humanitarian aid workers.

Findings from Phase I, in relation to both GBV and SEA, are being shared here in order to be taken forward and actioned by stakeholders in Lebanon and beyond working to prevent and respond to these issues. As noted in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) [Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action](#), all humanitarian actors have a responsibility to mitigate risk of GBV (2015). These findings, as well as the participatory approaches and tools shared, can support actors to further put the IASC GBV Guidelines recommendations into practice and better serve women and girls.

Further resources from Empowered Aid's work in Lebanon and Uganda—including reports, overall and sector-specific briefs, and toolkits—can be found at globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu.

¹¹ For further resources and information on contextual safeguarding, see: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding>.

ANNEX 1: FURTHER QUOTES FROM QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF AID

<p>Food aid</p>	<p><i>"Some officers ask girls to exchange the food assistance with something physical and if the girl refuses, they may cut off the assistance or they can take what they want by force."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p>
<p>Shelter</p>	<p><i>"The officer convinces the girl to go out with him and in return he will pay the rent of the shelter."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p> <p><i>"PARTICIPANT: In most cases whether at home or in the organization, the organization's owner or the person providing her with aid might tell her that he can only help her if she offered him something in return. Employees don't usually do this. It's mostly the owner of the organization.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: Why is it mostly by the owner of the organization and not the employees?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Because the employees' job is only to go inside and do their work to earn money. They're not the founders of the organization and they can't make decisions.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: But the owner of the organization has the power.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes, he has the power to choose to repair her house.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: Such cases of exploitation happen?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p> <p><i>"FACILITATOR: Do women usually accept such offers?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Some do, and others don't. If the woman desperately needs to find a shelter for her kids, she might agree. Others would rather live on the streets and protect their reputations."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p>
<p>Wash</p>	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: Are there any water and sanitation services spots that make women feel uncomfortable, and which they try to avoid?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: What do you mean? If they want to go to the place?</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: Let's say they're going to receive water, or someone is coming to fix the toilet, what could make them feel uncomfortable?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Abuse may occur.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: How?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: It's not safe for women to go there. Someone may fool her, fix other things for her.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: What else? Let's say your husband is not at home, and someone came to fix the toilet.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: He may fix the damages in order to get something in return.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: What could this something be? What are the challenges that may occur in such cases?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Harassment, abuse.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: What else?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: For instance, if you go out with me, I'll fix the damages for free."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p>
<p>Cash</p>	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: What are the types of violence that widows and divorced women may encounter when receiving aid by hand?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: People will look at them differently because they're widows or divorced. They may take advantage of them. They may ask for things in return for cash assistance.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: Have you noticed something like that, in your environment?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Many people said the same thing.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: You said that widows and divorced women are taken advantage of more than others. How? If the question is bothering you, you can pass.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: For instance, he may ask her to do something she doesn't want to do.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: Okay.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Sometimes, women accept because they're in need, and sometimes they don't. In both cases, it's abusive."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p>

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE DISTRIBUTION PROCESS

<p>When communicating or giving information about distributions</p>	<p><i>“PARTICIPANT: One time an employee visited a house and there were only a woman and her daughter. The employee worked for an organization that was well known but now it’s closed. At first, he visited as a shelter aid employee, he listed the broken items and received information and then he started visiting frequently to check the house. Finally, he visited the house and there was no one there other than the girl, so he started looking around the rooms.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: Maybe he wanted to make sure there was no one there.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes. He took advantage of the girl and it was done.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: Sexual harassment? Rape?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: Was the girls okay? How old is she?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: In her twenties. Her parents found out a year later because her state kept deteriorating and every time a man asked for her hand in marriage, she would reject him. She hated herself and caused herself harm. Her mother saw her trying kill herself by swallowing a lot of pills, but she threw them up. Her mother asked her what’s going on, and eventually because of her exhaustion she told her everything.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: How much later?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: A year later. But her father didn’t accept what happened and he beat his daughter so her stated deteriorated even more. Eventually her father forced her to marry the employee even though neither she nor her mother wanted that marriage.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: The employee married the girl?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: She filed a complaint?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: She told her parents. After a year from the incident. Yes.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: And the employee was still there.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: And he married her.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes. By force. Yes, they were forced to take each other. But they got a divorce after a while.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: You said that when her father found out he beat her. Did anyone file a complaint?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: He forced her into this marriage and the mother complained to the organization, so they fired the employee and filed a lawsuit against him, but they didn’t have enough evidence since a year had already passed since the incident. The father told the employee that he brought shame to his family, so he was either going to marry his daughter or get killed. The girl didn’t want him, but they were forced into this marriage.”</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p>
<p>During registration exercises</p>	<p><i>“Like mainly about sometimes when they don’t understand why they’re not getting aid, this is the main problem. Like why we are excluded and why others are included, you know these criteria. And other problems on the site are being able to actually come alone or being used to, like by her brother, they could use the element that she’s the woman, and she’s weak, it’s just like an abusive power.”</i></p> <p>-Key informant interview with humanitarian personnel</p> <p><i>“Again for what I have been told from the women, it could happen at the beginning at the registration example they were harassed when someone took their hands, they were looking at them in a very...I mean they were harassing them, the feel uncomfortable at the registering but then it could happen after accessing the services so you wouldn’t get this food item unless you sleep with me, unless I harass you or whatever because at the distribution site it is a bit harder it is possible but I did not hear of this. While distributing it is a bit harder because there are lots of people there are crowd and monitoring staff are there so it is mainly at the first beginning directly after receiving the service, it could happen at the location of distribution of the service.”</i></p> <p>-Key informant interview with humanitarian personnel</p>

<p>During registration exercises (cont.)</p>	<p><i>"PARTICIPANT: I understand what you're saying, but when you want to receive aid your name should be registered on the list. When a woman goes and her name isn't listed, he tells her to leave and come back tomorrow. He studies her situation and her house, and he adds her name to the list. The next day he gives her the aid. This is how it's going on in all societies, not just here.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: You mean sexual exploitation is everywhere.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes. Mostly women and girls are subjected to it."</i></p> <p>-Community participatory group discussion with refugee men</p>
<p>At the point of distributions</p>	<p><i>"Of course, there are a lot of people take advantage of the crisis. They might not let an older woman in but will let the younger woman in and ask her to perform certain acts in exchange of the services. They ask girls for certain things to give them services. If the girls refuse, they will withhold the service, but the service is not that great in the first place. They take advantage of little girls the most because 1. They are still young and don't know how to handle such situations, and 2. They need the service that is being offered at their home, and 3. They think about their family before themselves and might be pressured into agreeing. I heard about a center that offered such services and only let in young girls (not women or men). You would hear girls crying and running quickly out because they were being harassed inside the center."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p>
<p>Transporting items home</p>	<p><i>"PARTICIPANT: Yes, I was in a taxi once and a girl got into it too. There's a man who winked at her and suggested that he pay for her fare. This is financial exploitation.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: Is this financial exploitation?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes, the poor girl has no money to pay for the taxi fare.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: But what is she offering the man in this situation?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: He wants sexual favors in return."</i></p> <p>-Community participatory group discussion with refugee men</p>
<p>Storing or maintaining aid</p>	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: Is it possible for cash assistance to cause problems at home or in the area? Don't think about women and girls only, think about the organization providing the aid.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes, problems occur at home; expense is reduced, and nothing is enough</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: In this case, what problems and challenges do you encounter?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: In this case, girls in particular would have to go out with someone to provide for her family. If a girl is making money, and has siblings that spend a lot, they make take her money."</i></p> <p>-Participatory group discussion with refugee women</p>
<p>ADDITIONAL QUOTES RELATED TO SAFETY AND SERVICES</p>	
<p>Groups identified as more vulnerable to SEA</p>	<p><i>"I think that widows are the most exposed. She is obliged to accept certain things because she needs to care for her children. They can exploit widows because they know that they don't have a husband, married women are more able to protect themselves..."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p> <p><i>"PARTICIPANT: When distributing food aid these things may happen, discrimination occurs because of beauty?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes, it gets. They say she's pretty let her go in</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: During?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes. It even happens in the Center of Nations: The person standing at the door determines who will enter for assistance according to their beauty or admiration.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: He chooses the most beautiful and may get assistance before others</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: This happens also in the dispensaries, you may wait for long hours, then come a beautiful girl and enter before you."</i></p> <p>-Participatory group discussion with vulnerable refugee women</p>

<p>Groups identified as more vulnerable to SEA (cont.)</p>	<p><i>"PARTICIPANT: There's a woman whose husband fell and broke both of his legs. No one looked after them, she barely got any help and she had 3 children. She met someone and he started helping her financially, but she was giving him services in return. She started going out with him.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: So, he didn't marry her, but they went out together.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: That's right. She was already married and has kids. She did this because of poverty, although this is not an excuse to behave like this."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p>
<p>Risk factors</p>	<p><i>"PARTICIPANT: This brings us back to the same point that I, as a Syrian person, have the right to assess aid and receive it for my own self. When I'm not receiving it, I'm going to resort to the use of harmful methods. If a person isn't capable of feeding his mother or son, are they supposed to stay hungry? It's unacceptable."</i></p> <p>-Community participatory group discussion with refugee men</p> <p><i>"PARTICIPANT: Yes, I heard a story about a girl who doesn't have a provider, nor a husband, she doesn't have anyone, and she has children. A man asked her if she could go out with him in return for money, and he proposed to her. At first, she said no, because she has children, but later she agreed, she got pregnant during the first two months, and then he left her. He spent some time with her.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: She married someone who gives her aid.</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Yes, because he helps her, and he spends money on her and her children, but he's married, so when his wife found out, he left her, and she was almost three months pregnant."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p>
<p>Places identified as unsafe</p>	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: Why does the girl feel unsafe in crowded places?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: Because men and women are not separated.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: What may happen if they weren't separated?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: A man may touch her; people may fight; they always beat each other in these places.</i></p> <p><i>FACILITATOR: When you said harassment, you meant while they're waiting in line?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: People don't stand properly in line, they're always too close to each other, so you don't know what may happen. I never went there."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p>
<p>Perpetrators of SEA</p>	<p><i>"My friend in [location] once told me about a man that started visiting her at home. Can you imagine? He carried her stuff for her once and he tried to push the door and get inside. She didn't know what to do because people would think she did it intentionally. The taxi driver? Yes. She screamed for help until someone came and took him out."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p> <p><i>"Yes. Such cases are very frequent. A lot of men from Gulf married Syrian women who they were helping. It was known since before the crises even began that Gulf men always sought Lebanese and Syrian girls other than their wives. They run away from their wives in the first place. Yes, so it happened a lot. A lot of Gulf men married women from here. The student I told you about was married to an old sheikh. He almost never acknowledged her or took her out as his wife. Most of them abandon the women. They either visit after a year or they never come back."</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p> <p><i>"FACILITATOR: What do you think are other factors that increase the cases of exploiting women or girls?</i></p> <p><i>PARTICIPANT: He might protect himself with the organization's name, so no one is going to believe her. Maybe in order to get money, she would show that she is in need, and she would be humiliated. So being in need exposes her to such exploitation."</i></p> <p>-Community participatory group discussion with host community girls</p>

<p>Family/ Community Response to SEA</p>	<p><i>“Sometimes if the girl tells her parents and they are reasonable, they will go to a children’s rights association and provide them with information about the incident and offender such as his phone number, his details, his picture. They might find him and interrogate him, but he can deny the incident. I know a lot of girls who went through this. Parents sometimes insist on knowing what’s wrong with their girl and urge her to speak so she tells them everything. Some parents are understanding and open while some parents are not and might prohibit her from doing everything. They even might beat her and blame her.”</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p> <p><i>“He might ask her to give him a certain thing. I worked with the UN in Syria. One of the employees tried to hold a woman’s hand so she called for her neighbor. The employee tarnished her reputation, and even though she is an honorable woman, people kept talking about her. It all depends on the way they [men] were raised.”</i></p> <p>-Community participatory group discussion with refugee men</p>
<p>Survivors/ Women and girls’ response to SEA</p>	<p><i>“She wouldn’t tell anyone about what happened, because eventually he would give her the support money, so he wouldn’t be exposed. It scares her.”</i></p> <p>-Community participatory group discussion with host community girls</p> <p><i>“They don’t feel safe to turn for support and their family member because they will be blamed, they will be judged, and they will be stigmatized. They definitely do not go for the police it is for the Lebanese as well we don’t go to the police I mean the level of trust is really low and that was really shocking because the only space that they identified as safe and could talk to someone without feeling judged were the caseworkers and the staff members and mainly the staff members which is horrible and which means clearly that this is the only channel they would go to and not to the families.”</i></p> <p>-Key informant interview with humanitarian actor</p> <p><i>“They were devastated and couldn’t believe what happened to the girl. She went through an emotional crisis and started having suicidal thoughts; the parents stood by their daughter and tried removing these thoughts from her head and supporting her financially, mentally, and physically; but some parents didn’t succeed on their own and had to take their daughter to a therapist.”</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p>
<p>Accessing Services in response to SEA</p>	<p><i>“FACILITATOR: Do people complain? PARTICIPANT: No, to avoid being badly treated. Sometime the guy can make up false stories and accuse her of something she didn’t do. FACILITATOR: She prefers to remain silent. PARTICIPANT: Yes, to avoid a scandal in front of people.”</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p> <p><i>“They can’t file a complaint against him. They have no rights.”</i></p> <p>-Community participatory group discussion with host community girls</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p><i>“First of all, let the location of the distribution centers be safe because women can’t go to unsafe areas where a lot of bad things happen. Distribution should occur in open spaces where there are people, at schools, or mosques. They could also separate women and men, and hire women to distribute aid for women, and men to distribute aid for men.”</i></p> <p>-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p>

ANNEX 2: DETAILS OF INTERVIEWS AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS CONDUCTED

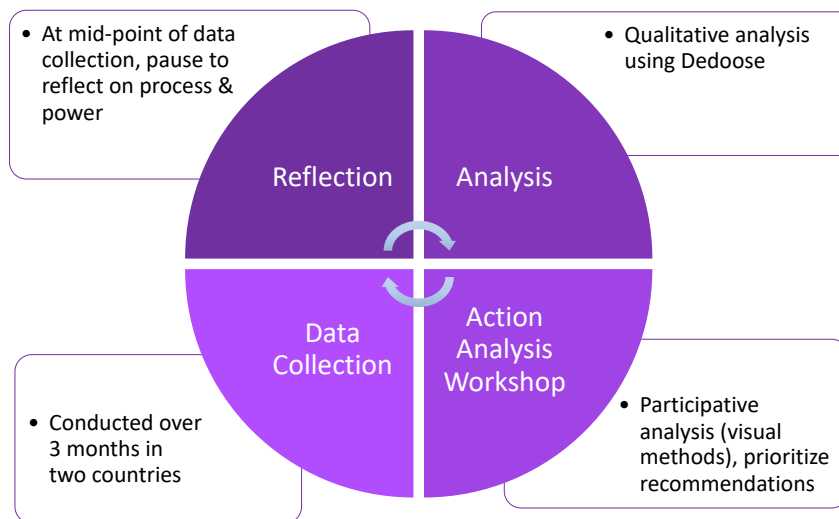
Discussions with...	Total	Method
Refugee Women & Girls (26) • 14 in Women's Group • 12 in Girls' Group*	10 PGDs	Participatory Focus Group Discussions
	95	Semi-Structured Narrative Interviews
Refugee men & boys; Host community women, men, boys & girls; Vulnerable refugee women	7 PGDs (33 people)	Participatory Focus Group Discussions
Community Leaders & Humanitarian Personnel	11	Key Informant Interviews

A total of 123 Interviews of focus groups conducted

A total of 70 People engaged

* Women's and girls' activities were held separately. The 12 girls include four participants aged 18-19 years who preferred to take part in the girls' research team rather than the women's team, due to comfort and relatability in group discussions.

Participatory data collection & analysis



ANNEX 3: OUTCOME OF PARTICIPATORY VOTING EXERCISE WITH WOMEN AND GIRLS

Recommendation	OVERALL (COMBINED) NUMBER OF VOTES FROM WOMEN & GIRLS	WOMEN RANKING			GIRLS RANKING				
		WOMEN OVERALL # VOTES	1ST PRIORITY	2ND PRIORITY	3RD PRIORITY	GIRLS OVERALL # VOTES	1ST PRIORITY	2ND PRIORITY	3RD PRIORITY
1 Sex-segregated lines at distribution points	4	1	0	0	1	3	3	0	0
2 More women aid workers & women's groups involved in aid distribution processes	5	3	0	0	3	2	0	2	0
3 Transportation support to collect food, WASH, shelter, especially for vulnerable groups	10	6	0	6	0	4	3	0	1
4 More security at distribution points (particularly CASH)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Formal/informal accompanying systems when women and girls collect/receive aid or are visited at home	5	0	0	0	0	5	3	2	0
6 Cash-specific: Information session on how to use ATMs	5	2	0	0	2	3	-0	2	1
7 Closer supervision of workers during distributions, including filing and following up complaints	6	0	0	0	0	6	3	2	1
8 Improved IEC for women and girls on SEA reporting mechanisms	4	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	1
9 Pre-determined times for groups/families to collect aid	18	16	6	10	0	2	0	2	0
10 Financial aid (cash) to reduce SEA vulnerabilities	24	24	24	0	0	0	0	0	0
11 Delivery to homes done by mixed-sex or female teams	11	10	0	6	4	1	0	0	1

ANNEX 4: FINDINGS RELATED TO OTHER FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN RELATION TO ACCESSING AID

SEA is one form of GBV and was the primary focus of this research. However, participants also described experiencing other forms of GBV in relation to each type of aid asked about, and during every stage of the distribution process. These findings are described here so that they can inform existing GBV prevention and response programming and be further actioned by stakeholders working to address GBV within humanitarian settings in Lebanon as well as more broadly.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF AID: FOOD, WASH, SHELTER, CASH

When accessing food aid

Women and girls described experiencing multiple forms of GBV including sexual and physical violence, in relation to accessing food aid. Most frequently noted was sexual harassment and assault while waiting for food distribution or registration for food assistance:

INTERVIEWER: Are there any other problems caused by the crowd and waiting and lack of organization that would disturb girls?

PARTICIPANT: Well, harassment happens.

INTERVIEWER: Sexual harassment?

PARTICIPANT: No.

INTERVIEWER: He touches her?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, only touching.

INTERVIEWER: And do women do anything in these cases or no?

PARTICIPANT: No, they start shouting and some people help while others just ignore what's happening."

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

Participatory group discussions with vulnerable refugee women, host community men and individual interviews with women and girls described women and girls being sexually harassed and abducted by taxi drivers on their way to and from food distribution points.

"Now the girls didn't go the centers a lot, the women went more than girls. Once when I was going to register my daughter aged 40 days in the UN, a person kidnapped me and he wasn't a taxi and he started to drive around the exhibition [distribution site in Tripoli] and he took me to a far place and when I started screaming and crying, he stopped and he get me down and my daughter. And I was started crying and I when I told to my husband, he was overwhelmed but nothing happened."

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

When accessing WASH assistance

Like food distributions, women and girls described facing sexual harassment while waiting in line for water or hygiene boxes at distributions.

"Sexual harassment from men while waiting in the line during the distribution so it's better for us as women to refuse to take the hygiene box and never leave the house."

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

Participatory group discussions with women and qualitative interviews with girls and women reported sexual assault or attempted assault - such as rape - and sexual harassment when workers or service providers visit women and girls' homes to provide WASH aid. They mentioned that this is more likely to occur when women and girls are at home alone.

"FACILITATOR: What other problems may occur?

PARTICIPANT: He may not fix anything. When he supposedly fixed it, you find it leaking. And in order to keep coming, because there are girls in the house.

FACILITATOR: We talked about harassment, right? What else?

PARTICIPANT: Conflicts between a man and his wife; the repairer can't come unless he's in the house. There's no safety."

-Participatory group discussion with refugee women

When accessing shelter assistance

Accessing shelter assistance was reported by women, girls and host community girls as a means of sexual violence. They noted that overcrowding in collective shelters and small apartments leads to sexual harassment or assault between family members and neighbors.

"PARTICIPANT: There are girls who have relationships with young people there. A 13-year-old minor fled with a young man

FACILITATOR: But at will?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, voluntarily, and some without their will

FACILITATOR: Can you tell me more?

PARTICIPANT: For example, in the absence of her parents, he entered her room and raped her.

FACILITATOR: Do these things happen?

PARTICIPANT: Yes. In the collective housing set up by the United Nations many problems occur, they know that problems occur. There should be no shared bathroom and small shared rooms."

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

Refugee men, host community girls as well as refugee women noted, in participatory group discussions, how women and girls face sexual assault or attempted assault - such as rape - and sexual harassment when workers or service providers visit women and girls' homes to provide shelter aid. More likely to occur when women and girls are at home alone.

FACILITATOR: *What types of violence can a Syrian refugee encounter when someone visits her house or fixes her bathroom?*

PARTICIPANT: *If she's alone, he might harass her*

FACILITATOR: *Yes, this is what I mean...*

PARTICIPANT: *They usually don't come alone.*

PARTICIPANT: *A man visited me alone and he didn't take his eyes off me.*

PARTICIPANT: *I know that a young girl and a young man or two young men conduct the visits. The UN came with a big staff... but it wasn't for one house only, it was for an apartment complex that consisted of 35 houses. They fixed all of the bathrooms and kitchens.*

FACILITATOR: *...You said that he might harass her?*

PARTICIPANT: *It happens... if the woman is home alone without her husband and someone is fixing something, it might happen. It didn't happen to me personally, but it does happen..."*

-Participatory group discussion with refugee women

When accessing cash assistance

Participatory group discussions with host community women, boys, refugee men, women and girls as well as qualitative interviews with refugee women and girls and key informants referenced cash assistance as a challenge for women and girls. Women and girls reported sexual assault, abduction and harassment when waiting in line at ATMs to withdraw cash assistance or when walking to and from ATMs.

PARTICIPANT: *She went to receive the assistance. There were boys and girls there; she stood in line... there was an old man behind her, he started touching her and annoying her. He said that it was accidental and that he didn't mean to... he didn't only touch her, but he also started to get close to her and pretended to be pushed from the person behind him. She was scared. When she left, he followed her to her house*

FACILITATOR: *did she tell her parents?*

PARTICIPANT: *At first, she didn't; but, when the situation was getting worse and when he knew where she lived, she told them."*

-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl

Interviews with key informants and women in participatory group discussions and qualitative interviews also stated that

intimate partner violence is perpetrated against women and girls from disputes over money use and husbands using money for their own benefit.

PARTICIPANT: *[Regarding], cash we heard a lot of problems about the bank e-cards a lot of women*

FACILITATOR: *From which organization?*

PARTICIPANT: *From UNHCR maybe. Like a lot of women were beaten by their spouses or brothers or sons just take the card, because it indicates that you have money. And there are a lot of problems about knowing how to use an ATM."*

-Key informant interview with local humanitarian actor

Gender-based violence (GBV) at different stages of the distribution process

Refugee women and girls experience other forms of GBV during every stage of the aid distribution process:

- In receiving information or communications about aid
- During registration or verification exercises
- At distribution points or locations where aid is collected
- Traveling to collect aid or while transporting it back to their homes
- Storing and/or safely maintaining the aid they receive

While receiving information on aid

Information about aid (e.g. how it is communicated, who hears about it) is a form of power in a refugee setting and can be exploited to perpetrate gender-based violence. Key informants highlighted that spouses or male relatives may withhold information regarding aid registration to control women and girls' movement and access to aid:

PARTICIPANT: *Participant reports being excluded from aid and not knowing why, maybe abusive power by family member around going to get aid.*

PARTICIPANT: *Or like maybe the family, what do you call, the head of the household, whether the mother or the father, they're like drug addicts, so they would, like, sell the things to get... So, this is also, so adolescents sometimes don't get aid items because it would be so directly to get money."*

-Key informant interview with local humanitarian actor

During registration or verification exercises

Registration exercises can prove to be chaotic and disorganized, which can lead to gender-based violence. Women and girls reported verbal harassment while waiting in line to register for aid by refugee men also waiting in line, exacerbated by the fact that men and women do not have separate lines.

FACILITATOR: You may be exposed to physical violence, when exactly? At any time from the registration operation or...?

PARTICIPANT: In the registration, it happens since the men stumble the women and they didn't stop in arrangement per example a place for women and another for men which mean we stumbled for many times

FACILITATOR: You say also that there is an oral violence

PARTICIPANT: Yes, they violated not only the distributor also the person that are waiting and they started using bad words"

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

"It's a long way from where I live to the distribution center, so I will need to take a taxi which may not be safe for a girl of my age, even for older woman. If my mom goes, the situation will be similar for her too. The distribution center is very crowded so I may get robbed or harassed."

- Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl

Storing or maintaining distributed items

Participatory group discussion with refugee women and interviews with refugee women and key informants stated that women and girls may experience intimate partner violence when husbands and wives disagree over the use of cash assistance. Moreover, collective housing can increase risks of gender-based violence due to overcrowding and small spaces as stated by women and girls and host community girls in participatory group discussions and qualitative interviews with women and girls.

"FACILITATOR: Is it possible for cash assistance to cause problems at home or in the area, don't think about women and girls only, think about the organization providing the aid

PARTICIPANT: Yes, problems occur at home; expense is reduced, and nothing is enough

FACILITATOR: In this case, what problems and challenges do you encounter?

PARTICIPANT: In this case, girls in particular would have to go out with someone to provide for her family

PARTICIPANT: If a girl is making money, and has siblings that spend a lot, they may take her money.

FACILITATOR: First, you mentioned resorting to wrong means.

PARTICIPANT: Or illegal

FACILITATOR: What did you say?

PARTICIPANT: The ways money is spent, arguing over money

FACILITATOR: An argument between a man and his wife?

PARTICIPANT: He may spend the money on alcohol, when the family needs the money. A lot of men don't care about their families; they spend the money on things they like."

-Participatory group discussion with refugee women

When receiving aid at a distribution point or at home

Women and girls in participatory group discussions and qualitative interviews reported sexual harassment and assault by men and boys when waiting in line for aid distribution or registration. They also reported experiencing sexual harassment and sexual assault or attempted assault - such as rape - when male workers come to homes for shelter or WASH assessments, installations, or repairs.

"FACILITATOR: What problems may you face? It doesn't have to be a personal experience. What types of violence may the Syrian refugee face, if the worker came to her house?

PARTICIPANT: He may harass her.

FACILITATOR: True.

PARTICIPANT: Or rape her.

PARTICIPANT: But this is no longer very common like in the past.

FACILITATOR: What do you mean?

PARTICIPANT: There are always men in the house, like our kids, for example, or their uncle.

FACILITATOR: Of course, you're right, but what about divorced women?

PARTICIPANT: She may be harassed or raped."

-Participatory group discussion with refugee women

When traveling to or from a distribution point

Sexual harassment of refugee women and girls by men and boys when traveling by foot to and from distribution sites for all types of aid was widely reported during interviews with refugee women and girls, and participatory group discussions with refugee women, girls and host community men and women. Participatory group discussions with refugee women, girls, refugee boys, host community men, vulnerable refugee women and interviews with refugee women and girls, and key informants, frequently reported sexual harassment and abduction by taxi drivers (or men posing as taxi drivers) when being transported to distribution points for all types of aid.

SAFETY AND SERVICES

Risk factors, safe and unsafe places identified by women and girls

According to refugee women and key informants, girls are forced into early marriages in order to pay for rent or basic necessities. Similar to sexual exploitation and abuse, poor financial conditions due to lack of income and jobs for family members contributes to risk.

Interviews with refugee women, girls and participatory group discussions with host community women, men, refugee women and girls reported that women and girls found that traveling alone and long distances to distribution centers and being unfamiliar with neighborhoods and roads put them at risk of GBV, where they can be unexpectedly attacked.

"A 19 year old girl living in Qoubbe-Tripoli was forced to search for a job and work because she lost her dad a few years ago and she needs money. She met a guy in the clothes shop where she was working, and he deceived her telling her that he loved her. After going out with him, he raped her."

-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl

According to refugee men, women, girls, host community men, women, boys and key informants, women and girls feel unsafe around and inside distribution centers, and inside taxis. Participatory group discussions with refugee women, girls, host community girls, refugee men and qualitative interviews with women and girls reported that women and girls feel unsafe when they are at home alone with male workers and inside collective shelters where incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape and physical violence may occur.

"PARTICIPANT: My wife is beautiful, and when she goes out someone might try to talk to her.

FACILITATOR: So, she's being harassed.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, they're subjected to harassment.

FACILITATOR: Are these women harassed by people in the distribution locations? Either people waiting their turn to receive aid or employees who are distributing?

PARTICIPANT: By employees and people who are waiting.

FACILITATOR: So, both of them are harassing women?

PARTICIPANT: Employees insult her. They would insult her, and she'd have to make her way through men.

FACILITATOR: So, what you're saying is that she's subjected to sexual harassment because she goes out among men.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, of course."

-Community participatory group discussions with refugee men

Perpetrators of GBV

Perpetrators who commit gender-based violence against women and girls when they are in public are difficult to identify as they may be other refugee men, members of the host community, or men and boys that women and girls do not know. Sexual harassment is reported as perpetrated by service providers, NGO workers, or contractors during households' visits. Taxi drivers are reported to perpetrate sexual harassment and in some cases abduction when women and girls are on their way to register or receive aid. Sexual harassment and physical assault are reported as perpetrated by refugee men and boys when they are waiting in line with women and girls to receive aid.

"FACILITATOR: Why does the girl feel unsafe in crowded places?"

PARTICIPANT: Because men and women are not separated.

FACILITATOR: What may happen if they weren't separated?"

PARTICIPANT: A man may touch her; people may fight; they always beat each other in these places.

FACILITATOR: When you said harassment, you meant while they're waiting in line?"

PARTICIPANT: People don't stand properly in line, they're always too close to each other, so you don't know what may happen. I never went there."

-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl

How survivors, families, and communities respond to GBV, and accessing services

According to interviews with women, girls, and a key informant interview with community leadership, survivors' families and communities may do nothing in response to GBV, or will blame and shame them, claiming it was the woman or girl's fault or choice. Sometimes family members may stop the survivor from going out alone, force her to marry the perpetrator or threaten to kill her. Women and girls report that some can turn to families for support after experiencing violence, but they fear community response and do not feel confident in the current reporting structures to file complaints. In response to GBV, families of women and girls may ensure that they avoid attending distributions, so they do not have to face harassment or risk being assaulted while traveling to and from or at the distribution; this was shared by women and girls and confirmed in discussion with others, including community leadership. There may be debates and disagreements about how to respond:

"FACILITATOR: Usually, what is the family's reaction when they know that their daughter was subjected to harassment?"

PARTICIPANT: Each family's reaction would be different. Some parents are very close-minded and if they found out such a thing, they would no longer allow the girl to go out. Other parents might support their daughter and accompany her to file a complaint against the man who harassed her.

FACILITATOR: You mean they might prevent her from going out.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, or they might support her and file a complaint against him.

FACILITATOR: To whom are they going to complain?

PARTICIPANT: To the UN, for example, if they responded.

FACILITATOR: Does the UN usually respond when someone sends them a complaint?

PARTICIPANT: If you go to them then yes, they offer help."

- Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl

Women and girls stated that they travel in groups to and from distributions for safety against sexual harassment or potential assault. They also ask friends or neighbors to accompany them at home when workers come to do installations or repairs for fear of being harassed or raped. Women and girls reported that survivors stay silent and fear reporting or sharing with family

and community members due to threats from the perpetrator, victim blaming, community stigma, fear, or not being believed. Therefore, women and girls experience psychosocial trauma from incidences of gender-based violence, but do not share this trauma due to blame and fear of backlash or disapproval from the community. Moreover, women, girls and other key informants stated that if women and girls do choose to report, they might go to organizations that work to address GBV, talk to caseworkers or trusted community leaders, or call the reporting hotline.

"FACILITATOR: What would the reaction of society be, if a woman says that she's been subjected to harassment?"

PARTICIPANT: They would blame her. It's better to remain silent, everything is a mess, and nothing will change."

-Qualitative interview with refugee woman

"FACILITATOR: And why did the woman go to bring the aid instead of her husband?"

PARTICIPANT: Because he was at work and her children were at school. She wouldn't allow her children to go there. She'd rather expose herself to danger instead of her children."

-Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl

ANNEX 5: FURTHER QUOTES ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WHEN ACCESSING AID

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF AID

Food	<p><i>"INTERVIEWER: You said that there is conflict and harassment between women PARTICIPANT: Many things happen INTERVIEWER: And the petting happens between who and whom? PARTICIPANT: Harassment between the women and many men. For example, a man came, harass the woman, and touch her and she cannot tell anyone in order to avoid the scandal. If there is a system or arrangements by number, nothing would happen. But now there are no arrangements." -Qualitative interview with refugee woman</i></p>
Shelter	<p><i>FACILITATOR: Are there any shelters and facilities that make woman and girls feel unsafe? Or places they try to avoid? PARTICIPANT: Yes, of course. For example, this apartment that is shared by three families. If a girl or a woman wants to use the bathroom and there is a male from the other family in the house, of course it is dangerous for her because it's a shared bathroom. A lot of ugly stuff happened in the building where we used to live? FACILITATOR: Like what? PARTICIPANT: The neighbor's daughter goes to use the bathroom but finds it already occupied. A lot of love relationships happened there too. FACILITATOR: Was this when you first came here? The bathroom was common for the whole floor? PARTICIPANT: No, it was shared by 4-5 families. FACILITATOR: Males and females? PARTICIPANT: Yes, families next to each other shared the same bathrooms. FACILITATOR: What makes them feel unsafe? PARTICIPANT: Imagine if a girl is using the bathroom but the lock is broken and then someone opens the door by mistake. It's not nice at all. FACILITATOR: Yes. Of course. PARTICIPANT: This is not safe. FACILITATOR: What else? PARTICIPANT: It could happen on purpose too. Ugly things. For example, someone might get harassed or even raped in a bathroom. If a guy sees a young girl entering the bathroom, he might rape her. FACILITATOR: What do you know about such cases? PARTICIPANT: There were a lot of girl where we used to live and there were too many romantic relationships going on." -Qualitative interview with refugee woman</i></p>
Wash	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: If a girl goes out to register her name to receive shelter aid, what kind of violence could she be subjected to on her way there or if an employee visited her at home to install a water pipe for her? What kind of violence could she be subjected to? PARTICIPANT: If she was alone at home when he visits, he might violate or harass her sexually." -Qualitative interview with adolescent girl</i></p> <p><i>"PARTICIPANT: I prefer if no one came to my house. FACILITATOR: Why? PARTICIPANT: Because it's not safe. FACILITATOR: What scares you? PARTICIPANT: I get scared, I don't open the door. The stories I hear don't encourage me to open the door to anyone. FACILITATOR: What scares you? What could he do? PARTICIPANT: Anything, he could drug us, or hurt the girls. FACILITATOR: You mean he could hurt one of your children? PARTICIPANT: Yes, especially [my daughter]." -Qualitative interview with refugee woman</i></p>

<p>Cash</p>	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: Yes, we know that there's physical and verbal violence. What are the types of violence you encounter, on your way to the center or in the center?"</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: Physical violence, beating like I've already said, verbal by insulting us.</i> <i>FACILITATOR: Physical violence like what?</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: You mean when I'm receiving the card?</i> <i>FACILITATOR: Yes, if the place is crowded and filled with men</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: Yes, men get close to women. They don't mind getting close to them. Harassment."</i> -Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p>
<p>GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE DISTRIBUTION PROCESS</p>	
<p>At the point of distribution or at home</p>	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: Why would you avoid it? What would make you feel unsafe there? You mentioned harassment, what else?"</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: Touching</i> <i>FACILITATOR: Touching?</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: He might put his hand</i> <i>FACILITATOR: He takes advantage of the crowd?</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: He hugs you, pretending that someone pushed him in the crowd, and he acts like he didn't do anything</i> <i>FACILITATOR: Exactly, he didn't do anything...</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: Yes, he acts like he's innocent, but he's in your arms!"</i> -Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p> <p><i>"FACILITATOR: While receiving it, like you registered and took a card and went to the supermarket to spend the aid, what problems could a woman or a girl face then?"</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: Zakat house for example, I went there twice by accident, in a popular area, and under the organization there were motorbikes and a lot of guys. There would be a lot of parked cars in front of the gate, so when they distribute meals you wouldn't be able to carry them, so you need a car to do that. Thus, all of the cars follow you to deliver you which causes a lot of traffic and some men a guy would talk badly so the standing women would hear."</i> -Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p> <p><i>"FACILITATOR: What other types of violence can women and girls be subjected to when receiving aid or when a repairman visits them?"</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: I think it's better if she doesn't allow anyone inside.</i> <i>FACILITATOR: You told me a story about violence and kidnapping.</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: That's why she shouldn't allow them inside. She's a woman alone at home, she might be a widow, married, or divorced and that in itself is a danger if she allows a stranger inside. He might kidnap or harass her or rob the house."</i> -Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p>
<p>When traveling to or from a distribution point</p>	<p><i>"Al Tebbeneh area, young people are abundant, and girls are exposed to insecure situations, harassment and there are girls being kidnapped, especially in the afternoon. There is [name of association], which provides sanitation assistance and there is an association that provides food assistance, and here there is cash and shelter assistance, and there is every area, there is an adolescent girl association, the girl is being harassed by the driver, and sometimes the driver exploits it, and under the Malula Bridge, there are some guys. If the girl passes from there, she is verbally harassed, and there are people who help her if she faces any danger."</i> -Participatory group discussion with refugee adolescent girls</p>

<p>When traveling to or from a distribution point (cont.)</p>	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: On what ways may you, or any girl in your community, be facing threats or violence while going to get food from the supermarket?</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: We may get harassed or may be kidnapped or simply get lost if the place is far.</i> <i>FACILITATOR: Have you heard about girls who got harassed or faced any danger on her way there?</i> <i>Participant: Yes, a lot of girls got harassed.</i> <i>FACILITATOR: Who harass them? Are they men who are on the street?</i> <i>Participant: Yes, they are boys who are on the street."</i> -Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p> <p><i>"Participant: I was attacked by the driver who was delivering me. I don't know very well Mina's area. He went on internal roads that I don't know.</i> <i>FACILITATOR: He knew you were going to a distribution center?</i> <i>Participant: Yes, I told him I want to go to the El Mina, they were distributing aid in the mosque in the Mina area. I shouted, he said, "Well, as you want, he opened the door and dropped me in the road. I don't know what to do. I was afraid to ride another car until I met an old man and told him what happened. He brought me home."</i> -Community participatory group discussion with vulnerable refugee women</p>
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ADDITIONAL QUOTES RELATED TO SAFETY AND SERVICES

<p>Risk factors</p>	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: What are women and girls doing to generate income to meet basic needs?</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: What do they do, I mean, a lot of them are, you're talking about Syrian refugees, yes specifically, a lot of them are completely dependent on aid, a lot of them are, many of them, most of them are in debt, I mean they have sold everything they have, they haven't paid rent for years, some of them have children, a lot of them use negative coping mechanisms, they marry off their daughters, they have their sons to work or they use survival sex as a last resort and then some of them of course go in sort of business, a lot of time it's something they could do home based, so that would be for example something of cooking, or making sweets or they can sell to restaurants or some kind of community kitchens initiatives, but the situation for the vast majority is desperate, and it's just getting worse."</i> -Key informant interview with humanitarian actor</p> <p><i>"PARTICIPANT: No matter how brave and confident she is; she might be exposed to danger when there are many people trying to hurt her..."</i> <i>FACILITATOR: How so?</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: I mean that if she is alone and two guys attacked, she can't do anything... what can she do? She is only able to do something if someone supports and defends her..."</i> <i>FACILITATOR: So, someone should be supporting her..."</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: Yes"</i> -Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p>
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<p>Places identified as unsafe</p>	<p><i>"All places you go to are not safe, even the UN. For instance, if you take a taxi, you might get kidnapped because the roads are very distant. If you were going to the fair, you suddenly find the driver taking a different route."</i> -Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p> <p><i>"He could tell her that he loves her in order to get what he wants, and then leave her. I know a woman in Tebbeneh, she's a little bit naïve, and a man raped her. She went downstairs to take bread or something from someone, some boys raped her in the street at night. In the street, while going to receive aid? Yes, but she's naïve. I feel sad for her. What did her parents do? She has no one. I know that she lives with her sister, and they're two naïve girls."</i> -Qualitative interview with refugee woman</p>
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<p>Family/Community Response</p>	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: What if they [the survivor's family] are not understanding?</i> <i>PARTICIPANT: They could get her married, ban her from going out, or control her movements in a way that could bother her."</i> -Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</p>
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<p>Family/ Community Response (cont.)</p>	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: Usually you didn't claim just you said for your husband? PARTICIPANT: Where I will claim? FACILITATOR: So, there is no reaction? PARTICIPANT: No, nothing! At this time, I return to house having a depression and crying, but my husband what he can do? So, what happens can't be changed and I didn't know the taxi driver and I didn't know his structure or anything about him." -Qualitative interview with refugee woman</i></p> <p><i>"FACILITATOR: Regarding the girl who was raped in the compound, have you heard of similar things happening in the collective housing? PARTICIPANT: Yes, a lot FACILITATOR: Things like what? PARTICIPANT: If a young man loves a girl, he goes to her father and says he has a relationship with her, and the father kills his daughter." -Qualitative interview with refugee woman</i></p> <p><i>"FACILITATOR: Why would the girl avoid going to receive aid? PARTICIPANT: Men are the main reason, men drivers. Parents get scared that if they send their girl to get aid, someone may harass her, or fool her." -Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</i></p>
<p>Survivors/ Women and girls' response</p>	<p><i>"FACILITATOR: If he was someone standing in line? PARTICIPANT: It is possible to be exposed by the girl at the same time and place, and other girls will probably remain silent because they won't believe them, they will believe him because he could invent a story that people will believe." -Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</i></p> <p><i>"And there is the Women's Rights Association, she can call the emergency and file a complaint while they are helping them, the Association of Nations and the Parents and Restart Association can help her." -Participatory group discussion with refugee adolescent girls</i></p> <p><i>"FACILITATOR: What do you mean by sexual violence? Have you heard about anyone who was subjected to it? PARTICIPANT: Even if they were subjected to it, they wouldn't tell anyone." -Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</i></p>
<p>Accessing Services</p>	<p><i>"So, if a girl faces such problems, she complains to organizations? Yes, she complains. And what does the organization do? Nothing." -Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</i></p> <p><i>"FACILITATOR: What could the police or organizations do to the man who caused the harm? PARTICIPANT: Most of the time, the police don't respond to us, because we're not locals. FACILITATOR: Yes, this is what usually happens, have you encountered such a situation? PARTICIPANT: No, but I hear about it. FACILITATOR: What happens to the man who caused the harm, when they don't respond? Participant: He'll continue to cause harm." -Qualitative interview with refugee adolescent girl</i></p> <p><i>"Based on the GBV information system that collect information in Lebanon, the consistent risks that were reported by women across Lebanon including Tripoli were sexual harassment, physical abuse or physical violence and then the sexual assault, so these were the main three that were repeatedly reported by women. When it comes to perpetrators, it is the same plus adding the very specific there are many incidents of child marriage and in Lebanon again based on the VASYR and other studies it is been 27% in Lebanon including Tripoli and other locations, so these were the main GVB risk reported. For adolescent girl it is more early marriage and actually physical violence." -Key informant interview with humanitarian actor</i></p>

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