The Global Women's Institute
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

GWI & IRC Dignity Kit Distribution, Empowered Aid Pilot 2

Safety Audit
Summary of Findings

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Overview

As part of Empowered Aid, the Global Women's Institute (GWI) is working with the NGOs International Rescue Committee (IRC) and World Vision in Uganda, to adapt distribution monitoring tools to more proactively identify and address risks for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). These tools build on the

findings from Empowered Aid's first phase, which identified ways in which the distribution processes can put women and girls at risk of SEA, and how to mitigate those risks.[1]

From May 14 – 29, the Global Women's Institute and the International Rescue Committee Uganda and distributed 880 dignity kits to women and girls in Bidi Bidi refugee settlement, as one of Empowered Aid's pilot tests to build evidence on safer distribution methods and monitoring. IRC Women's Protection & Empowerment (WPE) and Protection & Rule of Law (PRoL) teams identified recipients from among women and girls of reproductive age (12-45 years) from their databases who were considered most vulnerable, including female- and child-headed households, women and girls living with disabilities, persons with special needs (PSNs), extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIs), active GBV cases, and GBV survivors. WPE Community Volunteers conducted door-to-door mobilization, visiting the women and girls at their homes to inform them of the location, time, and date of the distribution as well as sharing key messages on SEA and COVID-19 preventative measures. This report covers the results from the analysis of the 17 safety audits conducted during the dignity kit distribution.

Table 1. Distribution Summary	
Type of distribution being piloted	Items were distributed in small groups of 20 aid recipients coming at pre-assigned times
Location of distribution	Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, Zones 1-5
Date of distribution	May 14-29, 2020
# of people reached	880
distribution monitoring conducted	17 safety audits at 16 distribution sites (two audits were conducted in sites where the distribution lasted more than one day)
	176 short (4 question) in-person surveys, with recipients sampled from each distribution site
Covid-19 related context	distribution occurred after lockdown lifted in Uganda

Methods

To ensure the safety of the staff and aid recipients, women and girls came at pre-assigned times to the Women & Girls Centers in groups of 20 to collect their dignity kits. The distribution took place outside of the Women and Girls Centers, with recipients waiting at designated points spaced 6 feet apart and marked with circles drawn on the ground with chalks or marked by rocks. One IRC WPE staff member would verify the aid recipients name and information, while another staff member would hand over the dignity kits to each woman/girl and show them the contents, while they remained in their circles (to maintain social distancing), and once all kits were handed out the women and girls could leave the distribution site. Six staff total supported this distribution process at each site. If an aid recipient needed further assistance or

[1] For more information about Empowered Aid, visit https://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu/empowered-aid. Findings from the first phase in Uganda can be found in the report online here: https://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu/empowered-aid-resources.

wanted to ask questions in private, they were given the opportunity to ask and stay to speak to a social worker or set up an appointment at another time. IRC staff and community volunteers orally relayed messages on SEA and COVID-19 prevention to each group of women and girls when the women and girls were mobilized for the distribution and during the distribution before they were given the dignity kit, in addition to displayed visual aids with messaging.

TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION TIMELINE AND AMOUNTS OF DIGNITY KITS DISTRIBUTED

Zones in Bidi Bidi	IRC Women & Girls Centers	Date	# of Dignity Kits Distributed
Zone 1	Amaalu, Stand Firm	May 14	160
Zone 2	Progressive, Women on the Move	May 18-19	160
Zone 3	Hope, Emmanuel, Rock, Loketa, Baraka	May 21-25	240
Zone 4	Jujumbita and Loketa	May 26	160
Zone 5	Asante, Faith, Unity, and Hope	May 28-29	160

Distribution monitoring was conducted during and after the distribution in accordance with COVID-19 restrictions. IRC and GWI worked in close coordination throughout the design, training, implementation and analysis of distribution monitoring data. As part of distribution monitoring, a safety audit was conducted at each distribution site (Women & Girls Center) on each day of the distribution. The Empowered Aid team adapted IRC's existing safety audit tool to include specific risks and safety measures women and girls shared during the first phase of research and shortened the audit tool in response to COVID-19. The safety audit is an observational tool that can be conducted while maintaining social distance, and provides a systematic way in which to record structured observations of aid processes. In this case, the safety audit tool focuses on issues of access, safety, dignity, and information, in relation to the distribution. In addition, a short (4-question) questionnaire was administered in-person at the distribution site; those findings are summarized in a separate report.

Recommendations

1. **Install latrines with locks at Stand Firm (Zone 1); Progressive (Zone 2); Emmanuel, Hope, and Loketa (Zone 3); Jujumbita (Zone 4); and Asante, Faith, Unity and Hope (Zone 5). Install locks on existing latrines at Amaalu (Zone 1); Women on the Move, Loketa (Zone 2); and Rock (Zone 3)**. As latrines are in unfenced areas, there is a need to ensure they are sex-segregated or otherwise set up so that women and girls can safely and privately use them without interference from men and boys. The lack of toileting facilities at the distribution points was pointed out in the safety audits particularly as a threat to the dignity of the aid recipients.

2. **Display sensitization on SEA, GBV, and COVID-19 at all Women & Girls Centers with visuals that are accessible for low-literacy groups** and ensure there are ways to successfully hang these materials at sites built with tarpaulin or other materials reported to be challenging. These materials are vital to raise awareness, regardless of whether or not a distribution is happening.

3. **Clearly define distribution spaces with a rope or other physical barrier to reduce confusion at the distribution sites**. Since Women & Girls Centers execute other programming and are also

gathering points for refugees, it is critical to create designated distribution space so that staff and volunteers can focus on the distribution and monitoring tasks and ensure aid recipients maintain social distancing measures necessary for COVID-19 prevention, which proved challenging according to the safety audits.

4. **The distribution team received positive feedback from aid recipients on the privacy afforded by packing materials in a container, such as a bucket**. This should be applied to future distributions where sensitive materials, such as sanitary materials, are handed out to women and girls, to preserve dignity and safety in the distribution process. Women and girls anecdotally reported to Empowered Aid staff in the past that they may be harassed or shamed when walking home with sensitive materials that are not packaged for privacy.

5. **While making Women and Girls Centers regular distribution sites could confuse their mission and purpose, future distributions should adopt the qualities that were favorable while holding the distributions at the Women and Girls Centers**. These include a space that felt safe and comfortable for women and girls, accessible reporting and complaint mechanisms with IRC social workers and WPE volunteers who can also provide referrals and services, and safe access to latrines intended to be used only by women and girls.

Checklist of Key Safety Audit Findings

SAFETY AUDIT CHECKLIST																	
Bidi Bidi Zone	**ZONE 1**			**ZONE 2**		**ZONE 3**						**ZONE 4**		**ZONE 5**			
Distribution Site	Amaalu	Stand Firm	Loketa	Progressive	Women on the Move	Hope	Emmanuel	Rock	Loketa	Rock	Hope	Jujuimbita	Loketa	Asante	Faith	Unity	Hope	***Summary of Findings***
ACCESS																		
Clear method for handling complaints	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	All sites had clear methods for handling complaints.
Defined distribution area that is clean and free of dangerous objects	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	All sites clean and free of dangerous objects.
Accessible visibility materials	√	√		√	√				√	√	√		√		√		√	Almost 60% of the sites had visibility materials. Those that did not had

																		no means to hang the materials.
Clear & timely communication on the distribution	√	√	√		√				√	√	√		√		√		√	A majority of the distributions had clear and timely communication.
Did the distribution start on time?	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	Distribution started on time except for logistical challenges on one day in Zone 1 and poor weather in Zone 4.
If not, were aid recipients informed?			√															Aid recipients were informed in Zone 1 but not Zone 4.
Appropriate behavior of staff/volunteers	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	All staff behaved in a dignified and

																		respectable way.
Inappropriate behavior of staff/volunteers																		No inappropriate behavior was observed.
SAFETY																		
Adequate crowd control measures																		No sites were defined by rope, concrete walls, or a fence.
More female than male staff/volunteers	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	All sites had more female than male staff.
An equal number of female and male staff/volunteers																		All sites had more female than male staff.
More male than female staff																		All sites had more female than male staff.

Observation of SEA occurring																		No observations of SEA occurred.
Active measures in place to prevent or mitigate SEA	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	All sites took active measures to mitigate SEA including more female staff who were trained on PSEA.
Interactions between Boda Boda / truck drivers and aid recipients																		No interactions observed.
Handwashing facilities available	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Handwashing facilities were available at all distribution sites.

Methods to ensure social distancing	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Methods to ensure social distancing were implemented at all distribution sites.
COVID-19 awareness materials displayed	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	COVID-19 awareness materials were displayed or shared at all distribution sites.
DIGNITY																		
Model of distribution takes into account the dignity of aid recipients	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	A majority of the sites took into account the dignity of aid recipients, except for in Zone 5 due to a lack of latrines.
Latrines at the	√		√		√			√		√			√					5 of the 15 sites reported

distribution point																		latrines available.
Latrines are lockable	√		√		√			√		√			√					All sites with latrines were lockable.
Latrines are sex-segregated																		No latrines were sex-segregated.
INFORMATION ON THE DISTRIBUTION																		
Information-dissemination on complaint mechanisms	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Conducted at all sites.
Sensitization on GBV/SEA	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Conducted at all sites.
Dissemination done in English & Juba Arabic	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Always done in English and Juba Arabic.

Findings

Access

Method for handling distribution complaints

All distribution points had clear methods of handling complaints. Aid recipients could give feedback or report a complaint directly to the IRC WPE staff at the Women and Girls Centers at all distribution sites. The staff also requested the aid recipients who had a complaint or problem once they reached home should go back to the Women & Girls Center or nearest complaint desk to report the complaint.

While information was shared to allow for transparency in why some women and girls received kits and others didn't, those who did not receive kits were also given information on how to share feedback via the complaint mechanisms outlined above. Aid recipients were further requested to check the items in the kit before leaving and report any issues to the staff immediately to rectify a missing item or other problem.

Layout, accommodation, and cleanliness of distribution points

None of the distribution points were defined by rope, a wooden fence, or concrete walls as they took place directly outside the Women and Girls Centers, which are either concrete buildings or tarpaulin tented structures located in open areas of the settlement. Spaces for each aid recipient to stand were defined by circles drawn in the dirt or using rocks set 6 feet apart, so that recipients would maintain social distancing and abide by COVID-19 preventative measures. Fourteen Distribution points in Zones 1 to 4 were kept clean however, one distribution point in Zone 5 was considered not clean.

Communication and timeliness of distribution

The audits indicated that all distribution information was given verbally to the aid recipients and shared in a timely manner in the most commonly spoken languages, English and Juba Arabic.

The distributions started early at every distribution site except at Zone 2, Loketa Women & Girls Center and Zone 3 due to logistical challenges and poor weather. When these delays occurred, information updates were shared verbally and by phone in Zone 2 and 3 by the WPE community volunteers in English and Juba Arabic.

Conduct of those distributing dignity kits

All IRC staff and community volunteers were observed behaving in an appropriate manner towards aid recipients. The distribution staff treated the women and girls with respect, answering questions and concerns, sharing information on SEA and COVID-19 prevention, showing them to handwashing stations, and directing women and girls to where they could sit and wait in the shade if they arrived early. Those who arrived despite not being included in the targeted list were spoken to politely about the limited supply of dignity kits and how, therefore, the distribution was targeted to those most vulnerable and could not serve all women and girls.

An IRC staff member would review the content of the dignity kit while kits were handed to recipients, to ensure transparency and clarity on what they would receive and allow recipients to double-check all contents were in the bucket.

Another example of clear and respectful communication occurred at Rock Women and Girls Center, Zone 3, where distribution staff first apologized for the delay due to the rain and welcomed all the women and girls to the Center for the distribution.

There were no instances observed in which staff and volunteers who were executing the distribution acted disrespectfully or inappropriately.

Safety

Crowding and crowd control

While the distribution sites did not have crowd control measures in place such as rope, fences, or concrete walls, crowd control staff were present at each site. The crowd control staff were male and female WPE volunteers who helped to ensure women, girls, and staff maintained social distancing measures. All the male and female crowd control staff were wearing visibility items during the distribution. Issues arose with crowd control because aid recipients and other refugees who were not receiving aid would linger around the Women & Girls Center during the distribution. Without a rope or other designated barriers, it proved difficult to maintain the distribution space.

At 15 of the 17 distributions (88%), the number of female crowd control staff exceeded or matched the number of male crowd control staff. The number of female crowd control staff ranged from 1 – 5 females present at the distribution. A female crowd control staff member was always present at the distribution sites. Further details can be found in the table below:

TABLE 3: AMOUNT OF CROWD CONTROL STAFF/VOLUNTEERS AT EACH DISTRIBUTION SITE DISAGGREGATED BY SEX

Distribution	**Location**	**# Female crwd cntrl**	**# Male crwd cntrl**	**Totals**
Zone 1	Amaalu	5	1	6
	Stand Firm	1	0	1
Zone 2	Loketa	3	0	3
	Progressive	3	0	3
	Women on the move	1	0	1
Zone 3	Hope	1	2	3
	Emannuel	2	3	5
	Rock	2	2	4
	Loketa	1	1	2
	Rock	3	1	4
	Hope	1	0	1
Zone 4	Jujumbita	2	0	2
	Loketa	3	0	3
Zone 5	Asante	2	0	2
	Faith	1	0	1
	Unity	2	0	2
	Hope	2	0	2

Overall average ratio of female:male crowd control staff:	***Approx. 2 females:1 male***

Distribution staffing and volunteers

At every distribution site, there were more female staff and volunteers than male present. Female volunteers helped with translation, while the male WPE volunteers helped in ensuring that aid recipients maintained social distancing measures. Further details are in the table below.

TABLE 4: AMOUNT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS AT EACH DISTRIBUTION SITE DISAGGREGATED BY SEX

Distribution	**Location**	**# Female staff/vol.**	**# Male staff/vol.**	**Totals**
Zone 1	Amaalu	5	1	6
	Stand Firm	4	0	4
Zone 2	Loketa	8	5	13
	Progressive	6	3	9
	Women on the move	5	3	8
Zone 3	Hope	3	2	5
	Emannuel	6	5	11
	Rock	4	2	6
	Loketa	5	1	6
	Rock	5	3	8
	Hope	2	0	2
Zone 4	Jujumbita	5	2	7
	Loketa	6	3	9
Zone 5	Asante	5	2	7
	Faith	3	1	4
	Unity	4	2	6
	Hope	5	2	7
Overall average ratio of female:male staff & volunteers:		***Approx. 5 females:2 males***		

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)

Every distribution site was observed as consistent with guidelines for safety, with no observed indications of known SEA risk. Female staff were present at all the Women and Girls Centers and participated in all the distributions at higher ratios than male staff. There was no need for sex-segregated lines since the target beneficiaries were 100% female, and police were not present.

All of the staff and volunteers who took part in the distribution received training on GBV core concepts and PSEA. Volunteers who took part in the distribution were trained either during Empowered Aid's PSEA trainings administered by GWI and IRC, or in IRC's *Listen Up* PSEA trainings. Seven of the staff who took part in the distribution attended Empowered Aid PSEA trainings and 5 were not trained by the research team but attended *Listen Up* trainings on PSEA.

Transportation

Transport support was not provided for aid recipients. The dignity kit materials were placed inside a bucket so they were easy to carry and discretely packaged so that contents could not be seen when the aid recipients walked home. PSNs who participated in the distribution were supported by the IRC Protection & Rule of Law team, helping to take dignity kits closer to their residences or delivered directly to their homes so they did not have to travel long distances.

Boda Bodas (motorcycles) are currently banned to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and the dignity kits were packed and transported by IRC staff to the distribution points. As a result, no truck or boda boda drivers were on site and no SEA interactions with drivers occurred.

COVID-19 safety related measures

All distribution sites had hand washing facilities with soap and water for aid recipients. Methods for ensuring physical distancing were practiced at all the distribution points, with support from crowd control staff who helped remind women & girls to practice physical distancing and stay within their designated circles / spaces when receiving their dignity kits.

All distribution sites included oral and written messages on COVID-19 prevention and safety measures. The oral messages were delivered in English and Juba Arabic. The messages relayed at every distribution site included: "Wash hands with soap and water, maintain social distance, avoid hand shaking and stay home if you have signs like fever, sore throat, coughing and difficulty in breathing." These key messages were also shared during mobilization of the aid recipients. Women and girls were told they could come and ask questions to social workers or visit the Women and Girls Centers if they had more specific needs related to COVID-19.

Dignity

Overall dignity of distribution models used

Fourteen of the 17 (82%) assessed distributions were observed as adequately taking into account the dignity of recipients. These were in Zones 1 – 4 and in one Women's Center in Zone 5. The reasons for this included:

The manner in which the dignity kits were packed – all the items inside of a bucket – to ensure privacy and avoid shame while walking home with the kit, was praised by the women and girls who took part in the distribution.

"The kits we're packed in a way that doesn't shame women and girls while walking back home" – monitoring staff observation from Zone 3, Hope Women & Girls Center, May 25

The distribution took place in safe spaces (the Women and Girls Centers) so women and girls collecting kits could felt comfortable. It was also an opportunity for staff at the Women and Girls Center to describe other programming and activities that happen at the Centers and encourage aid recipients to return and engage with them.

The distribution targeted the needs of vulnerable women and girls, at the same time none of the survivors or active GBV cases included were identifiable as such, and everyone was treated equally.

In Zone 2, Women on the Move Center had lockable toilets to ensure women's safety and respect while using the facilities and so that men and boys do not enter.

There is a counselling room at the Women & Girls Center, therefore if aid recipients are at the distribution and have questions or challenges for which they request support, they can talk to social workers and ask for help.

The three distributions in Zone 5 did not adequately take into account dignity of recipients due to lacking toilets, which is particularly problematic for women and girls who are menstruating or facing incontinence issues.

Latrines

Of the 15 women's centers where distributions were held, 5 (33%) had latrines available and none were sex segregated, as they were only meant for the women and girls at the Centers. However, IRC staff reported that on occasion men and boys do use the latrines. The Women and Girls Centers that included latrines with locks were Amaalu in Zone 1, Loketa in Zone 2, Women on the Move in Zone 2, Rock in Zone 3, and Loketa in Zone 4. All the facilities had locks, but due to the way the toilets were constructed, none were easily accessible for PSNs.

When latrines were not available, aid recipients would ask to use locked rooms in the Women & Girls Centers to change sanitary materials. For example, at Zone 3, Rock Women & Girls Center the IRC staff administering the safety audit stated, *"Women can change if they started their periods at the distribution point without feeling ashamed."*

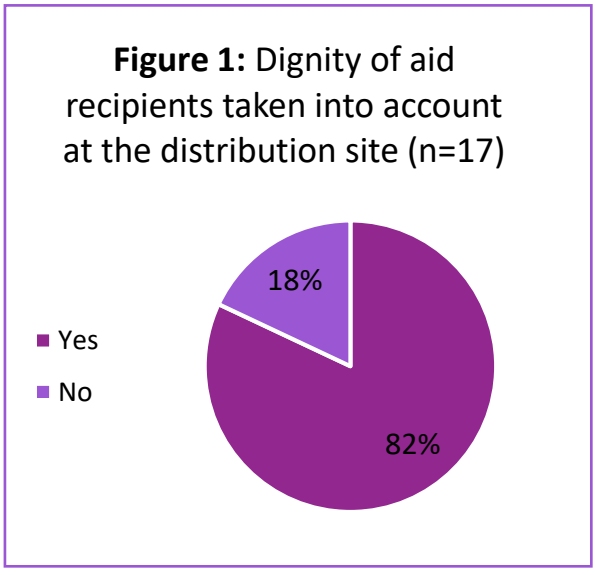

Figure 1: Dignity of aid recipients taken into account at the distribution site (n=17)

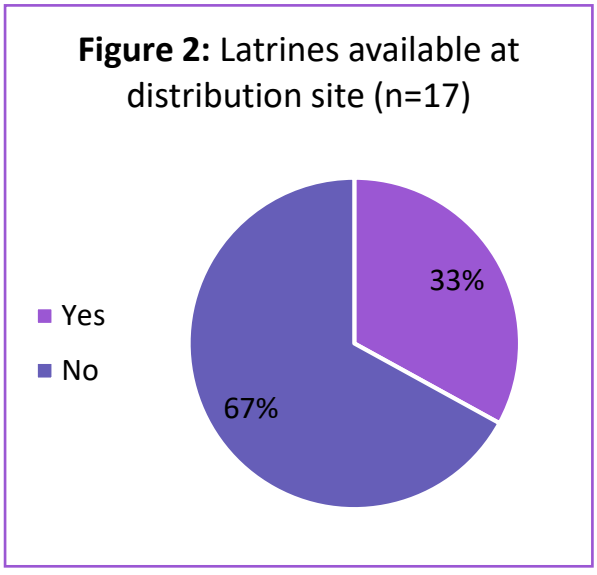

Figure 2: Latrines available at distribution site (n=17)

Information on the Distribution

Feedback, question, or complaint mechanisms

At all of the distribution sites, aid recipients were informed verbally of the ways they can share feedback, questions or complaints for any distributions or issues that could arise. The main formats of information sharing communicated to the women and girls included Complaint Desks, Women and Girls Centers, and toll-free hotlines.

This information was disseminated verbally to all the women and girls who attended the distribution in English and Juba Arabic. It was repeated each time a new group of 20 women and girls came to get their kits and displayed on posters on the walls of Women and Girls Center relaying the information.

IRC WPE staff and community volunteers shared verbal sensitization on SEA and GBV prevention at all the distribution sites and during mobilization for the distribution. The IRC staff and community volunteers communicated that all services are given to aid recipients and refugees free of charge; no humanitarian worker should demand anything in exchange for aid or services. If any issues should arise that women want to share, refer, or receive services for, they should visit the Women and Girls Center.

In addition to verbal messages, information on reporting and complaint mechanisms was posted on visual aids at the distribution in English and Juba Arabic. At all distribution sites, IRC staff and volunteers posted materials raising awareness on complaint and reporting mechanisms, GBV and SEA awareness prevention messages, and COVID-19 safety precautions. Awareness materials for low literacy/illiterate populations were available at 10 of the 15 distribution sites: Zone 1 Amaalu; Zone 2 Loketa, Progressive, and Women on the Move; Zone 3 Emannuel and Rock; Zone 4 Loketa; Zone 5 Faith, Unity, and Hope Women and Girls Centers. The other 5 distributions took place at tarpaulin structured Women & Girls Centers that had experienced damage and therefore made it difficult to hang the materials during the distribution. Since the distribution, all the tarpaulin structures have been repaired.

Information dissemination for aid recipients and refugees in special situations

For all the distribution sites, the information was tailored to the specific groups identified for the distribution but did not single out any group or call attention to their vulnerability in order to respect privacy and confidentiality. The messages on SEA, COVID-19, and reporting mechanisms were shared amongst all women and girl who attended the distribution.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the safety audit analysis, below are recommendations for IRC Uganda to improve the safety of women and girls at distribution sites. These recommendations can also be adapted by other NGOs and humanitarian actors at a wide range of distributions in Bidi Bidi settlement and other refugee settlement locations in Uganda.

1. **Install latrines with locks at Stand Firm (Zone 1); Progressive (Zone 2); Emmanuel, Hope, and Loketa (Zone 3); Jujumbita (Zone 4); and Asante, Faith, Unity and Hope (Zone 5). Install locks on existing latrines at Amaalu (Zone 1); Women on the Move and Loketa (Zone 2); and Rock (Zone 3)**. As latrines are in unfenced areas, there is a need to ensure they are sex-segregated or otherwise set up so that women and girls can safely and privately use them without interference from men and boys. The lack of toileting facilities at the distribution points was pointed out in the safety audits particularly as a threat to the dignity of the aid recipients.

2. **Display sensitization on SEA, GBV, and COVID-19 at all Women and Girls Centers with visuals that are accessible for low-literacy groups** and ensure there are ways to successfully hang these materials at sites built with tarpaulin or other materials reported to be challenging. These materials are vital to raise awareness, regardless of whether or not a distribution is happening.

3. **Clearly define distribution spaces with a rope or other physical barrier to reduce confusion at the distribution sites**. Since Women & Girls Centers execute other programming and are also gathering points for refugees, it is critical to create designated distribution space so that staff and volunteers can focus on the distribution and monitoring tasks and ensure aid recipients maintain social distancing measures necessary for COVID-19 prevention, which proved challenging according to the safety audits.

4. **The distribution team received positive feedback from aid recipients on the privacy afforded by packing materials in a container, such as a bucket**. This should be applied to future distributions where sensitive materials, such as sanitary materials, are handed out to women and girls, to preserve dignity and safety in the distribution process. Women and girls anecdotally reported to Empowered Aid staff in the past that they may be harassed or shamed when walking home with sensitive materials that are not packaged for privacy.

5. **While Women and Girls Centers should not be regular distribution sites, future distributions should adopt the qualities that were favorable while holding the distributions at the Women and Girls Centers**. These include a space that felt safe and comfortable for women and girls, accessible reporting and complaint mechanisms with IRC social workers and WPE volunteers who also could provide referrals and services, and safe access to latrines intended to be used only by women and girls.