



## **EMPOWERD AID IN ACTION: USING EMPOWERED AID RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' TRAVEL TO ACCESS SERVICES**

**World Vision**

Al Azraq Camp, Amman, Jordan

AUGUST 2023

---

### **Introduction**

The Global Women's Institute's (GWI) "Empowered Aid" study is feminist, participatory action research (PAR) that recognizes women and girls as contextual safeguarding experts and engages them as co-producers of knowledge in asking and answering questions about their own lives. PAR proactively acknowledges and addresses power imbalances—in this case, between men and women; aid workers and those receiving aid; and researchers and those being researched. Just as participation lies at the center of accountable humanitarian response, it is a critical element for research that seeks to shift power imbalances.

This brief offers guidance on creating formal and informal accompanying systems for girls to travel to activities – at the Peace Center in Al Azraq camp in the context of this case study – and on providing information sharing on moving in groups. This approach was developed by the World Vision team in Jordan with support from the GWI team, based on recommendations from women and girls to make accessing aid services safer.

### **Background**

In Jordan, Empowered Aid was implemented in Al Azraq camp, in partnership with the Road to Resilience (RtR) project part of the World Vision Syria Response. Al Azraq camp, which includes 6 villages, was established in 2014 in response to the influx of Syrian refugees, operated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in conjunction with the Government of Jordan. Today, Al Azraq camp is a home to around 40,000 Syrian refugees. RtR has been instrumental in creating a safe and healthy environment for children and caregivers in Al Azraq refugee camp. The Peace Centre part of RtR, where the Empowered Aid project was implemented, is designed to provide a safe and resilient environment for children and young adults in the camp.

Based on contextualization workshops with women and girls and participatory group discussions (PGDs) with men and boys, the participants reported that they travel by foot to access any aid or services inside Al Azraq camp. Distances in the camp are particularly large, with the camp stretching for some 15 kilometers. There are no taxis, buses, or cars, and the only mean of transportation is bicycles, mainly driven by men living in the camp. Each bicycle has an extra seat that can accommodate a maximum of one or two passengers.

Women and girls reported being verbally and physically harassed by the camp inhabitants when traveling to and from any distribution or service points, including the centers, clinics, schools, hospitals, and the mall. They stressed that no matter how near or far the place is, walking to any area inside the camp exposes them to abuse. Furthermore, men and boy participants corroborated this, and specifically mentioned that the highest risk happens when women and girls travel to collect food distribution or when they travel to and from the mall where daily shopping is conducted.

*“Today, a young man harassed me on my way to the Peace Center. The Center is about 20 minutes away from me, I always see guys follow me and verbally harass me, I stopped coming, or I come with my friend or group of girls”*

- A Syrian adolescent girl

Based on these accounts as well as insights from the contextualization workshops and PGDs, walking to or from any place inside Al Azraq camp puts women and girls at risk of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), irrespective of the distance. Adolescent girls (aged 15-18) were identified as the most vulnerable to this risk (more than women). Most of the adolescent girls at Al Azraq camp reported a fear of being exploited or abused while travelling to access NGO services or school. They also reported being afraid to tell this to their caregivers, concerned it may lead to them being further deprived of NGO services or education. Unfortunately, many girls have dropped out of school (voluntarily or forced by their caregivers) due to feeling unsafe and at risk of GBV.

## Approach

Following workshops and discussion with women, men, girls and boys, creating formal or informal accompanying systems for girls traveling to and from the Peace Center’s activities emerged as one of several recommendations for the RtR team to implement. To do so, the RtR team conducted a mapping exercise with women and girls attending their activities. They identified and grouped female adolescent beneficiaries (aged 15-18) based on their addresses using a map of the village. The team shared name lists with the beneficiaries according to their blocks, and designated safe points to meet within each block. The adolescent girls involved were instructed to gather at these safe points before moving together as a group to or from the Peace Center.

**Key steps to create formal/informal accompanying systems** for women and girls traveling to access activities and services, based on a mapping exercise:

- ❖ Identify the services/activities that target females in your organization and select the age group that is most vulnerable to GBV risks (e.g., adolescent girls aged, persons with specific needs)
- ❖ Using the camp map, point out and mark all addresses of your targeted group
- ❖ Mark the addresses that are near to each other on the map and group at least every 3 beneficiaries who live the closest to each other
- ❖ Protect data of adolescent girls (their addresses) in a safe location in a password-protection document
- ❖ Designate the safest place (criteria: familiar point, close to the caravans, far from the roads) in each area/block and assign a facilitator to act as a focal point in each area/block if applicable
- ❖ Highlight the safest paths/roads that the group of females can take from the designated safe point to your organization
- ❖ Hold a meeting with the targeted group, share the name list, and inform the beneficiaries about the safe points and paths/roads they should take to access your organization

- ❖ Perform a simulation with the targeted group and facilitators to make sure that each female beneficiary knows her group members and their designated safe points and paths/roads

## Examples

Identifying the targeted group addresses, selecting the safest points in each block, and identifying the safest paths/roads



The facilitator waiting for the girls to arrive at the designated safe area



One of the girls travels to the safe area while her group members wait for her to arrive.



The group of girls arriving safe at the NGO door



### 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. The initial study was conducted in partnership with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and World Vision in Uganda, and with CARE International and URDA in Lebanon; with scale-up activities currently underway in partnership with World Vision in the Middle East, East Africa and South Asia. 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. Empowered Aid is funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

Learn more at <https://empoweredaid.gwu.edu>

*This guide was drafted by Maha Al Saudi, Loujine Fattal, and Mathilde Belli. For questions, contact us at [empoweredaid@gmail.com](mailto:empoweredaid@gmail.com)*

**Suggested Citation:** *The Global Women's Institute (GWI).*