

# EMPOWERED AID IN ACTION: INCREASING GBV SENSITIZATION WITH GLOBAL COMMUNITIES



JANUARY 2022

---

Since the launch of **Empowered Aid**, our training materials have helped several organizations to better understand gendered power dynamics and mainstream gender-based violence (GBV) prevention practices. One such organization is **Global Communities**, an international development and humanitarian aid organization that operates in a variety of sectors in the areas of Humanitarian Assistance, Sustainable Development and Financial Inclusion.

**Empowered Aid** has supported **Global Communities** in *mainstreaming GBV prevention by providing findings that inform their work and materials to help train local actors and reduce sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and GBV risk in their aid distribution and programming.* **Global Communities** aims to create long-lasting, positive, and community-led change that improves the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable people across the globe by building the capacity of communities to direct the development of their own lives and livelihoods.<sup>1</sup>

## APPLYING THE EMPOWERED AID FINDINGS

After joining the launch of the Empowered Aid **Toolkit for Planning and Monitoring Safer Aid Distributions**, Global Communities drew upon their new knowledge to edit preexisting materials and draft new tools that better account for GBV risk prevention in their aid distributions, such as the [GBV Monitoring & Evaluation Toolkit](#) to help guide GBV prevention in northwest Syria, developed in partnership with the GBV Sub-Cluster and UNFPA.

*The Empowered Aid tools fill a gap in GBV/SEA prevention in humanitarian work, providing a standard for engaging women and girls directly that we can adapt across sectors and contexts to make our programs safer.*

Global Communities also plans to adapt their previously developed **Protection-Sensitive Distribution Guidelines** – piloted in northeast Syria at a food distribution activity – to be more gender-sensitive, based on their findings from the pilot, discussions with other teams, and experience with Empowered Aid. Additionally, Global Communities requested further information on specific topics that they have identified as areas for improvement. In particular, they requested more information about Empowered Aid trainings for truck drivers, who were commonly identified as perpetrators of GBV in the Empowered Aid research and trainings. *Global Communities plans to tailor the training to the context of the water supply operation and the profile of the truck drivers.*

Global Communities has also recently finalized a focus group discussion (FGD) report that discusses water supply services with women and girls and includes discourse about truck drivers and GBV risk. *The FGD tools were adapted from Empowered Aid resources to fit Global Communities' large-scale, daily water supply in a camp setting. Protection, Water Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH), Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), and Feedback colleagues worked together to adapt the tools and draft the report, which includes recommendations from women and girls themselves as well as Global Communities staff to reduce risks and improve women and girls' safety.* Specifically, women and girls recommended the creation of Women's Safety Groups, changes to Global Communities' Feedback Mechanism, and adjustments to the water supply schedule and distribution plans.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://globalcommunities.org/about-us/>

**Feedback from the women and girls also led to staff recommendations around GBV/SEA monitoring strategies, improvements to the procurement clauses, additional staff and vendor training and community awareness raising, as well as advocacy to other actors and coordination groups.** Global Communities is in the process of incorporating the report findings and the Empowered Aid findings as well as recommendations in ongoing conversations about WASH and water distribution in their project sites. Though these conversations are still preliminary, they plan to share future updates about how they utilize Empowered Aid resources with the Empowered Aid team.

## CONTINUED COLLABORATION

Overall, Empowered Aid aims to share vital information about SEA and GBV prevention, but also works to help build accountability partnerships between humanitarian actors and organizations through reciprocal education and resource sharing. **In this case, Global Communities gains important risk mitigation knowledge from Empowered Aid, while also contributing to the continued development of Empowered Aid initiatives by helping to pilot tools, improve materials, and recommend next steps.** Piloting new training materials and tools among humanitarian partners is an integral part of Empowered Aid’s approach, as it helps to ensure that the evidence-based materials produced are field-friendly and accessible to those they are designed to assist, and further disseminates the findings and recommendations.

In addition, Global Communities agreed to join the Empowered Aid Global Technical Advisory Group (TAG). This interdisciplinary team of researchers and humanitarian actors convenes several times per year to provide ongoing feedback and guidance for Empowered Aid initiatives. **Through this continued cooperation with the Empowered Aid team, Global Communities continues to grow not only in their own capacity as agents against GBV, but also as members of a global community dedicated to accountable research efforts and violence prevention. Likewise, GWI’s Empowered Aid project and partners continue to grow in learning from the expertise and applications of Global Communities’ work with “empowered communities.”** Moving forward, the Empowered Aid team hopes to establish similarly fruitful relationships with other organizations to strengthen the network of humanitarian aid organizations committed to preventing violence against women and girls.

## 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://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu/empowered-aid>.

---

*This case study was drafted by Aminat Balogun, Elizabeth Hedge, Emily Galloway, and Alina Potts.*

*For questions, contact Alina Potts, Principal Investigator, at [apotts@gwu.edu](mailto:apotts@gwu.edu).*

**Suggested Citation:** Aminat Balogun, Elizabeth Hedge, Emily Galloway, and Alina Potts. (2022). *Empowered Aid in Action: Increasing GBV Sensitization with Global Communities*. Washington, DC: The George Washington University and Global Communities.