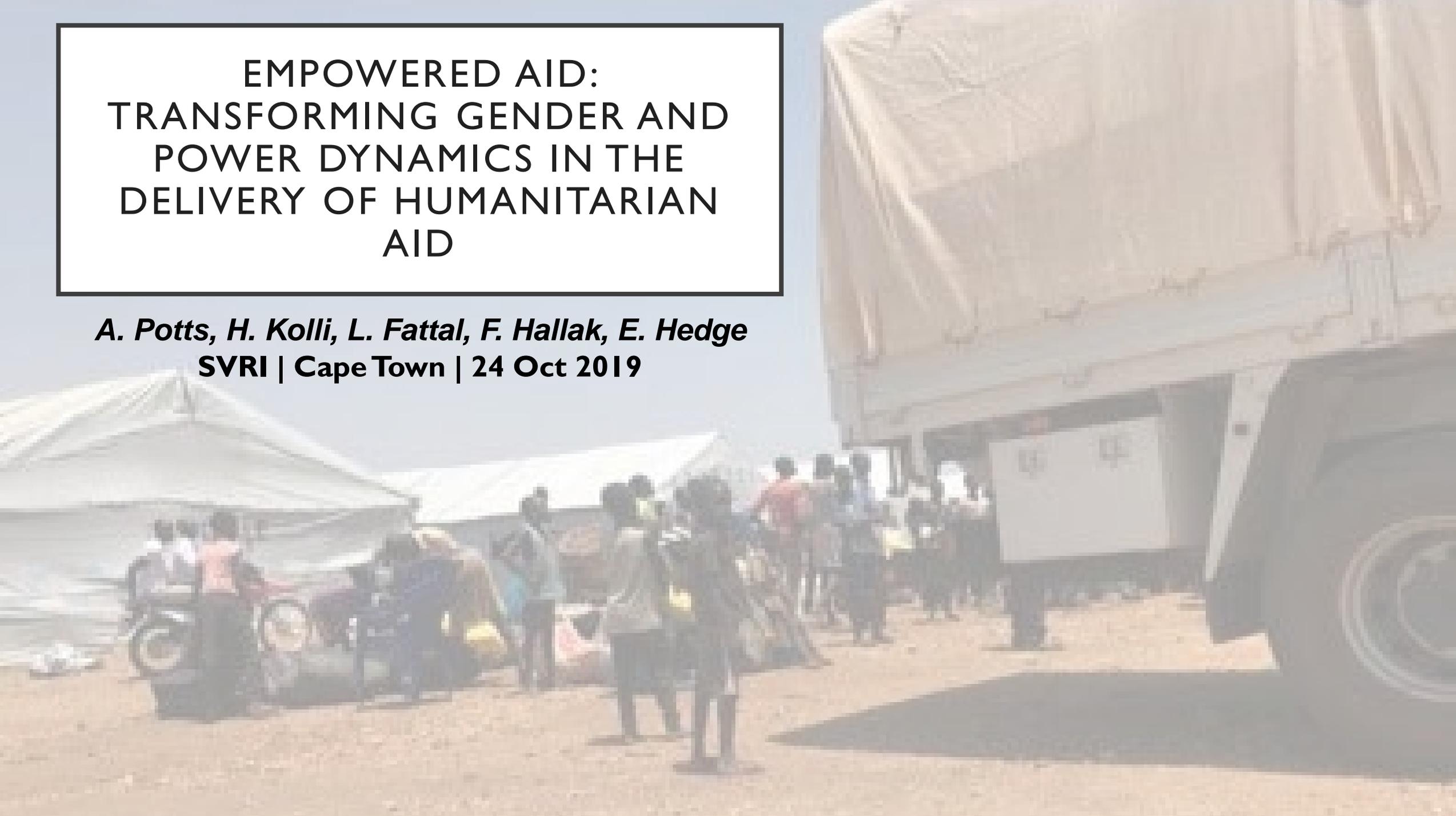


EMPOWERED AID:  
TRANSFORMING GENDER AND  
POWER DYNAMICS IN THE  
DELIVERY OF HUMANITARIAN  
AID

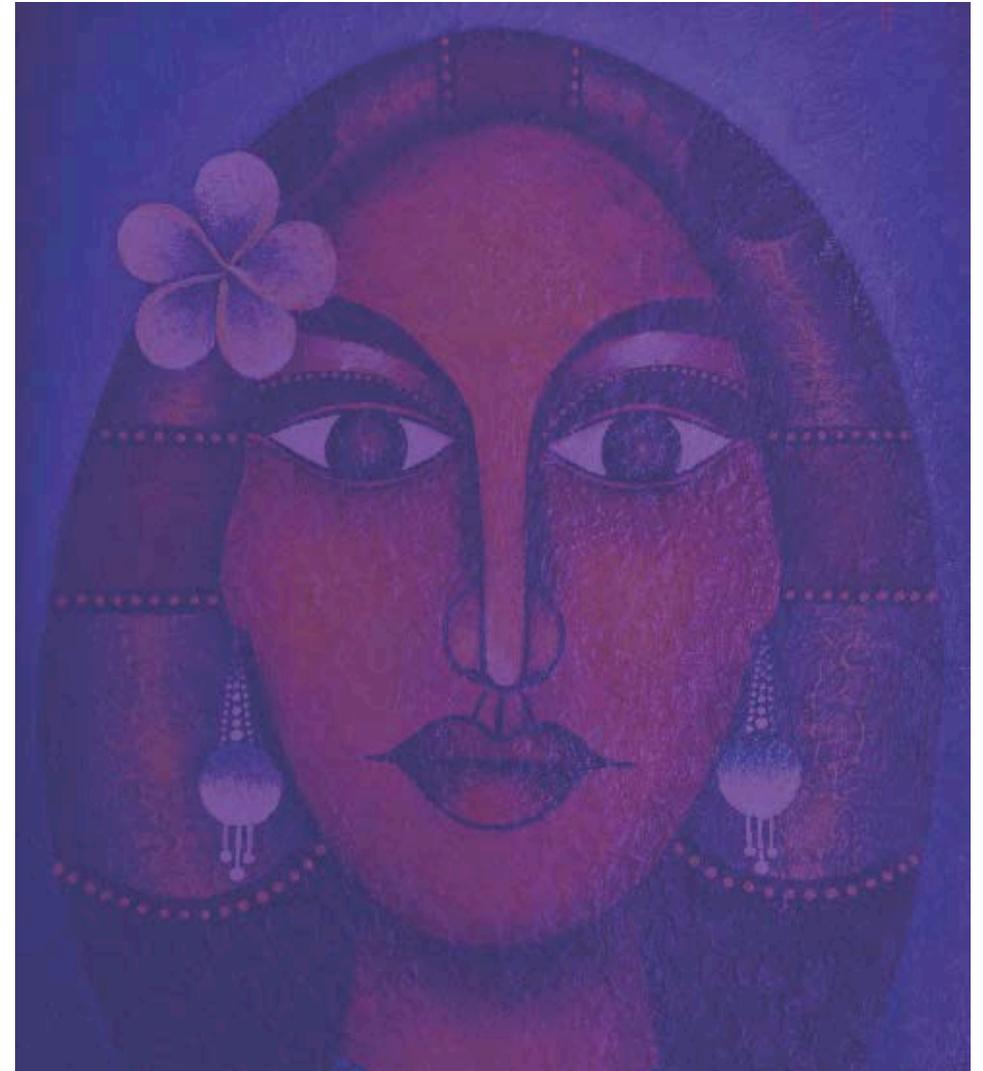
*A. Potts, H. Kolli, L. Fattal, F. Hallak, E. Hedge*  
**SVRI | Cape Town | 24 Oct 2019**



**What?** GWI specializes in research on **violence against women and girls (VAWG), women's empowerment, and gender equality.**

**Why?** Our aim is to produce a strong knowledge base to **inform programs & policies** that address a variety of issues affecting women and girls.

**How?** We focus on bringing **participatory, rigorous methods** to work with partners in **humanitarian and development settings.**



The Global  
Women's Institute

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THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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# COX'S BAZAR

BANGLADESH

DECEMBER 2017

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Little known about the magnitude of SEA in humanitarian contexts
- How might humanitarian aid delivery processes increase the risks of SEA within the affected populations?
- *Goal: Mitigating risks of SEA through 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: Study Design

## Phase 1

- To better understand the ways in which distribution of material resources in emergencies may create or reinforce opportunities for sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls.
- *Ethnographic fieldwork with refugee women and girls*

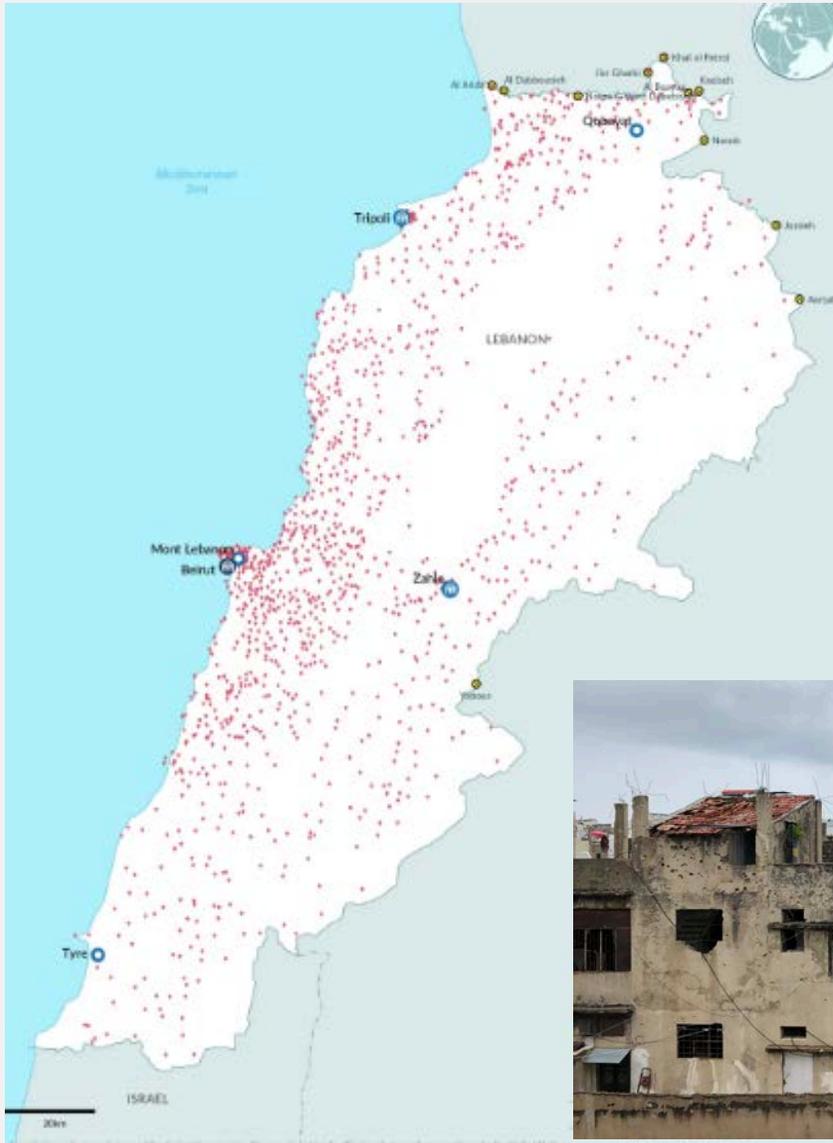
## Phase 2

- To identify, prioritize, and test a range of options for improving current distribution mechanisms and modalities.
- *Implementation science, pilot tests*

## Phase 3

- To disseminate, validate and replicate research findings in a third country, including networking and training led by women and girl refugee researchers, building on the participatory action approach.
- *Research uptake, dissemination, network-building*

# LEBANON CONTEXT



- 938,531 registered refugees as of Apr 2019, 52% women & girls
- 1 in 3 women reported feeling too scared or overwhelmed to leave their homes at all<sup>1</sup>

*“Women and adolescent girls spoke of feeling exhausted by the daily negotiations—for physical and sexual safety when securing food, water, shelter or clothing.”<sup>1</sup>*

## Partners:



<sup>1</sup> International Rescue Committee, “Are we listening? Acting on our commitments to women and girls affected by the Syrian conflict,” September 1, 2014.



اتحاد الجمعيات الإغاثية و التنموية  
Union of Relief & Development Associations

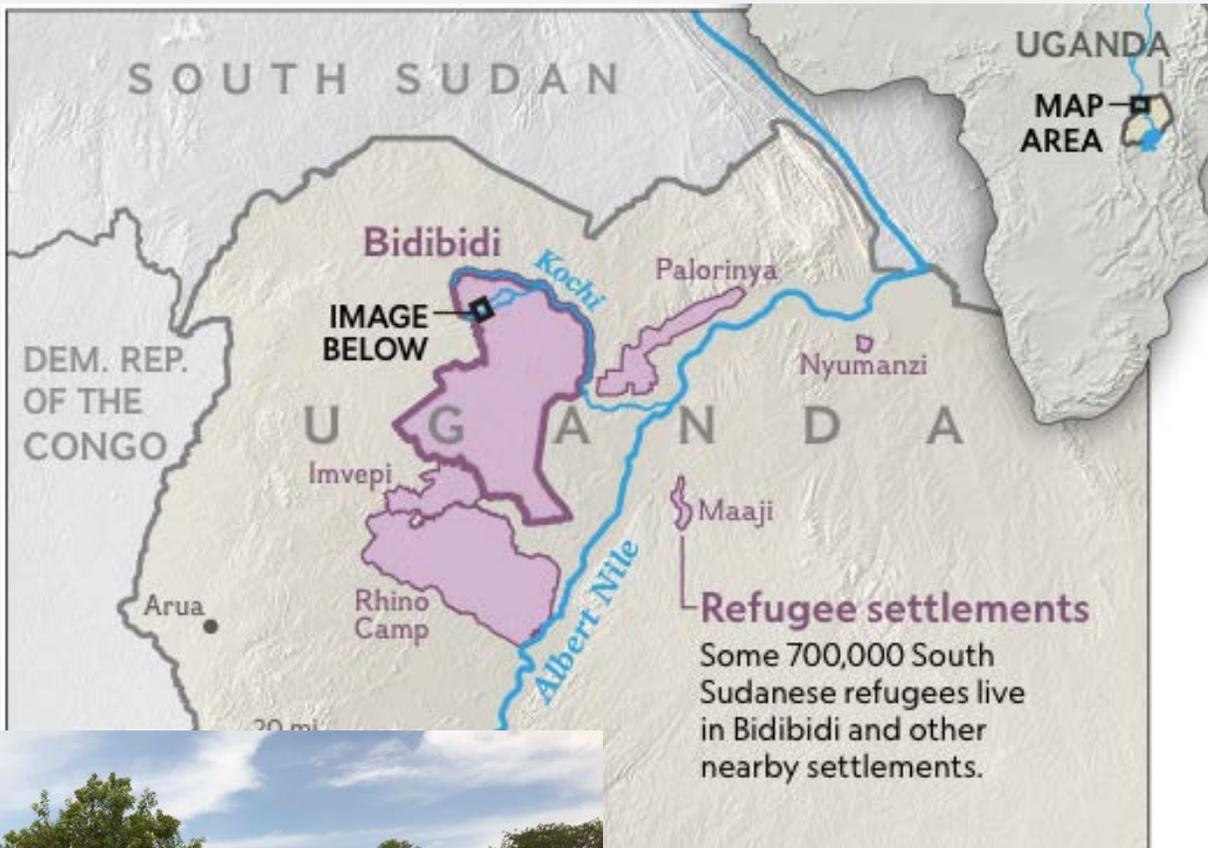
# UGANDA CONTEXT

- More than 1 million people from DRC & South Sudan since July 2016
  - Bidi Bidi & Imvepi: 287,399 pop, ~53% women & girls

“The **negative use of power in relationships** continues to be the main contributing factor to SGBV in the settlements and host communities. Other drivers of the violence include scarcity of fuel and natural resources increasing risks of attacks, limited livelihood opportunities, poverty and conflict among others.”

– UNHCR Monthly SGBV Update, May 2019

## Partners:





*Clockwise from top left:*  
New arrivals to the camp; items they receive before being transferred to other areas of the settlement; food & NFI distribution point

# PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PROCESSES & TOOLS THROUGHOUT



# DATA COLLECTION



Semi-Structured Qualitative Interviews (QI) with Women and Girls



Participatory Group Discussion (PGD) – Women and Girls



PGDs and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) – Community members & humanitarian stakeholders

Food

Water &  
Sanitation

Fuel &  
Firewood

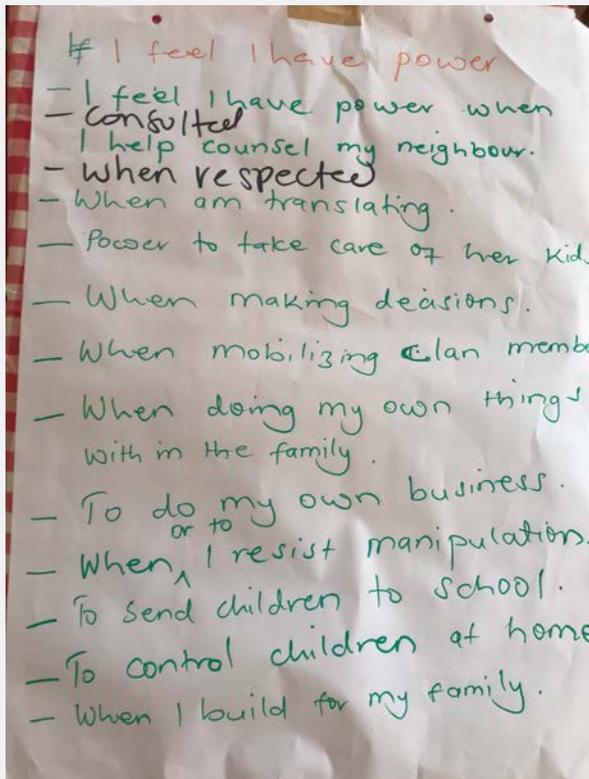
Shelter

Cash

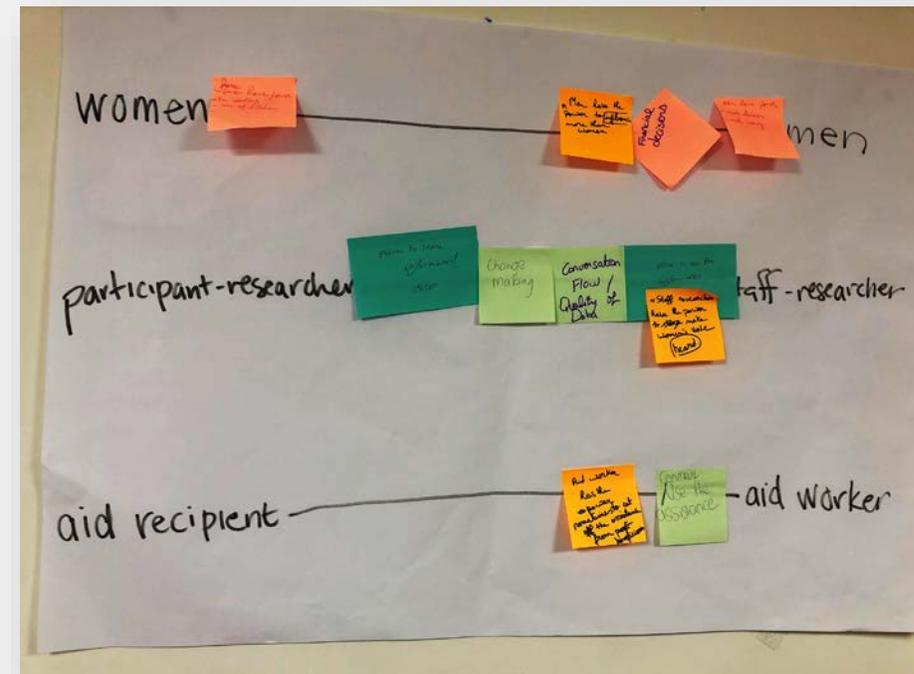
# REFLECTION WORKSHOPS

- **Sample exercise: Reflect on power dynamics**

- Deepen your analysis of your own power in this process. In what ways do you feel you have power in these interactions? In what ways do you lack power?
- In what ways do you seek to share or balance power?



Above exercise adapted from Raising Voices SASA! Toolkit



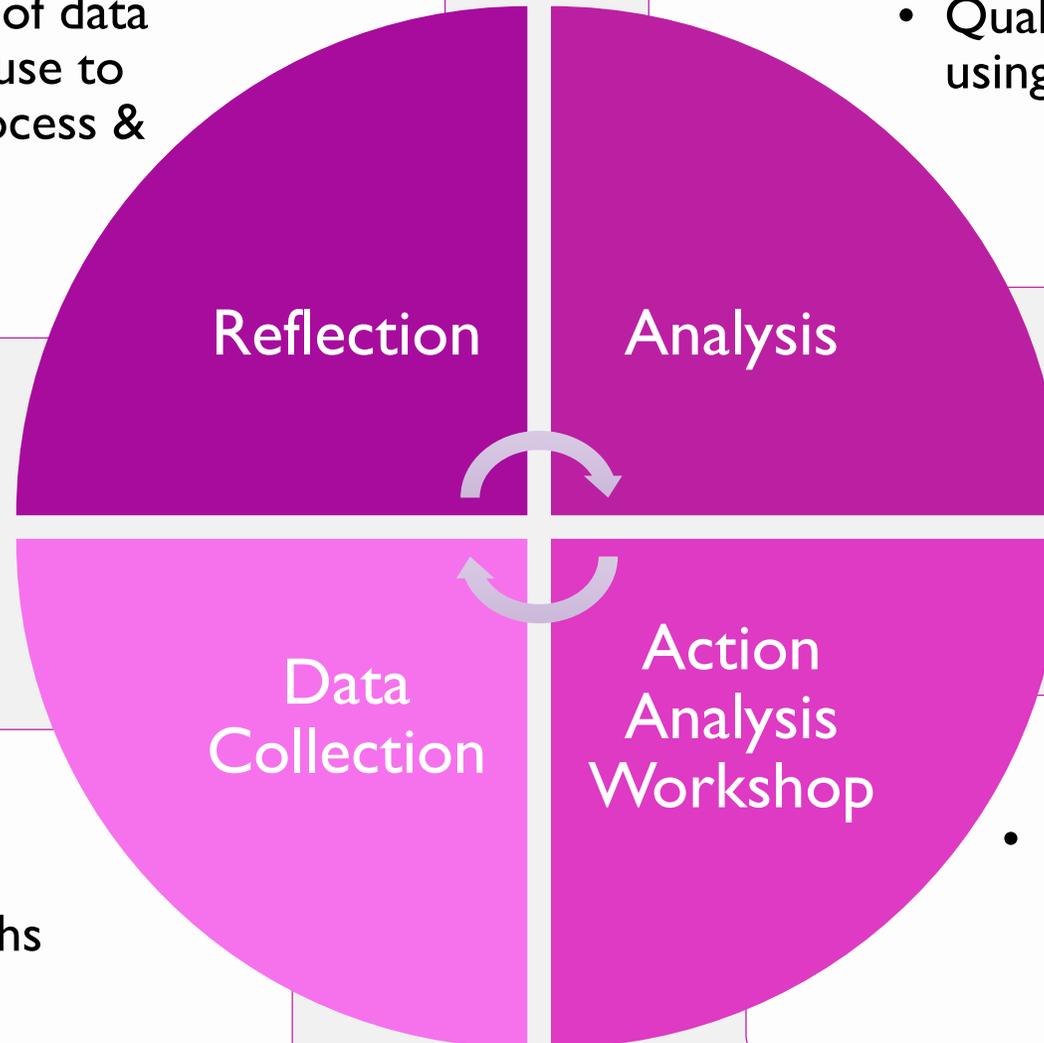
Exercise developed by Empowered Aid

Discussions with..	Uganda	Lebanon	Total	Method
Refugee Women & Girls (55) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lebanon = 26 (14 W, 12 G)</li> <li>Uganda = 29 (16 W, 13 G)</li> </ul>	12	10	<b>22</b>	Participatory Focus Group Discussions
	108	95	<b>203</b>	Semi-Structured Narrative Interviews
Refugee men & boys, Host community members, Vulnerable groups	18 groups (79 people)	7 groups (33 people)	<b>25 groups (112 people)</b>	Participatory Focus Group Discussions
Community Leaders & Humanitarian Personnel	18	10	<b>28</b>	Key Informant Interviews
	<b><u>156</u></b>	<b><u>122</u></b>	<b><u>278</u></b>	<b><u>Totals</u></b>

# PARTICIPATORY DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

- At mid-point of data collection, pause to reflect on process & power

- Qualitative analysis using Dedoose



- Conducted over 3 months in two countries

- Participative analysis (visual methods), prioritize recommendations

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- Reports of SEA during registration, and at distribution points, collection points, or in homes when receiving food, shelter, fuel and firewood, cash, or WASH aid
- Transporting aid from distribution sites also opens space for SEA, as women and girls must carry heavy and bulky aid home
- Groups vulnerable to SEA included: elderly women; disabled women and girls; adolescent girls; women and girls who are alone/unaccompanied and lack familial support; those living in isolated locations; and those deemed “attractive”
- Families and communities offer varying degrees of support to women and girls who experience SEA
- Lack of awareness & normalization of SEA were identified as factors that limit survivors from seeking help from service providers.

At times you find that we girls or women we find difficulties with the distributors. They come and tell that, 'if you fall in love with me, I will add you more food, or for the cooking oil you will get a big share.' So you end up... after they have realized the food is about to come, they move around corning girls or women, that, 'if you really fall in love with me, I will add you food.' So those are big challenges.

- South Sudanese girl in Uganda

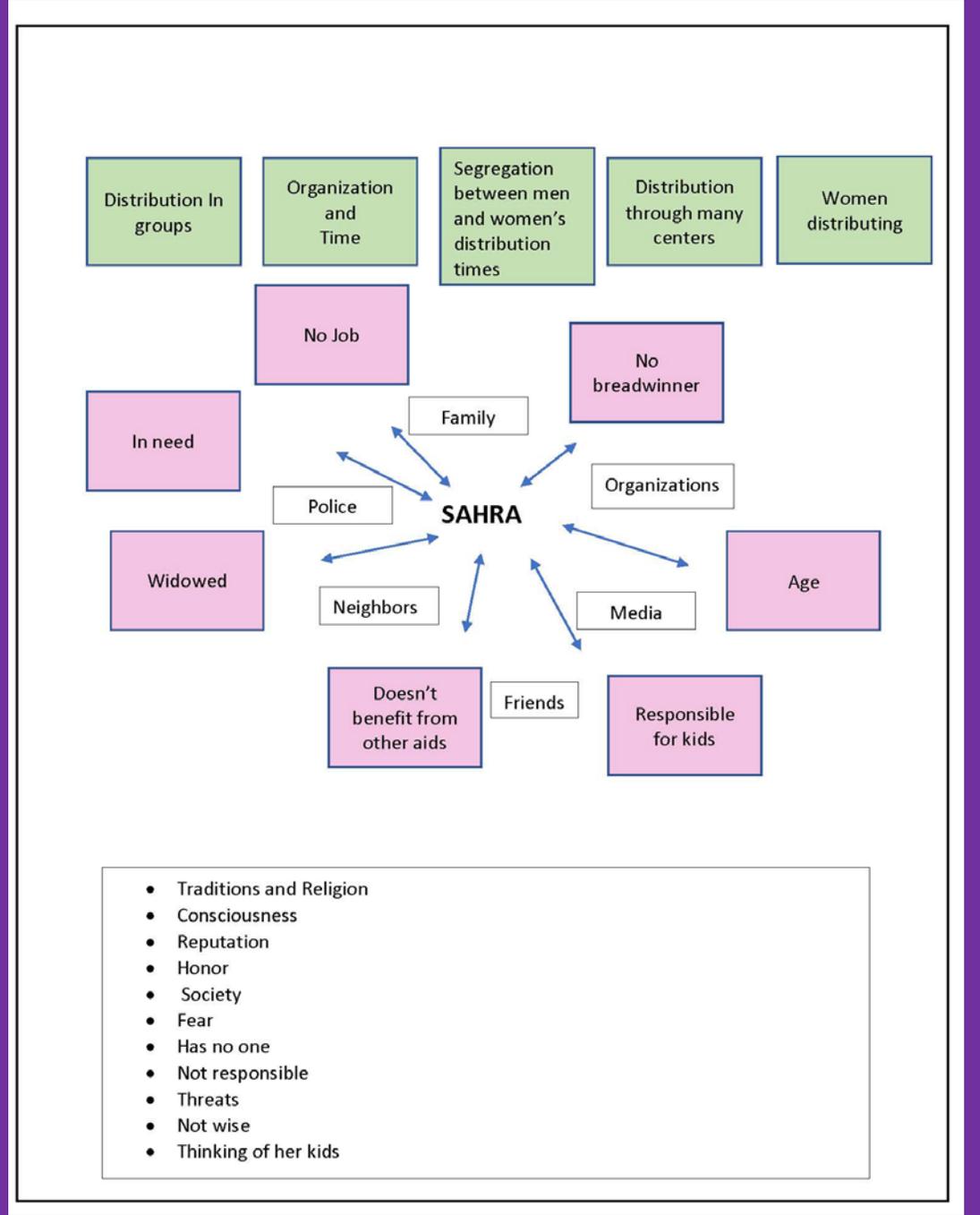
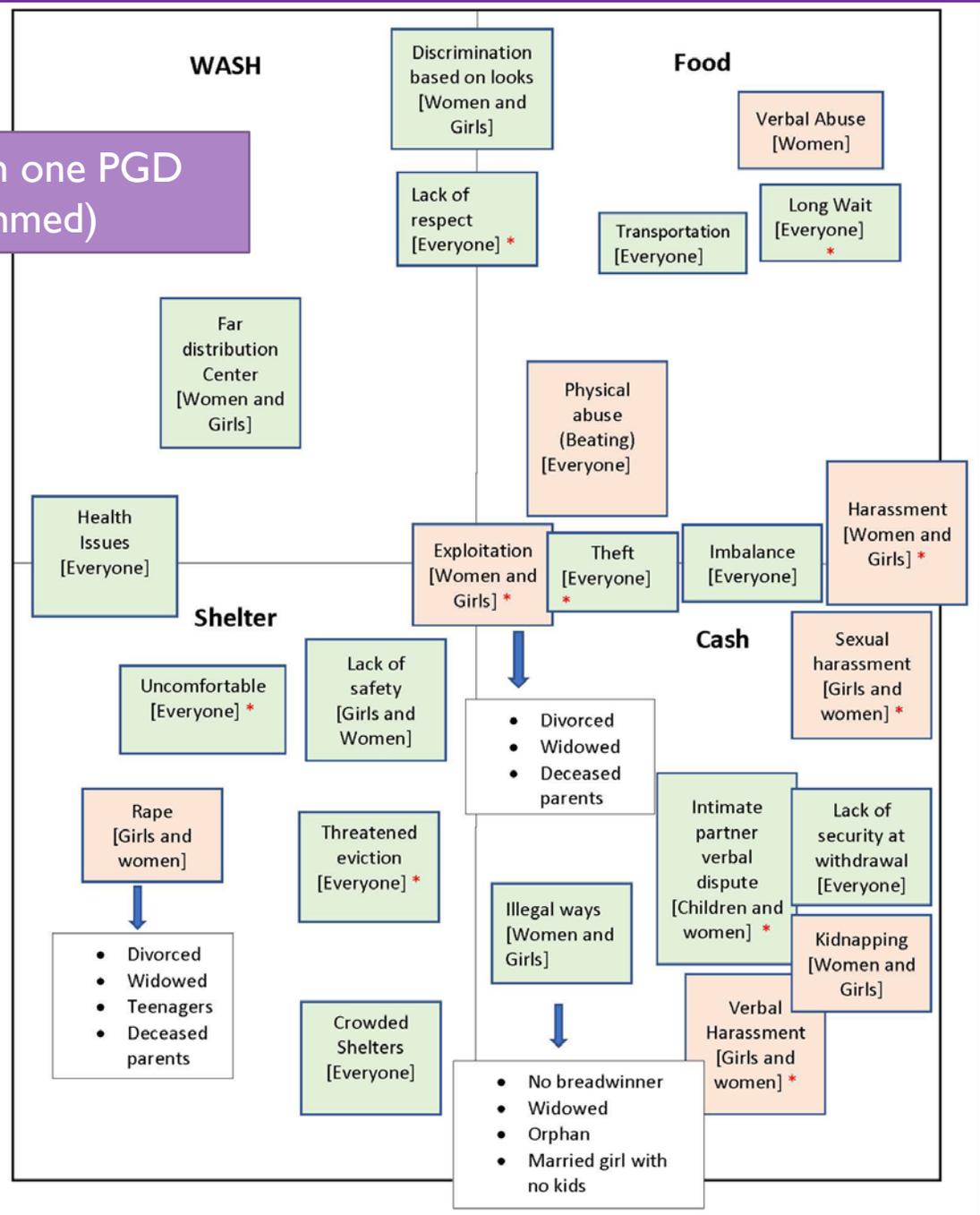
Does the woman exist for this? I am confused, honestly. I don't even want to marry my daughters. I want to educate them and help them learn and be independent... I want them to live their lives, to get jobs, and to be able to live the way they want without being humiliated..."

– Syrian woman in Lebanon



RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY 1	PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY 3	TOTAL
1 باسوان آوتف	0	0	0	0
2 زيادة الأمن	0	0	0	0
3 خطوات منضلة	0	0	1	1
4 التفرج في مجموعات	0	0	0	0
5 دعم في النقل	0	6	0	6
6 النساء العاملات	0	0	3	3
7 الأوقات البغصية	6	10	0	16
8 مساعدة مالية	24	0	0	24
9 توصيل منزلي	0	6	4	10
10 آلية الإبلاغ	0	0	0	0
11 هبة معلومات عن أجهزة التفرج	0	0	2	2

Example from one PGD (later diagrammed)



# RECOGNIZE WOMEN & GIRLS AS EXPERTS IN CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING



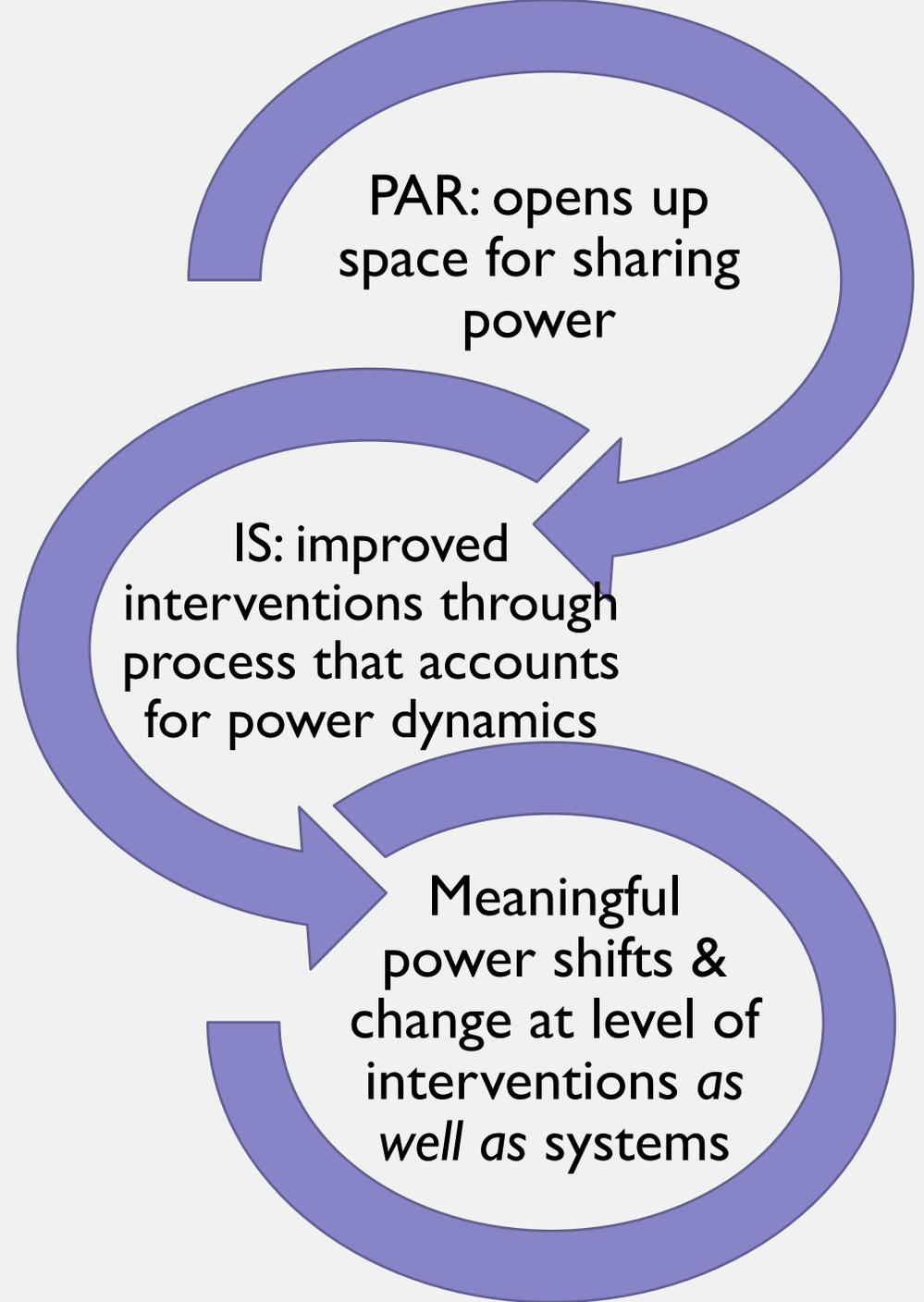
*(L-R) Community mapping & body mapping as part of Empowered Aid participatory group discussions & workshops.*



# INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK

Root cause =  
underlying  
gendered power  
imbalance – and  
misuse of that  
space through  
'power over'

Addressing this  
is key to  
prevention.



## NEXT STEPS

- Currently using findings from Phase to design Phase II
  - Operational partners will adapt distribution models and measure perceptions of safety for women and girls
  - Develop and adapt measurement frameworks and tools (i.e. post-distribution monitoring tools) grounded in women and girls' conceptions of what constitutes safety
  - Women and girls involved have decided to serve as Advisory Boards in Phase II
- Dissemination of results and learning from Phase I to relevant fora i.e. in-country and global working groups (SEA, GBV); practice briefs; reports; articles; etc.

## THANK YOU

Special thanks to our co-researchers in Lebanon & Uganda, all those who participated in discussions & national & global Technical Advisory Group members.

To all those working to better prevent & respond to SEA, we commit to amplifying & supporting each others' work to achieve systemic change & actively center women & girls in how aid is delivered.

Empowered Aid is funded by the US State Department (BPRM).

For more info: contact Alina Potts (PI) [apotts@gwu.edu](mailto:apotts@gwu.edu)

#EmpoweredAid updates and further resources at  
[@GWUGlobalWomen](https://twitter.com/GWUGlobalWomen) & [globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu](http://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu)

