Girl Researchers' Feedback on Safe Cities' Indicators

Overview of Girl Research Units

Acknowledging that adolescent girls are the true experts in their experiences and lived reality, GRL Power empowered 18 adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 in Amman, Madaba and Balqa, Jordan to conduct research on their experience in public spaces. Each area formed a GRU of six adolescent girl researchers. These girl researchers participated in qualitative research and leadership trainings that were conducted by research mentors. These mentors were young women from their communities who were trained in overseeing girl-led research. During the training each GRU developed a research question around the topic of Safe Cities for girls. After this training, the adolescent girls conducted a total of 75 interviews with their peers to better understand challenges to girls' safety in their communities, and answer their research question. The girl-led research training included components central to Positive Youth Development that are also necessary for research, such as goal setting and interpersonal skills such as effective communication.

Evaluation of Safe Cities' indicators based on the Positive Youth Development (PYD) indicators

The process of evaluation:

Within the scope of qualitative research, the girl researchers were introduced to the Positive Youth Development (PYD) indicators of Action Aid's Safe Cities project. To understand and simplify the PYD indicators for the girl researchers, they were asked to brainstorm ways to evaluate the benefits they received by being part of the GRU. They identified specific benefits, including the information they obtained on qualitative research, their increased level of self-confidence by the end of interviews and the positive way society perceived the girls as researchers.

Together with the research mentors, the girls categorized their ideas around the outcomes of being part of the GRU under the main PYD domains (assets, enabling environment, contribution and agency). To simplify the idea, and define the PYD domains, the mentor used drawings to show that there are external resources (assets and enabling environment) and internal resources (contribution and agency). The mentor used day to day examples to better explain to the girls what each domain represents. Following the categorization of their ideas, the research mentors

presented the Safe Cities indicators, which the girls categorized under the PYD indicators. Finally, the girls were asked to find the gaps in PYD indicators, and come up with new indicators for the project. The girls discussed how adolescent girls could evaluate a project and ensure that it engages youth, along with their families, communities and/or their governments so that youth reach their full potential. Through drawing and discussions with the girl researchers, the girls were able to identify and understand PYD indicators, in order to evaluate the Safe Cities indicators based on the PYD indicators.

Below, there are three different tables, one for each GRU, which represents the evaluation of the Safe Cities' Project indicators. The way the girls evaluated the indicators was through categorizing each indicator under the PYD domains. The evaluation differed from each girl research unit (GRU) to the other, depending on their experiences, and the discussions they had.

Balqa GRU

Balqa's GRU conducted research around the question of "How do adolescent girls define their relationship with their city after sunset? Does it change? How? Why?"

In the process of answering these questions, they developed their critical thinking and effective communication skills. The discussion with Balqa's GRU around the PYD indicators reflected the gaps in the Safe Cities' indicators. The girls found it challenging to understand what the indicators meant, and were confused on how to evaluate these indicators. However, with the help of the mentor and day to day examples, they were then able to navigate the indicators under the domains of PYD.

The GRU found that under the domain of assets, there are enough indicators to ensure that the Safe Cities project builds the skills of youth through trainings, community dialogues, planning and revision of available resources. As for the domain of enabling environment, the GRU also noticed that there are enough indicators through ensuring that policies are gender responsive, that campaigns are held to support safe cities campaigning. The girl researchers also noted that the indicators of the Safe Cities' project on trainings serve as both assets and enabling environment, since the trained individuals will create an enabling environment. According to the girls, they considered that the indicators that involved campaigning could be considered as contribution.

Indicators suggested by Balqa's GRU
The girls reviewed the Safe Cities' indicators based on the domains of PYD indicators, and found that more indicators are needed in the domain of Agency and Contribution. Based on their understanding of the PYD indicators and their domains, the researchers came up with indicators for the Safe Cities project that would cover agency by taking into account the positive identity of the youth. They, however, found it challenging to come up with ideas for indicators under the

agency domain, but it was easier for them to suggest indicators under the domain of contribution by monitoring the number of youth leading, planning, and participating in activities. This might be because the domain of agency was more challenging for them to understand.

	PYD Indicators	Assets	Agency	Contribution	Enabling environment	Other
Safe Cities Project Indicators						
	Increased percentage of perceived improvement on public services and practices at community level				x	
	Number of gender-responsive administrative and legal policies on Public Services are adopted by local and national councils				x	
	Number of community members participating in the Community Participatory Analysis (gender responsiveness scoring exercises)	x			x	
	Number of community dialogues between community users and public service providers undertaken	x			x	
	Percentage increased in understanding the value of Gender Responsive Public Services (GRPS) among community users and public service providers				x	
	Number of women and girls trained on effective campaigning	x		x		
	Number of campaign plans developed	x			x	
	Number of women and men mobilized to support Safe Cities and GRPS campaigning			x	x	
	Number of policy review reports successfully produced and delivered				x	
	Number of academics, policy experts, women activists providing input to the Policy Mapping Analysis	x			x	

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	Number of legal and administrative reform proposals raised/ submitted by community actors to enhance GRPS of Public Services	x				
	Number of public servants successfully trained on GRPS	x			x	
Adolescent Girls' Suggested Indicators	Number of youth in leadership roles in the project			x		
	Increased positive identity of youth at the conclusion of the project		x			
	Number of youth that are able to plan and set goals for the project			x		
	Number of youth leading campaigns of the project			x		
	Number of youth participating as volunteers in the project			x		

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Amman GRU

Amman's GRU conducted research around the question of "What is required to make adolescent girls feel safe on the street?" Amman's GRU's mentor reported that she found it challenging to discuss the PYD indicators with the girls, and that they had a hard time grasping the idea of indicators. However, like Balqa's GRU, with the help of the mentor the domains and indicators were simplified and explained using their day to day examples. They were then able then to discuss with the mentor's help, and evaluate what each indicator represents under the PYD domains. The researchers evaluated the Safe Cities' indicators and were able to dig into some and understand them in a way which reads into them beyond the direct wording. They had conversations with their mentor around each indicator and that helped them understand each in a holistic way. According to the girls, trainings under the Safe Cities indicators do not only serve the assets' domain, as suggested by Balqa's GRU, but these trainings also play a role in creating an enabling environment. The GRU also had a different understanding of agency, and considered participating in planning and training serving youth's ability to plan and set goals, and develop positive identity. The assumption that Amman's GRU had is that the indicators involve youth even if it does not clearly mention that. Therefore, with indicators that mentioned academics, policy experts and community actors, the researchers considered that youth are excluded since these professions are named. As for the policies, *the girls thought that change in policies is support for the youth and an indicator that their voices are amplified to reach decision makers and it speaks directly to public services and gender responsive public services.*

Indicators suggested by Amman's GRU

The girl researchers developed indicators based on gaps in two of the available indicators that according to them did not include youth. Amman's GRU criticized in particular two Safe Cities indicators: Number of academics, policy experts, women activists providing input to the Policy Mapping Analysis and Number of legal and administrative reform proposals raised/ submitted by community actors to enhance GRPS of Public Services. The researchers built on both indicators and incorporated youth in them.

	PYD Indicators	Assets	Agency	Contribution	Enabling environment	Other
Safe Cities Project Indicators	Increased percentage of perceived improvement on public services and practices at community level				X	
	Number of gender-responsive administrative and legal policies on Public Services are adopted by local and national councils				X According to the girls, change in policies is support for the youth and an indicator that their voices are amplified to reach decision makers + it speaks directly to public services and gender responsive public services.	
	Number of community members participating in the Community Participatory Analysis (gender responsiveness scoring exercises)		x	x	x	
	Number of community dialogues between community users and public service providers undertaken	x		x		

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	Percentage increased in understanding the value of Gender Responsive Public Services (GRPS) among community users and public service providers				x	
	Number of women and girls trained on effective campaigning	x	x		x	
	Number of campaign plans developed		x	x		
	Number of women and men mobilized to support Safe Cities and GRPS campaigning	*Didn't discuss this indicator, because it is similar to other indicators.*				
	Number of policy review reports successfully produced and delivered		x		x	
	Number of academics, policy experts, women activists providing input to the Policy Mapping Analysis	*This indicator does not include youth.*				
	Number of legal and administrative reform proposals raised/ submitted by community actors to enhance GRPS of Public Services	*This indicator does not include youth.*				
	Number of public servants successfully trained on GRPS	*Didn't discuss this indicator, it is similar to other indicators.*				
Adolescent Girls' Suggested Indicators	Number of youth participating in analysis meetings with the ones responsible for the policy mapping analysis			x		
	Number of youth participating in the reform proposals by meeting with the ones responsible for the reform			x		

Madaba GRU

Madaba's GRU conducted research around the question of "What are the reasons behind harassment in Madaba City?" Again, the researchers in Madaba looked at the indicators from a different angle, and were able to categorize and evaluate the indicators under the domains in their own unique way. According to the researchers, similar to Balqa and Amman's GRU, Safe Cities trainings were perceived under the domain of assets; however, Madaba's GRU also pointed to trainings as serving the domain of contribution where youth are engaged. Moreover, the researchers pointed out that the increase in understanding of the value of Gender Responsive Public Services is an asset, and not only serves the enabling environment domain because when the understanding increases, youth's thinking skills are built which plays a role in creating an enabling environment.

Indicators suggested by Madaba's GRU

The researchers from Madaba's GRU were very creative in suggesting a number of indicators that according to them could be used to ensure the engagement of youth and the strengthening of their voices. Some of the indicators the researchers suggested in Madaba reflected their own research, and own experience as leaders of research. For instance, reflecting their girl-led project and its paradigm shifting approach, the girls suggested "youth's participation in high positions to develop the community and improve it" as an indicator that could monitor three of the PYD domains. Moreover, also reflecting their research on safe cities, the girls suggested "women's feeling safe to go out at any time and to anywhere" as an indicator. More specifically, the GRU's research question on harassment was also reflected in their suggested indicator of "The availability and application of harassment laws".

	PYD Indicators	Assets	Agency	Contribution	Enabling environment	Other
Safe Cities Project indicators	Increased percentage of perceived improvement on public services and practices at community level				x	
	Number of gender-responsive administrative and legal policies on Public Services are adopted by local and national councils				x	
	Number of community members participating in the Community Participatory Analysis (gender responsiveness scoring exercises)		x Ability to prioritize a societal cause	x		
	Number of community dialogues between community users and public service providers undertaken		x	x	x	
	Percentage increased in understanding the value of Gender Responsive Public Services (GRPS) among community users and public service providers	x		x	x	
	Number of women and girls trained on effective campaigning	x	x	x		

	Indicator					
	Number of campaign plans developed		x Ability to plan	x		
	Number of women and men mobilized to support Safe Cities and GRPS campaigning		x Positive personality	x		
	Number of policy review reports successfully produced and delivered		x	x	x	
	Number of academics, policy experts, women activists providing input to the Policy Mapping Analysis	x			x	
	Number of legal and administrative reform proposals raised/ submitted by community actors to enhance GRPS of Public Services	x				
	Number of public servants successfully trained on GRPS	x			x	
Adolescent girls' Suggested Indicators	The availability of community centers specialized in youth development	x		x		
	The availability of financial support for youth's projects and initiatives	x		x	x	
	The availability of courses that develops youth's abilities	x				
	Youth's participation in high positions to develop the community and improve it	x		x	x	
	Appreciation of women and fighting any wrong stereotypes around women				x	

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	Fighting women's ignorance in her own rights	x	x	x		
	Activating women's role in society		x	x	x	
	Women's feeling safe to go out at any time and to anywhere					x
	The availability and application of harassment laws				x	
	Taking youth's opinions into account		x	x	x	
	Courses and activities and initiatives for the youth to raise awareness	x	x	x		

Moving forward:

Action Aid found it very helpful to have the adolescent girls' lens evaluating their project's indicators. Moving forward, ActionAid is planning to take the input from the researchers to enrich their own MEAL framework that is currently under development. On the other hand, Mercy Corps' Regional Center for the Advancement of Adolescent Girls (RCAA) found this experience to be another building block towards girl-led programming. Moving forward, the RCAA hopes to incorporate into its plan not only having girl researchers, but also training girls to lead monitoring and evaluation processes. This is very important as it puts the girls in lead and ensures that practitioners working with adolescent girls are not imposing their preconceived ideas on how the evaluation of projects targeting adolescent girls look like. Moreover, girl-led evaluation of projects will amplify the marginalized voices of adolescent girls and challenge the existing power dynamics.