Girl Research and Learning (GRL) Power Project:
What can we learn from girl-led research in Jordan?

Webinar

June 25, 2018

Advancing solutions to transform the lives of young people

YouthPower Learning
Advancing solutions to improve young lives

- **YouthPower Learning** advances solutions through integrated research and development programs to improve the capacity of youth-led and youth-serving institutions.

- *By engaging youth, their families, communities, and governments in innovative programs, we build young people's skills, assets, and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the enabling environment; and transform systems.*

What is Positive Youth Development (PYD)?

PYD programs recognize youth's inherent rights and result in youth who have **assets**, the ability to leverage those assets (**agency**), and the ability to **contribute** to positive change for themselves and their communities, surrounded by an **enabling environment** that supports them

http://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development

YouthPower Learning Grants under Contract

- Ten grants have been awarded to:
  - assess, evaluate, document and disseminate innovative work in **positive youth development (PYD) and cross-sectoral youth programming**.
  - advance the evidence base for **gender-transformative positive youth development**.
  - advance the evidence base for **youth civic engagement in effective peacebuilding** or in countering / prevention of violent extremism.

Grant Awarded to Mercy Corps Jordan: Girl Research and Learning Power (GRL Power)

The goal of GRL Power in Jordan is to equip adolescent girls with the knowledge and skills to conduct qualitative research; empower them to build upon efforts to create safe public spaces for girls and women by designing and undertaking their own research on topics that impact their lives; and to share these learnings and the girl-led research process with INGOs, national NGOs, UN agencies, the Jordanian government, and universities. Through this grant, GRL Power will:

- Establish and build the skills, knowledge and capacity of a group of girl researchers who can provide research services to the broader development community;

- Demonstrate the capacity of adolescent girls as researchers and the impact of investing in their empowerment; and

- Document and share lessons around the design and measurement of the impact that adolescent girls can have in mobilizing communities to foster safer public spaces and to reduce the potential for gender-based violence (GBV).

Girl Research and Learning (GRL) Power Project: What can we learn from girl-led research in Jordan?

Mercy Corps' Regional Center for Adolescent Girls and ActionAid Arab Regional Initiative
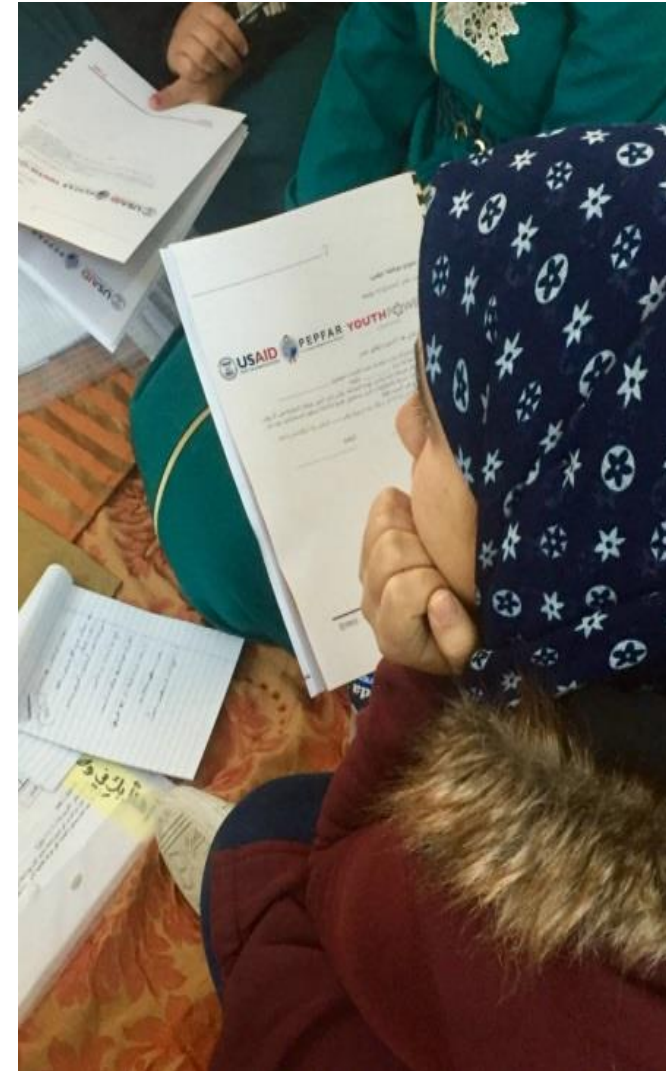
Why girl-led research?

❯ *"I don't feel free in anything, even in my choice of clothing, or even in my thoughts. I feel like my thoughts are being watched by my mother and brother".* – Breaking Silence report: Researching adolescent girls' situation in MENA

❯ *"The voice of girls in our society is nearly absent."*
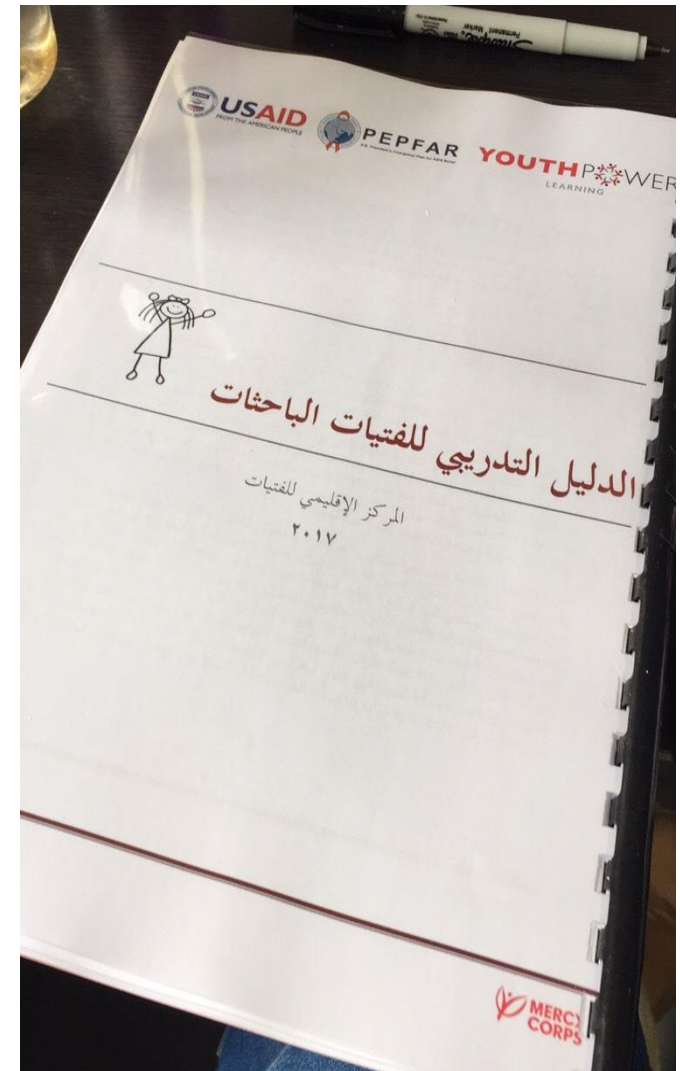–Girl Researcher, Madaba

Introducing GRL Power

October

- A girl adolescent-friendly training guide to girl-led research developed

November-December

- Three local mentors recruited and trained on qualitative research skills

January

- 18 girl researchers recruited and trained on qualitative research skills
- Each girl research unit (GRU) developed a research question

February-March

- Girl researchers led 75 interviews in their respective areas

April-June

- Research findings reported, and lessons learned shared

Developing a girl-led training guide

- A girl adolescent-friendly training guide to girl-led research developed, incorporating and adapting Girl Effect's experience in girl-led research and other global practical guides on youth-led research to the MENA region

- Two guides were developed, one for the mentors and another for the girl researchers

- Feedback from the mentors and the researchers on the guide are going to be used to improve the guides

Mentors' Recruitment and Training

> *"This is the first time I facilitate a training around research, I learned how to develop a research question and how to conduct research. I think this experience will allow us to dig deeper into information and problems that girls are facing."* – GRL Power research mentor
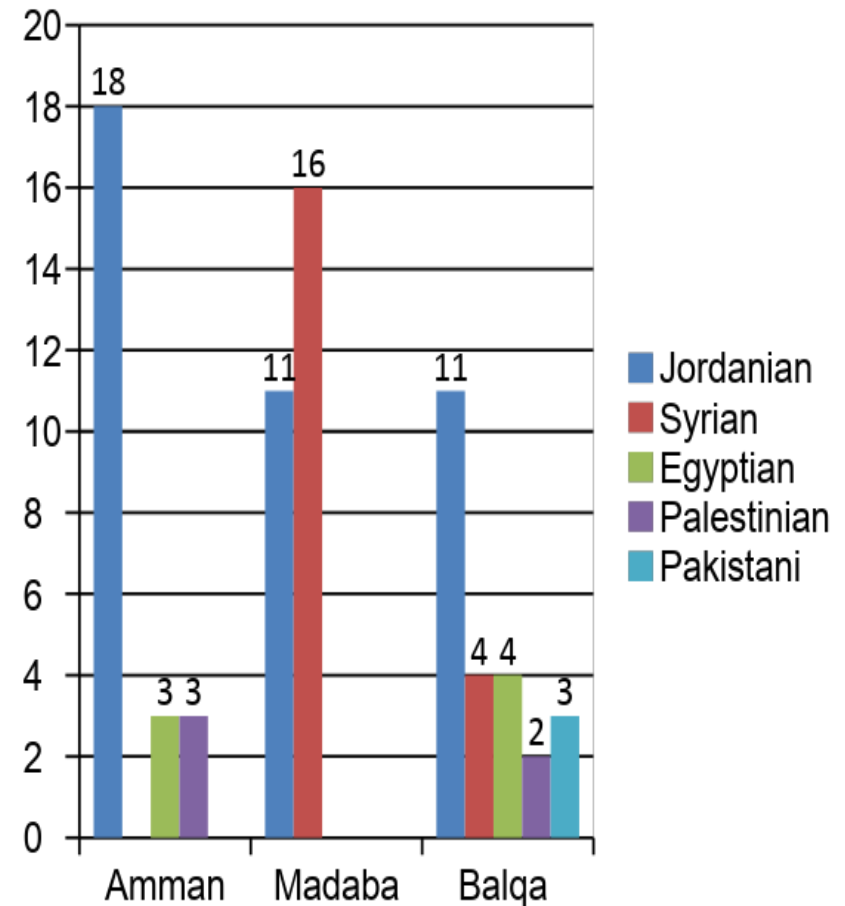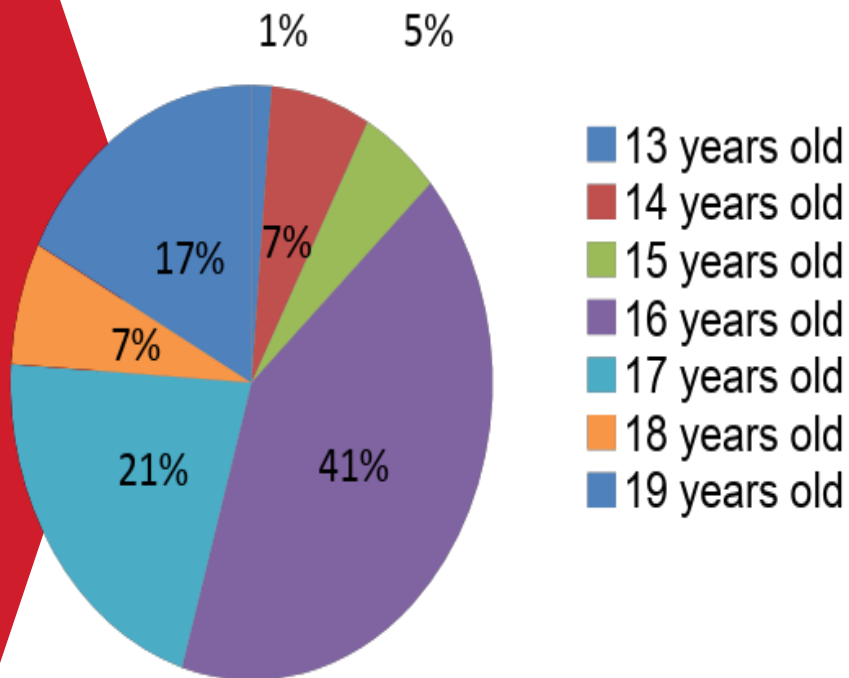
Girl Researchers' Recruitment and Training

> *"I feel that this will make my personality stronger and will allow me to speak up and raise my confidence"* – GRL Power researcher

> *"What's nice about the project is that it challenges the norms of what girls do and the stigma of shame."* – GRL Power researcher

GRL Power Research in Numbers

Sharing GRL Power's Experience and Learnings

- Conducting in person events at each of the local communities to share findings with community based organizations, community leaders and researchers' families

- Developing a case study and a guidance note to share findings and learnings with organizations and practitioners working with adolescent girls

Girl Research Unit - *Madaba*

- **Research question:**
  "What are the reasons behind harassment in *Madaba*?"
- **The interview questions included:**
  - How do adolescent girls in *Madaba* define harassment?
  - What are the reasons behind harassment in *Madaba*?
  - When does harassment mostly happen in *Madaba*?
  - How do girls react to harassment?
  - What are the girls' suggested solutions to harassment in *Madaba*?
  - How do girls in *Madaba* define a safe city?

Research Findings- *Madaba*

- **Defining harassment deferred among interviewees:**
  - Types of harassment
  - Lack of consent
  - "*something that you do not want*"
  - Three out of 27 interviewees found it challenging to define harassment
- **Reasons behind harassment:**
  - Lack of a social and legal framework to prevent and respond to harassment
  - Lack of religious awareness within the society
  - Disrespectful attitudes and behaviors of young men and women
  - An interviewee linked it to lack of legal procedures
    "*Not being afraid of any law, because there isn't a law that prevents them from doing so.*"

Research Findings- *Madaba*

- **When does harassment mostly happen?**
    - According to the interviewees, sexual harassment happens mostly at night or in the early morning (when there is no proper lighting) and on holidays (due to crowdedness).

    "There isn't a specific time for harassment."

- **How do girls react to harassment?**
    - Avoiding contact with harassers
    - Speaking up
    - Hit the predator
    - Ask for help

    "When I am on the bus on my way to university, I don't sit on the two seats- chair, I try to avoid [these chairs] and sit on my own."

Research Findings- *Madaba*

- **What are the solutions to harassment in Madaba?**

  - Developing laws against harassment
  - Raising awareness
  - Employing youth
  - One girls mentioned women covering

"We have to employ young men and use their interests and energies and girls' clothes should be modest and religious awareness is the most important thing."
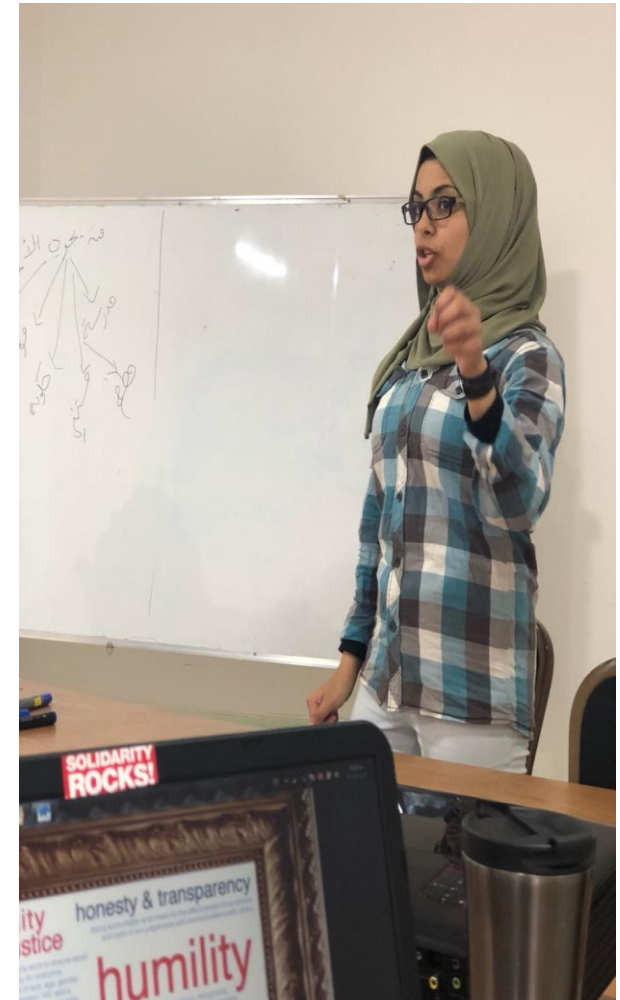
- **How do adolescent girls define a safe city?**

"A safe city is a city where I can go out at anytime and feel safe without my family. There is no safe city!"

Girl Research Unit - *Amman*

- **Research question:**
  "What is required to make adolescent girls feel   safe on the street in *Amman*?"

- **The interview questions included:**
  - What are situations where girls felt unsafe on the street in Amman?
  - What makes adolescent girls feel safe in Amman?
  - How do girls react when they feel unsafe in Amman?

Research Findings- *Amman*

- **Situations where adolescent girls feel unsafe on the street:**
  - Being alone on the street
  - In public spaces and public transportation
    "My parents do not allow me to go to the public park because it is full of young men. I love going there, but there are a lot of young men"

Research Findings- *Amman*

- **What is required to make adolescent girls feel safe?:**
  - The existence of people on streets or being accompanied by another person
  "*I always feel scared when I am alone, but when any one accompanies me, anyone, even if a young child, I feel safer.*"
  - Open shops
  - Lighting on streets
  - Cops
  - Wide streets
  - Having ladies' accessible public spaces

Research Findings- *Amman*

- **How do girls react when they feel unsafe?**
  "I am annoyed by young men's presence, they comment on the girls when they are alone on the street. Guys try to get in our way, or try to touch us."

- **Girls mentioned being exposed to harassment on the street, they reacted to it in different ways**:

  - Reporting the incident

  - Talking to family members

  - Keeping it to themselves

Girl Research Unit - *Balqa*

- **Research question:**
  "How do adolescent girls define their relationship with their city after sunset? Does it change? How? Why?"

- **The interview questions included:**
  - How does your relationship with *Balqa* change after sunset?
  - What are the changes that take place and affects your safety on the street after sunset?

Research Findings- *Balqa*

- **How does adolescent girls' relationship with their area change after sunset?**
  - Decrease in mobility
  - Feeling unsafe
- **Why?**
  - City's infastructure, lack of lighting and narrow streets
  - Underlying power dynamics ruling the space and the society
    "The street after sunset is full of boys, you do not see a girl on street after sunset."
    "My parents do not allow us to go out, because we are not in our country, we are not entirely free." – Syrian interviewee
  - Adolescent girls' perception of their city
    "Sometimes there is enough lighting and other times there isn't. If it is dark, I run. If there is lighting I walk slowly". When asked about the reason she runs, she answered *"There is the possibility of getting raped or harassed."*

Lessons Learned

- Collaborate with local female research mentors
- Allocate sufficient time for training and recruiting research mentors and girl researchers
- More time for recruiting interviewees
- Provide stipends for research mentors and girls
- Trust the direction of the girls

Looking Forward

❯ *"This research was one of the best experiences in my life, and I learned so much and changed my mind about a lot of topics."* –GRL Power researcher

❯ *"The research became ours."* –GRL Power researcher

"The most subversive thing a woman can do is talk about her life as if it really matters." (Tahhawi, 2016)

Q&A

Thank you!

Thank you for participating in this webinar.

The recording of today's event will be shared with all registrants.

Please visit www.YouthPower.org for more information.

Find more details about grants under contract:
http://www.youthpower.org/yp-grants-under-contract

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