



# *Why Addressing Gender-Based Violence Is a Critical Concern of the Shelter, Settlement and Recovery cluster*

**GBV Mainstreaming into the Shelter Cluster/oPT**

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- ▶ Protecting women and girls from GBV stems from all national and international actors' essential duty to protect those affected by crisis.
- ▶ All humanitarian sectors and actors are responsible for promoting women's and girls' safety and reducing their risk of GBV.
- ▶ Reducing risk by implementing GBV prevention and mitigation strategies across all areas of humanitarian response, from the pre-emergency to the recovery stages, is necessary for maximizing protection and saving lives.



- ▶ Risk mitigation focuses on reducing the risks of GBV, including sexual exploitation and abuse, that women and girls face in the emergency and post-emergency contexts;
- ▶ And protecting those who have already experienced violence from further harm. Risk mitigation focuses primarily on addressing “contributing factors” to GBV that might expose women and girls to increased risk of violence.
- ▶ **Eg:** Overcrowding in urban areas or camp situations can exacerbate family tensions, which in turn can contribute to intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic violence.
- ▶ Overcrowding can also increase the risk of sexual assault by non-family members, particularly in multifamily tents, multi-household dwellings or large communal spaces.
- ▶ Some families may arrange child marriages in order to alleviate congestion or attempt to protect their daughters from assault in communal dwellings.

## Definition of Gender Based Violence in the Guidelines

Gender Based Violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated **against a person's will** and is based on socially ascribed **gender differences** between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, psychological, sexual or mental **harm or suffering**, threats of such actions, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.

# Key Terms:

## ► Power

- The ability to control and access resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes
- It can be both real and perceived
- Gender is an important determinant of power.

## ► Informed consent

- Making an informed choice freely and voluntarily by persons in an equal power relationship
- Acts of GBV occur when there is NO informed consent
- Children under age 18 are unable to give informed consent for acts such as female genital cutting (FGC), marriage, sexual relations, etc.

# Types of GBV

- ▶ Physical
- ▶ Emotional/psychological
- ▶ Sexual
- ▶ Economic
- ▶ Harmful traditional practices (including child and forced marriage, FGM/C)
- ▶ Sexual exploitation and abuse (by humanitarian workers and associated personnel)
  - *All types of GBV have long-term and serious consequences*
  - *Different responses might be needed for different types of violence*

# Consequences of GBV

PHYSICAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES	PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES	SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES
Physical injury	Depression and sadness	Victim-blaming
Disability	Fear and anxiety	Stigmatisation
Sexually Transmitted Infections, including HIV	Self-blame, guilt and shame	Rejection and isolation by family and/or community
Unwanted pregnancy	Re-experiencing the trauma, flashbacks	Forced marriage
Unsafe abortion, miscarriage	Avoidance of places or situations, isolation	Decreased earning capacity/contribution
Fistula	Anger	Increased poverty
Chronic pain	Trouble concentrating or remembering	Risk of re-victimization
Sleeping and eating disorders	Self-harm	Death/honour killings
Death, including suicide	Suicidal thoughts/actions	

THE INTER-AGENCY  
**MINIMUM STANDARDS**

.....  
for Gender-Based Violence in  
Emergencies Programming



# Inter-agency Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies Programming



Standard 9 highlights **GBV-specialized actors' advocacy and technical support roles** in supporting the **integration of GBV risk mitigation efforts across humanitarian sectors**, in accordance with the *IASC GBV Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery*.

**All humanitarian sectors and actors are responsible for promoting women's and girls' safety, and reducing their risk of GBV.**

Failure to take action against GBV represents a **failure by humanitarian actors to meet their most basic responsibilities for promoting and protecting the rights of affected populations.**

# Prevention and Mitigation of GBV

- ▶ **Prevention**: Action to stop GBV from first occurring (e.g. scaling up activities that promote gender equality or working with communities to address practices that contribute to GBV).
- ▶ **Mitigation**: Action to reduce the risk of exposure to GBV, including sexual exploitation and abuse (e.g. ensuring that reports of “hot spots” are immediately addressed through risk reduction strategies, or that sufficient lighting and security patrols are in place from the onset of establishing displacement camps).
- ▶ **REMEMBER: All sectors of humanitarian response should undertake essential prevention and mitigation activities.**
- ▶ Integrating GBV prevention and mitigation into humanitarian interventions requires anticipating, contextualizing and addressing factors that may contribute to GBV.
- ▶ Actual risk factors will vary according to the setting, population and type of GBV.

# GBV Integration in Other Sectors: Overview

- In order for GBV integration to be effective within a given sector, the process must be owned and driven by the sector itself.
  - All sectors have a critical role to play in designing and implementing interventions in a way that minimizes risks of sexual exploitation and abuse and helps connect survivors of this and other forms of GBV to appropriate care and services.
- Example: With PSEA, GBV integration is never the sole responsibility of GBV specialists, but rather the responsibility of each sector and its personnel, including management, operations, human resources and programme sections.

# Categories of Risk to Women and Girls

***Women and girls can face risks of GBV  
across every aspect of their lives.***

Key categories of risk for women and girls include, but are not limited to:

- **Living space and physical camp/site layout;**
- **Unmet needs;**
- **Service delivery; and**
- **Information and participation.**

# The Guidelines for integrating GBV interventions in Humanitarian action/2015- Goal:

- ▶ **Reducing risk** of GBV by implementing GBV prevention and mitigation strategies from pre-emergency to recovery stages of humanitarian action.
- ▶ **Promoting resilience** by strengthening national and community-based systems that prevent and mitigate GBV, and by enabling survivors and those at risk of GBV to access specialized care and support.
- ▶ **Aiding recovery** of communities and societies by supporting local and national capacity to create lasting solutions to the problem of GBV.

# Purpose of the Guidelines:

- ▶ To assist humanitarian actors and communities affected by armed conflict, natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies to:

*coordinate, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate essential actions for the **prevention and mitigation** of gender-based violence (GBV) across all sectors of humanitarian response.*

# Why Addressing Gender-Based Violence Is a Critical Concern of the Shelter Cluster

- ▶ The work of the Shelter, Settlement and Recovery (SS&R) sector/cluster is critical to the survival of populations displaced by humanitarian emergencies. Whether the displacement occurs within or across national borders, a variety of shelter and settlement options may be implemented depending on the context. Failure to consider GBV-related risks in SS&R can result in heightened GBV exposure for inhabitants.
- ▶ **For example:** Overcrowding in urban areas or camp situations can exacerbate family tensions, which in turn can contribute to intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic violence. Overcrowding can also increase the risk of sexual assault by non-family members, particularly in multifamily tents, multi-household dwellings or large communal spaces.
- ▶ Shelters that are poorly designed (e.g. with insufficient doors and partitions in sleeping areas; inadequate locks; lack of privacy for dressing and bathing; not weatherized to withstand the elements) may increase the risk of sexual harassment and assault for
- ▶ inhabitants.
- ▶ Some families may arrange child marriages in order to alleviate congestion or attempt to protect their daughters from assault in communal dwellings. Even when camps are planned to avoid overcrowding, problems may arise as populations grow and additional land is not available.
- ▶ When women, girls and other at-risk groups (particularly woman- and child-headed households, unaccompanied children, persons with disabilities and older persons) are sheltered on the perimeter of camps or in areas with insufficient lighting, their risk of GBV is increased.
- ▶ Lack of security patrols and other protection monitoring systems in and around shelter sites can create an environment of impunity for potential perpetrators.

***Risks of GBV can be reduced through SS&R programming that continuously monitors for and develops strategies to address emerging GBV-related safety risks related to shelters, settlements and NFIs.***

# Why GBV mainstreaming is a non-negotiable priority for the Shelter cluster:

A shelter isn't just a physical asset; it's a psychological one.

**Healing Spaces:** For survivors of violence, a secure, private room is the first step toward reclaiming a sense of "home" and personal safety.

In any humanitarian crisis, a "roof over someone's head" is never just about construction—it's about safety, dignity, and privacy. When the Shelter Cluster fails to mainstream Gender-Based Violence (GBV) considerations, the very structures meant to protect people can accidentally become sites of danger.

Poorly planned shelters can inadvertently create opportunities for perpetrators. Mainstreaming ensures that technical designs account for:

**Privacy:** Partitioning in communal shelters to prevent harassment.

**Lighting:** Ensuring paths to latrines or water points are well-lit to prevent nighttime attacks.

**Locks:** Providing internal locks on doors and windows to give women and children agency over their own space.

# Why GBV mainstreaming is a non-negotiable priority for the Shelter cluster:

**Without a GBV lens, the most vulnerable often lose out.** Mainstreaming forces a look at who is receiving aid:

**Land Rights:** Ensuring that shelter assistance is provided to women and child-headed households, even in cultures where property is traditionally held by men.

**Physical Ability:** Ensuring that shelter layouts don't isolate elderly women or people with disabilities, making them targets for exploitation

**Humanitarian aid comes with power dynamics.** Mainstreaming involves training staff and contractors on **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**.

It establishes clear reporting channels. It ensures that the distribution of "NFI kits" (Non-Food Items like blankets or tarps) doesn't happen in dark, isolated areas where staff or "gatekeepers" could demand favors in exchange for supplies.

**Community Consultations:** By involving women in the design phase, the cluster ensures the shelter layout reflects their daily routines and safety concerns, rather than just an engineer's blueprint.

# Key strategies and interventions:

- ▶ **Involve women and other at-risk groups as staff and leaders in the design and implementation of SS&R programming** (*with due caution in situations where this poses a potential security risk or increases the risk of GBV*).
- ▶ **Involving women, girls, and other at-risk groups in all aspects of Shelter programming is essential** (Commitment 4 of the IASC Principals' Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP) highlights the importance of enabling affected populations to play a decision-making role in processes that affect them).
- ▶ **Strive for 50 per cent representation of females within SS&R programme staff.** Provide them with formal and on-the-job training in the construction, operation and maintenance of shelter facilities, as well as targeted support to assume leadership and training positions.
- ▶ **Ensure women (and where appropriate, adolescent girls) are actively involved in community-based SS&R committees and management groups.** Be aware of potential tensions that may be caused by attempting to change the role of women and girls in communities and, as necessary, engage in dialogue with males to ensure their support

# Key strategies and interventions:

- ▶ **Gender-Sensitive Safety Audits:** Conduct regular safety audits (e.g., using observation checklists, FGDs) to map risks such as poorly lit areas, isolated water points, or dangerous paths to latrines.
- ▶ **Staff Training:** Train all staff (including contractors and security) on GBV risk mitigation, PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse), and Code of Conduct.
- ▶ Employ persons from at-risk groups in SS&R staff, leadership and training positions. Solicit their input to ensure specific issues of vulnerability are adequately represented and addressed in programmes.
- ▶ Establish a system for the community to provide feedback about shelter-related safety issues relating to GBV

# Key strategies and interventions:

- ▶ **Identify Vulnerabilities:** Use a "vulnerability index" to prioritize assistance for female-headed households, unaccompanied girls, and people with disabilities
- ▶ **Strategic Location:** Site shelters near established communities or services to reduce isolation and risks during travel
- ▶ **Information Sharing:** Ensure information about available services is widely accessible to women and girls, reducing the influence of male-only "gatekeepers"
- ▶ **Safe Shelter Design:** Ensure shelters provide adequate privacy (e.g., solid doors, locks, internal partitions).
- ▶ **Secure Infrastructure:** Install lighting in and around shelters, communal areas, and pathways to latrines.
- ▶ **Segregated Facilities:** Ensure WASH facilities (latrines, bathing areas) are sex-segregated, lockable, and located safely.

# Essential to know/Persons with Disabilities....

- ▶ For a shelter to be accessible, a person must be able to get to it, get inside it, and move around within it independently. Access isn't just physical; it's social.
- ▶ If a PWD cannot lock their door or go to the bathroom privately, their protection risk increases.
- ▶ Ensure that NFI distributions consider the needs of persons with disabilities and GBV survivors isolated or confined in the home. These persons may require additional items (e.g. soap, cloth, incontinence pads, containers for water storage, etc.) to ensure their safety and dignity.
- ▶ In consultation with the affected community, ensure women, girls and other at-risk groups (particularly woman- and child-headed households, single women, young girls, older persons, persons with disabilities and other at-risk groups) have access to age-, gender-, and culturally appropriate NFIs.
- ▶ Consider the barriers faced by women, girls and other at-risk groups to their safe participation in community discussion forums (e.g. transportation; meeting times and locations; accessibility for persons with disabilities)

## Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action

*Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery*



Inaction and/or poorly designed programmes can cause further harm.

Thank You

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