

# GBV Risk Mitigation



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# GBV Risk Mitigation

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- **Community Mapping Tool**
- **Sample Key Messages for Outreach**
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- **Sample Tools: Protection Taskforce**
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- **Sample Action Plan and Monitoring Template: Protection Taskforce**
- **Sample Meeting Plan: Protection Taskforce**
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# Key Concepts

## Role of Community Leaders in Risk Mitigation

Community leaders are key actors within communities and may contribute greatly to endorsing, supporting, and/or leading actions aimed at GBV risk mitigation. Simply by acknowledging GBV risks, leaders can help to draw more attention to the needs of women and girls. And leaders' involvement in GBV risk mitigation can help to legitimize and strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions.

**Community leaders are well-placed to identify and share information on GBV risks.** Community leaders are knowledgeable about the communities they support, including the physical environment, services and facilities within the community, and community populations. They hear reports of problems within the community and understand how the community has changed over time, and through an emergency. They are also well-networked and often have established means for sharing important messages with communities.

**Government and humanitarian actors with responsibility for mitigating GBV risks regularly consult with community leaders.** All humanitarian actors have an obligation to mitigate risks of GBV from the earliest stages of an emergency<sup>1</sup>. To effectively integrate attention to GBV risks in the design and delivery of programs, all humanitarian actors should meaningfully consult women and girls. Unfortunately, many do not. These same actors are likely, though, to consult formal community leaders who therefore have an important opportunity to highlight risks that women and girls face.

**Community leaders can directly address some risks of GBV.** Beyond raising attention to GBV risks, community leaders may be able to take direct action to reduce some risks. Addressing risks to the population is an expected role of many community leaders, and GBV teams can support leaders in exercising this responsibility.

## Considerations for GBV Teams Preparing to Engage Community Leaders in Risk Mitigation

**Risk mitigation differs from transformative change.** Risk mitigation and transformative change may be thought of as different, and complimentary, strategies to prevent GBV. While risk mitigation generally relates to more immediate measures to address specific risks and reduce exposure to GBV, transformative change generally relates to actions taken to stop GBV from first occurring, including actions to transform systems and shift social norms. While it may be important to engage community leaders for both risk mitigation and more transformative change, it will be useful for GBV teams to reflect on different strategies, and the types of change they would like to pursue with specific leaders, at different phases of an emergency or programming. Engagement related to transformative change requires a deeper commitment, and more investment in time and resources from both GBV teams and leaders. Some risk mitigation activities will also require substantial inputs, but other activities will be relatively simple to implement, even when engaging community leaders for the first time.

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<sup>1</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee. *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action*, 2015. p.5. <https://gbvguidelines.org/en/>

**Maintaining a focus on women and girls can be challenging when communities face multiple problems and threats.** Across the world, women and girls do not enjoy equal participation in public affairs or leadership, where their needs may be overlooked or viewed as subordinate to other interests. During emergencies, when needs are many and time and resources are limited, it can be particularly challenging to assert a focus on women and girls. Even when community leaders are supportive of such a focus, discussions and initiatives can easily shift toward broader interests, or the priorities of men. While appreciating that multiple problems exist in communities, GBV programs bring value to humanitarian response by maintaining a steady focus on the rights and needs of women and girls. This includes ensuring that analyses of risks are women-led, and that the voices and interests of women and girls guide all GBV program actions, including engagement with community leaders.

**Gender-based violence is a sensitive topic, and community leaders may not be eager to acknowledge GBV risks.** It is a universal truth that GBV is a sensitive issue. Across the world, incidents of GBV are among the most underreported crimes, and subjects such as rape are highly taboo in many contexts. Community leaders may be reluctant to talk about GBV risks in general, and they might be particularly reluctant to acknowledge specific types or trends of GBV within the communities they support and guide. GBV programs should be aware of general sensitivities, adopting careful language and approaches, and should also anticipate specific sensitivities, including trends of GBV that might not be possible to directly address with community leaders.

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# Approaches

## Identifying and Raising Awareness of GBV Risks

GBV teams can work to involve community leaders in broader efforts to identify and raise awareness of GBV risks and can also engage leaders in specific activities tailored to their roles. A wide range of community leaders may be engaged in this approach, which may not require leaders to be familiar with GBV core concepts, nor fully committed to transformative change or a survivor-centered response. After introducing a GBV program to community leaders (see **Building a Foundation**), this is the most minimal engagement GBV teams may have with leaders, who will almost always be interested in at least contributing to community safety assessments.

## Addressing GBV Risks with Community Leaders

Beyond identifying and raising awareness of risks, more committed community leaders may be engaged to address GBV risks and create more protective environments for women and girls. A range of potential ideas for engagement are outlined below, but GBV teams can take a flexible and adaptive approach to support community-led risk mitigation activities, particularly those led by women and girls. Community leaders can be engaged to support community-led initiatives, GBV program activities such as dignity kit distribution, and humanitarian planning and coordination. They may also be engaged to take direct action or to find creative solutions to address risks.

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# Ideas for Engagement

## Identifying and Raising Awareness of GBV Risks

- Community Safety Audits
- Women-Led Risk Analyses
- Outreach and Awareness-Raising
- Group Discussions on GBV Risks and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

## Addressing GBV Risks with Community Leaders

- Reinforcing Existing Risk Mitigation Strategies
- Community Safety Initiatives
- Community Preparedness
- Distributing Dignity Kits
- Promoting Women's and Girls' Involvement in Community Affairs & Decision-Making
- Inclusion in Humanitarian Planning
- Involving Leaders in Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

## Community Safety Audits

A safety audit is a common method for GBV programs to assess risks of GBV, particularly in camps or communities with clear boundaries. Safety audit processes vary, where some audits rely entirely on GBV staff observations and can be completed quickly, while others are conducted in conjunction with key informant interviews, service mapping, or other methods of assessment. The frequency with which safety audits are conducted also varies. During the early stages of an emergency, GBV teams may frequently conduct safety audits to assess and respond to evolving changes in the environment. In more stable settings, teams may conduct semi-annual or even annual safety audits to monitor changes.

GBV teams can consider engaging community leaders in different ways to support a safety audit, from granting access for an assessment to participating in the audit itself to addressing findings. Options for community leader engagement are briefly described below.

### Sanctioning Safety Audits

As with other methods of assessment, in most contexts, GBV teams are recommended to at least inform community leaders of their plans to conduct a safety audit. Seeking buy-in from an appropriate range of leaders can reduce suspicion and help teams gain access to communities.

### Joining Safety Audit Teams

Where a GBV team has sufficient time and resources, it can be beneficial to organize broader community (and inter-agency) teams to conduct safety audits. Community leaders may be asked to serve on safety audit teams, helping to collect information, process results, and agree on findings and recommendations. Participation of community can lend credibility to safety audit findings. Government actors and humanitarian organizations may be more inclined to take actions based on safety audit findings if the recommendations come from the community and not a single organization or program.

- Be sure that women leaders (formal or informal) are included in safety audit teams
- Carefully discuss and review the purpose of safety audits as focused on safety concerns for women and girls, so that attention does not drift to broader community needs.

### Serving as a Key Informant

When safety audits include interviews with select service providers and other key informants, community leaders may be included based on their knowledge of communities. GBV teams should involve an appropriate range of leaders, to be sure the diversity of communities is well-represented, as well as male and female leaders. GBV teams should be sure that any safety audit reports reflect that community leaders were interviewed, as their perspectives may be different from other community members. Likewise, be sure to indicate whether interviewed leaders were male or female.

### Learning About Safety Audit Findings

When a safety audit is complete, GBV teams should, at a minimum, inform community leaders of key findings and recommendations (omitting any highly sensitive findings). Ideally, community leaders will have the opportunity to discuss findings and recommendations in a forum that allows leaders to explore ideas for addressing risks and setting plans for action.

### Taking Action to Share Information and Address Risks

Community leaders, including formal and informal leaders, can help to share information from safety audits through their networks. GBV teams can also engage leaders to address specific risks identified through safety audits.

➔ See **[Safety Audit Checklist](#)** in *GBV Risk Mitigation Tools and Resources*.

## Women-Led Risk Analyses

While both male and female community leaders can contribute to identifying GBV risks, it is critical that diverse groups of women and adolescent girls are consulted, and that their perspectives are prioritized. Women leaders may have relative privilege within communities, and even leaders with the best intentions will not be able to speak on behalf of women and girls in their diversity, while specific risks may relate to age, social status, means of livelihood, race, or other factors.

When conducting initial focus group discussions (FGDs) or more participatory exercises to assess GBV risks, GBV teams are recommended to first meet with groups of community leaders. Through such consultations, leaders are not only able to contribute information, but they are able to learn about the purpose and methods of the assessment- and more about the GBV program's interests- which can alleviate concerns or suspicions. During consultations, GBV teams can inform leaders about their intentions to meet with groups of women and girls and can further seek leaders' approval for such plans where this may be important. If leaders want to join FGDs with women and girls, GBV teams may gently discourage this in the interest of a recommended process. When leaders, including recognized women leaders, do join FGDs, this should be noted as leaders' presence may influence what information is shared.

Once a GBV program has established itself with community leaders, further efforts can be made to engage women and girls in participatory exercises to analyze GBV. Teams can introduce community mapping exercises, where women or adolescent girls identify services, challenges in accessing services, and areas that might present safety risks to women and girls. As GBV teams learn about perceptions of risks from women and girls, they can in turn continue to meet with community leaders and share the concerns of women and girls (without disclosing information that could compromise participants' safety or standing in the community).

Where community leaders are very receptive to women's and girls' concerns, GBV teams may also consider creating space for leaders to hear directly from women and girls. Teams could prepare both parties ahead of a meeting, where women/girl participants agree on roles to facilitate the discussion or exercise, and leaders understand that the session should be led by women and girls.

➔ See **Community Mapping** in *GBV Risk Mitigation Tools and Resources*.

## Outreach and Awareness-Raising

From the earliest phase of an emergency, community leaders can help to raise awareness of GBV risks, as well as community members' rights to assistance and opportunities to report abuse and seek assistance. Common communication channels include:

- **Interpersonal communication** including one-on-one interaction through community outreach
- **Community channels** that involve information sharing within the community, such as community meetings and religious sermons.
- **Broadcast and print media**, including radio messaging, distribution of brochures, and display of posters.
- **Digital and social media** via technology, including messages shared through mobile phone applications or e-mail.

GBV teams can include community leaders in outreach and awareness raising in two ways: firstly, as advisors when designing, implementing, and monitoring outreach and awareness-raising activities, and

secondly as facilitators to share information on GBV risks. As risk mitigation messages tend to focus on safety risks and available services, rather than behaviors and social norms, messaging is generally less sensitive. A wider range of community leaders may be willing and well-placed to contribute to outreach and awareness-raising related to risk mitigation than transformative change, which requires deeper levels of knowledge and commitment.

➔ See **Sample Key Messages for Outreach** in *GBV Risk Mitigation Tools and Resources*.

## Group Discussions on GBV Risks and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Group discussions is a common approach for engaging community leaders. Discussions related to GBV risks may be organized as a one-off opportunity to identify risks with leaders, or as an ongoing opportunity to dive deeper into how risks might be addressed. Discussions can also focus on building knowledge and connecting leaders to available resources, including information on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

When arranging any group discussion, consider the group dynamics, which will depend, in part, on whether leaders belong to an established group and know each other well, or if you are bringing together members of different formal or informal leadership structures. You should also consider how group size, composition in terms of age, sex, religion, and other factors, as well as location of the discussion might contribute to power dynamics and the comfort of participants. Tailor your discussion accordingly.

Some ideas for arranging group discussions that you could consider, depending on your context, include:

- Identify a cohort of interested leaders and organize regular discussions about mitigating GBV risks.
- Arrange group discussions between (male) leaders and representatives of women's associations or women-led organizations, to provide an opportunity for leaders to hear concerns from women representatives and for women representatives to directly seek support from leaders in addressing risks.
- Organize sex-separated discussion groups on GBV risks, and then bring groups together to exchange highlights from each discussion, with emphasis on learning from women and girls.

➔ See **Discussion Guide: GBV Risks** and **Discussion Guide: PSEA** in *GBV Risk Mitigation Tools and Resources*.

## Reinforcing Existing Risk Mitigation Strategies

GBV programming aimed at improving protection for women and girls should begin with learning. GBV teams can consult with women and girls to understand how they are mitigating and responding to GBV protection risks individually (self-protection) and collectively (in collaboration with other women, community groups, organizations, etc.). Wherever possible, GBV teams can help to reinforce existing strategies. If, for example, women have begun to organize themselves into small groups to gather firewood outside of a community, to mitigate risks of attack when traveling alone, a GBV team could assist to connect other women to such networks or establish gathering points and times for women to meet before leaving the community, or

organize meetings at a WGSS to set plans for firewood collection, or ask leaders to share information about the strategy.

GBV teams can engage community leaders to support existing risk mitigation strategies in many ways, including:

- Endorsing or sanctioning strategies
- Contributing time or resources
- Sharing information to increase awareness or participation
- Participating themselves

## Community Safety Initiatives

Community safety initiatives apply a participatory approach to recognize the essential role community members play in addressing protection risks and concerns within their own communities. GBV teams may support, or help to introduce, associations of concerned community members focused on addressing GBV risks. These groups may take different forms, but it can be helpful if community leaders (both male and female) contribute to such initiatives.

### Protection Committees/ Task Forces

GBV teams can support, or help to initiate, volunteer committees or task forces focused on increasing protection for women and girls within communities, or smaller sectors of communities. These groups should be guided by women and girl-led risk analyses and accountable to women and girls in the community. Effective groups may be reasonably small but should include diverse representation. As protection committees develop action plans and take actions, GBV teams should be attentive to shifts toward broader community interests and help to maintain a focus on women and girls. Where multiple committees or task forces exist within the same community or area, GBV teams can help to coordinate between groups to support shared learning and joint initiatives. GBV teams can also help to establish linkages between women's associations and women's rights organizations and protection committees.



### Example from Practice

#### Community safety initiative in Gambella, Ethiopia

A GBV program supporting South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia helped establish Community Safety Initiative Groups (CSIG) focused on protection of women and girls in refugee camps. Each CSIG includes ten volunteer members, including shurta (male community leaders), and focal points from different groups within the camp, including groups representing the elderly, people with disabilities, adolescents, and religious groups. The GBV program trains the CSIG, involves them in regular safety audits, and supports CSIG to develop action plans focused on women's and girls' safety. The GBV team holds regular meetings with the CSIG to consult on GBV risks and track progress against action plans. Separate but connected to the CSIG, the GBV program helped to connect women activists into Women Network Groups (WNG). These women-only groups play similar roles to the CSIG and help to guide the work of CSIG. They also help to mobilize women and girls to increase participation in work beyond risk mitigation.

### Community Patrols

Community leaders can support initiatives to monitor high-risk areas to help prevent or mitigate GBV. Some community groups that organize to monitor, or patrol communities can play a helpful role in mitigating GBV risks, while others may adopt threatening or controlling practices that present new risks for women and girls. Community patrols are sometimes armed with weapons, and in some settings, the groups may be viewed as militia, posing a threat to the government or to certain populations. Where community patrols

exist, GBV teams should view them as actors within the (informal) security sector and should understand the composition of the groups and common perceptions of their work. GBV teams can consult with diverse groups of women and girls to understand how they feel about community patrols. If women and girls identify potential for these groups, GBV teams can help to share recommendations from audits and women and girl-led risk analyses. Where possible, GBV teams can also help the patrols connect with protection committees, women's rights organizations, or other relevant groups.

➔ See **Sample Tools: Protection Taskforce** in *GBV Risk Mitigation Tools and Resources*.

## Community Preparedness

Risks of GBV increase during emergencies and displacement. Preparing for emergencies, by setting plans to implement in the event of an emergency, can help to mitigate these risks. While emergency preparedness is more commonly discussed as the remit of governments and humanitarian actors, individuals and communities can and do adopt measures to prepare for emergencies. Particularly where eruptions in conflict or periodic natural disasters are expected, GBV teams can engage community leaders to help prepare for events that disrupt protective systems and endanger women and girls.

Community preparedness for GBV can be attentive to:

- Individuals who may be at greater risk during an emergency or sudden displacement (e.g., older women, women and girls with disabilities, girl heads-of-household)
- Means of quickly reaching women and girls with information
- Plans to protect/destroy sensitive information (where community based GBV staff or volunteers provide GBV response services)
- Places for women to gather or seek shelter
- Strategies for safe movement that account for vulnerable individuals

Preparedness plans can include establishing alert systems, communication trees, gathering points, movement plans, focal points, teams, or partnerships. GBV teams can consult with women and girls to understand what plans may be in place and to explore opportunities to develop or strengthen preparedness plans. Once the interests and preferences of diverse groups of women and girls are understood, GBV teams can engage community leaders to support and share information on preparedness plans, as relevant. Plans may identify specific support roles that women leaders can take. GBV teams can further help to test and refine preparedness plans, for example by practicing the quick collection of documents, checking telephone numbers in communication trees, or rehearsing planned procedures.

➔ See **Sample Communication Tree** in *GBV Risk Mitigation Tools and Resources*.

## Distributing Dignity Kits

In emergencies, women and girls require basic material items to maintain hygiene, including personal hygiene, and personal comfort. The lack of basic items such as soap, underwear, or culturally appropriate clothing can lead women and girls to isolate themselves, or move to remote places for hygiene purposes, or engage in high-risk practices to meet needs. GBV programs commonly support the distribution of dignity kits, either through direct implementation or through coordination with WASH or other sectors, to help vulnerable women and girls meet basic needs. **The Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming** outline standards for dignity kits, including the importance of consulting with women and girls to determine the contents of kits. In addition to hygiene items, kits may include a range of materials to increase personal safety, such as hand-held lights and whistles. The Minimum Standards also outline considerations for targeting groups to receive dignity kits.

GBV programs can engage community leaders to endorse, plan and implement dignity kit distributions but should *not* rely on community leaders, including women leaders, to solely determine the contents of dignity kits. During acute emergencies, it may be tempting to accept the guidance of leaders to initiate interventions, but they cannot speak on behalf of vulnerable women or adolescent girls who can better represent their own needs and preferences. Community leaders may be able to assist, though, in identifying community networks that can assist in assembling and distributing kits. Leaders can also help to identify vulnerable individuals in need of kits, particularly where blanket distribution is not possible. For example, International Medical Corps' GBV program in Iraq consulted with women and girls and coordinated with partners to develop a vulnerability criteria for dignity kit distribution.



### Example from Practice

#### Working with leaders to distribute dignity kits

In Iraq, a GBV program consulted with women and girls, as well as partner agencies, to determine the contents of dignity kits and establish a vulnerability criteria for targeting most vulnerable women and girls for distribution. GBV staff share kits with women and girls who visit women and girls safe spaces (WGSS) for GBV case management or other activities and who meet the criteria. The team also shares the vulnerability criteria with community leaders and collaborates with leaders to identify vulnerable women and girls who may not frequent the WGSS, including those with disabilities.

## Promoting Women's and Girls' Involvement in Community Affairs and Decision-Making

Globally, women do not have equal access to public affairs, nor equal representation in decision-making bodies. Adolescent girls have even less involvement in decision-making, and in highly patriarchal settings, women and girls may have limited to no representation. This inequality has broad implications for women and girls, and during emergencies, when time and resources are limited, the result is too often that women's and girls' rights and needs are overlooked by those charged with making critical decisions about assistance.

Community leaders assume many responsibilities during emergencies. They often lead meetings where information is shared and decisions are reached, they may determine access to or distribution of community resources, and they are commonly consulted by government ministries and humanitarian agencies to plan and deliver aid. Particularly where formal leadership structures do not include women, GBV teams can

engage leaders to highlight women's and girls' interests, and, where possible, advocate for women and girls to be more directly involved with decision-making. GBV teams can consider the following approaches to increase women's and girls' involvement in community affairs and decision-making:

- **Share concerns and priorities, on behalf of women and girls.** Particularly where direct representation of women is not possible, GBV teams can serve as a link between community leadership and women and girls reached through the GBV program.
- **Work with leaders to increase women's and girls' access and representation.** GBV teams can explore ideas with leaders and make recommendations based on consultations with diverse groups of women and girls. This could include setting community meeting times and locations that better facilitate women's participation; opening new channels for information-sharing; inviting women's associations, or women and adolescent girl representatives, to participate in meetings or decision-making bodies. Where women leaders are included in decision-making, but their representation is limited, leaders could consider introducing quotas to ensure more inclusive and balanced participation.
- **Support women leaders.** GBV teams can engage women leaders to identify barriers to their full participation in decision-making and help to address these. Support to women leaders could involve capacity building, advocacy, resource mobilization, or other areas of work.
- **Advocate for requirements on consultation and representation.** GBV teams can request that community leaders help remind government and humanitarian agencies of their responsibilities to consult with women and girls when setting priorities and planning services. Leaders can ask agencies not to proceed without input from women and girl representatives.

➔ See **Key Areas of Engagement: Transformative Change** for more ideas related to shifting norms toward gender equality and **Supporting Women Leaders** for more ideas related to promoting women's leadership.

## Inclusion in Humanitarian Coordination and Planning

Community leaders should have opportunities to both inform and receive information from humanitarian agencies to strengthen GBV risk mitigation. GBV teams can help leaders, particularly women leaders, connect with and feed into humanitarian coordination and planning mechanisms. GBV teams can help leaders engage with coordination and planning in multiple ways, including:

- Help leaders understand coordination systems, and the responsibility of all humanitarian sectors and actors to mitigate risks of GBV.
- Organize with coordinating agencies of GBV sub-clusters/ working groups (or other sectors, as relevant) for leaders to participate in coordination meetings and share concerns. This could be organized on an ongoing basis, or for select meetings.
- Serve as a liaison between leaders and coordination mechanisms by regularly meeting with leaders for two-way information sharing. Help to raise leaders' concerns with relevant groups for humanitarian planning, and keep leaders informed of plans.
- Advocate with sector leads and coordination structures to consult with leaders, particularly women leaders, to strengthen GBV risk mitigation. Help to connect agencies and focal points with leaders who demonstrate commitment to GBV risk mitigation. Based on the Community Leader Mapping and engagement with leaders, GBV teams can recommend consultations with specific leaders and help to make introductions.



## Example from Practice

### Advocacy for protection of displaced women

A GBV program supporting a camp community of internally displaced persons in Iraq established regular coordination with mukhtars (male community leaders). Many of the women and children in the camp had been left behind by their husbands/fathers who were thought to be somehow affiliated with ISIS and believed to have been captured or killed. When the government determined to close the internally displaced people (IDP) camp, the GBV program maintained telephone contact with the mukhtars as camp residents moved back to their homes of origin. The mukhtars conveyed concerns raised by women about the challenges they faced reintegrating into their communities, where they were met by threats because of their husbands' possible or perceived involvement with ISIS. The GBV program was, in turn, able to raise these concerns through humanitarian coordination systems and advocate for continued protection for affected women. Based in part on this advocacy, the government allowed women and children at risk to return to the camp.

## Involving Leaders in Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is a specific and appalling form of GBV, where humanitarian workers or peacekeepers violate the rights of vulnerable individuals affected by crises. Risks of GBV increase in every humanitarian emergency, when unscrupulous members of humanitarian agencies have opportunities to exploit and abuse those they should serve.

GBV teams can engage community leaders to share information on SEA risks, the rights of all beneficiaries of assistance, the responsibilities of all humanitarian workers, and service and reporting options. Through assessments, group discussions, or one-on-one meetings, community leaders may also be able to identify specific SEA risks and concerning humanitarian practices that should be addressed. Community leaders are well-placed to help share protection from sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA) messages with community members, including through outreach and awareness-raising activities.

GBV teams can help leaders connect to SEA coordination and reporting mechanisms and can further help to strengthen community-based protection and reporting. Community leaders may be supported to serve as PSEA focal points in communities, receiving complaints and helping survivors access services. Community leaders can also serve on committees to process and address complaints.

### For more guidance and resources please refer to:

- **Empowered Aid:** A free, self-paced online course on mitigating risks of SEA in programming, distribution, monitoring and evaluation. The course emphasizes engagement of women and girls and a participatory approach. Available from George Washington University's Global Women's Institute and partners at: [Empowered Aid Course | Global Women's Institute | The George Washington University \(gwu.edu\)](#)
- **The IASC [PSEA-CBCM Best Practice Guide \(2016\)](#)** for recommendations on establishing and supporting community-based complaints mechanisms.
- **The IASC PSEA** site for additional resources, including a page devoted to community engagement, with examples from different countries and sample IEC materials: [Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse | IASC / PSEA \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](#)
- **The United Nations PSEA** site for policies and additional resources: [Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(un.org\)](#)

# GBV Risk Mitigation Tools and Resources

## Tools and Resources

- [Safety Audit Checklist](#)
- [Community Mapping Tool](#)
- [Sample Key Messages for Outreach](#)
- [Discussion Guide: GBV Risks](#)
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- [Sample Tools: Protection Taskforce](#)
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- [Sample Communication Tree](#)

## Training Modules

- *Training Modules: GBV Risk Mitigation*

# Safety Audit Checklist

Safety audit information is largely collected through observation. When community leaders are involved with conducting safety audits, they may share additional information that is not immediately available through observation. This checklist can be adapted for context.

Shelter/Layout	Yes	No	Comments
Is there a large presence of unaccompanied women and girls?			
Are single women or women-headed households located in a special area?			
Are non-related families housed together?			
Is there any source of night lighting?			
Is overcrowding a problem?			
Mobility	Yes	No	Comments
Are women able to move freely in and out of the community?			
Are women regularly leaving the community for livelihood purposes (firewood, water, farming, jobs)?			
Are there particular safety risks for women and girls moving through the community?			
Decision-Making	Yes	No	Comments
Are women represented in leadership?			
Are government/ humanitarian actors consulting women in planning services?			
Have youth been consulted in planning services (shelter, nutrition, health, WASH, etc)?			

<b>Security Presence</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Police			
State military			
Other armed actors			
Barriers/checkpoints			
Community security committees			
Women's participation in any community security plans			
Known/apparent danger points in the community that pose risk to women and girls?			
<b>NFIs</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Are any NFIs distributed specifically to women?			
Is fuel distributed?			
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Are latrines/bathhouses separated by sex?			
Are there internal locks on latrine/bathhouse doors?			
Do latrines/bathhouses appear safely and easily accessible for women?			
Do water points appear safely and easily accessible for women?			
Do health facilities appear safely and easily accessible for women?			
<b>Support</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Are there spaces where women are congregating (informal or designated)?			
Are any women's associations active?			

# Community Mapping Tool

Community mapping can help to identify GBV risks, as well as barriers to services, that may be mitigated. The exercise can also serve a purpose of raising awareness of GBV risks, particularly when women and girls identify risks that community leaders, or men and boys, had not considered. If mapping exercises include mixed-sex groups, these should be well-facilitated to be sure women and girls are able to lead. Maps developed by women and girl-only groups may be shared with male community leaders after exercises are concluded.

Generally, participatory exercises should be limited to 20 participants and completed within 1.5 hours. When mapping includes physically visiting different areas of the community, the exercise will take more time, and refreshments or other provisions may be required.

## Information to Record During Mapping Exercise

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interpretation Used?**  Yes  No

Gender Composition of Participants	Approximate Age Groups of Participants
<input type="checkbox"/> All female	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-14 years
<input type="checkbox"/> All male	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-19 years
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed-sex	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-24 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-40 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 40 years

**Notes on Diversity of Participants:**

**Are any community leaders included in the group?**  Yes  No

Notes:

## Information to Share Before Mapping Exercise

**Introduce all GBV team members.**

**Present the purpose of the discussion.**

- General information about your organization and program
- Interest in understanding concerns and needs for women and girls
- Participation is voluntary with no direct benefit for volunteering
- No one is required to respond to any questions
- Participants are free to leave the discussion at any time
- With whom will information be shared and how?

**Agree on confidentiality.**

- Keep discussion confidential
- Do not share stories that identify individuals

**Ask permission to take notes.**

- No one's identity will be mentioned
- The purpose of the notes is to ensure that the information collected is accurate

## Methods of Community Mapping

Participants develop some representation, or map, of the community and then mark areas of increased risk (e.g. the bush when collecting firewood, the road to and from school) as well as protective assets (e.g. women and girls' safe spaces).

The map of the community can be developed through different exercises, including:

- 1. Group drawing:** Present a map of the community, or begin with a blank paper and facilitate a discussion where volunteers help to draw a rough map of the community by memory. Indicate major landmarks, such as rivers, markets, and places of worship, as well as service points, such as schools and health facilities.
- 2. Representing space:** Using an open space, participants can model the community, using handy objects, or even volunteers within the group, to mark landmarks.
- 3. Visiting space:** Invite participants to move together through the community, for example using transect walks to move from one end of the community to the other, to identify specific areas.

After mapping space, as well as risks and assets, engage participants to discuss how identified risks might be addressed. Note recommendations for advocacy with different actors, and support proposed community initiatives. Plan to follow up with participants, as relevant. Community mapping exercises can be repeated over time to track changes in the overall protective environment of a community.

### Sample Community Map



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# Sample Key Messages for Outreach

Outreach messages related to risk mitigation can be developed with community leaders, who can help to amplify messages within communities.



All assistance is free! No one has a right to touch you, or demand money or favors or sex in exchange for services.



If you see or hear anyone asking for money, sex or favor in exchange for any service you have a right to report it. *Add information on locations/ focal points for reporting.*



Individuals who may be vulnerable – unaccompanied young people, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, elderly, female heads-of households, etc. – may need special attention. Please check on those near you and make sure they are okay.



Services are available for any man, woman or child who has experienced rape, or sexual violence. Medical Care after rape is very important and is best if received as soon as possible. Within three days after rape, medicine may prevent HIV and infections. Within five days after rape, medicine may prevent unwanted pregnancy.



*Provide information on available services for survivors of GBV, including health and GBV case management/ psychosocial support services, or community focal points who can provide basic emotional support.*



Everyone has the right to be safe from violence. If you or someone you know is in danger, you can seek help from *available security services.*

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# Discussion Guide: GBV Risks

Group discussions with community leaders about GBV risks can help to identify, raise awareness, and explore ideas for risk mitigation. This discussion guide includes suggestions for arranging and leading any group discussion, followed by sample questions and important ideas for discussing GBV risks.

## Arranging Discussion Groups (ahead of discussion)

- Identify a comfortable and quiet locations for discussions.
- Limit groups to 15 participants
- Complete discussions within 1.5 hours.
- Ensure lead facilitator has experience and/or training in facilitation. The facilitator must be able to ask probing and clarifying questions, demonstrate comfort and patience when talking about sensitive issues, positively manage negative or harmful comments, and respond appropriately to disclosures of GBV.
- Have a referral list of available services in case of GBV disclosure.
- Where possible, arrange same-sex facilitators for all male or all female discussion groups.

## Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- Greet everyone, share introductions, pleasantries, and gratitude for any recent positive actions.
- Share general information about your organization and program (with any new participants).
- Present the purpose of the discussion.
- Agree to not share stories that identify individuals.

## Discussion (30-45 minutes)

- Introduce topic of discussion and begin with a question or other prompts.
- Be sure to review questions/prompts and adapt them for context.
- Avoid “teaching”, talking too much, or arguing. Use prompts to keep conversation going and remember the discussion is also a learning opportunity for you.
- Do not feel pressure to use all questions/prompts.

## Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Summarize key takeaways or ideas from discussion.
- Agree on any points for further discussion and make plans as appropriate.
- Thank all participants.

## Prompts/Questions

- Is there a place in the community that women or girls should avoid? (Day? Night?)
- What places/services/shelters present the most danger for women/girls? Could anything be done to make these safer?
- Without mentioning any individuals, which group or groups of women and girls feel the most insecure or the most exposed to risks of violence? Why?
- Since the emergency/displacement, are parents taking any new actions to protect their daughters?
- What actions are being taken to protect women and girls from violence? What more could be done to create a safer environment?

## Important Ideas for Discussion

- In highly sensitive environments, GBV teams can ask generally about any safety risks to the population and then probe for specific risks to women and girls if leaders appear open to discussion.
- Community leaders may have different ideas about risks than women and girls who are separately consulted. GBV teams can help to highlight risks from women and girls' perspectives and ask for leaders' help to address these risks.
- Community leaders may have ideas for protecting women and girls that would limit their rights (such as restricting women's access to certain services) or present new risks (such as encouraging girls to marry). Allow space for all ideas and facilitate a discussion around what is truly protective (considering multiple risks and interests).
- Share information on available GBV response services, as well as reporting options for SEA. Where community leaders are in new environments, GBV teams can also help to make them aware of general security service and reporting options.

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# Discussion Guide: Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Group discussions with community leaders about sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) can help to raise awareness of risks and rights related to SEA and explore options for better protecting communities. This discussion guide includes suggestions for arranging and leading any group discussion, followed by sample prompts and important ideas for discussing PSEA.

## Arranging Discussion Groups (ahead of discussion)

- Identify a comfortable and quiet locations for discussions.
- Limit groups to 15 participants
- Complete discussions within 1.5 hours.
- Ensure lead facilitator has experience and/or training in facilitation. The facilitator must be able to ask probing and clarifying questions, demonstrate comfort and patience when talking about sensitive issues, positively manage negative or harmful comments, and respond appropriately to disclosures of GBV.
- Have a referral list of available services in case of GBV disclosure.
- Where possible, arrange same-sex facilitators for all male or all female discussion groups.

## Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- Greet everyone, share introductions, pleasantries, and gratitude for any recent positive actions.
- Share general information about your organization and program (with any new participants).
- Present the purpose of the discussion.
- Agree to not share stories that identify individuals.

## Discussion (30-45 minutes)

- Introduce topic of discussion and begin with a question or other prompts.
- Be sure to review questions/prompts and adapt them for context.
- Avoid “teaching”, talking too much, or arguing. Use prompts to keep conversation going and remember the discussion is also a learning opportunity for you.
- Do not feel pressure to use all questions/prompts.

## Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Summarize key takeaways or ideas from discussion.
- Agree on any points for further discussion and make plans as appropriate.
- Thank all participants.

## Prompts/Questions

- Sample Script: We would like to talk to you about something very sensitive and concerning that can happen during emergencies, when people like me work to assist affected communities. Sometimes, some of those people aren't really committed to helping and instead take advantage of those most vulnerable, particularly women and girls. Aid workers might demand favors in exchange for work or assistance. Some aid workers have hurt and even raped children. We want to make sure you're aware of the community's rights to be free from this kind of abuse, and we would like to talk about some ways to protect the community.
- Do you think there are any services/ distribution practices that present significant risks to women and girls?
- Without mentioning any individuals, have you heard any suspicions of bad behavior by aid workers?
- If you heard that someone in your community may have been exploited or hurt by an aid worker, what do you think the best actions would be to protect them and others? Are you aware of services available to them? Do you know where this could be reported?
- Sample scenario (to adapt for context if using): *A widowed woman is alone in the community, the only caretaker for her two young children and her aging father. While in line to register for food distribution, an NGO worker said he will give her an extra kilo of wheat each month if she visits him in the evenings to "keep him company."*
  - Do you think such a situation happens in this community?
  - How would community members react if they knew what was happening to the woman?
  - Do you think the woman might seek help from anyone? Who?
  - How would you respond if the woman confided in you about this situation?

## Important Ideas for Discussion

- Assistance from humanitarian agencies is always free. Any requests for payment or exchange is wrong and can be reported.
- Someone who has been exploited by a humanitarian is never at fault. Every person has the right to assistance and the right to be safe from harm and abuse.
- Share information on local reporting options for suspicions of SEA, as well as information on how leaders might be more involved with SEA coordination or complaints mechanisms.
- Share information on available GBV/SEA response services.

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# Sample Tools: Protection Taskforce

This selection of tools may be useful for GBV teams considering support to, or establishment of, protection taskforces/ committees (names may vary) focused on mitigating risks of GBV. Sample tools include:

- Guidance on establishing a protection taskforce
- A sample Terms of Reference for a protection taskforce
- Sample action and monitoring plans for a protection taskforce
- A sample meeting plan and agenda for a protection taskforce

## Establishing a Protection Taskforce (PTF)

### Phase 1:

- Approach key community members and invite them to a preliminary meeting about the establishment of PTF
- Explain the purpose of the PTF, expected commitments and responsibilities (to be finalized by members), and that there will be no monetary remuneration
- Ask who is interested in joining PTF and if others should be invited

### Phase 2:

- Arrange an orientation meeting to agree on structure and terms of reference for the PTF
- Provide initial training in GBV core concepts, referrals, and risk mitigation
- Establish meeting schedule

### Phase 3:

- Carryout safety risks
- Identify risks to address and actions to mitigate risks
- Implement and monitor actions
- Share information and connect community members to services
- Meet regularly to review needs and plans

# Sample Terms of Reference (ToR): Protection Taskforce

## Purpose & Objectives

The Protection Task Force (PTF) is committed to the general safety and wellbeing of the community, with a particular focus on reducing risks of gender-based violence (GBV). The task force will dedicate attention to specific issues and challenges women and girls face in the community, partner with community leaders to create a safer environment for women and girls, and coordinate with GBV programs to strengthen community participation in GBV prevention and response efforts. The PTF will play key role identifying and addressing protection risks.

## Composition and Structure

The PTF will comprise community leaders and other committed members of the community who can provide diverse and effective representation, with at least 50% women and adolescent girls. This may include community leaders, religious leaders, members of women's associations, youth associations, associations of persons with disabilities, and elders.

PTF will include 10-15 members. In larger communities, PTF associations may be larger, with 10-15-member sub-groups responsible for designated blocks or areas of the community.

## Commitments and Responsibilities

Members of PTF commit to:

- Initial orientation
- Trainings on GBV core concepts, referral pathway, and risk mitigation
- Regular participation in meetings
- Participation in safety audits
- Contributions to address identified needs
- Respectful coordination with PTF and community members
- Upholding GBV guiding principles

## Members of PTF contribute to:

- Continuous discussion on protection of women and girls
- Identifying protection risks of women and girls
- Developing action plans for addressing protection risks
- Monitoring progress against action plans
- Sharing information on protection risks, reporting mechanisms, and services
- Linking vulnerable individuals to support services
- Reporting protection concerns, including suspicions of sexual exploitation and abuse
- Promoting solidarity and gender equality

# Sample Action Plan & Monitoring Template: Protection Taskforce

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PTF: \_\_\_\_\_

GBV Risk	Action	Location	Timeframe	Participants	Lead

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PTF: \_\_\_\_\_

Planned Action	Location	Lead	Status	Notes

# Sample Meeting Plan: Protection Taskforce

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitation: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

	Name	Age	Sex	Zone	Affiliation	Contact
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

## Meeting Agenda:

- Priority issues
- Review of action plan and achievements since last meeting
- Challenges
- Plans
- Updates on membership, partners, community services
- Any other business (AoB)

# Sample Communication Tree

To support community preparedness, GBV teams can work with community leaders to develop communication trees to reach women and girls, or vulnerable individuals, with emergency information. In the example below, 27 individuals or families are reached in just three steps of communication

