



How and why to meaningfully mainstream gender-based violence into other sectors

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Contents

- 1. Executive Summary**..... 3
- 2. Introduction** 6
- 3. What is GBV mainstreaming?**..... 7
- 4. Why mainstream GBV?** 8
- 5. How to mainstream GBV into policy and programmes**..... 14
 - 5.1. Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Analysis & programme design 16
 - 5.2. Engaging GBV expertise 16
 - 5.3. Implementation options 17
 - 5.4. Timeframe 19
 - 5.5. Partnerships..... 21
 - 5.6. Monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning 22
- 6. Emerging lessons on how to do effective GBV mainstreaming** 24
 - 6.1. Use language and framing that is relevant for the sector 24
 - 6.2 Identify GBV champions for internal advocacy 25
 - 6.3. Create clear requirements and incentives for GBV mainstreaming 25
 - 6.4. Partner with both GBV experts and sector specialists..... 26
 - 6.6. Use safeguarding and PSEAH commitments as entry points 26
 - 6.7. Adapt GBV mainstreaming strategies in restrictive contexts..... 27
- 7. Key resources and toolkits to support your journey**..... 28



1. Executive Summary

Gender-based violence (GBV)¹ is one of the most widespread human rights violations globally and constitutes a public health emergency. The UK Government has made tackling violence against women and girls² a national mission and is committed to halving violence in the UK within a decade. At the end of 2025, the Foreign Secretary declared VAWG an international emergency which requires an international response. She also launched All In: Global Leaders for Ending Gender-Based Violence, a new global initiative co-founded by the UK, Ford Foundation and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund. It brings together former heads of state, Nobel laureates, activists, and survivors to advocate for an end to VAWG, including Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (former President of Liberia), Denis Mukwege (2018 Nobel Peace Prize recipient), and Baroness Harman (UK Special Envoy for Women and Girls).³

Mainstreaming GBV strengthens the effectiveness and value for money of UK investments across sectors. Evidence shows that violence restricts women’s participation, disrupts service delivery, and undermines the effectiveness of investments across economic growth, climate change programming, national security, and humanitarian assistance.⁴ Mainstreaming GBV helps the UK to deliver on its stated commitments and achieve impact across sectors. This paper sets out why GBV mainstreaming matters for different sectors, and how FCDO teams can meaningfully mainstream GBV considerations into their policy, programming and diplomatic work.

What is GBV mainstreaming?⁵

By embedding GBV considerations into the design and delivery of all interventions, programmes can increase their impact and sustainability. GBV mainstreaming, when done well, is one way to make sure that preventing and responding to violence is considered in all programmes, policy and political and diplomatic engagements, across all sectors. GBV mainstreaming is a key part of gender mainstreaming and can complement efforts to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH).

GBV mainstreaming involves the systematic inclusion of GBV considerations and risk mitigation across all aspects of policy and programme. Responsibility is shared among all staff and stakeholders, alongside GBV specialists who should provide inputs and capacity strengthening. The involvement of specialist staff and partners, including women’s rights organisations (WROs), who bring GBV expertise, is essential. GBV mainstreaming when done effectively, has the potential to deliver co-benefits and improve sectoral outcomes.

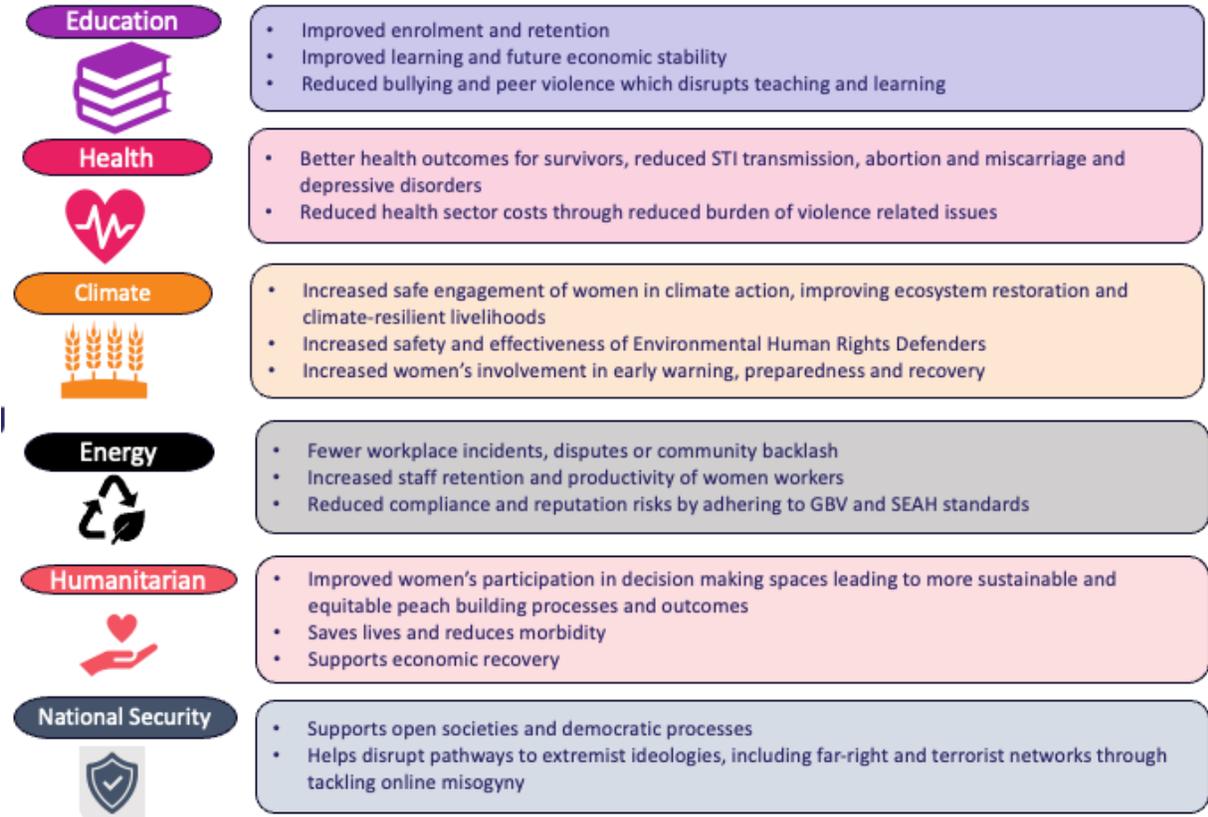
Why mainstream GBV?

Mainstreaming GBV strengthens the effectiveness and impact of UK investments in areas such as education, health, climate, livelihoods, energy, humanitarian response, and national security. For example, integrating GBV prevention into education leads to safer, more inclusive schools and improved learning outcomes; in health, it supports better outcomes for survivors and reduces



sector costs; in climate and environment, it enables women to safely participate in climate action, increasing the reach and impact of interventions; and in national security, tackling GBV (including technology-facilitated gender-based violence) helps safeguard democratic processes and disrupt pathways to extremism. Evidence shows that every €1 spent on preventing violence against women and children can yield up to €87 in economic returns, demonstrating the value for money and societal benefits of mainstreaming GBV. The diagram below and table in Section 4 further illustrates these benefits for a range of sectors.

Figure 1: Sectoral benefits of mainstreaming GBV



How to mainstream GBV?

Based on the evidence to date, there are a number of considerations for designing a programme that aims to mainstream GBV:

- Conduct a **Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) analysis** or gendered political economy analysis (GPEA) to understand the problem, the extent of GBV and its likely impacts on the intended sectoral outcomes, and the drivers and risks factors of violence.
- Secure the involvement of a Social Development Advisor or other Advisor or Policy Lead, with GBV expertise to support the **sectoral specialists** with the business case, programme

design and delivery. You may also want to identify partners with particular expertise, or engage with women’s rights organisations who can partner with sectoral specialists.

- Clarify the **timeframe and budget** for your project or programme, and particularly the GBV component, and identify what is feasible with that timeframe. A synthesis of appropriate interventions relating to timeframes is provided in section 5.
- Decide, on the basis of the GEDSI or GPEA analysis and your timeframe and budget, if your programme should address **GBV prevention, response or risk mitigation**.
- Develop a **theory of change and programme monitoring and learning framework** to identify key learning and evaluation questions, and indicators.
- Consider how to involve survivors, people with lived experience of violence and women’s rights organisations in the design and delivery of the programme.

Emerging lessons on how to do effective GBV mainstreaming include:

- Use language and framing that is relevant for the sector
- Identify GBV champions for internal advocacy
- Create clear requirements and incentives for GBV mainstreaming
- Partner with both GBV experts and sector specialists
- Use safeguarding and PSEAH commitments as entry points
- Adapt GBV mainstreaming strategies in restrictive contexts.

At a glance: Key points

- Mainstreaming GBV across FCDO’s diplomacy, development and security work is key to delivering on the UK’s stated commitments across a range of areas.
- It strengthens other sectoral outcomes, from health and education to climate, humanitarian and energy sector programmes.
- Involving a range of partners in delivering this work across sectors is important to ensure the right expertise is in place – this includes working with women’s rights organisations alongside other sectoral specialists.
- Effective framing is important to ensure GBV is understood as integral to achieving sectoral outcomes and not a separate or competing agenda. Using language that is relevant and familiar to other sectors is critical.



2. Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most widespread human rights violations and constitutes a public health emergency.⁶ Globally, it is estimated that one in three women will experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.⁷ GBV has profound costs for individuals and families, as well as significant consequences for societies as a whole. The social costs of violence strain public services and progress on women’s engagement in, leadership of, and benefit from wider social developments. Children exposed to violence are at increased risk of perpetuating cycles of abuse in the future and often have worse educational outcomes.

Mainstreaming GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response into programmes and systems can strengthen outcomes across diverse sectors, improving the effectiveness of sectoral initiatives. This approach is a key priority for the Foreign and Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the wider international community, reflecting a shared recognition that reducing violence is essential for achieving security, stability and economic growth; adapting to climate change; and contributing to the sustainable development goals.

Whilst there has been an increased focus on mainstreaming GBV into other sectoral initiatives across many countries, this is not a new approach, and stakeholders have been generating evidence on what works to mainstream GBV across sectors well before these recent ODA reductions.⁸ GBV mainstreaming is expected to become an increasingly central approach to addressing GBV, however, standalone targeted GBV programmes remain essential, as they provide the expertise, space for innovation, and opportunity to develop and test specific interventions that address drivers of violence, providing insights that ultimately will strengthen mainstreaming efforts to contribute to wider social development.



3. What is GBV mainstreaming?

GBV mainstreaming is a strategic approach to ensure that GBV prevention, risk mitigation and/or response measures are considered and addressed in other sectoral programmes with a view to accelerating, deepening or sustaining intended programme outcomes. It comes under the umbrella of gender mainstreaming and can complement interventions and approaches designed to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH). It is important to note that meaningful GBV prevention cannot be achieved without effective safeguarding measures and elements of Protection from SEAH (PSEAH). Integrating PSEAH into sectoral programmes ensures that efforts to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV are comprehensive, survivor-centred, and uphold the highest standards of safety and accountability for all participants. Effective PSEAH is foundational to creating environments where violence is less likely to occur and survivors are protected. Organisational PSEAH approaches, policies and requirements, in line with FCDO’s Common Approach to PSEAH (CAPSEAH),⁹ can also be a useful hook, or entry point, for mainstreaming community level GBV considerations into wider sectoral programmes, as we will see later in this report. Useful resources on PSEAH can be found in Section 7.

Figure 2: Gender mainstreaming, GBV and PSEAH



GBV mainstreaming can include **prevention** (addressing root causes and norms), **risk mitigation** (reducing immediate exposure to harm), and **response** (supporting victim-survivors), which can be delivered as standalone actions or combined within sectoral programmes. Further information is provided in Section 5 and Annex 3.

4. Why mainstream GBV?

“Addressing GBV can amplify positive outcomes for other sectors of development”¹⁰

Mainstreaming GBV across FCDO’s diplomacy, development and security work is key to delivering on the UK’s stated commitments across a range of areas, and, helps other sectors reach their full potential (see case study examples below and throughout the document). It is a key component of the UK’s foreign policy priorities, and the Foreign Secretary has confirmed the UK’s commitment to halving violence in a decade and ‘stepping up’ global action.¹¹ This includes: ensuring women’s voices are at the heart of peacebuilding efforts in Sudan, Syria, Myanmar and the DRC; working with civil society in Nigeria, France, Pakistan and beyond to access new technology to address non-consensual image abuse; and integrating GBV prevention into the education curriculum of 160 schools in Pakistan, through the What Works to Prevent Violence Initiative.

Case study 1: Integrating GBV into a nature-based water solutions programme in the MENA region

Al Murunah (‘flexibility’ in Arabic) is a 5-year programme funded by the UK Government, implemented by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The programme aims to enhance water security, support climate change adaptation, and contribute toward sustainable livelihoods in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.

The programme’s initial gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) analysis identified that women manage household level adaptations, and that GBV is a significant barrier to women’s participation and ability to implement new processes promoted by the programme. The analysis highlighted that improved gender dynamics in the target areas were critical for the successful implementation of the programme.

Al Murunah+ was then developed, which works with households, positioning gender equity not only as a social imperative but as a precursor to the success of the overall programme outcomes of climate adaptation, water security and sustainable livelihoods. The programme integrates a couples curriculum as a core prevention strategy, adapted from IRC’s EA\$E (Economic and Social Empowerment) model. The EA\$E approach engages couples in structured discussions to address gender norms, power dynamics and financial decision-making within households to reduce the risk of GBV. Alongside the couples curriculum, participating couples also receive an



asset transfer and business skills training, further linking the different elements of the programme. The findings of these pilots will be available in 2026.

Mainstreaming GBV offers good value for money and strengthens the overall impact of UK investments. Research shows that every €1 spent on preventing violence against women and children can yield up to €87 in economic returns.¹² GBV carries significant costs, including on health care, psychosocial support and access to justice, as well as long-term economic losses from reduced productivity, disrupted education and places a substantial stain on social and public sectors.¹³ Globally, GBV is estimated to cost at least \$1.5 trillion USD, with some countries spending up to 3.7% of GDP.¹⁴ Mainstreaming GBV into wider sectoral programmes helps ensure that UK investments deliver stronger sectoral impacts and are not undermined by the pervasive effects of violence (for example, see case study 9). It can also increase the efficient use of resources, as GBV components can be integrated into larger sectoral programmes or co-financed models, extending reach and impact.¹⁵

"From a small investment in this kind of work, you could yield greater benefits and have a more efficient project – prevention is much more efficient and cost effective than handling cases." (stakeholder interview – donor)

Identifying and mitigating GBV risks is important to ensure that programme activities do not unintentionally expose women and girls to harm, thereby upholding ethical standards and 'do no harm' principles.^{16,17} At the same time, addressing GBV enhances the credibility and reputation of implementing agencies, demonstrating commitment to safeguarding (PSEAH), accountability, and human rights.¹⁸

Evidence shows that violence restricts women’s participation, disrupts service delivery, and undermines the effectiveness of investments across economic growth, climate change, and humanitarian assistance, amongst other areas.¹⁹ The table below sets out some of the benefits to mainstreaming GBV into different sectors.

"Integrating prevention and responses to GBV in diverse development projects and programming could accelerate progress on multiple development challenges faced across the globe" (UNDP, 2023)²⁰



Table 2: Summary of benefits of GBV mainstreaming across sectors

The benefits for other sectors		
Sector	How addressing GBV strengthens sectoral outcomes	Case studies
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer, more inclusive schools improve enrolment and retention, especially for girls, by removing a key barrier to attendance and progression.²¹ For example, in Ethiopia, over 40% of parents said that school violence discourages them from sending daughters to school.²² • Reducing children’s exposure to violence improves learning and future economic stability.²³ In Rwanda, a study found that student safety is associated with improved learning outcomes, with students who feel unsafe at school performing 36% lower in maths tests.²⁴ • Well-designed and implemented school-based interventions, including age-appropriate curricula on gender equality, respect and non-violence, can reduce bullying and peer violence that disrupt teaching and learning.²⁵ 	Mainstreaming comprehensive sexual education into Madagascar’s education system ^{26,27} (case study 2: Projet Jeune Leader , p13)
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening health sector responses to GBV supports better health outcomes for survivors, including the risk of sexually transmitted infections by at least 104%, maternal abortion and miscarriage by 101% and major depressive disorder by 50%.²⁸ • Addressing GBV can reduce health-sector costs. In England and Wales, domestic abuse costs health services an estimated £2.3 billion per year.²⁹ Although cost data is not available from low and middle-income countries, the proportional burden on more constrained health budgets is likely substantial. 	Engaging men on maternal and child health, and preventing GBV through community health workers, Rwanda ³⁰ (case study 3: RWAMREC , p14)
Climate and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing GBV helps women to safely engage in climate action, such as ecosystem restoration and climate-resilient livelihoods, increasing the reach and impact of climate interventions.³¹ • Increases the safety and effectiveness of Environmental Human Rights Defenders, who face aggravated threats of violence due to their gender and other 	Addressing GBV, economic violence through a couples curriculum alongside



	<p>intersectional vulnerabilities, helping sustain advocacy on conservation and climate change.³²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes GBV-related barriers to women’s leadership in climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction, strengthening early warning, preparedness and recovery in climate-vulnerable communities.³³ 	<p>interventions to promote nature-based water solutions, in the MENA region. (case study 1: Al Murunah +, p.8)</p>
Livelihoods and economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBV, particularly intimate partner violence, directly reduces women’s ability to work, earn income, and participate safely in value chains.³⁴ • Integrating GBV prevention into livelihoods programmes and cash-plus programmes have shown increases in women’s earnings, savings, access to work and food security, as well as being effective ways to rebuild household economies in protracted crisis.³⁵ • Given the buy-in that livelihoods programmes often enjoy at household and community level, they provide an effective entry point for GBV prevention that can generate co-benefits across both sectors. 	<p>Addressing GBV prevention alongside building local resilience among vulnerable farming communities to boost production, improve food and nutrition security, and improve household dynamics, and shared decision-making. (case study 6: BLRS, Syria, p21)</p>
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy projects that assess and manage GBV and SEAH risks are less likely to face workplace incidents, disputes, or community backlash, which can be costly and delay construction and operations.³⁶ • Addressing GBV increases staff retention and productivity of women workers, lowering recruitment and oversight costs for energy projects.³⁷ • Managing GBV and SEAH risks helps energy projects meet international standards and reduce compliance and reputational risks. In turn this reduces the likelihood of financing delays or penalties.³⁸ 	<p>Early interventions by renewable energy sector to mitigate and respond to GBV. (case study 4: Solar Plant, Malawi, p.16)</p>
Humanitarian /conflict affected settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing GBV in conflict and post-conflict settings improves women’s participation in decision making spaces, leading to more equitable and sustainable outcomes, ultimately increasing confidence in peace building 	<p>Combining cash assistance with GBV case management to support economic and social</p>



	<p>processes.³⁹⁴⁰ Analysis of 182 peace agreements shows that women’s participation in its creation is associated with a 35% higher likelihood that it will last at least 15 years.⁴¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing, mitigating and addressing GBV risks is a core part of the obligations and responsibilities of humanitarian actors,⁴² and addressing the factors driving GBV in emergencies is critical to saving lives.⁴³ GBV is considered lifesaving as the physical and emotional impacts can result in death, and can be severe and long-lasting. Complications from unwanted pregnancies, especially among adolescents and young girls, are one of the leading causes of death for girls 15-19 years old in the Global South.⁴⁴ • Strengthening resilience, health and well-being of survivors of violence can help them rebuild their lives and livelihoods, reducing long-term dependence on humanitarian assistance and supporting economic recovery.⁴⁵ 	<p>empowerment among survivors and women and girls at risk of violence (case study 8: UNFPA, p.23)</p>
<p>National security and democracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence against women in politics threatens individual safety and undermines democratic processes.⁴⁶ • GBV is closely linked to societal instability and is a threat to democracy. • Addressing GBV against women participating in political processes as elected representatives, activities, leaders or voters is critical to support open societies and democratic processes.⁴⁷ • Addressing online, technology-facilitated GBV (TFGBV), including non-consensual image abuse, or deep fakes is essential to support democratic participation and safe engagement of women and other structurally marginalised or repressed groups in these processes.⁴⁸ • Tackling online misogyny helps disrupt on-ramps to extremist ideologies, including far-right and terrorist networks.⁴⁹ 	<p>Integrated Security Fund is working on GBV, and in particular TFGBV as part of overall national security and threat picture and not just from a women’s rights perspective (p.24).</p>



Case Study 2: Mainstreaming comprehensive sexual education into Madagascar's education system, to improve learning outcomes and retention

Through the UK-funded What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) programme, Projet Jeune Leader is working with Madagascar's Ministry of Education to mainstream comprehensive sexual education (CSE) into the education system. CSE is positioned 'at the intersection of health, education and gender equality', providing an inherently integrated approach to addressing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people and building skills for healthy relationships. This includes addressing gender roles, norms and power dynamics – key elements for effective GBV prevention programming. Key strategies include:

- Pre-service teacher training to build capacity and motivation among new educators.
- Collaborating with education authorities and school leaders to align the project with their priorities for improved student behaviour, increased parental engagement at school and reduction in student pregnancies, supporting greater scale and long-term sustainability.
- Strengthening community support for in-school CSE while addressing misconceptions and misunderstandings that hinder GBV prevention and response.

Stakeholders reported the following 'multi-faceted impacts' of the CSE approach and their impact on educational outcomes for students overall:

- Improvement in overall student behaviour.
- Increased student self-confidence, resulting in higher attendance and motivation to learn.
- Decrease in student pregnancies, often linked to sexual violence by teachers, or older men, and a factor in early school dropout.

Case Study 3: Engaging men on maternal and child health, and preventing GBV through community health workers, Rwanda

The Rwanda Men’s Resource Centre (RWAMREC) works with men as allies to promote gender equality, engaging with fathers alongside their partners to challenge unequal gender norms and power dynamics. Building on formative research conducted on the drivers of GBV in 2013 with the Rwanda Biomedical Centre, RWAMREC developed a pilot programme to address GBV prevention using a curriculum adapted from Equimundo’s ‘Program P’ delivered through Community Health Workers.

The Rwandan Ministry of Health was initially sceptical of the significance of gender equality on health outcomes. To address this, RWAMREC presented compelling results from formative research and randomised control trials, and conducted training, dialogues and meetings with ministers to illustrate the importance of GBV prevention for maternal and child health outcomes. A rigorous multi-site randomised control trial reported a number of improvements against the following outcomes, which were also followed up 6 years after the end of implementation:

- Past year physical, sexual, economic and emotional abuse
- Incidence of child punishment
- Depressive symptoms
- Alcohol use
- Maternal health seeking
- Father engagement
- Division of household labour and decision making

The Rwandan government showed strong interest in the programme’s results, especially the increases in men’s participation in maternal and child health and efforts to prevent GBV, and moved to support the scale up of the initiative through existing government structures. The Government of Rwanda led the selection of scale-up locations, based on identified gaps in child stunting, malnutrition and GBV, all of which were government priorities. They have been providing in-kind support for training, and monitoring and evaluation, further strengthening buy-in and engagement in the programme.

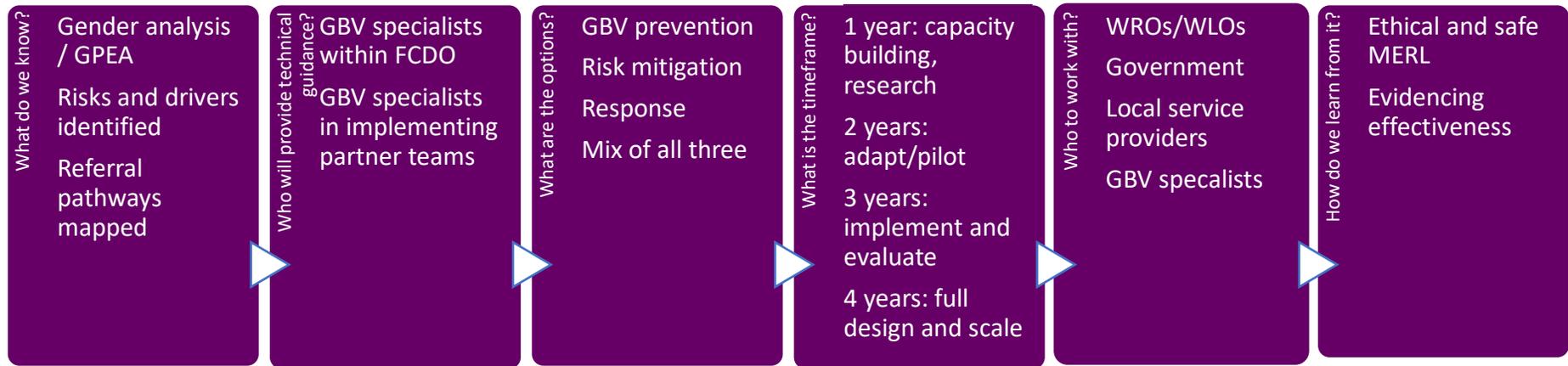
[Doyle, et al (2023) and Doyle et al (2018)]

5. How to mainstream GBV into policy and programmes

For practitioners new to GBV programming, the idea of mainstreaming GBV into their work may feel complex or unfamiliar. The GBV Mainstreaming Process Map below is designed to support non-GBV specialists by providing clear, structured guidance on the key steps to take. A more detailed Process Flow Chart is provided in Annex 3.



GBV Mainstreaming Process Map



5.1. Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Analysis & programme design

A common theme emerging in the literature and among stakeholders interviewed is the importance of conducting a Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) analysis, gendered political economic analysis (GPEA) or a threat analysis, to understand the extent to which GBV is likely to impact on the overall programme's intended impact, as demonstrated in the AI Murunah programme (case study 1 above). The analysis should also identify drivers of violence, and enable the design of appropriate interventions to address the identified drivers, either through a prevention intervention or risk mitigation. A GPEA will also support programme teams to have a clearer understanding of the challenges in service delivery for victim-survivors of violence, such that response interventions can be designed to be relevant and cost-effective (e.g. as part of the Tithetse Nkhanza programme in Malawi⁵⁰). A GEDSI analysis also provides programme teams with the information needed to develop GBV outcomes, which can be integrated into programme results frameworks and theories of change.

5.2. Engaging GBV expertise

Embedding GBV specialists at all levels of decision-making within programmes in which GBV is mainstreamed, including at the programme and at the donor level, is essential for effective design and execution. Technical GBV specialism, either through engaging an internal SDA with GBV expertise, creating full-time posts or engaging long-term technical assistance, is required to inform decision making throughout the programme cycle, and particularly through analysis, business case design, procurement, delivery, monitoring and evaluation processes.

When GBV specialists have been embedded in programme delivery teams, they have needed to engage with counterparts at the donor level and across consortia, such that an informed view of risks, approaches and processes can be drawn. Examples of GBV mainstreaming initiatives, which have embedded GBV specialists in teams and have engaged technical assistance at all levels include the FCDO-funded AI Murunah+ programme in the MENA region, and the Building Local Resilience in Syria (BLRS) project. Engaging local GBV specialists can also help sectors to respond to reports of violence and develop appropriate measures to create safer communities and workplaces (see case study 4 below).

Case Study 4: Engaging local gender expertise for effective GBV intervention⁵¹

An allegation of GBV during the construction of the Salima Solar Plant in Malawi led the developer, JCM Power, to commission a GBV assessment with external support. Following the assessment, a gender action plan was developed which included a recommendation to hire a local gender inclusion specialist. A comprehensive gender action plan was developed, to support prevention, response and risk mitigation measures, including providing survivor-centred support services. This early intervention and mainstreaming of GBV considerations have helped create a safer working environment for everyone.

5.3. Implementation options

Various GBV mainstreaming options are available for prevention, risk mitigation, and response (see Annex 2). In practice, effective GBV mainstreaming often involves a combination of these. For example, prevention typically involves sensitive discussions about violence and so cannot be delivered safely without measures that reduce immediate risks and ensure survivors can access support.

5.3.1. GBV prevention

GBV prevention interventions are those that **address the root causes of violence**, such as social norms that legitimise men’s power over women and normalise violence. Thanks to substantive investment in the GBV field, led globally by FCDO, there is now a broad range of evidence-based approaches that have proven effectiveness as addressing key drivers of violence, as well as established elements of design and implementation that are critical for success.

Quick hints and tips relating to prevention interventions

- Evidence suggests that ‘GBV awareness raising’ alone *does not* prevent violence
- One-off training sessions, which focus on knowledge and skills alone, are not effective at addressing the root causes of violence, or poor service delivery for victim-survivors
- The gender-equitable values and non-violent behaviour of staff and volunteers who deliver GBV prevention interventions is a critical success factor. Staff and volunteers should be selected on this basis, over their experience and qualifications
- Consider the intensity, duration and frequency of interactions with programme participants, as reduction in violent behaviour requires time for reflection and experiential learning.

Prevention interventions with proven effectiveness

- Combined women’s economic empowerment and social empowerment interventions are effective in reducing women’s experience of intimate partner violence (IPV) when well designed and implemented. Examples include UK aid-funded *Zindagi Shoista* in Tajikistan, and *Maisha*, a microfinance and gender transformative intervention for women in Tanzania.
- There is good evidence that couples’ interventions are an effective approach for reducing women’s experience of IPV and can be delivered safely. Examples of interventions include *Indashyikirwa*, a couples’ interventions combined with community activism in Rwanda and *Bandebereho*, a series of small group sessions with expectant/current fathers and their partners, also in Rwanda.
- There is good evidence that interventions using community activism to change gender attitudes and social norms can be effective if they are well-designed and implemented. Examples of interventions include *SASA!*, a community mobilisation intervention which originated in Uganda, and *Transforming Masculinities* in DRC.

Source: ‘A rigorous global evidence review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls’⁵²



Prevention interventions can be designed and delivered with individuals, couples, families and at the community level (including with schools and workplaces). The most cost-effective prevention interventions are typically those that use the same programme entry points as the overall initiative. For example, the USAID-funded Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA) intervention sought to improve early grade reading outcomes and primary grade retention in 3,500 schools in Uganda. Integrating GBV prevention into the programme design, it engaged learners, educators and community members in the target schools and catchment communities in shared learning and dialogue to address GBV.⁵³ The content of the intervention should be designed to address the root causes of violence identified through an initial GEDSI analysis or GPEA.

5.3.2. GBV risk mitigation

GBV risk mitigation refers to initiatives that reduce the likelihood or impact of GBV occurring in connection with an intervention.⁵⁴ It shares many processes with PSEAH/safeguarding efforts aimed at reducing the risk of harm to participants resulting from programme activities and external context.

A programme should consult with women, girls and other groups, who are at risk of violence in a target area to identify GBV risks and then design activities in a way that reduces these risks. For example, in efforts to address GBV and harassment in the agribusiness sector, the International Finance Corporation supported Bioparques de Occidente, a tomato producer in Mexico, to provide free, safe transportation to the farms for workers who live in surrounding communities and has employed security guards at work locations and accommodation sites to secure worker safety.⁵⁵

Examples of risk mitigation measures include:

- Meetings should take place in safe and safely accessible locations, during daylight hours, and in accordance with other conditions that are identified as risk reducing
- Field guides should restrict individual family members from entering homes on their own
- Recruit gender-balanced teams, who hold gender-equitable values and take a zero-tolerance approach to violence, to deliver activities

Source: *How-to: A practitioner-friendly guide on how to integrate GBV risk mitigation into program design & implementation*.⁵⁶

GBV risk mitigation alone, as part of a GBV mainstreaming approach, may not lead to sustainable outcomes, as risks may re-emerge once a programme is no longer in place to address them. For example, if an agricultural programme mitigates GBV risks by requiring farmers to make joint decisions with their spouses about income use, but does not address the underlying gender-inequitable norms that reinforce male dominance over financial decision-making, families are likely to revert to inequitable practices once the programme ends. Such



inequitable decision-making is a known risk factor for GBV.⁵⁷ However, risk mitigation efforts can have longer-term outcomes, as shown in case study 5 from Mexico.

Case Study 5: Supporting women’s safety and participation in climate-affected ecotourism in Mexico

In Mexico, Espacio de Encuentro de las Culturas Originarias (EECO), a WRO and environmental advocacy organisation worked in partnership with World Wildlife Fund to support the resilience and participation of women in the ecotourism sector, which has increasingly been affected by climate change. Women working in the sector were subjected to intimate partner violence, abuse and harassment in the workplace by male colleagues and male tourists, alongside increasing risks of violence linked to travel to more remote and isolated areas to find animals sought by tourists. By supporting women workers to conduct GBV risk assessments and develop personal security plans, challenging harmful social norms and collaborating with authorities, EECO anticipates that addressing GBV will enable more women to continue to participate in the workforce, deepening the impact of work to reduce the environmental impact of the tourism industry.⁵⁸

5.3.3. GBV response

GBV response interventions aim to provide victim-survivors with survivor-centred, timely, high-quality, and protective support that addresses their immediate needs and risks, offers longer-term assistance and referrals, and better enables them to pursue justice as they define it.

Strengthening GBV response within sector programmes can involve improving access to existing support services or creating new, safe ways for survivors to seek help.⁵⁹ For example, the RE-INVENT security and justice programme in Kenya designed a new mobile app to improve the reporting and follow-up of GBV cases, and the ACCELERATE economic programme in Ethiopia established call centres to provide support to survivors of GBV and SEAH in industrial parks.⁶⁰ It can also involve partnering with WROs to offer accompaniment and financial support to victim-survivors as they navigate GBV referral pathways. This approach has demonstrated effectiveness through the FCDO-funded Survivor Support Fund (SSF) initiative in Malawi,⁶¹ although it requires strong technical assistance and protection mechanisms for participating WROs.

A core component of all GBV mainstreaming initiatives is the mapping of GBV referral pathways and ensuring that programme staff are prepared to make safe, appropriate, and survivor-centred referrals whenever a victim-survivor seeks help. A Do No Harm approach would ensure that survivors are not referred to services that may cause further harm and/or re-traumatisation.

5.4. Timeframe

While evidence shows that violence is preventable through the design and delivery of effective interventions, matching a programme’s aspirations with available timeframes is essential to avoid ineffectual use of funds and provoking backlash from perpetrators and wider community



members.⁶² This is particularly important when mainstreaming GBV into other sectors, where programmes may have shorter cycles or other priorities, making it vital to ensure that GBV components are safe and proportionate to the time and resources available.

The Prevention Collaborative and UN Women have provided a useful synthesis of appropriate interventions relating to timeframes, which is summarised in the table below.⁶³

Timeframe	Intervention	This may be appropriate when...
Funding to be used within 1 year	Capacity strengthening of staff on GBV prevention programming	A programme anticipates additional funding over a longer timeframe to deliver GBV prevention programming
	Formative research to inform future programming or policy priorities	
	Translation of globally available resources and materials into appropriate languages	
Funding to be used within 2 years	Adapt and pilot a successful intervention to a different context. Adaptation and piloting typically requires at least 12 months.	There is potential that a successful intervention could work in a different context, and willingness to consult with the programme originators to ensure fidelity to the model.
	Work with national or decentralised governments and civil society to develop a prevention strategy	There is sufficient time for robust reflection, analysis and co-design with a range of stakeholders, as well as an implementation budget.
Funding to be used in 3-4 years	Optimise, implement and evaluate an evidence-based mainstreamed prevention intervention	An existing programme has strong results, and the staff, budget and time are available to optimise the intervention based on learning
Funding to be used over 5 or more years	Design, pilot, implement and evaluate a prevention and response programme	The aim is to achieve greater impact by integrating a new intervention, or set of interventions, within the wider programme objectives
	Scale up a successful prevention intervention	There is funding to deliver an existing programme in more communities, in line with the overall programme reach, whilst remaining faithful to the original design and implementation quality



5.5. Partnerships

In line with the wider localisation agenda, mainstreamed GBV programming, diplomacy and policy work should always be done in partnership with key local organisations, particularly WROs, women-led organisations (WLOs), and feminist organisations, who are recognised as a key factor in driving positive change to end GBV.⁶⁴ WROs and WLOs are often pivotal in providing response support to survivors who report or seek help, and can be supported to deliver prevention interventions within their communities. WROs and WLOs may also be recognised as key civil society leaders, who can be supported to engage in influencing and government engagement from national to decentralised levels.

As noted above, WROs and WLOs should be identified on the basis of their organisational culture, staff values and non-violent behaviour, and should be provided technical support to assist with intervention fidelity and quality assurance.

Partnership with key government stakeholders is key to effective GBV mainstreaming that contributes toward co-benefits across sectors. Experience shows that involving sectoral government counterparts throughout the mainstreaming process strengthens programme impact and sustainability.⁶⁵ It is important to carefully consider which level of government is best positioned to advance the objectives of GBV mainstreaming in programming, policy, and diplomacy efforts. Whilst national level government may have mandate to adopt and operationalise national policy and legislation, decentralised levels of government may be better placed to engage on specific initiatives within their constituency, and may have influence over national processes, which could otherwise be inaccessible or opaque.⁶⁶ A GPEA would be a useful tool to determine which level of government to target, particularly in FCAS contexts, or contexts in which GBV may be a sensitive topic.

Case Study 6: Mainstreaming GBV in Livelihoods Programming in Syria

The Building Local Resilience in Syria (BLRS) programme, a humanitarian food security and livelihoods initiative, aims to support vulnerable farming communities to increase production, become resilient to climate shocks and improve food and nutrition security.⁶⁷ The programme is successfully working with key ministries and has received approval to mainstream GBV within programme delivery. The intervention’s focus on GBV has received no pushback at the political level following the regime change, rather key focal points within government have advised on terminology and language to increase the programme’s acceptability and uptake. By approaching key ministries alongside economic experts to explain that mainstreaming GBV prevention will contribute toward the programme’s goals of empowering women and youth to establish innovative, profitable, and entrepreneurial agri-businesses, and increasing equitable access to irrigation water, the government officials requested support to build their technical understanding of GBV, such that they were better able to integrate GBV considerations into their wider work.



Partnership with key government stakeholders is also a key element of taking programmes to scale, and achieving lasting, system-wide change. Effective collaboration can drive policy, political, legal, regulatory, and budgetary reforms needed for national or subnational institutionalisation.⁶⁸ Diplomatic engagement across sectors, such as the Women in Leadership Reception hosted by the British High Commission in Malawi, can play a pivotal role in supporting the broader mainstreaming of GBV.

Case Study 7: Using diplomatic engagement to support GBV mainstreaming in Malawi

In November 2025, the British High Commission (BHC) in Malawi hosted a Women in Leadership Reception at the High Commissioner’s Residence, bringing together female leaders from Parliament, the private sector, independent statutory bodies, civil society, UN agencies, and other key stakeholders in the ODA space. The event celebrated women’s leadership while also fostering relationships between BHC staff and influential partners across a broad spectrum of society, contributing to the High Commission’s diplomacy and policy work. It further showcased *Pamodzi Kuthetsa Nkhanza (PKN)*, a GBV prevention and response programme funded under FCDO’s What Works 2 initiative, which operates at both national and district levels, and gave space to the Director of PKN to speak more broadly about her work in GBV and the continuing issues that require policy level attention.

It is important to anticipate challenges that may arise during periods of political change or growing rollback on gender equality, and to cultivate champions across political parties, government departments and within the civil service, who can help maintain sustained support for GBV activities.⁶⁹

5.6. Monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning

Generating knowledge, learning and evidence is vital to ending GBV, and contributing toward understanding of the co-benefits with other sectoral programmes. It is important to always include GBV indicators in monitoring frameworks. Despite progress, more robust evidence of the co-benefits of GBV mainstreaming into sectoral programmes is needed. To address this, efforts to mainstream GBV prevention and risk mitigation should be accompanied by monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) processes that seek to determine the resulting change in GBV prevalence, and the extent to which any change in violence rates contributes toward the overall programme impact. Some of these changes are indirect and highly personal and sensitive, for example improved mental health, relationship dynamics and experiences of GBV, so ensuring safe and ethical data collection can be a challenge in programmes that are not familiar with these protocols. MERL activities relating to GBV programming, including mainstreamed initiatives, are themselves high-risk processes, for which consideration of ethics and safeguarding procedures is essential. Depending on the measures agreed upon for the mainstreamed initiative, data collection, analysis and dissemination processes can, if not undertaken in accordance with best practice, lead to backlash and trigger violence. Guidance



and oversight by experienced GBV MERL specialists are vital to minimise risks where primary data relating to victim-survivor experiences of violence is being gathered.

Many donors and partners are making efforts to build the evidence base. For example, FCDO is funding a quasi-experimental evaluation of the AI Murunah+ programme in MENA region, and hopes to be able to demonstrate changes in both experiences of GBV as well as contribution of the GBV prevention component to improved livelihoods and resilience of participating couples and communities. One big challenge noted is the timescales involved, as due to implementation delays and funding cycles, the time between baseline and endline may not be long enough to demonstrate substantial impact in these areas.

Case study 8: Combining cash assistance with GBV case management approaches in humanitarian settings⁷⁰

UNFPA has been integrating cash assistance interventions for survivors of violence, or women and girls at risk of GBV into existing case management services in humanitarian contexts. A quasi-experimental pre-post design was developed to evaluate these interventions in Jordan, Colombia and Indonesia. While cash assistance is often used in humanitarian settings, there has been little rigorous evidence of its effectiveness for GBV prevention and response. The findings from this study showed that cash assistance provided to women and girls in these settings can improve their safety and mental health. Recurrent cash assistance, rather than one-off payments, demonstrated greater impact on household relationships and mental health for some women. Longer-term access to cash assistance is likely to have more protective outcomes, but the authors conclude that more research is needed to understand whether sustained support would lead to more sustainable protection and recovery outcomes.

Key considerations for MERL in mainstreamed GBV interventions include:

- **Do not confuse administrative data with estimates of violence prevalence.** Administrative data refers to data managed by institutions that receive reports of individual cases of violence. Given the chronic under-reporting of violence by survivors (due to huge social and financial barriers, and lack of protection from backlash), the number of reported cases is not an accepted indicator of the prevalence of violence in a population.⁷¹
- **Balance risk with potential benefits of gathering data on GBV programming, including integrated initiatives.** Discussing GBV with those affected by violence risks further traumatisation and exposing survivors to further violence. New primary data should only be gathered where it is strictly necessary to monitor intervention fidelity and can benefit programme improvement, adaptations and evaluation.⁷²
- **Prioritise data protection procedures, informed and fully comprehended consent and assent, and confidentiality** to keep staff and participants involved in monitoring mainstreamed GBV interventions safe.⁷³ Teams should also be aware of mandatory



reporting requirements in the local area, and should be supported to make informed decisions about mandatory reporting which balance the best interests of the victim-survivor and wider risks of continuing abuse should reports not be made.

- **Equip monitoring teams to make survivor-centred referrals to good quality services** for victim-survivors whose experiences become known through MERL activities.
- **Provide access to good quality, trauma-informed staff well-being initiatives** for MERL and wider programme delivery teams to reduce the likelihood and severity of experiencing vicarious trauma, or re-triggering past traumas.
- **Choose appropriate evaluation methods.** A range of evaluative methodologies exist to determine changes in GBV prevalence and changes in victim-survivor experiences, with randomised control trials (RCTs) typically considered the ‘gold standard’ of evidence of effectiveness. RCTs, however, are highly technical, expensive, and require significant consideration of ethics and safeguarding in their design. GBV MERL specialists can advise on the most appropriate evaluation framework for a mainstreamed GBV intervention.

6. Emerging lessons on how to do effective GBV mainstreaming

6.1. Use language and framing that is relevant for the sector

Language and strategic framing play a vital role in building stakeholder commitment to mainstreaming GBV into sectoral programmes. Presenting GBV as directly linked to sectoral outcomes helps stakeholders see it as integral to the effectiveness of achieving their sector-specific goals, and generates stronger engagement and relevance.

Communicating this alignment in compelling, and accessible ways so that GBV mainstreaming is not perceived as yet another external obligation or additional burden is critical. While few stakeholders are likely to disagree with the importance of addressing GBV, it may still be viewed as another competing ‘priority’ within a landscape of limited resources. Effective framing can therefore help reposition GBV as integral to achieving sectoral results rather than as a separate or competing agenda. In some cases it may be beneficial to present this as a complementary to PSEAH efforts, as mentioned above, framing this as a component of wider safeguarding efforts, or supporting efforts towards greater gender equality within the programme.

The Integrated Security Fund (ISF) framed the work on technology facilitated GBV as a threat to democracy and national security, rather than a women’s rights issue. They have noted a lot less resistance from people working in this area who now consider this an important part of the threat issue, and not just an issue of women’s right. (stakeholder interview)



6.2 Identify GBV champions for internal advocacy

An effective approach is to identify a GBV champion within the sector targeted for GBV mainstreaming, someone who can serve as an internal advocate and connect GBV technical expertise with sectoral priorities. Their role is to help ensure that GBV is viewed not as an external requirement, but as an integral part of delivering effective and sustainable programming. Because they operate from within the sector, they bring credibility and influence, increasing the likelihood that GBV considerations will be prioritised, resourced and embedded into ongoing work. This expert may also be embedded with in a particular government department to ensure the issue remains a high priority.

“(B)ecause she saw value in what we were trying to do, she was able to help us convince the government.”
The Asian Development Bank (ADB) was working on a road infrastructure project in Nepal. The SEA risk assessment identified risks of sex trafficking and GBV. A conversation with the civil engineer, whose responsibility it was to build the road, convinced her of the importance of addressing these risks and the need to get government buy-in.

6.3. Create clear requirements and incentives for GBV mainstreaming

“You might get the odd one here and there who don’t understand why this is relevant to what they are doing, but because we’ve had these rules in place they have to engage with us and we can normally win them over.” (FCDO interview)

Designing projects or programmes which make explicit GBV mainstreaming requirements or components helps ensure that prevention, response and risk mitigation are integrated from the earliest stages of programme design.

ISF, previously the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF), introduced a minimum requirement for all projects to include a gender mainstreaming objective in their programmes. Having this rule as part of the fund helped push the issue of gender mainstreaming up the agenda. At least one project in each portfolio must be wholly devoted to transformation change, often related to GBV.

Strong incentives can be created through process, and do not necessarily require additional funds. For example, recognising and sharing examples of good GBV mainstreaming internally can reinforce expectations. Donors can also use procurement and contracting levers to incentivise GBV mainstreaming by including GBV expectations in Terms of Reference and contracts, such as risk mitigation, staff conduct, and safe reporting pathways. GBV considerations could be embedding into business cases, creating incentives for intentional action throughout implementation.

When such requirements are in place, implementing partners are more likely to allocate resources, prioritise training, and embed monitoring mechanisms, leading to more consistent



and sustainable mainstreaming of GBV considerations. This approach highlighted the influence of incentives and accountability in driving sectoral ownership and systematic mainstreaming.

6.4. Partner with both GBV experts and sector specialists

A key aspect of mainstreaming GBV within sector programmes is to find the right partners, both partners with expertise in GBV and the specific sector. They may not have worked together before and you may not know who these partners are. Identifying new partners is an important aspect of this work and recognising the expertise that each party brings to the table. Spending time establishing equitable partnership principles and ways of working can strengthen relationships, trust and quality of deliverables.⁷⁴

The AI Murunah+ project featured above set out to involve a range of partners in the delivery of the GBV prevention component, working with the core implementation partners who are water management specialists and bringing in women’s rights organisations to support the GBV prevention intervention alongside technical assistance from What Works to Prevent Violence.

6.6. Use safeguarding and PSEAH commitments as entry points

Not addressing GBV risks within sectoral programmes can result in real harm to women and girls and undermine programme outcomes. Examples shared by stakeholders, such as from a livelihoods programme in Uganda, show that interventions which overlook GBV risks can expose women to violence and lead to unintended harms.

Case study 9: Impacts of GBV on climate programming

In Uganda, a livelihoods programme which sought to transition women away from environmentally harmful wetland agriculture provided them poultry and cattle for alternative livelihoods in a new location. Doing so, without considering the contextual drivers of GBV, exposed women to violence perpetrated both by male landowners who owned the land needed for their new livelihood and by their husbands, some of whom stole their cattle. Women then decided to return to the wetlands, where they felt safer. This reduced the resilience of the community and meant that the programme’s aims of reducing environmental degradation were not achieved. Had the programme better identified and addressed GBV it would have been more likely to achieve its environmental aims.⁷⁵

For those unfamiliar with GBV, the distinction between GBV and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) may be confusing. While GBV may be an unfamiliar concept to non-GBV specialists, most are aware of their responsibilities around protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. Stakeholders suggested that organisational policies on protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH) can be a useful policy hook and entry point to discuss wider issues around GBV prevention mainstreaming.



However, there is a need to remain cautious around this, and while there is some overlap in the root causes of GBV and SEAH, there are distinct elements to addressing these issues, and the two should not be conflated. Both can be addressed as part of gender mainstreaming approach, but clear communication is needed to ensure the unique aspects of each are recognised and appropriately managed.

6.7. Adapt GBV mainstreaming strategies in restrictive contexts

In fragile and conflicted affected states (FCAS), where de facto authorities do not approve of initiatives that overtly address gender inequality or women’s rights, mainstreaming GBV programming into more accepted sectoral programmes such as health and education, has enabled vulnerable women and girls to be reached with services and support. Adapting language to focus on family well-being, rather than women’s rights, for example, and drawing on positive cultural principles that are in alignment with GBV prevention, such as dignity and respect, are examples provided by respondents as approaches to operating in FCAS settings safely.

“Food security and livelihoods programmes can include sessions with men on supporting women’s rights and preventing violence, but we just don’t call it that.” (Stakeholder interview)

Another key lesson identified is working to ensure GBV entry points are aligned to the core mandates of the ministry under which the sectoral programme falls. In the example provided by the AI Murunah project, as long as they stayed close to their core mandate of ‘water security for all’, and could articulate how addressing family dynamics, and improving communication and respect among married couples, to prevent GBV, could improve water security and increase community ownership and management of water resources they have not faced any major push back from Ministries.



7. Key resources and toolkits to support your journey

GEDSI Analyses

SDDirect and Christian Aid (2021) [Gender Inclusion Power and Politics Analysis Toolkit](#)

Global Innovation Fund (N.D) [Gender Toolkit](#).

GBV Prevention

UN Women (2020) [RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women – Implementation package](#).

What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls: Impact at Scale (nd) Tipsheet 1: [What is prevention](#)

Prevention Collaborative and UN Women (2021) [Fostering Behaviour Change to Prevention Violence Against Women](#).

GBV Response

CARE-GBV (2022) [Foundational Elements for Gender-Based Violence Programming in Development 3.2 Program Elements: Response](#). Washington, D.C.: USAID.

GBV Risk Mitigation & PSEAH

Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and UNICEF (2022) [Guidance Note: Measuring GBV Risk Mitigations Interventions in Humanitarian Settings](#).

Resource and Support Hub (2024) [How-to note. What to consider when implementing the safeguarding cycle](#)

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning

The Prevention Collaborative (2024) [Rapid guide to collecting survey data on gender-based violence](#) (Final).

Global Women’s Institute (2017) [Gender-based violence research, monitoring, and evaluation: A manual and toolkit for researchers and practitioners](#). The George Washington University.

African Women’s Development Fund (2020) [Generating knowledge and evidence on the prevention of violence against women: An introductory guide for African women’s organisations](#).

Sectoral guidance – selected examples

Asian Development Bank (2023) [Integrating Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, And Harassment Reporting And Case Handling Into Project Grievance Redress Mechanisms Good Practice Note For ADB-Financed Projects with Civil Works](#).

CARE-GBV (2022) [In Foundational Elements for Gender-Based Violence Programming in Development](#). Washington, D.C.: USAID.



CARE and UNICEF (2015) [Guidelines for integrating GBV interventions in Humanitarian Action](#)

Castañeda Camey, I., Sabater, L., Owren, C. and Boyer, A.E. (2021) [Gender-based violence and environment linkages: summary for policy makers](#). Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.

Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) (2024) [Advancing Economic Empowerment of Survivors and Women at Risk of Gender-based Violence Using Innovative Approaches in Integrated Programming and Localisation: Findings across Jordan, Lebanon, Niger and Uganda](#). DRC and WRC.

IMC & IRC (2020) [Women and Girls Safe Spaces: A toolkit for Advancing Women's and Girl's Empowerment in Humanitarian Settings](#)

Singh, R. and Bhattacharya, S. (2024) [What Works II: Practice-Based Learning Series: Integrating Violence Against Children and Gender Based Violence prevention into national education systems](#)

World Bank, The Global Women's Institute, IDB (2015) [Violence Against Women and Girls Resource Guide. Health Sector Brief](#). Washington, DC

World Bank (2022) [Analysis of Gender-based Violence Prevention Opportunities by Sector](#)

Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) (2025) [Violence Against Women & Girls Resource Guide | Energy Brief](#). ESMAP Papers.



Annex 1: Methodology

This report has been conducted through a systematic review of literature and collection of primary data through interviews with key stakeholders who have been engaged in GBV mainstreaming in sectoral programmes

Step 1: Interviews – Ten interviews were held with 13 experts in a range of sectors, who had been involved in GBV mainstreaming. Sectors included education, humanitarian, climate adaptation, social development, and water. Interviewees were asked to suggest examples and provide recommendations for further reading and further interviews.

Step 2: Search – Evidence was identified through online desk-based research, interviews, and email correspondence with relevant experts. Preliminary searches were conducted using Google Scholar, ChatGPT, Perplexity, and relevant electronic databases using key search terms including but not restricted to: GBV mainstreaming, GBV integration, GBV timeframes, specific sectors including health, education, livelihoods, climate, energy, infrastructure, humanitarian. All case studies, examples and reports identified through these searches were independently verified and quality-checked against original sources before inclusion, to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the information.

Step 3: Inclusion - To be eligible for inclusion in this rapid evidence review and mapping, reports had to fulfil the following criteria:

- **Focus:** Guidance or case studies of GBV mainstreaming or integration into other sectoral programmes
- **Time period:** From January 2010 to present.
- **Language:** English.
- **Publication status:** Publicly available – in almost all cases published online.
- **Geographic focus:** Global, including development and humanitarian contexts.
- **Format:** International and organisational guidelines, evaluation reports, guidance notes, rapid assessments, grey literature, blogs, academic papers.
- **Study design:** All study types, designs, and methodologies including primary and secondary studies with clear methodologies to enable an assessment of quality.

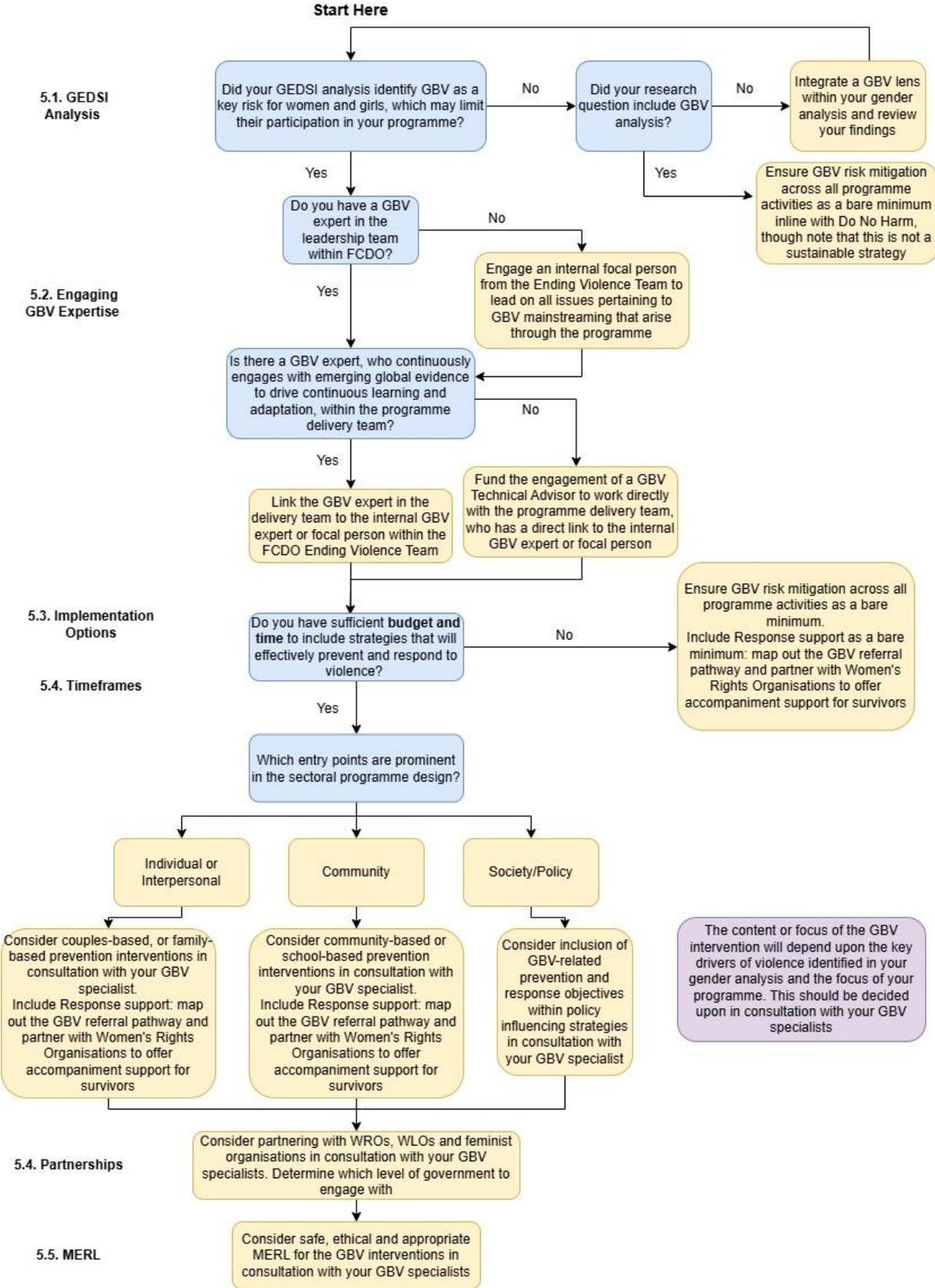
Annex 2: GBV programming: prevention, response, risk mitigation

Mainstreaming GBV into sectoral programmes involves more than just including an objective related to GBV outcomes in a larger programme or implementing a joint programme with separate pillars or workstreams. Rather it must ensure that GBV work is embedded across all aspects of the programme.

GBV programming may include prevention, response and risk mitigation as either standalone components or elements of any or all of those integrated into the sectoral programme. GBV prevention programming is more effective when it aims to be transformative and works to address social norms and root causes of gender inequality and power imbalances, through structured and intentional community interventions. There are a range of activities and interventions that could be included in wider programming depending on the context, needs and resources available. In contexts of high prevalence of violence against women and girls it will be important to consider aspects of GBV response and survivor-centred support alongside any risk mitigation or prevention that is being considered.

GBV Prevention (P)	GBV Risk Mitigation (RM)	GBV Response (R)
Aims to address the root causes of violence through transforming structural gender inequalities and power imbalances that legitimise men’s power over women and normalise violence	Understanding the situational triggers, and vulnerabilities of individuals at risk of violence and introducing mitigation strategies to reduce risks, e.g. providing transport to meetings, or ensuring women can work together in groups	Improving state, or informal, response services for victim-survivors of violence and/or providing additional financial and social support to those who seek help and report their experiences
Gender transformative in nature, seeking to shift the systems and structures that maintain high rates of violence	Strategic in nature, seeking to support vulnerable groups to stay safe in the context of risks of violence. This is not a sustainable strategy, as risks will return when the programme no longer exists to mitigate them, risking the reversal of programme impact following the end of programme delivery.	Can be both strategic and transformative in nature, seeking to support victim-survivors to access their rights and can strengthen efforts to prevent GBV if part of a more holistic intervention.

Annex 3: Process Flow Chart



Endnotes

¹ GBV is ‘any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females’.

² FCDO often uses VAWG and GBV interchangeably because, while the term, ‘gender-based violence’ highlights the gender dimension of these types of acts, the term ‘VAWG’ highlights that women and girls are disproportionately affected by GBV. It is important to note, however, that men and boys may also be victims of gender-based violence, including sexual violence (SV), particularly when they are subjected to torture and/or detainment.

³ Speech by Yvette Cooper (2025) [Foreign Secretary speech on violence against women and girls, to launch a new international coalition- All In](#) 2 December 2025

⁴ Alexander-Scott, M. Bell, E. and Holden, J. (2016) [DFID Guidance Note: Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\)](#). London: VAWG Helpdesk

⁵ Within the GBV sector, GBV ‘mainstreaming’ is often discussed alongside GBV ‘integration’. For this paper, we use the term ‘GBV mainstreaming’ by which we mean a targeted process of including specific GBV prevention, risk mitigation and/ or response interventions into the design and implementation of sectoral programmes, policy and political and diplomatic engagement.

⁶ Office of National Statistics, [‘The lasting impact of violence against women and girls’](#), November 2021

⁷ World Health Organisation, [‘Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018’](#), March 2021

⁸ See for example: CARE-GBV (2022) “Introduction.” In [Foundational Elements for Gender-Based Violence Programming in Development](#). Washington, D.C.: USAID; World Bank (2022). [Analysis of Gender-based Violence Prevention Opportunities by Sector](#); UNDP (2023). [A New Approach to Ending Gender-Based Violence: Lessons on integrating prevention and response in four UNDP sectoral development projects](#).

⁹ See <https://capseah.safeguardingsupporthub.org/>

¹⁰ CARE-GBV (2022) “Introduction.” In [Foundational Elements for Gender-Based Violence Programming in Development](#). Washington, D.C.: USAID.

¹¹ Speech by Yvette Cooper (2025) [Statement by The Rt Hon Yvette Cooper, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, at the UNGA 80 side event on Beijing](#), 22 September 2025

¹² Office of the Special Representative on Violence against Children (2016) [Towards a World Free from Violence: Global Survey on Violence against Children](#). New York: Office of the SRSG on Violence against Children

¹³ See: <https://knowledge.unwomen.org/en/articles/facts-and-figures/facts-and-figures-ending-violence-against-women>

¹⁴ Ouedraogo, R. and Stenzel, D. (2021) [The Heavy Economic Toll of Gender- based Violence: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa](#). IMF WP/21/277, Washington DC: USA

¹⁵ UNDP (2023)[New approach to ending gender-based violence: lessons on integrating prevention and responses in four UNDP sectoral development projects](#) New York.

¹⁶ CARE-GBV. 2022. [Section 3.2. Program Elements: Risk mitigation](#)

¹⁷ Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) and UNICEF.(2022) [Guidance Note: Measuring GBV Risk Mitigations Interventions in Humanitarian Settings](#).

¹⁸ See for example: <https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/documents/leadership-series-part-1-role-modelling-safeguarding-values-leader> or <https://safeguarding-tool.bond.org.uk/>

¹⁹ Alexander-Scott, M. Bell, E. and Holden, J. (2016) [DFID Guidance Note: Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\)](#). London: VAWG Helpdesk



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- ²² Save the Children Denmark, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Women's Affairs (2008) A Study on Violence against Girls in Primary Schools and Its Impacts on Girls' Education in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: Save the Children Denmark
- ²³ Holt, Stephanie, Helen Buckley, and Sadhbh Whelan. (2008) "The Impact of Exposure to Domestic Violence on Children and Young People: A Review of the Literature." *Child Abuse and Neglect* 32 (8): 797–810.
- ²⁴ Kibriya, S., Zhou, S., Zhang, Y. and Fatema, N. (2018) The Effects of School Safety on Academic Achievement: Evidence from Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia, Washington D.C.: USAID
- ²⁵ Kerr-Wilson, A.; Gibbs, A.; McAslan Fraser E.; Ramsoomar, L.; Parke, A.; Khuwaja, HMA.; and Jewkes, R. (2020). A rigorous global evidence review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls, What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls Global Programme, Pretoria, South Africa
- ²⁶ See: Singh, R. and Bhattacharya, S. (2024) [What Works II: Practice-Based Learning Series: Integrating Violence Against Children and Gender Based Violence prevention into national education systems](#)
- ²⁷ Projet Jeune Leader. (February 2023) [Multi-faceted impacts of Projet Jeune Leader: Understanding what matters most to educational authorities](#)
- ²⁸ Stein C, Flor LS, Gil GF, Khalil M, Herbert M, Aravkin AY, et al. (2025) The health effects associated with physical, sexual and psychological gender-based violence against men and women: a Burden of Proof study. *Nat Hum Behaviour*; 9(6):1201-1216.
- ²⁹ Oliver, R. Alexander, B., Roe, S and Wlasny, M. (2019) [The economic and social costs of domestic abuse](#), Home Office Research Report 107, January 2019
- ³⁰ VAWC Helpdesk (2025) NGO-Government Collaboration on Addressing GBV
- ³¹ Clugston, N., Rhodes, F., Nneli, O., Fraser, E. (2024) [Gender Based Violence: Addressing the overlooked barrier to effective climate action](#). What Works to Prevent VAWG: London UK
- ³² Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence (2022) Gender Based Violence and its intersection with Climate Change. Brief.
- ³³ UNICEF (2021) [Climate Change and Gender-Based Violence: What are the links?](#) GBV AOR Helpdesk 2021.
- ³⁴ O'Mullan, C., Sinai, S. & Kaphle, S. A scoping review on the nature and impact of gender based violence on women primary producers. *BMC Women's Health* 24, 395 (2024) <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-024-03228-3>
- ³⁵ Women's Refugee Commission (2022) [Integrated Gender-Based Violence and Economic Recovery Programming with Gender-Transformative and Localized Approaches](#), Women's Refugee Commission and Danish Refugee Council.
- ³⁶ Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) (2025) [Violence Against Women & Girls Resource Guide | Energy Brief](#). ESMAP Papers.
- ³⁷ ESMAP. (2025) *ibid*.
- ³⁸ See: Asian Development Bank (2023) [Integrating Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, And Harassment Reporting And Case Handling Into Project Grievance Redress Mechanisms Good Practice Note For Adb-Financed Projects With Civil Works](#) and [CAPSEAH](#). Accessed 14th November 2025

- ³⁹ HMG. (2019) [UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security – Implementing Strategic Outcome 3: Gender-based violence](#).
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