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USAID's Collective Action to Reduce Gender-Based Violence (CARE-GBV)

Foundational Elements for Gender-Based Violence Programming in Development

Glossary

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The glossary is organized into two sections: terms related to types of gender-based violence (GBV) and other relevant key terms.

Types of Gender-Based Violence

Acid attacks: Acid attacks are a form of violence in which acid or another corrosive substance is thrown at a person—usually a woman or a girl—with the intention of maiming, torturing, or killing them (ActionAid, n.d.).

Child, early, and forced marriage and unions (CEFMU): Child marriage (also called early marriage) is a formal or informal union, wherein one or both parties are under the age of 18. Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not give full and free consent, regardless of age. Early unions are informal unions in which a girl or boy lives with a partner as if married before the age of 18. The acronyms CEFM and, increasingly, CEFMU are often used to encompass all of these practices (CARE-GBV 2022).

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV): CRSV refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage, and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls, or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict. That link may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator, who is often affiliated with a state or non-state armed group; the profile of the victim, who is frequently an actual or perceived member of a political, ethnic, religious, or gender or sexual minority group; and the climate of impunity, which is generally associated with state weakness or collapse (United Nations 2020).

Conversion therapy: “Conversion therapy,” also referred to as sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI) conversion practices, is an umbrella term to describe a range of interventions that share the belief that a person’s SOGI can and should be changed. Such practices aim (or claim to aim) to change people from gay, lesbian, or bisexual to heterosexual and from transgender or gender diverse to cisgender. “Conversion therapy” practices are deeply harmful interventions that rely on the medically false idea that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex people, and those of other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities (LGBTQI+ people) are sick. They inflict severe pain and suffering, and can result in long-lasting psychological and physical damage. Conversion therapy currently happens in a multitude of countries, in all regions of the world (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR] 2020).

Disrespect and abuse in maternity care (D&A): D&A, sometimes referred to as mistreatment, obstetric violence, or dehumanized care, can be defined generally as interactions, facility conditions, and treatments that disrespect, abuse, neglect, and humiliate women during childbirth and maternity care in facilities. D&A has many manifestations, both individual (specific provider behaviors experienced or intended as disrespectful or humiliating) and structural (systemic deficiencies based on gender inequalities that create a disrespectful or abusive environment—for example, the systemic failure to fund maternity care, which causes women to birth in inhumane conditions, such as without a bed of their own (WHO 2015; Freedman and Kruk 2014, Manning et al. 2018).

Domestic violence (DV): DV refers to physical, sexual, economic, or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, economic abuse, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviors (such as controlling finances, movement, and access to other resources) that is perpetrated by a person against an intimate partner, dating partner, or any member of a household, including a child, parents, other relative, or a domestic worker (WHO 2012).

Economic violence: Economic violence spans the socio-ecological model from individual actions to systemic constraints aimed at curtailing economic agency. At the interpersonal level, economic abuse ranges from attempts to limit a person's ability to earn, inherit, or exercise control over funds or property. At the broader structural and societal levels, economic violence can take the form of "limited access to funds and credit; controlled access to health care, employment, or education; discriminatory traditional laws on inheritance and property rights; and unequal remuneration for work" (Fawole 2008).

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C): FGM/C comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for nonmedical reasons (WHO 2008).

- Type I: Partial or total removal of the clitoris and/or the prepuce (clitoridectomy)
- Type II: Partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (excision)
- Type III: Narrowing of the vaginal orifice with creation of a covering seal by cutting and appositioning the labia minora and/or the labia majora, with or without excision of the clitoris (infibulation)
- Type IV: All other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for nonmedical purposes, for example: pricking, piercing, incising, scraping, and cauterization

Femicide: Femicide is generally understood to involve the intentional murder of women because they are women, but broader definitions include any killings of women or girls. Men usually perpetrate femicide, but sometimes female family members or others may be involved. Femicide differs from male homicide in specific ways. For example, many cases of femicide are committed by partners or ex-partners and involve ongoing abuse in the home, threats or intimidation, sexual violence, or situations where women have less power or fewer resources than their partner and are driven by general gender-related motivations (WHO 2012).

Forced anal examinations: These examinations are used in some countries that criminalize same-sex relations to "substantiate" accusations of same-sex sexual behavior. These invasive, pseudoscientific procedures often involve doctors or other medical personnel forcibly inserting their fingers, and sometimes other objects, into the anus of the accused. Forced anal examinations are a form of cruel, degrading, and inhumane treatment that can rise to the level of torture. They violate the Convention against Torture, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the African Convention on Human and Peoples' Rights (Human Rights Watch 2016).

Forced and coercive medical interventions targeting intersex people: In countries around the world, intersex infants, children, and adolescents are subjected to medically unnecessary surgeries, hormonal treatment, and other procedures in an attempt to forcibly modify their appearance or physical development to be in line with societal expectations about male and female bodies. There is no clinical consensus about the necessity of these procedures, which often have long-lasting harmful effects on intersex individuals. Comparisons and similarities have been drawn with female genital mutilation and intersex medical interventions (OHCHR n.d.).

Gender-based violence (GBV): GBV “is an umbrella term for any harmful threat or act directed at an individual or group based on actual or perceived biological sex, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, and/or lack of adherence to varying socially constructed norms around masculinity and femininity. It is rooted in structural gender inequalities, patriarchy, and power imbalances. GBV is typically characterized by the use or threat of physical, psychological, sexual, economic, legal, political, social and other forms of control and/or abuse. GBV impacts individuals across the life course and has direct and indirect costs to families, communities, economies, global public health, and development” (USAID and U.S. Department of State 2016, 6).

Homophobic rape: In homophobic rape, people are raped because they are, or are perceived to be, lesbian or gay. Part of a wider pattern of sexual violence, attacks of this kind commonly combine deeply entrenched homophobia with a fundamental lack of respect for women, which often amounts to misogyny. The term “corrective rape” should not be used, because it implies the need to correct or rectify a “deviated” behavior or sexual orientation. The preferred term, homophobic rape, notes the deep-seated homophobia that motivates the hate crime (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS 2015).

Homophobic, transphobic, biphobic violence, and hate crimes: These are bias-motivated attacks on people because of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. They are often driven by a desire to punish those seen as defying gender norms. The mere perception of deviation from social norms, including same-sex attraction or transgender identity, or the perception of supporting the rights of LGBTQI+ people, is enough to put people at risk (United Nations, OHCHR 2014).

Honor killing: Honor killings take many forms, including direct murder; stoning; women and young girls being forced to commit suicide after public denunciations of their behavior; and women being disfigured by acid burns, leading to death. Honor crimes are also linked to other forms of family violence and are usually committed by male family members as a means of controlling women’s sexual choices and limiting their freedom of movement. Punishment usually has a collective dimension, with the family as a whole believing it to be injured by a woman’s actual or perceived behavior, and is often public in character. The visibility of the issue and the punishment also serves a social objective, namely, influencing the conduct of other women (Manjoo 2012).

Intimate partner violence (IPV): IPV refers to physical, sexual, economic, or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, economic abuse, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviors (such as controlling finances, movement, and access to other resources) by a current or former intimate partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among couples of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. IPV perpetrated by a cohabitating partner is a form of domestic violence. IPV can be perpetrated even if the perpetrator and victim do not cohabit, as is the case with stalking and dating violence (National Institute of Justice 2007, WHO n.d.).

Non-partner violence: Non-partner violence is defined as GBV perpetrated by people who include strangers, acquaintances, friends, colleagues, peers, teachers, neighbors, and family members.

Reproductive coercion: Reproductive coercion refers to behaviors that interfere with a woman's autonomous decision making related to contraception and pregnancy. Specifically, this may take the form of contraceptive sabotage (such as removing a condom, damaging a condom, removing a contraceptive patch, or throwing away oral contraceptives), coercion or pressure to get pregnant, or controlling the outcome of a pregnancy (such as pressure to continue a pregnancy or pressure to terminate a pregnancy). Its perpetrators can include men, partners, and family members (Silverman and Raj 2014; Trister, Grace, and Anderson 2018).

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV): SRGBV refers to “acts or threats of physical, sexual, or psychological violence or abuse that are based on gendered stereotypes or that target learners on the basis of their sex, sexuality, or gender identities. SRGBV reinforces gender roles and perpetuates gender inequalities. It includes rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment, bullying, and other forms of non-sexual intimidation or abuse, such as verbal harassment or exploitative labor in schools. Unequal power relations between adults and children and males and females³ contribute to this violence, which can take place in formal and non-formal schools, on school grounds, going to and from school, in school dormitories, in cyberspace, or through cell phone technology. SRGBV may be perpetrated by educators, learners, or community members. Both girls and boys can be victims, as well as perpetrators” (USAID 2018, 47).

Sex trafficking: Sex trafficking is a form of sexual violence involving the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act. It can include coercing, forcing, and deceiving someone into sexual labor and maintaining them in sexual labor; forcing someone into sexual labor to pay off a debt, especially as a condition of their freedom; and holding someone in service through psychological manipulation or physical force. It may be perpetrated by means of threat; use of force; or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, position of vulnerability, and/or giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation. A person may initially consent to participate in commercial sex, but if held either through psychological manipulation or physical force, they are a victim of trafficking (U.S. Code of Federal Regulations n.d., USAID 2013, OHCHR 2000).

³ As stated in the 2016 United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, GBV “is rooted in structural gender inequalities, patriarchy, and power imbalances.” Therefore, a range of power imbalances beyond those based on an adult–child or male–female binary contribute to GBV—for example, citizenship status, marital status, national origin, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and disability.

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA): Sexual abuse is “any actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.” Sexual exploitation is “any actual or attempted abuse by aid workers of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another” (USAID 2020a). Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) refers to actions to prevent, mitigate, and respond to SEA.

Sexual harassment (SH): SH is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, verbal or physical conduct or gestures of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might cause offense or humiliation to another. It comprises sexual or sex-based conduct that interferes with an individual’s work performance; creates an intimidating, hostile, or abusive work environment; or affects the terms and conditions of employment. While typically involving a pattern of behavior, it can take the form of a single incident. Additionally, it can encompass sex- and gender-based discrimination, disrespect, and aggression rooted in the abuse of power. Sexual harassment may occur between people of any gender identity (United Nations Secretariat 2008, U.S. Department of State 2019, Berdahl 2007).

Sexual violence/abuse: Sexual violence refers to any unwanted sexual comments, sexual acts, or attempted sexual acts using force or coercion, or threat of force or coercion. This can include situations in which a person is incapable of giving genuine consent. Sexual violence/abuse can be committed by anyone, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including at home and at work. Rape is forced/coerced intercourse and can be defined as nonconsensual sexual penetration, however slight, of any part of the body of the victim with a sexual organ, or of the anal or genital opening of the victim with any object or any other part of the body. Marital rape is sexual intercourse forced on a spouse without consent (SVRI, n.d.).

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV): TFGBV is action by one or more people that harms others based on their sexual or gender identity or by enforcing harmful gender norms. This action is carried out using the Internet or mobile technology and includes stalking, bullying, sexual harassment, defamation, hate speech, and exploitation (Hinson et al. 2018).

Violence against children (VAC): VAC comprises all forms of physical, sexual, or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, or exploitation perpetrated against someone under the age of 18. It also comprises the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child by an individual or group, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development, or dignity (United Nations General Assembly 2006, WHO 2002, Guedes et al. 2016).

Violence against women (VAW): VAW refers to any act of GBV that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life ([United Nations General Assembly 1993](#)). USAID uses the term GBV instead of VAW to be explicitly more inclusive of people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, as well as men and boys, and to underscore that this form of violence is rooted in gender norms and inequalities (USAID and U.S. Department of State 2016).

VAW in politics: VAW in politics encompasses all forms of aggression, coercion, and intimidation for the purpose of excluding women from politics—whether serving as civic leaders and activists, voters, political party members, candidates, elected representatives, appointed officials, or election administrators—simply because they are women. While VAW in politics takes many forms, it often draws on gendered ideas about women’s bodies and their traditional social roles—primarily as mothers and wives—in order to deny or undercut their suitability or competence in the political sphere. As a result, its purpose extends beyond the individuals targeted to also deter other women who might consider engaging in public and political life (National Democratic Institute 2021).

Workplace violence: Workplace violence refers to “an action (verbal, written, or physical aggression) that is intended to control or cause, or is capable of causing, death or serious bodily injury to oneself or others, or damage to property. Workplace violence includes abusive behavior toward authority, intimidating or harassing behavior, and threats” (U.S. Department of Labor n.d.). Not all forms of workplace violence are gender-based. Workplace GBV includes gender-based workplace discrimination, stigmatization, and social exclusion; sexual harassment and intimidation; sexual exploitation and abuse; and trafficking for forced labor and sex work within and across borders (USAID 2014).

Other Key Terms

Cisgender: Cisgender describes a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex category assigned to them at birth (USAID n.d.).

Cisnormativity: Cisnormativity is the assumption that all people should be cisgender (Edge Effect 2021).

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA): Diversity refers to the practice of including the many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of people, including underserved communities. Equity means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment. Inclusion means the recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of employees of all backgrounds. Accessibility refers to providing accommodations and modifications to ensure equal access for persons with disabilities (White House 2021).

GBV analysis: A GBV analysis identifies the prevalence and types of GBV in the local context, who experiences violence, and the effects of GBV. It also analyzes norms, power, and drivers of violence at every level of the socioecological model: individual, interpersonal, community, and structural.

GBV prevention: Addresses norms and inequalities at the individual, interpersonal, community, and structural levels to stop GBV before it starts or to reduce violence that is already happening.

GBV response: Addresses the consequences of GBV by providing support and services to survivors.

GBV risk mitigation: Seeks to identify and reduce the risk of GBV by implementing measures to address factors that may increase GBV that results from participation in a program, service, or other initiatives.

Gender: Gender refers to “a socially constructed set of roles, norms, rights, responsibilities, entitlements, expectations, and behaviors associated with women, men, and individuals of diverse gender identities, as well as the relationships between and among them. These social definitions differ among and within cultures, change over time, and often intersect with other factors such as age, class, disability, ethnicity, race, religion, and sexual orientation. All individuals are subject to these expectations and sanctions, including transgender and gender non-binary individuals. The term gender should not be used interchangeably with women, sex, or gender identity” (USAID forthcoming).

Gender equality: “Gender equality means equal enjoyment of human rights, socially valued goods, opportunities, and resources by all individuals independent of a person’s sex or gender identity. Gender equality means more than parity in numbers or laws on the books; it means equal access and freedoms for all people and that rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on an individual’s sex assigned at birth or their gender identity. Gender equality is fundamental in human development for all women and girls, men and boys, and individuals of other gender identities. It is both a human rights issue and a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable development”(USAID forthcoming).

Gender norm: A gender norm is a type of social norm. Among the characteristics of gender norms is the strong role of power in maintaining norms that normalize inequality between women, men, and gender-nonconforming people (USAID 2021, Kedia and Verma 2019).

Gender-transformative approach: A gender-transformative approach “seeks to fundamentally transform relations, structures, and systems that sustain and perpetuate gender inequality. This approach requires: (1) critically examining gender roles, norms, power dynamics, and inequalities, (2) recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support gender equality and an enabling environment, and (3) transforming underlying power dynamics, social structures, policies and broadly held social norms that affect women and girls, men and boys, and individuals of other gender identities and perpetuate gender inequalities. This approach recognizes that gender equality cannot be achieved or sustained without an approach that includes all three of these components” (USAID forthcoming).

Heteronormativity: Heteronormativity is the assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual in their sexual orientation, which is often inscribed in law, institutions, and social practices (Edge Effect 2021).

Integrated GBV programming: Integrated GBV programming refers to sectoral programming that includes any aspect of GBV prevention, risk mitigation, response, or cultivation of an enabling environment. Some sectoral programs include comprehensive GBV prevention and response, but if the main objective of the program is to accomplish other sector-specific outcomes, it is considered integrated GBV programming.

Intersectionality: “The concept of intersectionality recognizes that all individuals have multiple social identities shaping their lived experiences, including but not limited to their place in society, privileges they may or may not enjoy, the level and types of protection from human rights violations, and the impact of complex forms of discrimination. Although intersectionality acknowledges that singular oppressions exist, it identifies that overlapping identities (age, class, disability, gender identity, nationality, race, sex, sexual orientation, etc.) interact with overlapping

systems of oppression and/or discrimination and the need to address the impact these have on systemic privilege and access” (USAID forthcoming). An intersectional analysis of GBV examines the specific ways these identities create and reinforce discrimination and privilege and affect risks for GBV.

Land tenure: The relationship (whether defined under formal de jure law or under customary law) that individuals and groups hold with respect to land. Land tenure rules define the ways property rights to land are allocated, transferred, used, or managed in a particular society.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex people (LGBTQI+): LGBTQI stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex people. The + at the end of the acronym acknowledges people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) who are not covered by the LGBTQI acronym. This includes people who are considered “third gender” (including “hijra” in India, “khawaja sarra” in Pakistan, “waria” in Indonesia, and “fa’afafine” in Samoa) (USAID n.d.).

Patriarchal norm: A patriarchal norm is a type of gender norm that reinforces patriarchal power structures—relationships, beliefs, and values that afford disproportionate power to men and lead to gender inequality between men, women, and gender-nonconforming people (USAID 2021, Kedia and Verma 2019).

Property rights: The rights individuals, groups, and the state hold with respect to land, resources, and other assets and in relation to each other; therefore, there is some overlap between the concepts of land tenure and property rights (TetraTech 2013).

Safeguarding: Safeguarding refers to preventing harm to people during the delivery of development programming. In this document, safeguarding refers to organizations mitigating, preventing, and responding to all types of harassment, discrimination, exploitation, and other abuse, including SEA of program participants and workplace sexual harassment committed by an organization’s own personnel or partner personnel (Safeguarding Resource & Support Hub 2022).

SOGIESC: SOGIESC refers to diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics, which are defined as follows:

- Sexual orientation is an enduring pattern of romantic or sexual attraction (or a combination of these) to another person. These inherent attractions are generally subsumed under heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or asexuality (USAID and U.S. Department of State 2016).
- Gender identity is a person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth (USAID and U.S. Department of State 2016).
- Gender expression is the external appearance of one’s gender identity, which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine (USAID and U.S. Department of State 2016).
- Sex characteristics are defined by characteristics encoded in DNA, such as reproductive organs and other physiological and functional characteristics, and include chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical characteristics. Variations of sex characteristics, also referred to as intersex variations, do not fall within typical definitions or classifications of male and female (USAID n.d., National Institutes of Health 2015).

Social norms: Social norms are the unwritten rules that most people follow. Social norms are embedded in communities, systems, and structures. They include **gender norms** and **patriarchal norms** (USAID 2021, Kedia and Verma 2019).

Standalone GBV programming: Standalone GBV programming is specialized programming to prevent and respond to GBV, whose main objective is to address GBV.

Survivor-centered approach: A survivor-centered approach is one in which the survivor's best interest, dignity, experience, and needs are placed at the center of the process—from the initial program design to investigating and responding to alleged incidents, with appropriate accountability for perpetrators of abuse (USAID 2020b).

Transgender: Transgender is an umbrella term referring to individuals who do not identify with the sex category assigned to them at birth. The term “transgender” encompasses a diverse array of gender identities and expressions (Interagency Gender Working Group n.d.).

Women's economic empowerment: “A woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions. To succeed and advance economically, women need the skills and resources to compete in markets, as well as fair and equal access to economic institutions. To have the power and agency to benefit from economic activities, women need to have the ability to make and act on decisions and control resources and profits” (Golla, Malhotra, et al. 2018).

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The goal of the Collective Action to Reduce Gender-Based Violence (CARE-GBV) activity is to strengthen USAID's collective prevention and response, or "collective action" in gender-based violence (GBV) development programming across USAID. For more information about CARE-GBV, click [here](#).

To learn more, please contact:

Chaitra Shenoy, JD

Contracting Officer's Representative
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub
cshenoy@usaid.gov

Diane Gardsbane, PhD

Chief of Party
CARE-GBV
diane@makingcents.com