

Key Actions for Gender-Based Violence and Coordination

Note: This is an excerpt from the IASC GBV Handbook.

In any emergency setting, there is usually one organization or individual providing overall coordination and leadership for gender-based violence (GBV). This coordinating group is responsible for ensuring that the actions described below are carried out.

- 1. Establish inter-organizational, multisectoral GBV working groups at the national, regional and local levels.**
 - Working groups should be made up of GBV focal points (see below) and any other key multisectoral actors from the community, government, UN, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors and others in the setting.
 - Working groups should be inclusive, but must also be small enough to effectively share information, plan and rapidly implement coordinated action.
 - Members should be able to represent their cluster's and/or organization's activities in prevention and response to sexual violence, and participate as an active member of the working group.
 - At the outset of many emergencies, short-term and/or 'mission' staff are the majority on the ground and might need to serve as early members in GBV working groups. In these situations, working groups must take care to maximize continuity and information-sharing when short-term staff rotate out and new staff arrive.
- 2. Field-level actors including the Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator, NGOs implementing GBV programmes, and relevant UN entities (UNFPA/UNICEF as the global UN lead agencies for GBV) should select a coordinating agency.** The coordinating agency (or agencies) could be UN, international or national NGO, or other representative body invested with due authority.
 - Establish clear terms of reference for the coordinating agency agreed by all working group members.
 - Ensure terms of reference are endorsed by the leading United Nations authority in the country (e.g. Humanitarian Coordinator, Special Representative of the Secretary-General).
- 3. The coordinating agency, working in collaboration with the GBV working groups and relevant cluster actors, is responsible for ensuring that the actions described within the IASC *Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings* are carried out.**
- 4. Working groups at the national, regional and local levels should establish methods for communication and coordination among and between them. All working groups maintain meeting notes with non-identifying information (i.e. no details about survivors) and distribute copies to all GBV working groups.** In general:
 - Local GBV working groups discuss details of coordination and implementation, identifying problems and needs, problem-solving, and referring national level/policy issues to the national GBV working group.
 - National GBV working group discusses implementation and coordination from a national perspective, providing support, problem-solving, and policy-level action for the local GBV working groups.
- 5. All relevant clusters and working groups (i.e. health, protection, camp management, shelter, WASH, education, etc.) define their respective responsibilities regarding prevention and response to sexual violence, and how they will liaise with the GBV**

working group and the coordinating agency(ies) – using the IASC GBV Guidelines as a tool.

- Each cluster and each organization carefully and consciously designates a **focal point** who will represent the organization and/or sector in taking action for prevention and response to sexual violence ('GBV focal points').
- Responsibilities of cluster GBV focal points are described in Action Sheets for each cluster (or sector) within the GBV Guidelines. GBV focal points actively participate in GBV working groups.

6. Develop a plan of action for coordination, prevention and response to sexual violence.

- All working group members/participating organizations contribute to the development of the plan of action, and all must commit to active involvement in implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and holding all actors accountable for action.
- The plan should be developed based on information obtained in the situation analysis, and with **active involvement of women** in the community. The plan must include, at a minimum: (1) establishment of confidential 'entry points' where survivors and the community can seek assistance after an incident of sexual violence and/or make an incident report; and (2) confidential referral mechanisms among and between actors/sectors to facilitate multisectoral action as requested by survivors.

7. All actors agree to adhere to a set of guiding principles that minimise harm to the survivor and maximize efficiency of prevention and response interventions. The guiding principles are incorporated into all elements of the plan of action for GBV prevention and response and should include, at a minimum:

- Ensure the physical safety of the survivor and those who help her;
- Guarantee confidentiality;
- Respect the wishes, the rights, and the dignity of the survivor and be guided by the best interests of the child; and
- Ensure non-discrimination.

8. Orient all actors to the multisectoral approach and the importance of coordination by distributing key resource and training materials on prevention and response to GBV.

- Ensure relevant materials are distributed to the community.
- Make sure all relevant actors have copies of the IASC GBV Guidelines and are familiar with the guidelines. These relevant actors include representatives from sectors/organizations that may interface with sexual violence survivors and/or be engaged in sexual violence prevention but whose responsibilities and actions may not be specifically described in the Guidelines.

9. Compile a resource list of organisations, focal points and services for prevention and response to sexual violence. Distribute to all actors, including the community, and update regularly.

10. Establish a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan.

- Include a system for receiving and documenting sexual violence incidents using an agreed-upon incident report form.
- Ensure the M&E plan allows for compilation of non-identifying incident data, action taken, and outcomes across sectors.
- All actors routinely submit anonymous data to the coordinating agency(ies) responsible for collating data and reporting information to all actors.