

Gender-based violence: recognizing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) in community conservation

What is Gender-based Violence?

GBV is violence that is directed at individuals based on their biological sex, gender identity, or perceived adherence to culturally-defined expectations of what it means to be a man, woman, boy, or girl. It includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse; coercion; arbitrary deprivation of liberty; and economic deprivation, whether occurring in public or private.¹

GBV exists because of the differences in power between males and females and is rooted in cultural norms regarding masculinity and femininity. Although both males and females can experience GBV, a large proportion of GBV is aimed specifically at women and girls.

How is Gender-based Violence relevant to CI's work?

Quite simply, GBV occurs in practically every community around the world, including those that CI engages with. It is one of the most widespread forms of violence, affecting individuals and communities everywhere, and defies class structure, age, religion, education levels, and geography.

- **GBV is a barrier to achieving project goals.** The presence of GBV within a community or household shapes how people interact with each other, and ultimately impacts community projects or programs. Many of CI's field programs have reported that violence is present within partner communities and impacts the implementation and sustainability of conservation initiatives.
- **GBV can be an unintended program effect.** All activities, by their very presence, potentially create both direct and/or indirect changes in their targeted communities. These changes are often a combination of intended and unintended outcomes, of which GBV can be one.
- **Personal safety and health of staff.** People experiencing GBV in a targeted community may disclose their experiences to program staff during the course of program activities and interactions. Additionally, staff in the field may be at risk of GBV themselves in the course of site visits and travel.

What does GBV look like?

- Sexual violence: rape, assault, molestation and inappropriate touching
- Psychological violence: harassment, bullying, insults, controlling behavior, exploitation
- Physical violence: beating or abuse that may lead to injury or death
- Socio-cultural violence: social ostracism, discrimination, political marginalization or social norms that have negative impacts

¹ USAID

How can staff be prepared?

It is important to understand where power inequalities lie within the community and how they will be affected by the project.

- **Learn about GBV norms and prevalence** as part of the gender analysis or community engagement process for the project or program. Often data can be gathered through on-line resources² and local or international organizations who work in this field.
- **Create or find a referral list** of community resources and services for people experiencing GBV. Be prepared with a list of formal and informal support systems that people experiencing GBV can access.
- **Engage the community and partner organizations** in program planning. This will help to ensure that the program's positive or negative impacts on community norms and existing gender roles and inequalities are well understood.

“Dos and Don'ts”

The following list of Do's and Don'ts are gender guidelines for program staff:

Do's:

- **Provide an empathetic ear if a survivor raises the issue of violence and wants to talk**
- **Budget for and carry out training on basic GBV concepts and skills for first-line support when GBV is disclosed**
- **Have a referral list available**

Don'ts:

- **Don't ask personal questions about GBV**
- **Don't assume that confidentiality is given; take steps to ensure confidentiality**
- **Don't let staff give out personal phone numbers or become a case manager**

This guidance is adapted from Care's document *Guidance for Gender Based Violence (GBV) Monitoring and Mitigation within non-GBV Focused Sectoral Programming*, available here: http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/CARE%20GBV%20M%26E%20Guidance_0.pdf

² E.g. National Demographic Health Surveys