



Report Title: GBV and Environmental Considerations

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INTRODUCTION

A review of literature on gender-based violence (GBV) and the environment was requested of the Helpdesk to highlight research, evidence, tools, guidance and approaches linking GBV issues and the environment. This review is aimed at increasing awareness of GBV actors about the need for mainstreaming attention to the environment in GBV programming, and for supporting closer cooperation between GBV specialists and environment actors. In particular, a deeper understanding of how environmental degradation impacts women and girls and contributes to the occurrence of GBV will encourage GBV actors to more proactively consider environmental concerns in GBV programming and be more confident in advocating to environment actors on the need to integrate GBV concerns into environmental projects.

GBV AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Disasters and conflicts often impact the environment in ways that threaten human life, health, livelihoods and security. Subsequent emergency relief and recovery operations can also have significant negative impacts on the environment. The damage to the environment by the emergency itself and the response operation can have a devastating impact on women and girls and exacerbate the occurrence of GBV. For example, scarcity of natural resources often forces women and girls to walk long distances to collect water and firewood, exposing them to exploitation and sexual violence. Insufficient attention to environmental considerations in humanitarian operations, including a failure to address risks of environmental degradation, can undermine the relief process and impact negatively on efforts to address and prevent GBV. For women and girls, a failure to address environmental issues can exacerbate and protract a situation of dependency for access to natural resources (Rosen, 2017).

The mitigation of negative environmental impacts can thus facilitate more effective and efficient recovery from emergencies and provide for a smoother shift into sustainable recovery. Less soil contamination and soil degradation will allow a quicker restart of livelihoods like small scale farming; more equitable management of natural resources, water, fertile soil,

will contribute to better inter-community relations thus reducing conflict and alternative cooking and heating systems will reduce the exposure of women and children to exploitation and sexual violence; they will not have to walk for hours to collect wood in remote places and children and girls will be able to attend school more often. In addition, engaging women in all aspects of environmental programming such as waste management, air and water pollution, management of hazardous material amongst other environmental concerns is not only highly beneficial from a health and safety perspective, it will also empower women to be stewards of the environment.

It is therefore critical that GBV actors fully understand the links between GBV risks and the environment and pursue opportunities to mainstream environmental considerations into GBV programming. It is also important that environmental experts ensure GBV risk mitigation is integrated into environmental programming. Closer cooperation between the environmental community and the GBV community will lead to more collaborative and coherent responses to all crises, decreasing discord and competition, and enhancing efforts to reduce and prevent GBV (Delrue and Sexton, 2009).

PREVENTION OF GBV THROUGH LINKING WITH ENVIRONMENT

Even prior to the onset of a disaster, preparedness and the prevention of environmental degradation as part of disaster preparedness can also contribute to the prevention of GBV by enhancing community resilience, food security and economic development (UNEP, 2016).

GBV actors should collaborate and work closely with environmental actors to:

1. Restore degraded ecosystems and prevent further degradation to make collecting water and firewood easier and safer
2. Build the resilience of women and girls to cope with shocks and reduce dependency
3. Ensure that environmental policies and practices safeguard women's rights
4. Include women in decision-making and encourage agency
5. Empower women to be stewards of the environment
6. Ensure equitable access of women and girls to natural resources (land and water), education and information, credit and markers.
7. Collaborate with development actors on women's access to land, land rights and livelihoods as part of building resilience and preventing dependency (UNEP, 2016)

CAPACITY BUILDING

Online training which connects the environment to humanitarian action is available. Training manuals, kits and guidance notes which connect GBV to the environment covering climate change, livelihoods and other topics are also available online. A list of capacity building resources is attached. UN Environment and UN OCHA have also developed a unique digital tool - [EHA Connect](#) - spanning the humanitarian- environment nexus. It allows environmental actors to get involved in the disaster management space and humanitarian actors to mainstream environmental considerations in preparedness, response and recovery. It explores numerous topics associated with the environment, each of which has gender and GBV links.

ANNOTATED LITERATURE REVIEW

The selection of literature on the links between GBV and the environment that follows provides compelling evidence of the need for collaboration between GBV and environment actors to ensure cross-fertilisation of policy and practice.

General Background Information

Bob, C., Potgieter, C., and Perry, E. (2010). [Environmental conflicts and women's vulnerability in Africa](#). *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*. Vol 10. No. 2. Durban: ACCORD.

This article examines environmental conflicts and women's vulnerability in Africa. Environmental resources are critical to poor women's productive and reproductive lives in Africa. Environmental resources diversify livelihoods and are key to the survival strategies women adopt. Environmental conflicts are of concern in several parts of Africa and they have gendered impacts that need to be considered. This article focuses on two main aspects. The first examines the linkages between environmental conflicts, women's vulnerability and gender-based violence. The second considers environmental conflicts, access to resources and women's vulnerability. In particular, the focus is on the way in which conflicts restrict women's access to and control of environmental resources. Additionally, the impacts of environmental degradation which tend to characterise environmental conflicts are considered. The article also briefly discusses women's responses and adaptation strategies to the challenges they confront in relation to environmental conflicts.

Coelho, S. (2016). [The Climate Change- Human Trafficking Nexus](#). Bangkok: IOM Publications.

This infosheet looks at how climate change increases the risk of natural disasters and places a strain on livelihoods; exacerbates poverty and can potentially cause situations of conflict and instability. It points out that women are especially vulnerable as trafficking incidents of women from climate vulnerable areas being duped by "agents" are frequent. The agents promise employment but instead sell vulnerable women to brothels where they are sexually exploited.

UNEP, (2016). [Global Gender and Environment Outlook](#). Nairobi: UN Environment

This report looks at the links between gender and the environment and their importance for gender-sensitive policy-making and actions. It maintains that gender inequality is one of the most pervasive threats to sustainable development causing negative impacts on access to, use of and control over a wide range of resources, and on the ability to meet human rights obligations. It provides an overview of current knowledge and answers key policy-relevant questions such as: What social forces are producing the changes seen in the environment, and are they gender-dependent?

[USAID – IUCN Partnership: Forthcoming Study](#)

This study is focused on researching the nexus between gender-based violence (GBV) and the environment, which is aiming to culminate in a forthcoming paper in 2019 that will include targeted recommendations. The goal of the project is to review and collate existing knowledge and experience from across the globe to inform how the integration of GBV prevention and response in environmental programming can be strengthened. The research reviews the links and drivers between GBV and numerous environment sectors and issues like tenure rights, livelihoods etc; it looks at GBV and gender equality around natural resource governance covering extractives, crimes and violence. The impact of

instability and crises caused by climate change and environmental degradation on exacerbating GBV are also explored. A survey and call for case studies form part of this research project.

United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, (2016). [Protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict](#) Nairobi: UNEP /ea2/Res.15

This UN Environment Assembly Resolution of UNEP in May 2016 is significant as it recognises the specific negative effects of environment degradation on women and the need to apply a gender perspective with respect to the environment and armed conflicts.

UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office, (2014). [Climate Change, Disasters and Gender-Based Violence in The Pacific](#). Fiji: UNW

This brief is part of UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office's series on the links between climate change and gender. It highlights how disasters create conditions that intensify pre-existing SGBV risk factors such as stress and trauma, both of which are drastically heightened following disasters, and both of which reduce normal coping capacities and heighten the risk of violent response to pressure or strain. After two tropical cyclones hit the Western division of Fiji in 2012, women living in relief centres were reportedly being violently forced into sex. It provides recommendations to address and prevent SGBV in disaster management plans.

Mcllwaine, C. (2013). [Urbanization and gender-based violence: exploring the paradoxes in the global South](#). London: Sage Publications

This paper examines the nature and paradoxes of the relationship between urbanization and gender-based violence, especially violence against women. It outlines a range of risk factors that accompany urbanization processes. These can exacerbate gender-based violence in many circumstances, especially in relation to urban poverty, slum dwelling, the prevalence of gang violence, low-quality sanitary facilities, widespread sale of alcohol, and an urban environment that lacks street lighting and has secluded, un-policed spaces.

Addressing Environmental Concerns in GBV Programmes

Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, (2016). [Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings: Cookstoves and Fuels: A Systematic Review of the Evidence Base](#). London: UN Foundation.

This paper outlines evidence and highlight gaps in knowledge on the impact that adoption of clean and/or efficient cookstoves and fuels can have on reducing the risk and incidence of gender-based violence (GBV). The purpose of this review was to examine existing project data and research in order to evaluate the evidence base, better understand whether humanitarian energy programs intending to reduce GBV measured their impacts and learn whether these projects reduced risk or incidence of GBV. Key recommendations urged more research and evaluations to explore GBV and fuel; more training for implementers to conduct evaluations and increased involvement of GBV and protection experts in the humanitarian energy sector.

Addressing GBV Concerns in Environmental Programmes

Wedeman, N., and Petruney, T. (2018). [Invest in Girls and Women to Tackle Climate Change and Conserve the Environment: Facts, Solutions, Case Studies, and Calls to Action](#). *Deliver for Good Campaign*. New York: Women Deliver

This policy brief examines some useful strategies to promote the inclusion of women in climate change mitigation, adaptation, and negotiations — and ensure their voices are heard.

Climate disasters have also been shown to increase gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual harassment and violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation of children, and human trafficking. Key recommendations, amongst others, are land rights for women, women-led sustainable food production and linking the environment with women's health.

Capacity Building Resources

Training Tools and Manuals

Aguilar, L. (2009). [Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change](#). New York: UNDP, IUCN - GGCA.

This manual was created by IUCN and UNDP, coordinating through the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA), in order to build the capacity at the global level of main decision makers working on climate change initiatives and policies to design and implement gender-responsive climate change strategies. It includes an overview of the interconnectedness of gender and climate change as well as best practices and recommendations for developing gender-responsive initiatives with respect to climate change mitigation, adaptation, technical solutions, and financing. GBV is referenced as an outcome of disasters and climate change. The focus is on prevention through gender equality measures in development, disaster risk reduction/ management programming.

Habtezion, S. (2013). [Overview of Linkages between Gender and Climate Change](#). *Gender and Climate Change, Capacity Development Series – Asia and the Pacific*. Training Module 1. New York: UNDP – GGCA.

This is module 1 of a series of gender and climate change training modules and policy briefs directed at practitioners and policy makers in the Asia-Pacific region. The themes of this module focus on climate change issues such as adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction, energy and finance. The module highlights women's low status in the Asia-Pacific region and the gender-based inequalities in law and in practice, the gender-defined roles in society and the sociocultural constraints that render women disproportionately vulnerable to climate change. It emphasises that climate change impacts have the potential to exacerbate existing gender inequalities based on the high percentages of domestic violence reports and that very few countries have DV laws. Some of the GBV issues linked to climate change are that women tend to be reluctant to move to safe shelters during disasters for fear of losing their children and their homes, the fear of gender-based violence, or reluctance to share common space with men. Often, women are not able to make evacuation decisions without their husbands and hence stay behind waiting instead of securing themselves and their children/family on time. Appendix B of the manual is a case study of women in post-tsunami Sri Lanka which highlights evidence linking SGBV with disasters.

The One UN Climate Change Learning Partnership (2019). [Open Online Course on Gender and Environment](#). The Global Environment Facility (GEF).

This self-paced free course covers Gender and Environment; Biodiversity; Climate Change; Land Degradation; Chemicals and Waste and (under development) International Waters. The main objective is for participants to understand gender equality and environmental sustainability. It is aimed at environmental specialists, development practitioners and policy makers for them to learn how addressing environmental degradation and gender equality can be mutually supportive. Although it does not specially mention GBV in the course outlines, the topics of land degradation, climate change etc suggest that GBV would be included as a negative outcome. UN Women's involvement in the course development also suggests that GBV / VAWG should be part of the course. It provides an opportunity for GBV Actors who do course to advise the course developers to fill any GBV gaps.

Asian Development Bank, (2015). [Training Manual to Support Country-Driven Gender and Climate Change Policies](#). Manila: ADB

The manual provides trainers, policy makers, and practitioners with background information to inform the development of gender-sensitive mitigation measures and includes material to conduct training on gender and climate change. GBV is referenced as a factor that increases women's vulnerability and in an exercise on power and gender - the Powerwalk.

Guidelines and Other Resources

Irish Aid, (2005). Environment and Gender Equality. **Dublin: Dept. of Foreign Affairs**

This key sheet is part of a series of awareness-raising tools. It provides preliminary information on why consideration of the environment is critical to Gender Equality and vice versa and to indicate where to find additional information. Key issues highlighted are that Gender Equality matters to the Environment because degraded environments mean that women must walk further to collect water and fuel wood. As a result, their access to education and other productive activities may be curtailed and they will be exposed to the risk of gender-based violence in isolated areas. Also, women are disproportionately vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of violence in times of vulnerability and need. The sheet offers a list of opportunities to enhance synergies between gender and the environment.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, (2016). [Guidelines or other tools for integrating gender considerations into climate change-related activities under the Convention](#). UNFCCC /TP/2016/2

Drawing on relevant web-based resources, this technical paper aims to provide an overview of existing methodologies and tools for the integration of gender considerations into climate change-related activities under the UN FCC Convention. The paper assesses selected tools and guidelines in terms of their methodology, information and data requirements, capacity-building needs, lessons learned, gaps and challenges, and relevance for social and environmental impacts.

USAID, (2018). [Intimate Partner Violence and Land Toolkit](#).

As a part of sustainable recovery and disaster risk reduction, securing land tenure, property rights for women and involving women in land governance is critical. This toolkit supports the objectives of the *United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally* (updated, 2016) and USAID's *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy*. It addresses activities and projects that USAID staff may design to strengthen and secure land tenure, property rights, and land governance in rural, peri-urban and urban areas. It is a resource that provides guidelines for creating gender-sensitive land programming which could be useful in DRR and DRM programming.

Richardson, A. (2015). [The Link Between Land and Gender-Based Violence](#). USA: Landlinks, USAID.

This article highlights a growing body of evidence which shows a correlation between gender-based violence (GBV) and land rights. Land rights are inextricably linked to recovery from disasters and impact significantly on women. Awareness of the possible GBV implications of land interventions is critical to understanding impacts on women. The articles look at how land-related development programming could better address GBV and cites case studies from Kerala, Uganda, Rwanda and Liberia, amongst others, to demonstrate that land rights can increase a woman's economic independence and bargaining power and reduce vulnerability to GBV – particularly in low-income, agriculture-based economies. Hence the link with the environment.

UN Women, (2015). [Monitoring Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Opportunities and Challenges](#). New York: UNW

This position paper sets out UN Women's suggestions for global indicators to effectively monitor how the SDGs are being implemented for women and girls. See Goals 5, 6 and 7 for indicators relating to GBV and Environment. The indicators monitor some key gender dimensions pertaining to lack of access to energy sources, including the time women and girls spend in the collection of firewood and other fuel sources, as well as the health impacts of indoor household pollution.

World Food Programme (WFP), (2019). [WFP's SAFE HANDBOOK: Safe Access to Fuel and Energy \(SAFE\) Initiative](#).

This WFP programme, SAFE initiative, adopts a multi-faceted approach to meet the energy needs of displaced people worldwide through sustainable energy-related activities, protecting both people and the environment. They focus on reducing people's exposure to gender-based violence, nutrition and health threats, and where possible building resilience and long-term food security. Greater involvement of GBV Actors in the SAFE initiatives is highly recommended.

[Refugee Tents That Collect Rainwater and Store Solar Energy](#)

Against the background of the risk of exploitation and sexual violence facing women in their attempts to access natural resources in a displacement setting, this case study highlights a unique solution that not only provides water, it is also a shelter and can provide energy as well. In 2011, Abeer Seikaly was inspired to come up with a solution to help transform the lives of Syrian refugees. Named 'Weaving a Home', this design uses a unique structural fabric that can expand and enclose during different weather conditions and be broken down to allow an ease in mobility and transport. The tent can collect rainwater and provide basic sanitation like showering and can also absorb solar energy and transform it into electric energy, which is stored in special batteries.

REFERENCES

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Rosen, M.A., ed. (2017). [Environmental Sustainability: A Case of Policy Implementation Failure? Sustainability](#). Vol 9. Basel: MDPI

UNEP, (2016). [Gender Policy Brief and success stories: A guide to UN Environment's work](#). New York: UN Environment.

The GBV AoR Help Desk

The GBV AoR Helpdesk is a technical research, analysis, and advice service for humanitarian practitioners working on GBV prevention and response in emergencies at the global, regional and country level. GBV AoR Helpdesk services are provided by a roster of GBViE experts, with oversight from Social Development Direct. Efforts are made to ensure that Helpdesk queries are matched to individuals and networks with considerable experience in the query topic. However, views or opinions expressed in GBV AoR Helpdesk Products do not necessarily reflect those of all members of the GBV AoR, nor of all the experts of SDDirect's Helpdesk roster.

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The GBViE Helpdesk is available 09.30- 17.30 GMT, Monday to Friday.