

TIP SHEET

3

Integrating economic interventions with GBV prevention and response

- **Economic deprivation is linked to gender-based violence in many ways,** including:
 - **Poverty of GBV survivors can exacerbate trauma and impact recovery:** Persons experiencing gender-based violence are also often experiencing economic deprivation, which can exacerbate trauma, limit support and prevent access to services. GBV also impacts survivors' ability to earn.
 - **Economic deprivation makes women, girls and boys especially vulnerable to GBV,** including intimate partner violence and other forms of GBV such as commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, early marriage.
 - **Economic stress is known to be a key risk factor for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).** Unemployment and other economic deprivation increase the stress in a household which often manifests in increased violence by men against their women intimate partners.
 - **Changing economic status of women can increase IPV.** Violence against women can increase when traditional gender norms that men are primary breadwinners and women are meant to be financially dependent on men in their families are threatened. (For instance, in many displaced households, women are compelled to work outside of their homes for the first time and men may not find satisfactory employment and this could exacerbate violence).

GBV must be understood in the economic context of the survivors

Most of the humanitarian and development contexts that the SDC works in involve low-income communities with severe underemployment. Although economic deprivation might manifest differently for women, men, children, young people and old people, entire households are affected. And poverty and economic stress in households is exacerbated through political and economic crisis, and in conflict and post-conflict settings.

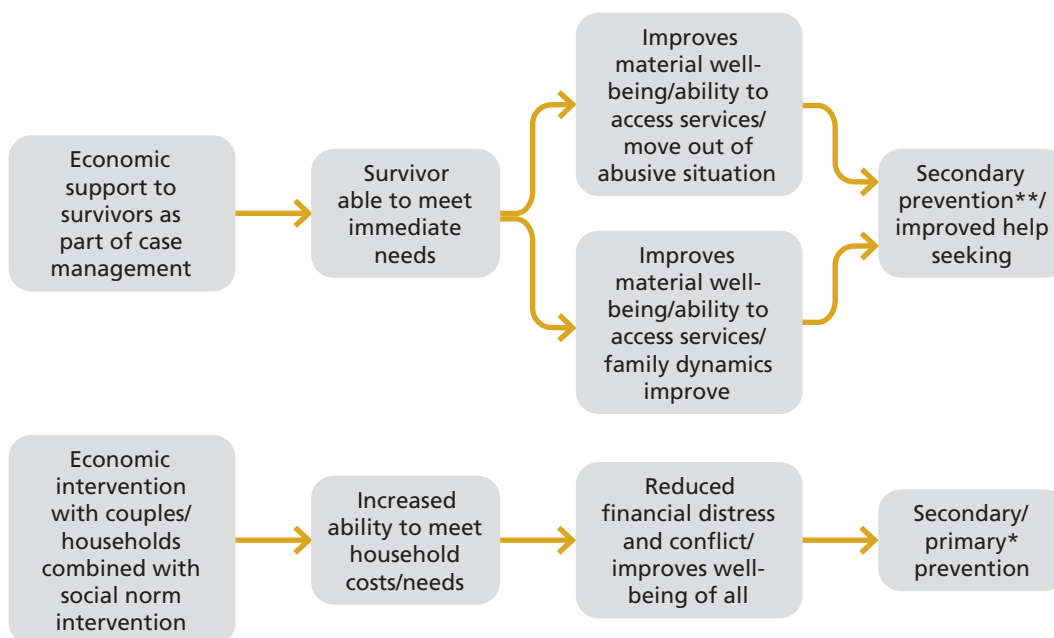
- **Linking GBV survivors with economic opportunities supports empowerment and resilience**
- **Addressing economic deprivation is an important part of GBV prevention and response efforts.**
 - **Promote the economic well-being of households.** While focusing on improving women's economic well-being, consider addressing economic well-being of entire households in consultation with women. Sometimes providing economic opportunities only to women and not their spouses can have adverse effects on women, with IPV increasing.

- **Economic interventions with entire households can reduce gender-based violence.**
 - When women have an equal say in decisions on the type of economic project (business, enterprise, etc.) and on the use of income that is generated.
 - When economic interventions are accompanied by critical reflections among participants on gender inequality, norms and family dynamics.

Economic interventions are an effective entry point for engaging with men on GBV

Engaging and retaining men's interest in discussions on gender norms and violence has been challenging for GBV projects. Facilitators report that men are not interested and/or perceive these discussions as "against them"; even if they are open to discussions, they often focus on economic problems in their lives. Some GBV actors therefore looked at ways in which men's own concerns might be addressed as an end in itself, as well as a means to engage with them on social norm change. These projects have had success with mobilizing and retaining men's interest and show encouraging potential for reducing GBV.

Evidence shows pathways on how economic interventions can reduce gender-based violence



*Primary prevention: preventing violence before it occurs

**Secondary prevention: preventing recurrence of violence

Source: Adapted from Julienne Corboz' presentation at the SDC, December 2022.

? — Essential questions to ask when integrating economic and GBV prevention and response interventions

1 — How is critical reflection on social/gender norms integrated in the economic intervention?

Emerging evidence indicates that where economic interventions are accompanied by facilitation of critical reflections on social/gender norms and family dynamics, gender-based violence can be reduced. Some GBV actors have developed curricula for such reflections as part of their training programmes for the economic intervention. For example, a training session on financial management with men and women can include an analysis of management of household finances and unpaid care work – who manages, who controls, who contributes? Such reflections with male and female participants can also be included in skills development training courses, for example as part of the life skills component. These discussions can be effective entry points to facilitate reflections on discrimination and inequality. Some organisations have now tested such interventions with encouraging results.



While reviewing the social component of economic development projects, check if:

- Sufficient time is allocated for the intervention to show results – although the training sessions on economic components and social norms last from a couple of weeks to a year, a project cycle of 2 years as a minimum should be calculated, including preparatory time for training of facilitators and hand-holding support after training is completed.
- Social interventions involving intimate partners/households is labeled appropriately – it is recommended that the intervention be packaged as “family well-being” sessions or other such non-threatening label.
- The curriculum has been tested, evaluated and adapted for the context with feedback from women’s organisations.
- Sufficient attention is paid to training and mentoring of local facilitators.

Example of working with couples in economic project to address GBV

Indashyikirwa (Agents of Change), Rwanda, Great Lakes Region and now in Syria

Developed by CARE Rwanda in partnership with two Rwandese NGOs: Rwanda Men's Resource Centre and Rwanda Women's Network. Has also been implemented successfully in the SDC project in the Great Lakes Region since 2012. Presently being adapted by the FCDO for implementation in Syria.

Context: IPV, conflict, post conflict

Interventions: with women, couples, community

- Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) for adult women, now used as entry point for GBV intervention
- Curriculum (21 sessions, over 5 months) with couples to support gender equitable, non-violent relationships – emphasis on power (power over, power to, power within, power with), critical reflection, and moving from knowledge to attitudes to skills to action. Includes content on sources of triggers of IPV (e.g. disagreements about money, jealousy, men's use of alcohol)
- Community activism – subset of couples trained to support community activism (drawing from SASA!) over two years
- Women's safe spaces for GBV support, referrals for survivors and training for income generation
- Training and engaging opinion leaders to support an enabling environment for IPV prevention and response

Results: Significant reduction of IPV among couples participating in the curriculum (including economic IPV).

Source: What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls (2019). [Impact of Indashyikirwa: An innovative programme to reduce partner violence in rural Rwanda](#). Evidence Brief August 2019.

Example of working with in-laws in economic development project to address GBV

Zindagii Shoista ("Living with Dignity"), Tajikistan

Developed by International Alert, Cesvi and 3 local partners: ATO, Farodis and Zanoni Sharq. Adapted from the Stepping Stones and Creating Futures intervention. Also adapted and implemented as Sammanit Jeevan in Nepal.

Context: IPV and domestic violence from in-laws, husbands migrated to Russia

Interventions: with women, in-laws

- Social empowerment – 11 curriculum sessions on building gender equity, respect and intra-household communication, and reducing violence
- Economic empowerment – 12 sessions to build understanding of women's contribution to household economy, strengthen financial management skills (budgeting, spending, saving), develop a concept for Income Generation Activities (IGA), training in business skills, provision of materials and assets to start IGAs

Results: At 30 months, VAWG levels had dropped by 50%, and relationship and gender equality indicators had improved. Significant positive changes were seen for all socio-economic status indicators as well as significant positive changes for all health measures, including depression scale and suicidality.

Source: Mastonshoeva, S.; Myrntinen, H.; Chirwa, E.; Shonasimova, S.; Gulyamova, P.; Shai, N. & Jewkes, R. (2020). [Evaluation of Zindagii Shoista \(Living with Dignity\), an intervention to prevent violence against women in Tajikistan: impact after 30 months](#), What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls.

For more information on the content of these training programmes see [Tip sheet 2: GBV prevention – critical reflection and collective action](#).

2 — How does the economic intervention include spouses/partners and other family members?

Emerging evidence shows that including spouses and other members of the household, (such as in-laws in contexts where multi-generational families live together), in economic interventions provides a good opportunity to engage in discussions related to family dynamics. This improves intra-household relationships and ultimately reduces domestic and intimate partner violence. SDC-funded projects that seek to integrate economic interventions with GBV prevention and response should explore a whole family/household approach in consultation with women/women's organisations. See page 4 for examples of sessions conducted with women, their spouses and family members in such integrated models.

Example of GBV project including family members for economic interventions

In an SDC-funded GBV project implemented by the IRC in Jordan, survivors referred to the IRC's economic development unit were able to make a substantial addition to the household budget from the economic intervention. Seeing the economic benefit of the activities, husbands started to join their wives, the economic activity came to be regarded as "family" business and the project started to encourage such an approach because it positively contributed to a change of family dynamics.

Source: Chaujar, P., Weyermann, B. (2022). Light-touch review of SDC-funded GBViE project in the MENA region. SDC, Berne.



While reviewing economic development/livelihood programmes, ask:

- Does the economic intervention meaningfully improve the financial situation of the survivor/family? Are earnings from the intervention substantially contributing to covering living costs?
- How does the economic intervention include spouse/other family members, such as in-laws, (to influence family dynamics contributing to domestic violence/IPV) and/or other women members of the household in small business development projects?
 - Did the implementing organisation consult with women to understand their specific context and to identify which members of the household should be included in the economic interventions?
 - Will the survivors/their families be able to sustain the income generating activity after the project support ends?
 - Does the project address women's disproportionate household and childcare responsibilities, which can affect their participation in and benefitting from the economic intervention?
 - In an economic project addressing men, check whether it would make sense to include female family members in the business?

Child care for working women

The IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action lists provision of childcare services as part of humanitarian action as good practice in ensuring that women can participate in and benefit from economic empowerment interventions.

Source: IASC (2018). [Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action](#).

3 — How does an economic development project ensure that GBV survivors participating in activities have access to GBV response services?

Persons at risk of GBV or persons already experiencing GBV might be among participants of economic interventions. They must have access to GBV response services. SDC-supported projects must link GBV survivors with response services. See [Tip sheet 1: Multisectoral GBV response services](#).



Check the following:

- Have GBV service providers in the project locations been identified? How is the project connecting survivors with these services? Do they have a protocol for referrals?
- Does the project keep track of how the GBV services treat the survivor and how she/they benefit from it?
- What does the project intend to do if the quality of the GBV referral services is not sufficient?

Economic development projects can also include a contribution to strengthen GBV response services in project locations by funding a technical agency for capacity support and mentoring, providing financial support to service providers, and working with local authorities to institutionalise funding and technical support for GBV response services.

4 — How does a GBV project link with a project on economic interventions?

GBV survivors must be referred to livelihood support as part of the multi-sectoral response. SDC-supported GBV projects should be linked with existing livelihoods/ economic development projects.



While reviewing such linkages, check the following:

- Does the livelihood/economic development project enable participants to gain sufficient income – avoid linking survivors to schemes that are not economically viable?
- How do the two projects collaborate on individual cases of GBV survivors who are referred from one project to the other?

- Does the economic project team understand the specific needs and vulnerabilities of GBV survivors who are/might be participating in their interventions? If not, can they be trained or mentored, to avoid singling out GBV survivors and increasing the risk of stigma, and to ensure confidentiality for the survivors?

References and further readings

Training modules used for social norm change and economic empowerment

Zindagii Shoista – Living With Dignity: Workshop Manual Part 1, developed by International Alert and others.

Couples Curriculum Training Module used in Indashyikirwa model developed by CARE in Rwanda and others.

Program Implementation Manual Economic And Social Empowerment (Ea\$E) model developed by IRC.

Impact assessments of economic interventions integrated with GBV Prevention and Response

Mastonshoeva, S.; Myrtilinen, H.; Chirwa, E.; Shonasimova, S.; Gulyamova, P.; Shai, N. & Jewkes, R. (2020). Evaluation of Zindagii Shoista (Living with Dignity), an intervention to prevent violence against women in Tajikistan: impact after 30 months, What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls.

Evidence on impact of EA\$E model of IRC in Burundi: IRC (2011): Getting down to business: Women's economic and social empowerment in Burundi.

What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls (2019). Impact of Indashyikirwa: An innovative programme to reduce partner violence in rural Rwanda. Evidence Brief August 2019.

Good practice compilation of interventions where gender transformative approaches are integrated in economic intervention projects

FAO, IFAD and WFP. 2020. Gender transformative approaches for food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture – A compendium of fifteen good practices. Rome.