

PREVENTION FOUNDATIONS—REFRESHER



In this topic, we will cover where mitigation fits in the prevention-to-response continuum.

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WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) RISK MITIGATION?



- Term first popularised in the context of humanitarian emergencies
- Refers to efforts to reduce exposure to GBV during environmental and/or conflict-related crises, especially risks of violence resulting directly from humanitarian response
- Includes identifying the ways that humanitarian programmes may increase opportunities for violence against women, children, and gender minorities, and taking action to minimise those risks.

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WHAT DOES MITIGATION MEAN IN PRACTICE?

Think about an educational programme that is operating a secondary school for girls in a conflict-affected setting.

Mitigating GBV risks in this programme would include identifying:

- What risks are associated with the programme?
- What strategies can mitigate these risks?



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Risks associated with the programme: for example, the school may be located along an insecure route or may require a long commute, which can expose girls to sexual harassment, sexual assault, or abduction by armed groups.

Risk mitigation strategies: for example, conducting a safety mapping activity with teachers and students to identify insecure areas in and around the school, ensuring safe passage to and from school through ‘walking buses’ and safety patrols, and training teachers and staff in emergency safety protocols in case the school is attacked.

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WHAT DOES MITIGATION MEAN IN PRACTICE?

Examples of other mitigation strategies in humanitarian settings include:

- Consulting women on the location and design of latrines, washing facilities, and water sources so they are convenient and safe to use.
- Providing biomass stoves so women do not have to walk through unsafe routes to get firewood.
- Providing cash and voucher assistance to women to meet their basic needs and reduce the risk of sexual exploitation in exchange for necessities.



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HOW DOES MITIGATION DIFFER FROM PREVENTION?



While **mitigation** focuses on reducing risks that may arise from humanitarian emergencies and programmes, **prevention** focuses on addressing the underlying causes of violence to stop violence before it starts or reduce its frequency and severity.

For example:

- Ensuring adequate lighting in communal areas in a refugee camp is an example of a risk mitigation strategy.
- Mobilising trained community activists and leaders in a refugee camp to transform gender inequitable norms and attitudes that condone violence is an example of a prevention strategy.

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While there are overlaps between mitigation and prevention, the key message is that mitigation works alongside prevention and response to address violence.

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HOW CAN WE APPLY MITIGATION PRINCIPLES OUTSIDE THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD?

Mitigation is a useful concept that can be applied to programming outside the humanitarian field.

Think about a government that is investing in a road construction project in a rural community.

- What risks are associated with the programme?
- What strategies can mitigate these risks?



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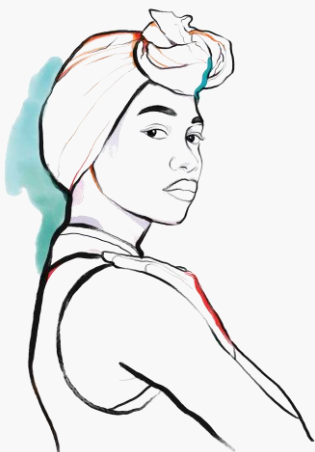


Risks associated with the project: for example, the project attracts a large number of transient male workers from outside the community, which puts local women at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Risk mitigation strategies: for example, creating a code of conduct for contractors and staff prohibiting sexual harassment and sexual exploitation; developing a safe complaints and reporting mechanism for victimised employees and community members; implementing prevention programming in affected communities; and conducting periodic interviews with project staff and beneficiaries to identify problematic behaviours proactively, without having to rely on victim reporting.

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Here's another example: Think about an organisation that is designing a women's economic empowerment programme to prevent IPV.

- What risks are associated with the programme?
- What strategies can mitigate these risks?

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Risks associated with the programme: for example, in some settings, male partners may feel threatened by women's economic empowerment, and the programme could unintentionally increase household tensions and the risk of IPV.

Risk mitigation strategies: for example, ensuring that men and family members understand the programme and how it could benefit the household, informing women of potential risks, and establishing mechanisms to detect any escalation in violence.

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