



GBV Sub-Sector (GBVSS) Monthly Meeting Minutes - July 2025

Date	16 July, 2025	Venue: ISCG Conference Room, Cox's Bazar Office
Meeting Modality	In-Person	Time: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Chair	Annie Waweru, GBVSS Coordinator	Preparation of Minutes: GBVSS Coordination Team
Partner's present	<p>Number of Participants: The total number of participants is 42 (Male:09 , Female:33).</p> <p>Representative Organizations: WFP, DRC, ECHO-EU, Bandhu Social Welfare Society, World Vision Bangladesh, Mukti Cox's Bazar, RWWS, FIVDB, CARE, UNHCR, ICRC, UN Women, CBM Global, Caritas BD, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, GUK, Nari Maitree, Action Aid Bangladesh, AID-Comilla, BRAC, Good Neighbors Bangladesh, PHD, IRC, COAST Foundation, Save the Children International, Educo, GIZ, MHPSS WG, GiHA WG, PSEA Network, Protection Sector, CPSS, GBVSS</p>	
Agenda & Discussion	<p><u>Welcome & Greetings:</u> Annie Waweru, GBVSS Coordinator, opened the meeting by greeting all participants and inviting introductions. She highlighted the critical role each member plays in advancing the GBV Sub-Sector's collective efforts and emphasized the value of their continued engagement.</p> <p><u>Agenda:</u></p> <p>1. <u>GBVSS Updates:</u></p> <p>A. <u>Field Observation Updates:</u> NFC-GBVSS shared the field-level observations based on information gathered through field-level meetings and consultations findings held in June 2025. The observations are provided as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incidents of femicide and homicide have been reported across several camps, reflecting the severe violence women face within their homes. Triggers include financial disputes and substance abuse. In one of the reported incidents, a woman was killed and another gravely injured due to issues linked to gambling or the refusal to relinquish personal belongings. These incidents have left children in distress and without stable parental care. ● Online gambling and gaming have emerged as contributing factors to GBV in the camps. Women are facing different forms of GBV and even attempted murder, husbands demanding money or valuables to repay gambling debts. The sale of gambling women's jewelry and food rations has become common, and in extreme cases, gambling their shelters further exacerbating risks for women and children. Some members of the host community are reportedly facilitating this trend by renting out phones and providing internet access, enabling the gambling. This is fueling domestic violence, deepening financial strain, and significantly increasing the risks faced by women and girls. ● suicide and suicidal ideations linked to emotional distress and social pressures. A young woman reportedly consumed poison following a conflict with her husband and co-wife. In another case, a teenage girl committed suicide after being physically abused and forced into child marriage. Additionally, a young man committed suicide after being denied the right to marry the person he loved, with his family arranging for a different partner. ● Cyber violence/ Technology Facilitated GBV has increased and with new tactics specifically targeting women and girls. Perpetrators are more frequently using digital platforms to share explicit photos and recorded videos of survivors and even demand sexual favors in exchange, heightening the risks and psychological impact on survivors. ● Women have reported that Community leaders are actively involved in case mediation often receiving money from perpetrators to influence outcomes. These groups have also allegedly threatened survivors seeking formal services, and some survivors opt for them for quicker resolutions. ● Theft has become a growing concern in the camps, with tarpaulin shelters being easily cut into, allowing for the theft of valuables such as cash, gas cylinders, and utensils. These break-ins often escalate to harassment, 	



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as intruders peek inside or attempt to enter shelters at night, leaving women feeling unsafe, vulnerable, and exposed.

Feedback and Discussion:

The GBVSS Coordinator, reiterated the growing concern around technology-facilitated GBV. She appreciated the active participation of GBVSS partners, including GBV Camp Focal Points, in the webinar on cyber violence held on Monday, 14 July 2025, which had a total of 138 participants. The session was facilitated by UNFPA's TFGBV staff - Abu Syed Sumon, who will share the resource package and IEC materials for broader circulation among GBVSS members.

During the discussion, the GBVSS Coordinator, alongside Phunke—from the MHPSS Working Group, highlighted the critical intersection between GBV and mental health, citing recent suicidal cases that reflect this linkage. She further emphasized the need for organizations to exercise caution during volunteer recruitment processes, noting a recent femicide case involving a volunteer as the perpetrator.

- B. Membership review (5W, Facility Mapping):** The GBVSS Coordinator, stressed the need for active engagement and accountability among the 54 GBVSS member organizations. She reminded partners of their commitments under the GBVSS Terms of Reference (ToR), reviewed and endorsed in Q4 2024. As per the ToR, partners failure to share key reports—such as 5W reports and service & facility mapping—for three consecutive months may lead to membership review or discontinuation. By 16th July , 31 partners had not submitted their June 2025 5W reports, Nineteen partners had not submitted reports for April, May, and June. In addition, 20 partners missed both Q1 and Q2 service mapping, while 22 failed to submit Q2 data by the 8 July deadline. She highlighted that if partners do not implement activities or share relevant data, GBVSS cannot recommend or reflect partners' contributions to donors or coordination platforms like the JRP. She urged partners—especially JRP appealing—to revisit the ToR and to monitor their own performance and that of their implementing partners using the reporting status [link](#) and to regularly check the [5W dashboard](#) on the GBVSS website. She also noted that regular reporting must be accompanied by accurate data. GBVSS reviews and cleans data monthly to avoid repeating challenges faced last year, when reported achievements exceeded targets. The Coordinator concluded that all partners should share any required inputs at least on the expected dates. . This call was reinforced by the EU representative, who emphasized the need for stronger coordination moving forward.
- C. Emergency Preparedness & Response:** The GBVSS Coordinator highlighted that during emergencies, ensuring availability, access, and safety of GBV services is critical— and especially during the monsoon season when multiple GBV risks may occur. These include heightened sexual violence and exploitation in overcrowded or poorly lit temporary shelters, disrupted access to lifesaving services due to damaged infrastructure and impassable roads, increased household stress leading to spikes in intimate partner violence, and greater challenges in referring survivors during flooding or relocation. She also reminded the participants of the key documents and tools shared the previous week to support emergency preparedness and response efforts, including:
- [Community GBV Messages for Camp Focal Points](#) Guidance for GBV focal points to coordinate prevention and response activities at the community level.
 - [Preparedness Messages for GBVSS Members](#): Guidance for members on GBV prevention, response, and risk mitigation during emergencies.
 - [List of Emergency Communal Relocation Centers](#) Information on temporary shelters for women, girls, men, and boys
 - [GBV Risk Monitoring Tool](#): A tool for collecting data on emerging GBV risks during the emergency
 - [Dignity Kit Guidance Note](#): guidance on the pre and post distribution of Dk
 - [Prepositioned Dignity Kits](#) : An overview of available kits in the field and agency contacts for rapid distribution during emergencies.



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- [Damaged/Flooded GBV Facility Tracker](#): A monitoring tool to identify inaccessible facilities and redirect survivors to operational sites to ensure continuity of services.
- [GBV Referral Pathway](#): Clear guidance on referral points for survivors to access appropriate services during emergencies.

D. Q3 2025 planned activities: The GBV Sub-Sector (GBVSS) Coordinator provided an overview of the following Planned/proposed activities for Quarter 3:

- **Workshop with CiCs on GBV Prevention and Risk Mitigation,**
- **Training on Psychological First Aid (PFA) for PERU Officers (CP/GBV/Protection)** will be conducted with support from the MHPSS Working Group. **GBV Multi-Sectoral Training for Non-GBV Actors** conducted quarterly to ensure that all sectoral partners understand core GBV of concepts, risk mitigation, and the safe referral pathway.
- **Training on GBVIMS+/Primero for GBV Case Workers Training for Enumerators conducting the Safety Audit with the SCCCM Sector** to equip them with foundational GBV knowledge on safe and ethical data collection.
- **Workshop on Community Women's Leadership and Women-Friendly Policies** targeting GBVSS and SRH Working Group members, mostly WLOs, in collaboration with the GiHA Working Group.

E. GBVSS/ SCCCM Safety Audit Tool: The GBVSS Coordinator provided an overview of the [GBV Safety Audit tool for the SCCCM sector](#), reviewed collaboratively by the GBVSS and SCCCM sectors.. The tool is divided into three sections: the reflection and observational sections which will be conducted by SCCCM partners, while the community consultation/ FGD's section will be led by GBV actors, at the Women and Girl Friendly Spaces, . The GBVSS will notify partners once the sample size is finalized, tool updated on Kobo and enumerators trained on data collection. . The audit findings will complement the ISNA results from both sectors and recommendations adopted

2. Partner Presentation:

- A) **UN Women on Women's Economic Empowerment and IPV:** Ashraf from UN Women presented the [2024 Evidence Brief on Women's Economic Empowerment \(WEE\) and Intimate Partner Violence \(IPV\)](#) from the Prevention Collaborative, which explores the complex intersection of WEE interventions and the risk of IPV among women living with male partners. The brief highlights that the impact of WEE interventions, such as cash transfers or microfinance programs, depends not only on the intervention type but also on the reactions of male partners and the broader societal context. It recommends designing interventions that are tailored to local conditions, engaging men in the process to promote shared decision-making, and continuously monitoring the programs to ensure women's safety. Ultimately, while WEE holds promise for empowering women, its effects on IPV are complex and require careful consideration of social, cultural, and relational dynamics. The presentation can be found [here](#) and the Evidence brief [here](#).

Feedback & Discussion:

- In response to UNICEF's inquiry about whether the brief considers the refugee context, UN Women clarified that the brief incorporates data from various countries, with a specific focus on Bangladesh, where the microfinance aspects of the host community were explored.
- The Protection sector was curious to understand how Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) has impacted the situation of intimate partner violence (IPV) across different countries. UN Women responded that the evidence presented in the brief is limited in scope, as it mainly draws from a secondary literature review covering various contexts. The brief highlights both the positive and negative outcomes of WEE interventions on IPV, but it does not provide an in-depth analysis of how these interventions have played out in every individual country or specific refugee settings.



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B) **UNICEF on Child Rights Monitoring Mechanism (CRMM):** Patrick from UNICEF presented The Child Rights Monitoring Mechanism (CRMM) that provided an overview of the child protection situation in Cox's Bazar, highlighting how children in the Rohingya refugee camps are increasingly affected by armed violence and exploitation. Despite the absence of formal armed conflict, the region suffers from severe child rights violations, including recruitment for armed groups, sexual violence, abductions, attacks on educational and health facilities. Rolled out by UNICEF in 2024, the CRMM monitors, reports, and responds to these violations, drawing on a model similar to the global Monitoring & Reporting Mechanism (MRM), adapted to Bangladesh's context where violations are addressed under International Human Rights Law. The system focuses on data collection, verification, and reporting through secure channels, aiming to prevent further violations, meet children's immediate needs, and hold armed groups accountable. It encourages collaboration with local communities, stakeholders, and law enforcement to establish a robust child protection framework and strengthen the capacity for effective intervention, ensuring both immediate and long-term support for affected children. He also mentioned the two ways to report incidents:

- Confidential online Notification Form: <https://web.inform.unicef.org/x/8UEQMHja>
- Confidential generic email ID: crmmbangladesh@unicef.org

However, the online form is the more effective method. The confidentiality of the information is paramount, so it is recommended to report incidents without including identifiable information.

The presentation can be accessed [here](#).

Feedback and Discussion:

- UNFPA raised concerns about confidentiality and the GBVIMS information-sharing protocol, specifically addressing how to report incidents when there is insufficient information about the perpetrator. UNICEF emphasized the importance of maintaining strict confidentiality, recommending that incidents be reported without identifiable information. They noted that gathering more responses helps improve analysis and ensures better support, and that cases with uncertain perpetrators can be reported as "unverified."
- The GBVSS Coordinator reminded everyone about the gang rape incidents allegedly perpetrated by organized groups and how these can be reported through the mechanism, even if the survivor chooses not to pursue legal support. She also suggested that UNICEF conduct a one-hour session on the CRMM reporting mechanism during the upcoming Primero training to ensure better understanding and reporting practices.

3. Operational Updates:

Prevention Working Group (PWG): Shirin from UNHCR shared updates from the GBV Prevention Working Group, noting that the June monthly meeting took place on 24 June 2025. She confirmed that the key messages on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), translated s, have been finalized, and the GBV prevention service mapping has been updated. Development of the remaining thematic materials is currently in progress.

Case Management Working Group (CMWG): Gladys from IRC shared updates from the GBV Case Management Working Group, noting the June monthly meeting was held at AAB on 7 July 2025. Key agenda included a presentation on the CRMM by UNICEF and explored the opportunities how caseworkers can better support the mechanism; an overview of the GBV GDP Module developed by IRC with UNFPA support; and a discussion on UNHCR's safe shelter modality, focusing on referral mechanisms, challenges, and mitigation measures. The next meeting is scheduled for 4 August 2025 at the UNICEF Office.

Child Protection Sub-Sector (CPSS): Osman from the CPSS shared updates, highlighting that in June, Key Informant Interviews for Child Protection Situation Monitoring (CPSM) were completed with 230 respondents across 44 locations. The CPSM dashboard is now live, and Q2 FGDs were also conducted with active child participation. The first batch of the 4-day Caring for Child Survivors (CCS) training was delivered, with the next planned for August. The monthly CP Focal Points meeting addressed ongoing camp challenges, and on 30 June, a joint SAG meeting with GBVSS reviewed integrated CP-GBV activities, followed by a draft guideline shared for input. CPSS also finalized unit cost data collection from partners in preparation for JRP 2026.



Protection Sector (PS): Johanna from the Protection Sector shared that drafting of the Q2 Joint Protection Monitoring report is underway. She raised serious concerns about the increasing impact of gambling in the camps, which now involves a large network with master-agents and is taking a significant toll on women and girls. Reports indicate that some families have been evicted from shelters after falling into debt from gambling losses. While incidents of killings have declined due to the ongoing "Mission Harmony," other protection risks such as gatherings, abductions, and kidnappings continue. She also highlighted camp-level elections where no female positions are being selected, limiting the community's representative voice. The Protection Sector Coordinator also emphasized the need to report protection incidents and to strengthen community awareness on the risks and consequences of gambling, particularly as it also remains illegal in Bangladesh. She also reinforced that volunteers identified in this activity must be held accountable for any violations of the code of conduct. In response to CiC requests for awareness sessions on gambling, as shared by Mukti Cox's Bazar—an area outside the GBV actors' expertise—the Protection Sector, in collaboration with AAP WG, CPSS, and GBVSS, will develop key messages. The MHPSS WG will also be engaged, acknowledging gambling as an addiction and a harmful coping mechanism that would require a more structured approach. The HLP WG will share updates on the situation of new arrivals in the next meeting.

The Protection Sector Coordinator also shared that due to major 2025 funding cuts, the Sector—including CP and GBV Sub-Sectors—reprioritized activities with a 60% reduction from the original JRP appeal, and the revised plan was shared with SEG Co-Chairs and the RC. Internal consultations are underway to finalize cost ceilings by 15 August. The HLP WG finalized tools for a July assessment on new arrivals to address rental disputes. The Peace and Security Campaign was launched in Camps 4, 7, and 2E, while the ATWG held counter-trafficking sessions. Protection and Food Security Sectors also agreed to streamline referrals and clarify volunteer roles.

PSEA Network: Rajib from the PSEA Network shared key updates, including plans to ensure 100% staff coverage through structured PSEA training sessions from August to December 2025, starting on 12 August [[Training Registration Link](#)]. A volunteer training package—developed with IOM, Tdh, and ActionAid—will be rolled out across camps in Bengali. The three years strategy development workshop will be held on 6 August in Cox's Bazar with UN and NGO PSEA focal points. The 2025 Annual PSEA Survey has also been launched, with a completion deadline of 8 August [[Survey Link](#)]. All organizations are encouraged to widely promote the survey across all personnel levels.

Discussion points:

The GBVSS Coordinator inquired about staff and volunteer background checks. In response, the PSEA Network shared that under the Local/Inter-Agency Background Check system, INTERPOL has developed a concept note, which is currently under review by PSEA Network members before being submitted to the UNCT. The Network is also developing a tip sheet on safe volunteer recruitment. It was noted that most agencies in Bangladesh are not part of the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (MDS), meaning there is no shared blacklist—allowing perpetrators to potentially move between organizations undetected.

GiHA WG: Mehbuba from the GiHA Working Group shared updates from the July 15 monthly meeting, including plans for a workshop with the NGO Platform on WLO mapping and strengthening inclusion in the Rohingya response (30 July). She highlighted ongoing efforts to develop a Rapid Action Plan reflecting ISCG and GiHA priorities, upcoming joint capacity-building initiatives with GBVSS and SCCCM, and the development of a GiHA WG dashboard to showcase interventions.

4. AoB

- The **CP-GBV Integration Guideline** has been shared with the SAG for review, with the input deadline closing this week. A draft FGD questionnaire for community consultations was also shared with the SAG for their review before starting on the community consultations. The GBV SS will disseminate the **key resources**—including the GBV SOP, Strategy, ToRs, and other guidance notes—with partners, as guidance and for a



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	<p>harmonized approach when preventing and responding to GBV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GBVSS Coordinator urged partners to continue reporting any observations related to coercion in family planning or denial of aid through the FP Risk Monitoring Tool. <p><i>The detailed presentation can be found HERE.</i></p>
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Action Points

SL	Action Points	Responsible person	Progress
1	Share IPV Key messages with GBVSS team	Shirin-UNHCR	
2	Share GBV resource package (SOP, Strategy, ToRs etc)	GBVSS	
3	Review partners and send mail on the partnership status	GBVSS	
4	Share Volunteer data for PSEA Training	GBVSS members	