

ANNEX 16:

ANALYZING AND MITIGATING GENDER-SPECIFIC RISKS

Identifying gender-specific risks related to project implementation, and devising needed mitigation measures, is a key part of developing a project's gender analysis and gender equality action plan (GAP). "Gender-specific risk" refers to the potential negative consequences that a project may inadvertently cause, by exacerbating, deepening, or further entrenching gender gaps and inequalities including gender-based violence (GBV) and other human rights violations. A project's gender analysis should identify any such potential adverse impacts on gender and power dynamics, and the GAP should outline essential strategies for their prevention and mitigation. By analyzing these risks and incorporating mitigation strategies in the project's GAP, development programs can work towards promoting gender equality while preventing unintended negative consequences.

ANALYZING GENDER-SPECIFIC RISKS

Analyze how the project's activities may affect individuals of diverse gender identities, and across identified marginalized groups, based on the context of prevalent norms and existing inequalities. Identify potential unintended consequences that could arise during the project implementation by considering the full range of impacts individuals may experience, due to their own participation or that of their family or community members. Below are common types of gender-specific risks in development programming with illustrative examples:

- **Unintended use or control of resources.** Resources introduced by projects (e.g., grants, cash vouchers, physical goods) may be used in an unintended way or may come under the control of individuals other than the intended recipients. Additionally, when project staff and partners have the power to distribute valued resources, this can potentially lead to exploitative practices. **Example:** *An education program provides cash vouchers to encourage families to keep their children in school instead of having them work. However, some families may save the cash instead, to contribute to a bride price.*
- **Shifting existing gender norms and power dynamics.** By providing opportunities or resources to particular individuals or entities, a project may affect existing power dynamics in a way that may potentially threaten the position and reputation of traditional power holders. Working to shift or transform existing gender norms and power dynamics may thus introduce risks of resistance and backlash, including increased GBV. **Example:** *A cash-for-work program encourages women to work in the non-traditional field of construction. Women participants may begin to experience increased intimate partner violence, if their spouses feel threatened by their partners working with other men outside the home, or feel threatened by their partners' earning their own money.*
- **Reinforcing gender norms and power dynamics.** A project may inadvertently reinforce gender norms and power dynamics through its engagement with participants and stakeholders. Project materials or activities could reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. **Example:** *An*

economic opportunity program exacerbates women's unpaid time burden, by providing opportunities for women to work outside the home without addressing the distribution of care responsibilities.

- **Contributing to increased risk of unsafe conditions and GBV, including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) risks.** Projects may introduce new infrastructure, services, and opportunities that expose individuals to increased safety and GBV risks. **Examples:** *A humanitarian relief program introduces communal water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities in camps, introducing safety concerns for individuals in using and accessing the facilities. An economic growth activity introduces women workers into an industry dominated by men, leading to increased risk of harassment in the workplace.*
- **Context-specific risks.** Norms are context-specific; they may be affected by contexts of conflict and increased economic pressures. Projects should analyze not only the risks their activities introduce but also how the current context affects gender norms and the pressures faced by individuals. **Examples:** *During increased conflict, there may be restricted movement of women and girls due to safety concerns. On the other hand, economic pressure may promote normalization of women as primary breadwinners.*

DEVELOP A RISK MITIGATION TABLE

Using a table¹ is an optional — but recommended — way to identify risks, rate their severity, and outline mitigation strategies based on available resources, especially for conflict settings and contexts with high levels of GBV. Mitigation strategies should be added to the GAP. Refer to [Annex 15: Resources](#) for additional guidance on risk mitigation and risk management.

TABLE 16-1. RISK MITIGATION PLAN (TEMPLATE)			
PROJECT ACTIVITIES OR CONTEXT FACTORS	GENDER-SPECIFIC RISKS	RISK RATING	MITIGATION STRATEGIES
[List factors related to the project's context or activities that may have associated risks.]	[List key risks related to the project activities and context.]	[Enter: Low, Medium, or High] [This determination should be based on both <i>probability</i> and <i>severity</i> of risk]	[Describe measures to be integrated into implementation, including additional analysis, if applicable.]
EXAMPLE <i>Trainings to improve girls' and young women's job opportunities</i>	<i>Sexual harassment at the workplace</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>All employment partners to sign code of conduct. Complaints and grievance mechanism for SEA established.</i>
	<i>Girls at higher risk of violence on the way to work</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Any payments to interns or trainees to be remitted electronically or in a safe location.</i>

¹ This illustrative table was modeled on USAID's [Activity-Level Climate Risk Management Summary Table](#) (p. 15).