Chapter 2: Information Management and Gender-Based Violence

The Gender Based Violence
Information Management System



USER GUIDE



Chapter 2: Information Management and Gender-Based Violence

MAIN IDEAS

- Good quality data is vital to organizations and agencies in order to make informed decisions, take appropriate action and improve the humanitarian response to GBV.
- GBV-related data is always sensitive. The management of that data is complex and requires that systems and safeguards be in place to ensure data security and the safety of everyone involved.
- As data is compiled and shared during the information management process, the quantity and specificity of the data shared at each level should decrease.
- The GBV Information Management System is a set of 4 tools designed to to improve Gender-Based Violence prevention, response and coordination in humanitarian context by:
 - o standardizing management of GBV-related data
 - o automatically generating high-quality GBV incident statistics and reports for analysis
 - o developing the capacity and context for safe and ethical sharing of incident data between humanitarian actors
- Once you have finished reading this chapter you should refer to your printed copy of the user guide workbook and do all the activities associated with Chapter 2.

KEY TERMS

Information management: The manner in which an organization's information is handled or controlled. Includes different stages of processing information including: collection, storage, analysis and reporting/sharing.

Relevant data: Data that can be used for accurate and appropriate data analysis. The tendency is for people to collect more information than they can use, and in a level of detail that limits its utility to produce general statistics and meaningful data analysis.

Standardization: The process of creating consistency or regularity. One main purpose of the GBVIMS is to standardize data collection so that information can be meaningfully compiled and analyzed within and between GBV service providers.

Data Analysis: is the process by which data or information is aggregated and summarized for presentation.

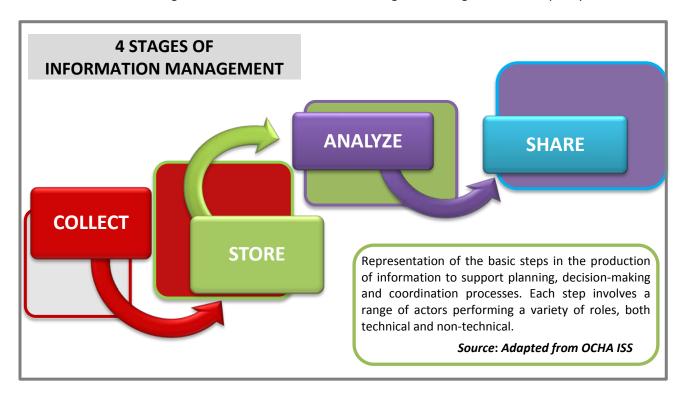
Data Points: The specific types or fields of data that will be collected.

The Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) and this user guide focus on the following main aspects of information management: *collection, storage, analysis* and *sharing of data*. Anyone involved in any of these activities is participating in the information management process.

GBV information management: data collection, analysis, storage and sharing

Information management, (sometimes called data management) covers all the various stages of information processing from collection to storage, analysis to reporting. Information can be from internal and external sources and in any format (paper forms, data, electronic files, verbal reports & graphical representations. Effective information management enables organizations and agencies to:

- capture, manage, store, safe-guard and share the right information with the right people at the right time to improve programming and overall humanitarian response
- improve the speed and accuracy of information delivered, creating a shared frame of reference that enables decision makers to co-ordinate and plan response programming based on best available knowledge of needs and a clear understanding of each organization's capacity.



Information management is extremely important in the field of gender-based violence (GBV). Currently, there is a lack of timely and reliable data on the nature and scope of GBV. This makes the data that service providers do collect extremely important and sought after it also puts pressure on service providers to make sure this data is of high quality and handled appropriately.

This section introduces the four main aspects of information management within the GBV context.

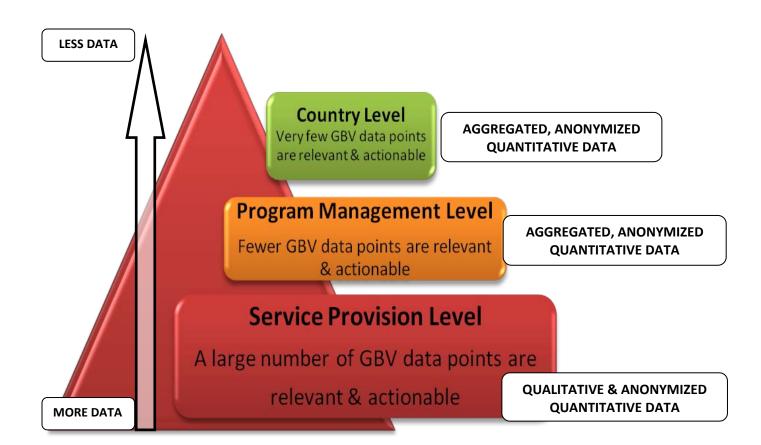
 Data collection—Data collection is the processes by which data is gathered or obtained. When GBV survivors seek support from your organization, an important aspect of your work is to collect relevant, accurate information regarding the survivor and the incident. The primary concern of service providers should be the immediate well-being of survivors; therefore, you should only collect data that meets the needs of your clients and to offer them appropriate services.

- 2. Data storage—All data throughout the information management process should be stored properly, whether the data is stored in paper form or in an electronic database. The sensitive nature of GBV data and the potential harm that could happen if the data were misused makes it extremely important for service providers to store data in a manner that ensures the safety of the survivor, the community and those collecting the data.
- 3. **Data analysis**—Data by itself is not very useful. Once collected, data must be analyzed in order to understand what the information is actually saying. Data analysis allows us to make sense of the data, extract meaning from it and then draw informed conclusions. Properly analyzing high-quality GBV data has several benefits at the organizational level. It can enable your agency to:
 - a. Understand the trends and patterns of reported incidents within your organization
 - b. Make more informed decisions regarding your interventions
 - c. Plan for future action
 - d. Improve the overall effectiveness of your GBV programs and service provision
- 4. **Data sharing** Just as data can be compiled and analyzed at the *organizational level*, shared data can be compiled from various sources (different organizations & agencies) to generate data that can be analyzed at the *inter-agency level*. Since multiple providers often operate in the same area and provide services to the same client population, the ability to produce high quality GBV data that can be safely shared and analyzed at the inter-agency level is a key step towards ensure a proper, and coordinated, response.

The sensitivity of GBV information requires that clear guidelines and information sharing agreements are in place to make sure that safe and ethical data sharing can take place between viable agencies, organizations and institutions. Inter-agency data sharing agreements must take into account not only what information is being shared but also at what levels different types of information is shared. As information works its way through the information management process, the amount and specificity of data being collected, compiled and analyzed decreases. For example, the thorough and detailed information collected in case notes and intake forms by a service provider is important to ensure that the client receives the best care possible, but as this information moves further away from the individual and their case management and more towards compiled data for analysis, that level of detailed information is no longer necessary or appropriate for the purpose it is now serving. In general, not all GBV data that you collect will be equally pertinent on all levels of analysis. In fact, fewer and fewer data points will be relevant and necessary. See diagram below.

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¹ The constant italicized 'reported' throughout the user guide is to emphasize the fact that GBVIMS only considers incidents that have been reported to service providers. This means, therefore, that GBVIMS data should not be considered or used as prevalent data, or data that represents the total number of GBV incidents in an area.



Challenges with GBV information management

While it is easy to see the importance of having proper information management methods, implementing and maintaining them within an organization is challenging. The following table outlines some of the challenges confronting organizations at the various stages of information management:

Stage of information management	Challenges with GBV information management	
Collection	Lack of clarity regarding what data is appropriate to collect from clients and for what purpose	
	Lack of standardization in what data is collected and how, both within organizations and between organizations	
	Human error while recording data on intake forms	
Storage	Client files and GBV data are not stored with adequate precautions to protect client anonymity and safety	
	Appropriate precautions such as anti-virus and backing up database files are not taken, making loss of stored electronic data common	
	Staff are unaware of appropriate procedures for destroying or relocating client files that have been closed or must be secured during an emergency evacuation	
Analysis	Staff at all levels struggle with how to: compile data, present data in a meaningful way, and analyze data	
	Limited experience with computers prevents many staff from using information entered into a database	
	Staff are not accustomed or trained to use data to inform service delivery, programming and the wider humanitarian response	
	Calculating GBV data by hand is very time intensive, leaving little time for the resulting statistics to be analyzed.	
Sharing	Sensitive information is shared without taking into account the necessary ethical and safety considerations, putting the anonymity and safety of GBV survivors, their communities and services providers at risk	
	Requests for information are made without a clear explanation of why the data is needed and how it will be used	
	Quantity of data tends to be prioritized over the quality and usefulness of the data being shared	
	Client files are often expected to be automatically shared as routine reporting versus strictly within the confines of a referral and with client consent	
	Client consent regarding the use of his/her data is often overlooked	
	Lack of standardization in GBV terminology, data collection tools and incident type classification across services providers undermines the quality of data aggregated between service providers	
All stages	Maintaining standards in information management in the face of high staff turnover	

The challenges described above have the following impact on the humanitarian response to GBV:

- Humanitarian workers do not have access to complete and reliable picture of the GBV incidents being reported in their context, which hinders their ability to advocate, coordinate and plan
- The potential for collected data to inform program decisions for effective GBV prevention and care for survivors is compromised.
- Unsafe and unethical information sharing practices are too common; GBV service providers may
 not recognize these bad-practices which can result in ineffective coordination relationships
 between key stakeholders due to tensions raised around these issues.
- The overall multi-sectoral response to GBV in humanitarian contexts is diminished by the many obstacles created from the existing inconsistencies across common GBV data management and information sharing practices.

EXAMPLE

The RHRC's report dealing with GBV programs over the course of five years and within 12 different countries describes some of the challenges organizations face with GBV information management:

"Obtaining data and reports was the first challenge. The GBV TA [Technical Advisor] found that none of the headquarters of organizations that serve refugees had one place where GBV incident report data was maintained and used to guide program planning and development...

Comparison of the data was difficult because definitions of the different types of GBV vary from country to country and even from field site to field site within a country. *Sexual harassment* in one site might be *sexual abuse* or *sexual exploitation* in another...

Another problem was the inconsistency in forms and formats that field sites use to document incidents. The report from the 2001 "SGBV Lessons Learned Conference" in Geneva recommended a universal Incident Report Form, but its use is not universal. Some sites do not document GBV incidents on the Incident Report Form; others complete Incident Report Forms only for rape and sexual assault. Some sites document certain types of GBV incidents in log books, which do not contain the same detailed information called for by the Incident Report Forms.

Data compilation itself is scarce, spotty, or nonexistent. Many sites lack monthly data reports on the number and type of incidents. Some sites compile data in great detail from time to time, but do not have systematic methods for data compilation; therefore, the compilation is extremely time-consuming and occurs only intermittently. Others collect data, but have not yet developed systems for compilation and analysis. One site had a collection of incident reports spanning almost three years, but they remained unused in a file drawer.

GBV staff are generally aware of the types and extent of GBV incidents being reported, but have very few, if any, hard numbers with which to monitor and evaluate their work. GBV programs seem to be guided by qualitative, subjective information and impressions. Although qualitative information is perfectly acceptable, most programs did not have consistent systems for collecting, compiling, and analyzing it."

Vann, B. (2002) "Gender-Based Violence: Emerging Issues in Programs Serving Displaced Populations." RHRC:53-54.

The Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS)

The Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) was originally launched in 2006 by UNOCHA, UNHCR, and the IRC. Since then, UNFPA, UNHCR and IRC has counted on technical guidance from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action throughout the development of the GBVIMS. The GBVIMS was created to harmonize GBV data produced through service delivery in humanitarian settings. The GBVIMS enables humanitarian actors who are responding to GBV to safely collect, store and analyze reported GBV incident data, and facilitate the safe and ethical sharing of reported GBV incident data.

The GBVIMS offers:

- 1. A simple and efficient process for GBV service providers to collect, store, analyze and share their incident data
- 2. A standardized approach to data collection for GBV service providers
- 3. A confidential, safe and ethical approach to sharing anonymous incident data on *reported* cases of GBV

The intention of the system is to assist the GBV community to better understand the GBV cases being *reported* by enabling service providers to more easily generate high quality GBV incident data across their programs, properly analyze that data and safely share it with other agencies for broader trends analysis and improved GBV coordination.

The GBVIMS is made up of four major tools:

1. **GBV Classification Tool**—When a GBV incident is reported, the individual providing services collects and records many important pieces of information relating to the incident, survivor and services being provided. At some point the caseworker will use this information to determine what type of GBV the incident involved and classify the reported incident accordingly. Despite being a routine part of most service providers' work, the GBV community has long struggled with what types of GBV should be used, how these types of GBV should be defined and how can they be applied consistently across individuals, organizations and contexts. The variation in incident classification has made compiling GBV data difficult, hindered information sharing and undermined coordination efforts. The GBV Classification Tool standardizes GBV terminology by using a set of six core GBV types and definitions. It also standardizes how incidents are classified by using a process of elimination to determine the most precise GBV type that occurred during the reported Gender-Based Violence Classification Tool:

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The humanistic community has not been able to collect, classify and analysis condend-based Violence (00V) - related information in a way that produces compression and classics. A present, it a new proposition to confide and analysis data across programs and LIA Proputation Fund (00FPV), the thermational fraction. A present it a new proposition to confide and engineering the classification to discrete the the URI High Commissioner for Religious (10HcCPT) has developed an energy of an experiment of the URI High Commissioner for Religious (10HcCPT) has developed an energy of the classification to discrete the the URI High Commissioner for Religious (10HcCPT) has developed an energy of the classification to discrete the the URI High Commissioner for Religious (10HcCPT) has developed an energy of the classification of the specific of the classification to discrete the third propriet of the classification to discrete the third propriet of the classification of the specific of the control of control, specification the classification of the specific of the control, separate from the control of the specific of the control of the control of the specific of the specific of the control of the co

incident. For more information regarding the classification tool, please refer to Chapter 3.

2. **Intake and Consent Forms**—Since most organizations determine individually and independently what data they will be collecting from survivors and how to define that data, the format, content and quality of the resulting GBV-related data varies greatly from one organization to another. This

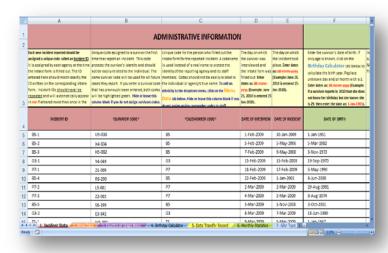
variation makes compiling and analyzing data from different service providers extremely difficult. The intake form is a template to be used by individuals providing services to GBV survivors reporting an incident. It contains fields collecting non-identifiable information on the survivor, referral type, incident, alleged perpetrator, planned action, and initial assessments. It is an easy-to-use form that is intended to be adjusted and modified to meet the needs and context of each service provider.

In addition to the intake form is the 'Consent for Release of Information.' This form provides survivors the right to control whether information about their case is shared with other agencies or individuals, for what purpose, and in what format. The consent form should be explained to the survivor at the beginning of the meeting with the client and filled out after referrals have been discussed and given. The consent form should never be attached directly to the intake

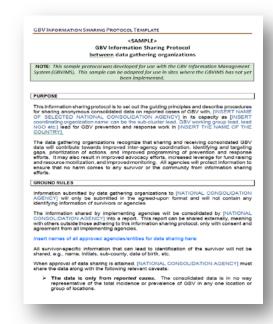
form. It should always be stored separately to ensure client confidentiality.

3. Incident Recorder (IR)—Once data has been collected using the intake form, service providers can input the data into the Incident Recorder. The IR is an Excel spreadsheet that acts as a database for compiling and storing collected GBV data. It contains customizable dropdown lists to decrease input

errors and the amount of time to it takes to enter data. As data is entered, the IR will automatically generate calculated data for trend analyses as well as monthly statistics reports, data tables and charts to allow users to instantly search, utilize and analyze their GBV data. The fields of the IR correspond directly with the fields of the intake form to make data input quick and easy. The IR is password protected and contains only de-identified incident data to ensure all data is safely stored and accessible only to those who should be able to access it.



4. GBV Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) Template—The information sharing protocol may be the most groundbreaking tool in the GBVIMS toolkit. Sharing GBV-related data in humanitarian contexts is challenging and raises concerns due to its inherent sensitivity and potential negative consequences if mishandled. It is essential that only the appropriate level of data is shared and that the purpose for sharing the data is explicitly stated. Clients' control over their data must be respected. All participating organizations must undertake an initial internal assessment of their existing data protection practices. All participating organizations and agencies must also agree not only on how their shared data will be used but also exactly what information will be shared, with whom, and in what format. Trust and a spirit of collaboration are essential to facilitating information-sharing amongst organizations. The process of developing an ISP will need to engage all relevant actors and is equally as important



as the final document produced. This sample gives an example of what a GBVIMS information sharing protocol might look like and key points that it should include. It provides some ground rules and guiding principles on procedures for sharing non-identifiable data on *reported* cases of GBV.

Each of the GBVIMS tools plays an important role in accomplishing the purposes of the GBVIMS. The following chapters of this user guide are focused on explaining each tool with its unique role and then training *you* on how to use and ultimately implement them in your organization.

The GBVIMS

Intake form Database (Excel) Generates Generates Generates Generates Generates Generates Generates Reports (Excel) Reporting

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Information

Sharing

Information Sharing

Protocol

Additional GBVIMS resources

In addition to the four tools listed above, additional resources pertaining to the GBVIMS do exist.

The GBVIMS User Guide—This user guide is intended to be a resource to help you not only understand the GBVIMS and how to use its tools but also important issues surrounding information management within the context of GBV. The user guide also includes a corresponding workbook that contains exercises and activities to help individuals apply the information they have learned while reading the user guide.

KEY POINT

The GBVIMS User Guide Workbook found at the end of this user guide contains activities pertaining to Chapters 2-7. You should print the workbook and its answer key separately so that you can refer to it quickly and easily while reading the user guide. Once you finish reading this chapter, remember to take a moment to do the activities for Chapter 2.

GBVIMS website—The GBVIMS website offers an introduction to the GBVIMS, technical support from the GBVIMS Steering Committee, GBVIMS news and updates, and allows individuals from organizations wanting to implement the GBVIMS to download the tools. Organizations and agencies wishing to receive a copy of the Incident Recorder, can find instructions on how to do so here. You can access the website at www.gbvims.org.

GBVIMS Steering Committee—The GBVIMS Steering Committee is an inter-agency partnership consisting of members from UNHCR, UNFPA and IRC.

The steering committee's role is to:

- Develop and update the GBVIMS tools
- Facilitate rollouts of the GBVIMS in countries and locations wanting to implement it
- Provide technical support to agencies needing assistance.
- Further the discussion on best-practice information sharing

The steering committee can be contacted for questions or support at gbvims@gmail.com or on skype under the username: gbvimshelp.

The GBVIMS tools and resources are intended to help the GBV humanitarian community overcome information management challenges. Below is a table showing which GBVIMS tool or resource addresses the specific challenge mentioned above.

Stage of information management	Challenges with information management	GBVIMS tool or resource that addresses the challenge
Collection	Lack of clarity regarding what data is appropriate to collect from clients and for what purpose	Intake form Classification tool and
	Lack of standardization in what data is collected and how, both within organizations and between organizations	intake form
	Human error while recording data on intake forms	Incident Recorder (IR)
Storage	Client files and GBV data are not stored with adequate precautions to protect client anonymity and safety	IR
	Appropriate precautions such as anti-virus and backing up database files are not taken, making loss of stored electronic data common	IR
	Staff are unaware of appropriate procedures for destroying or relocating client files that have been closed or must be secured during an emergency evacuation	User guide
Analysis	Staff at all levels struggle with how to: compile data, present data in a meaningful way, and analyze data	IR and Information Sharing Protocol (ISP)
	Limited experience with computers prevents many staff from using information entered into a database	IR
	Staff are not accustomed or trained to use data to inform service delivery, programming and the wider humanitarian response	IR and User guide
	Calculating GBV data by hand is very time intensive, leaving little time for the resulting statistics to be analyzed.	IR
Sharing	Sensitive information is shared without taking into account the necessary ethical and safety considerations, putting the anonymity and safety of GBV survivors, their communities and services providers at risk	ISP
	Requests for information are made without a clear explanation of why the data is needed and how it will be used	ISP
	Quantity of data tends to be prioritized over the quality and usefulness of the data being shared	ISP
	Client files are often expected to be automatically shared as routine reporting versus strictly within the confines of a referral and with client consent	ISP
	Client consent regarding the use of his/her data is often overlooked	Consent form
	Lack of standardization in GBV terminology, data collection tools and incident type classification across services providers undermines the quality of data aggregated between service providers	GBV classification tool and intake form
All stages	Maintaining standards in information management in the face of high staff turnover	GBVIMS User Guide

The benefits and limitations of the GBVIMS are briefly outlined for you below. These will be discussed in further detail throughout the user guide.

KEY POINT

Benefits of the GBVIMS

- 1. Eliminates bias and subjectivity used in classifying and defining types of GBV
- 2. Uses a specific GBV taxonomy based on the act of violence rather than the context of the incident; combining the context with the act of violence results in massive incident taxonomies that are not useful or comparable
- 3. De-identifies incident data, thus increasing client confidentiality and enabling safe and ethical data sharing
- 4. Ensures survivor consent for data usage
- 5. Low technology solution (Excel) for environments that do not have high technological capacity
- 6. Uses Excel formulas and tables to reduce the amount of staff time dedicated to data entry, and manual calculation of GBV statistics
- 7. Systemizes every data element and keeps all incident data together within one incident recorder (Excel database); data is then suitable for statistical reporting and can be filtered, sorted and aggregated by the various data fields (e.g. victim or perpetrator characteristics); in other words, the data is very "flexible" and many types of analyses are possible
- 8. Automatically produces statistical tables and charts
- 9. Assists with producing reports, including victim profiles, perpetrator profiles, incident trends (e.g. time and location) and referral pathway tracking
- 10. Produces standardized statistics across many actors that may be compiled, reported and compared
- 11. Is a mechanism to help minimize the double-counting of cases within inter-agency datasets
- 12. Can be easily customized for specific contexts and programming needs

KEY POINT

Limitations of the GBVIMS

- 1. It is NOT a case management tool—it only captures data at one point in time
- 2. It does not evaluate the quality of GBV interventions or programming
- 3. Recorded GBV incidents are a reflection of those *reported* and <u>NOT</u> of the prevalence of GBV in a particular context
- 4. Because it is in Excel, it is ill-suited to massive volumes of data; in an operation where incident records are consolidated into a massive database, construction of an Access database that can import data from the Excel Recorder is recommended
- 5. Because it is in Excel, data fields can only have a one-to-one relationship, thus not making it very suitable for tracking one-to-many relationships
- 6. Since the GBVIMS collects incident data that is collected during service provision, it cannot be used to collect second hand reports of GBV. This includes any incident in which the victim dies prior to seeking services.
- 7. Data source is limited to the initial intake form; the GBVIMS is not intended to be used for case follow-up, such as following a case through the court system over a long period of time

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- It is important for all GBV organizations and service providers to properly collect, store, analyze and share information. This information is essential for understanding what is happening in terms of GBV being reported in an area, making informed decisions, planning for future action, improving the effectiveness of GBV programming and inter-sectoral coordination.
- The GBVIMS has been created to help organizations overcome information management challenges, improve their information management processes and benefit more fully from it.

STOP!

If you have not done so already, print the user guide workbook and answer key and do the activities pertaining to Chapter 2 before moving on to the next chapter.