



Platform
for Agricultural
Risk Management

Acknowledging Gender-Based Violence (GBV) as an Agricultural Risk

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Introduction

A growing global commitment to end GBV in rural settings affected by climate disasters

The 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls, run every year from 25 November to 10 December, serve as a crucial reminder of the urgent need to address GBV, particularly in rural communities affected by climate change. Recent research, namely led by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)¹, shows a clear link between climate change, related disasters and an increase in GBV, especially in rural settings^{2,3,4,5}. UN Women recently stated that climate change and violence against women and girls⁶ are 'the two of the most pressing global emergencies and sustainable development challenges of our time'⁷. These critical interlinkages are also growing in policy and programming work. For instance, the progress of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Gender Action Plan reported GBV-related initiatives⁸ and the recent Gender Action Plan (GAP) for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)⁹ sets clear objectives to address GBV in the context of disasters. Such advancements echo with the Platform for Agricultural Risk Management's (PARM) mandate to de-risk investments in agriculture while fostering gender equality and social inclusion, in the context of increasing climate disasters.

PARM, a G20 global initiative hosted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and co-funded by the European Commission, French Development Agency, Italy and IFAD, acknowledges that gender equality, women's empowerment and social inclusion are key components of smart and sustainable risk management in the agricultural sector¹⁰. The Platform is dedicated to fostering the resilience of rural people and communities through a holistic approach to risk management (including a climate-risk insurance program) that fosters smallholder farmers' resilience, through a gender-responsive and inclusive lens.

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- 1 Castañeda Camey, I., Sabater, L., Owren, C. and Boyer, A.E. (2020). Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality. Wen, J. (ed.). Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 272pp. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-002-En.pdf>
 - 2 <https://genderandenvironment.org/agent-gbv-env/>
 - 3 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/Statements/StatementRuralWomen.pdf>
 - 4 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). (2023). The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems. Rome: FAO. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e7689bf7-00f0-465b-ad03-e0c56ffb14b1/content>
 - 5 Clugston, N., Rhodes, F., Nneli, O., Fraser, E. (2024) 'Gender Based Violence: Addressing the overlooked barrier to effective climate action'. What Works to Prevent VAWG: London UK. <https://www.datocms-assets.com/112720/1730999571-gbv-overcoming-an-unseen-barrier-to-effective-climate-action.pdf>
 - 6 In this text, violence against women and girls is referred to as 'gender-based violence' (GBV)
 - 7 <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-context-of-climate-change-en.pdf>
 - 8 https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbi2022_8.pdf
 - 9 <https://www.undrr.org/publication/gender-action-plan-support-implementation-sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015>
 - 10 Platform for Agricultural Risk Management (PARM). (2019). Gender in Agricultural Risk Management: Analytical Framework and Operational Guidelines. <https://www.p4arm.org/document/gender-in-agricultural-risk-management/>

As we approach the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2025, there is a need to further increase concrete commitments and actions towards gender equality, in all its dimensions, including gender-based violence.

In this context, PARM commits to further explore and integrate these critical interconnections between GBV, Agricultural Risk Management (ARM), and climate resilience into its holistic approach in its upcoming Horizon 3 (2026-2030).

Understanding the relevance of addressing Gender-Based Violence in Agriculture Risk Management

GBV is a violation of human rights that encompasses a spectrum of harmful behaviors and practices¹¹. These include physical, sexual, economic and psychological violence, alongside discriminatory practices that curtail women's and survivors' access to resources, including land and natural resources, decision-making power, and economic empowerment opportunities. Factors such as unequal power relations, entrenched social norms, and economic disparities contribute substantially to the prevalence of GBV within agricultural communities¹².

In many agricultural communities, GBV prevalence is high and likely to increase due to climate change and climate-related shocks that disproportionately impact women and girls, as well as Indigenous Peoples, in rural settings¹³. Due to climate change, and even more in the aftermath of a disaster, women spend more time and travel longer distances to collect water, food, fuels, and other resources needed for their agricultural activities and their household¹⁴. For instance, collectively, in the world, women and girls spend more than 200 hours finding and collecting water every day, on long and often dangerous roads¹⁵. 200 hours that they cannot dedicate for their education, income-generating activities and self-care, and that expose them to a much higher risk of GBV, such as sexual violence on the road and coercion for sexual favors at water access points under certain controls.

11 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence>

12 FAO. 2022. *Practical guide on how to eliminate gender-based violence and protect rural communities through food security and agriculture interventions – Guidance for FAO staff and partners*. Second Edition. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3347en>

13 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2022). *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, & B. Rama, Eds.). Cambridge University Press. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

14 <https://www.unep.org/topics/gender/gender-and-climate-action>

15 <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-collecting-water-often-colossal-waste-time-women-and-girls>

Domestic violence also increases when water-related tasks are incomplete, and negative impacts on maternal and child health have been reported¹⁶. In Ethiopia, prolonged droughts led to an increase in selling girls into child marriage in exchange for livestock as a coping strategy for rural families' survival¹⁷. In Bangladesh's coastal regions, a recent study highlights a significant 39% increase in child marriages following climate-induced disasters¹⁸, and new estimates from Save the Children predict a global 33% rise in girls at extreme risk of both climate change and child marriage, reaching nearly 40 million by 2050 worldwide¹⁹.

The increasing scarcity of natural resources and land is causing significant tension and competition both among and within rural communities and households. Rural women farmers, who already face limited land tenure rights, are further disadvantaged by climate change and related disasters²⁰. Gender inequalities are exacerbated, leading to a surge in various forms of gender-based violence – including killing – used to exert control over resources needed for agricultural work²¹. In several countries, sexual extortion has been reported as a highly violent means of accessing and controlling scarce natural resources and land – such as in Sierra Leone where 8% of women and 5% of men surveyed in a study reported experience or knowledge about sexual extortion from women in exchange for land rights^{22,23}.

GBV is therefore an agricultural risk per se – since women and girls are exposed to its various forms in the framework of their agricultural work – and needs to be more strongly addressed in agricultural projects to avoid its increase²⁴.

16 IPCC, 2022. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

17 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2017). Horn of Africa: A call for action. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/ethiopia/horn-africa-call-action-february-2017-enar>

18 <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/bangladesh-irc-study-reveals-staggering-39-surge-child-marriage-due-climate-change>

19 <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/girls-face-double-threat-of-climate-change-child-marriage>

20 Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). (2022). Securing land tenure for women and girls to promote climate change resilience. <https://forestsnews.cifor.org/77083/securing-land-tenure-for-women-and-girls-to-promote-climate-change-resilience?fnl=en>

21 Tran, D., Hanaček, K (2023). A global analysis of violence against women defenders in environmental conflicts. *Nat Sustain* 6, 1045–1053. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-023-01126-4>

22 Castañeda Camey, I., Sabater, L., Owren, C. and Boyer, A.E. (2020). Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality. Wen, J. (ed.). Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 272pp. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-002-En.pdf>

23 Transparency International. (2018). Gendered Land Corruption and the Sustainable Development Goals. https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2018_Report_GenderedLandCorruptionSDGs_English.pdf

24 <https://agrilinks.org/post/you-will-be-afraid-doing-anything-your-own-agricultural-development-intimate-partner-violence>

In addition, the impact of GBV over the agricultural sector is significant. According to FAO, by undermining the health, resilience, and work capacity of survivors, GBV severely impacts agricultural productivity, food security, and nutrition²⁵. Recent research also highlights the economic cost of GBV: lost productivity due to GBV is up to 3.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which represents the amount developing countries investment on primary education²⁶. In sub-Saharan Africa, an increase in the share of women subject to violence by 1 percentage point can reduce economic activities by up to 8 percent, and even more in countries with poor protective laws against domestic violence, with abundant natural resources, and where women lack decision-making power²⁷. Research gaps, and therefore data and stats gaps, persist in various sectors not commonly involved in the GBV field, such as agriculture²⁸, and PARM can play a strategic role in addressing this need as a key actor in ARM. In addition to the need of more data on the specific intersection of GBV and ARM, gender-responsive and -transformative approaches in ARM tackling GBV are key. A gender-blind (disaster) risk management is proven to increase GBV²⁹, while a risk management that includes work on challenging gender norms and fostering gender equality has proven to decrease GBV³⁰, up to around 50% less, as reported in Cambodia.

PARM and GBV

PARM has recently started to integrate GBV considerations into its technical analysis and process, to fill the research and data gap. And since GBV can markedly exacerbate agricultural risks – especially along the value chain steps where women play a key role (in production, food processing and trading) – and undermines efforts to cultivate resilience in farming communities.

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- 25 FAO. 2022. Practical guide on how to eliminate gender-based violence and protect rural communities through food security and agriculture interventions – Guidance for FAO staff and partners. Second Edition. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3347en>
- 26 World Bank. 2018. Fact Sheet: Update on Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Development Projects. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2018/08/30/factsheet-update-on-addressing-gender-based-violence-in-development-projects>
- 27 Ouedraogo, R. and Stenzel, D. 2021. The Heavy Economic Toll of Gender-based Violence: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa. IMF WP/21/277, Washington DC: USA. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/19/The-Heavy-Economic-Toll-of-Gender-based-Violence-Evidence-from-Sub-Saharan-Africa-509667>
- 28 World Bank. (2022). Advancing Gender Equality in Climate-Resilient Agricultural Risk Management. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099847009292332841/pdf/IDU1cc2005701add314f2e1b62019a088534fc6e.pdf>
- 29 Dwyer, E. and Woolf, L. (2018). Down by the river. Addressing the rights, needs and strengths of Fijian sexual and gender minorities in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response. Australia: Oxfam. Available at: https://www.edgeeffect.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Down-By-The-River_Web.pdf
- 30 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2023). Guidelines for Integrating Gender and Climate Change in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-12/publication1_guidelines_v2_revas_ccc12dic_0.pdf
- 31 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2022). Disaster risk reduction reduces gender-based violence. <https://www.undp.org/cambodia/blog/disaster-risk-reduction-reduces-gender-based-violence>

A higher exposure to GBV risk constrains women farmers' mobility, market access, extension services utilization, and decision-making autonomy, thereby impeding their capacity to adopt risk-mitigation strategies and adapt to climate change, despite their pivotal role in agriculture^{32,33,34}.

PARM's Agricultural Value Chain Risk Assessment Study (AVC-RAS) in Madagascar found that the high prevalence of GBV³⁵, namely domestic violence, affecting women in rural areas, prevents them from developing further their agricultural activity. According to persisting gender norms, men perceive women's economic independence as a threat and use domestic violence as a response to counter it³⁶. Research also found that while both women and men encounter land corruption in Madagascar, women face a higher risk of sexual extortion³⁷. Men are typically asked to "leave something," whereas women are asked to "offer something", meaning sex³⁸.

In Tunisia, women are predominant across the olive value chain, as highlighted by the PARM's Agricultural Value Chain Risk Assessment Study (AVC-RAS)³⁹. While women represent up to 80% of the workforce in this sector, they are much less paid than men for the same work and are even exploited. This represents one type of gender-based economic violence⁴⁰, since they are deprived from financial resources they should access to, because of their female gender.

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- 32 O'Mullan, C., Sinai, S. & Kaphle, S. (2024) A scoping review on the nature and impact of gender based violence on women primary producers. *BMC Women's Health* 24, 395 <https://doi.org/10.1186/>
- 33 Rubin, D., Boonabaana, B., & Manfre, C. (2021). Building an inclusive agriculture: Strengthening gender equality in agricultural value chains. CIRAD & RTBfoods Project. Montpellier, France: CIRAD. <https://rtbfoods.cirad.fr/content/download/4186/31890/version/1/file/Building+an+inclusive+agriculture+-+Strengthening+gender+equality+in+agricultural+value+chains.pdf>
- 34 Eckman, A.K., J. Williamson, K. Cheney, Z. Mesfin (2022). "Toolkit to Address Gender-Based Violence in Agriculture and Market Systems Development." Prepared by EnCompass LLC for the United States Agency for International Development. <https://agrilinks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/AWE-CO4-GBV-in-Ag-Toolkit-Final-June-29-2022.pdf>
- 35 In Madagascar, 1 in 3 women have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives. Over 14 percent of women have faced sexual violence, and more than a quarter have endured physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner. <https://www.unfpa.org/news/fighting-justice-against-gender-based-violence-madagascar>
- 36 Platform for Agricultural Risk Management (PARM) (2023). Évaluation des risques agricoles des filières Mais et Arachide au Madagascar. https://www.p4arm.org/app/uploads/2023/11/Rapport-final_PARMMINAE-evaluation-des-risques-agricoles-filieres-Mais-et-Arachide-au-Madagascar_Inside.pdf
- 37 Transparency International (2018), "Women, Land and Corruption – Resources for Practitioners and Policymakers." <https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/women-land-and-corruption-resources-for-practitioners-and-policy-makers>
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 PARM's AVC-RAS on cereals and olive value chains in Tunisia soon to be published.
- 40 See definitions of economic violence: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/06/high-commissioner-economic-violence-against-women-gender-based>; https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/EIGE_Factsheet_EconomicViolence.pdf; : <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence>;

Economic violence against women, notably through labor exploitation and underpayment, is the most common form of GBV in public spaces in Tunisia, reported by up to around 60% of women in the workplace⁴¹ – and that PARM AVC-RAS observed in the olive oil sector specifically. This is a major constraint to the uplifting of the potential of women and of the whole olive sector that would benefit from gender equality.

The same phenomenon of economic violence was revealed in PARM's AVC-RAS in Burundi⁴² where women, who are the predominant maize producers, hardly get the financial benefit of their labor on the lands, that they rarely own, and have poor decision-making power over such incomes. Stakeholder consultations for PARM project design work in Burundi reported cases of women being raped and even killed when accessing resources such as water for their agricultural activities.

Effectively integrating Gender-Based Violence into Agricultural Risk Management

Effectively managing agricultural risks and advancing gender equality necessitate the integration of GBV considerations into risk assessment, planning, and identification of the appropriate ARM tools for investment and implementation processes. This mandate calls for a multi-sectoral approach involving governmental agencies, civil society organizations, financial institutions, and the private sector. Key strategies for PARM and partners include:

- Recognizing GBV as an agricultural risk and measuring it in PARM risk assessment studies, as to generate data on the GBV-ARM nexus useful for advocacy, programming and policymaking;
- Raising awareness and enhancing capacity among agricultural stakeholders to recognize and respond to signs of GBV;
- Opening the dialogue on entrenched gender social norms in rural areas and challenge them to promote more equality to prevent and end GBV, through gender-transformative tools;
- Developing and implementing gender-responsive agricultural policies that address the root causes of GBV and foster women's empowerment in decision-making processes;
- Ensuring access to support services such as counseling, legal assistance, and healthcare for GBV survivors within agricultural communities;
- Providing women with access to financial resources, training, and market opportunities to bolster their economic independence and diminish vulnerability to GBV.

41 UN Women. (2016). The Gender-Based Violence in Public Spaces in Tunisia. <https://morocco.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Morocco/Documents/Publications/2016/12/The%20Gender%20Based%20Violence%20in%20Public%20Spaces%20in%20Tunisia.pdf>

42 Platform for Agricultural Risk Management (PARM) (Forthcoming). Évaluation des risques agricoles des filières Riz, Maïs et Lapin au Burundi.

The Role of Gender-responsive Climate-Risk Insurance

Gender-responsive climate-risk insurance holds promise as a valuable tool for shielding female farmers against climate-related losses and fostering resilience in agricultural systems with global benefits for all farmers. Through its program “Insurance for rural resilience and economic development” (INSURED), PARM covered 630,000 rural people by offering 150,000 climate risk insurance policies that reached up to 76% of women in Guatemala, and more than half of women in average amongst the small-scale farmers covered. Women beneficiaries reported that CRI had positive effects on their recovery.

Increased livelihoods and recovery means, as well as GBV are strongly intertwined. If GBV is addressed through CRI programs such as INSURED, women’s resilience and recovery are improved. And if women’s resilience and recovery are supported through tools such as CRI, their exposure to GBV is more likely to decrease, especially in the aftermath of a disaster that, as previously mentioned, increases dramatically the exposure to GBV.

While CRI can increase its impact by addressing GBV, gender-responsive CRI itself can help address GBV, as discussed in a webinar co-organized by PARM⁴³. However, for these schemes to be genuinely effective, they must account for the gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities confronting women in agriculture, and men, to a lesser extent, since GBV affects predominantly women. This includes:

- Developing climate-risk insurance products and services tailored to the needs of women farmers (and male farmers, where applicable), incorporating flexible payment options, gender-responsive claims processes, and targeted outreach and education campaigns;
- Collecting sex-disaggregated data on climate-related risks and losses to discern the divergent impacts of climate change on men and women in agriculture, thereby informing the design of insurance products and risk-management strategies;
- Conducting gender-responsive risk assessments to identify and address the specific vulnerabilities of women farmers to climate-related hazards, and their exposure to GBV, ensuring that insurance coverage adequately reflects their needs;
- Strengthening capacities of insurers of prevention of and response to GBV;
- Opening the dialogue with communities on social norms to shift them towards more equality, especially on women’s economic empowerment and financial literacy that challenge gender representations and may lead to an increase of GBV in response;

43 FARM-D, PARM (2023). Live Talk 08: How CDRFI Policies and Programmes Can Address Gender-Based Violence (GBV). <https://www.farm-d.org/webinar/live-talk-08-how-cdrfi-policies-and-programmes-can-address-gender-based-violence-gbv/>

Partnerships are critical to promote agricultural risk management that fosters gender equality, social inclusion and contributed to ending GBV in rural settings: if you are an organization engaged in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment in the agricultural sector, and you want to be informed and/or involved in the next phase of PARM (2026-2030), currently under design, please reach out to us at parm@ifad.org.

Managing risks to improve farmers' livelihoods



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