Livelihoods are broadly defined as the capabilities, assets and strategies people use to meet basic needs and—in crises—to survive. In humanitarian settings a lack of sufficient income or assets can increase gender-based violence (GBV) risks because without income or assets, women, girls and families may resort to negative economic coping strategies such as transactional sex, marrying girls early, or travelling to unsafe areas to look for food, firewood, water or economic activity. Further, household tension and conflict may increase due to economic pressures, exacerbating intimate partner violence (IPV). This evidence digest highlights selected key research and evidence in relation to livelihoods and GBV programming, focusing on two areas where there is an emerging evidence base. The first is economic strengthening interventions to prevent GBV, and the second is cash transfer to reduce GBV risks in emergencies. Links to relevant GBV and livelihoods research, guidance and tools are included at the end for those who want to explore the issues further.

Select Evidence on Economic Empowerment to Prevent GBV
Increasingly, livelihoods interventions are seen as strategies for GBV prevention and mitigation in emergencies as it is recognized that participation in well planned, targeted livelihoods interventions can lead to an increase in women and girls’ safety, access to resources, opportunities and decision-making power. If combined with gender transformative program components, livelihoods interventions also contribute to changing social, cultural and gender norms that underpin GBV.

Summary of Reviews
A Rigorous Global Evidence Review of Interventions to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (Kerr-Wilson et al., 2020)
This paper presents global evidence on what works to prevent violence against women and girls. Following the core principles of a systematic review, it examined 104 individual studies on the impact of GBV prevention programmes. Of these, 73 were from lower- and middle-income countries and 31 were from high income countries. It found good evidence that nine categories of VAWG prevention programmes can be effective when well designed and implemented. These include: economic transfer programmes; combined economic empowerment and social empowerment interventions for women; couples’ interventions; parenting programmes to prevent IPV and child maltreatment; community activism to shift harmful gender attitudes, roles and social norms; school-based interventions to prevent dating or sexual violence; school-based interventions for peer violence with a gender component; interventions working with individuals and/ or couples to reduce alcohol and/or substance abuse and interventions with female sex workers. The review found promising but insufficient evidence of effectiveness for the following categories of
programme: cash based transfer interventions with pregnant women; economic and social empowerment programmes targeting men; self-defense interventions to prevent sexual violence for women of college age; and interventions with female sex workers to reduce violence by non-paying intimate partners. This review found conflicting evidence on the effectiveness of the following interventions: self-defense interventions to prevent sexual violence for girls at primary and secondary schools; working with men and boys alone; home-visitation programmes to prevent IPV in the antenatal and postnatal periods. It found good evidence of no effect for the following categories of programmes: microfinance, savings and livelihood programmes; brief bystander interventions; brief counselling and safety planning for pregnant women. It found insufficient evidence and no effect for social marketing campaigns, edutainment and digital technologies.

**Women Economic Empowerment Via Cash Transfer and Microcredit Programmes is Enough to Decrease Intimate Partner Violence? Evidence from a Systematic Review** (Leite et al. 2019)

This paper finds that while microcredit and cash transfer programmes are positively correlated with eradicating hunger and poverty, their impact on physical and sexual violence towards women and girls is mixed. It found that the impact of microcredit programmes on the prevalence of sexual violence was non-existent. It found that the impact of cash transfer programmes on the prevalence of sexual, physical and psychological violence were diverse. Given the evidence suggesting that cash transfer and microcredit programmes reduce child mortality, preventable infectious diseases, and provide other health benefits, they should not be discouraged. However, further research into the increase in violence towards women and girls associated with these programmes in certain contexts is necessary. This study suggests the inclusion of educational components of programming that discuss how gender roles could evolve with a focus on eradicating violence against women and girls to address this impact on violence.

**Financial Inclusion and Intimate Partner Violence: What Does the Evidence Suggest?** (Dougal et al., 2019)

This research assesses the relationship between women’s financial inclusion and recent IPV across 112 countries. Multivariate global analyses finds that increased levels of women’s financial inclusion is associated with lower levels of recent IPV after accounting for asset-based enablers of economic autonomy and gender norms. This relationship between recent IPV and women's financial inclusion was obscured when measures of national context such as development and fragility were included in the analyses. This shows the complexity of the relationship. The study concludes that initiatives aiming to prevent IPV by increasing the financial inclusion of women must occur alongside social change and support programming that facilitates an environment supportive of women’s right and autonomy. It is understood that this will improve effectiveness is likely to minimize backlash from men that increases the risk of violence towards women.

**Women Empowerment Programmes and Intimate Partner Violence** (Angelucci and Heath, 2020)

This paper finds that while women’s empowerment programmes can improve autonomy, bargaining power and reduce socioeconomic stress among women and within households, which may lead to a reduction in IPV, this is not always the case. In other cases, economic empowerment programmes may lead to an increase in violence with a view to controlling the woman’s resources or asserting the dominance of the perpetrator. Within South Kivu, DRC, data finds that IPV is higher towards women who are the main household earner, are more educated, are younger than their husbands, and in households facing socioeconomic shocks. This paper raises concerns that these findings position the effectiveness of empowerment programmes as a mechanism for reducing IPV within theoretically ambiguous grounds.

**The Impacts of Combined Social and Economic Empowerment Training on Intimate Partner Violence, Depression, Gender Norms and Livelihoods Among Women: An Individually Randomized Controlled Trial and Qualitative Study in Afghanistan** (Gibbs et al. 2020)

This paper assesses the extent to which Women for Women International’s economic and social empowerment programme reduced women’s experiences of IPV and depression in Afghanistan. It presents findings from a randomized controlled trial across six urban and peri-urban communities. The communities selected were conflict affected and showed signs of economic vulnerability. Individuals eligible to participate in the programme were female, aged 18-49, able to consent, and one per household. This research assessed three outcomes at 22 months: past year physical IPV, past year severe IPV, and depressive symptoms. It found that, while the intervention did improve livelihoods, created more gender-equitable relationships and increased women’s mobility, it had no impact on either IPV or depression.
Associations Between Women’s Economic and Social Empowerment and Intimate Partner Violence: Findings From a Microfinance Plus Programme in Rural North West Province, South Africa (Ranganathan et al. 2019)
This paper explores the relationship between women’s economic empowerment and their exposure to IPV. It analyzed data from baseline interviews with married women from the Intervention with Microfinance and Gender Equity (IMAGE) longitudinal study in rural South Africa. It found that economic stress and aspects of women’s empowerment coupled with established gender roles is associated with IPV risk within marital relationships. While improved economic conditions did seem to reduce women’s exposure to IPV in some cases, these findings were inconsistent. This paper concludes that complementary programming is key to protecting against IPV and that all research into IPV must recognize and reflect the multiple types of IPV (physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse) and the corresponding associations of empowerment with those types of IPV.

“I got courage from knowing that even a daughter-in-law can earn her living”: Mixed Methods Evaluation of a Family-Centered Intervention to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls in Nepal (Shai et al., 2020)
This paper presents the findings from a family focused pilot intervention to reduce GBV by husbands, change harmful social and gender norms and improve the economic conditions of women through young married women-led income generating activities. Results from this pilot suggest that with adequate time and seed funding, the programme was able to generate significant income for young women, strengthen their position within the household and reduce their exposure to violence within the family and community. Qualitative and quantitative data showed that the intervention successfully improved domestic relations between young married women, their husbands and in-laws. It suggests that women, and particularly older women, held less patriarchal views following the intervention and that both younger and older women believed gender attitudes within the community had improved following the intervention. The data also indicated a decrease in controlling behavior by husbands following the intervention and an improvement in mother-in-law relations. However, caution is needed when attributing these results to the programme, due to the lack of control arm. This type of programming would benefit from further research.

Adolescent Girls
Adolescent Economic Empowerment (Amin and Desai, 2019)
This paper links to a collection of articles that highlight multiple economic interventions for adolescent girls and the indicators that can be used to measure their impact. It identifies the feasibility of synergistic interventions to improve social, health and economic assets along with barriers to reducing protection risks for adolescent girls and highlights that in addition to traditional indicators developed for adult women (such as savings, workforce participation, and asset generation), interventions with adolescents require indicators that reflect local context and norms, household dynamics, and measurement of sustained effects on the economic empowerment and well-being of girls. Moreover, given the critical role of context, economic empowerment interventions targeting adolescents should be viewed as localized processes rather than through generalizable measures across settings.

This program review analyzed outcomes, processes and lessons from 11 integrated programs that included a component of economic strengthening for adolescent girls. The review found the evidence base for economic strengthening as a strategy for reducing GBV-related risk against adolescent girls in humanitarian settings is limited; however age- and developmentally-appropriate economic asset-based interventions for vulnerable girls, delivered as part of an integrated approach to health, protection and empowerment, could play an important role in GBV prevention in emergency contexts. Interventions facilitating access to safe and dignified livelihood opportunities can directly reduce girls’ immediate risk of exposure to forms of GBV for which economic insecurity is a key determinant, such as exploitative sex. Building girls’ economic and social assets can facilitate their increased bargaining power, decision-making, autonomy and self-confidence in the longer term, which, when combined with an enabling and supportive environment, can lead to greater empowerment for girls and reduced risk of future GBV. The document makes recommendations for practitioners, which include using formative research to ensure context-specific interventions, as well as defining intended changes and measurement strategies from the outset. It also suggests using a holistic,
integrated approach to building girls’ economic and social assets and using market-based livelihood strategies that are tailored to girls’ age, developmental stage and circumstances.

Select Evidence on Cash Transfers to Address GBV
Cash transfer involves the direct transfer of resources – conditional or unconditional - to households in the form of cash or food/vouchers. Studies from development contexts have shown well-designed cash transfer programs directed to women can positively impact women and girls’ protection and empowerment. In development contexts, cash transfers have been linked to reductions in IPV, early and forced marriage, and negative coping strategies. Conversely, in a small number of studies cash transfers may increase risk of violence through either male backlash due to male partners feeling threatened by women usurping their traditional ‘identity’ as a provider, or by making women targets for others, including their partners, seeking to take the cash. Cash programming is increasingly used in humanitarian settings and it is critical to ensure that GBV considerations are integrated into cash-based programs so that these interventions do not inadvertently increase safety risks for girls and women. As yet, there is little solid evidence on the effectiveness of cash programming to prevent GBV in humanitarian contexts.

Summary of Reviews
Cash and Voucher Assistance for Protection (Global Protection Cluster, 2020)
This report found that the majority of evidence on cash and voucher assistance (CVA) related to GBV protection related to the impact of CVA on risk or exposure to GBV outcomes. Evidence on the impact of CVA on access to survivor services and avoidance of risky coping strategies is more limited. This review found that multipurpose cash programmes had a mixed impact on the prevention and mitigation of and response to GBV. It also found that many studies included poor targeting practices, based on assumptions that gender-based targeting would necessarily yield positive and protective results. Instead, assumptions should have been based on consultations with crisis-affected communities to identify potential risks and benefits that may cause, harm and reinforce gender inequality. Positive spillover effects of CVA on GBV were identified and included improved psycho-social wellbeing, increased confidence to report GBV, increased participation in social activities and community practices, community relations and access to education. A limited number of studies identified the following negative spillover effects: the double burden on women targeted for CVA due to gender roles that led to an increased workload, deterioration of community relations stemming from jealousy by those not targeted by interventions, and reports of unsettled marital dynamics including divorce and abandonment.

Cash Assistance and the Prevention, Mitigation and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV): Findings from Research in Lebanon, Ecuador and Morocco (UNHCR, 2019)
This paper identifies key findings from research into cash assistance to prevent, mitigate and respond to SGBV in Lebanon, Ecuador and Morocco. It found that CVA can act as a protective measure but that, while survivors of GBV ranked financial assistance as a high priority, other services including medical services, psychosocial support, shelter, resettlement, and case management are essential to covering non-financial dimensions of vulnerability to violence. It found that case management with clear plans tailored to the participant and time-bound, measurable objectives, regular follow up and support increases the protection benefits of the CVA. This research also highlighted that any needs analysis should be comprehensively disaggregated to ensure that CVA components respond to the specific needs of households. For example, in Lebanon, evidence shows that the cost of living varies between locations and size of household. In order for CVA to be effective, programmes must be able to reflect these varying situations. It found that CVA that facilitated women’s management of economic resources promoted the creation of decision-making power for women within families. Findings from Morocco found that CVA helped participants form and maintain social networks by enabling them to pay off debts, participate in social gatherings, and purchase phone credit.

Humanitarian Cash Transfer Programming and Gender-Based Violence Outcome: Evidence and Future Research Priorities (Cash Learning Partnership, 2018)
This research reviewed 28 studies of cash transfer and GBV programming and presents evidence regarding the impact of cash transfers on risk or exposure to GBV. It found cash transfers are promising tools to reduce GBV; however, this relationship is complex and there are large gaps in understanding of what program design components are necessary in diverse settings. The evidence reviewed indicates that cash transfers can have a positive effect on reducing IPV. The
most common finding was a reduction in income-related tension, frustration, and fighting, leading to this reduction. Across the studies, IPV tended to increase when there were not enough resources to meet basic needs, when there was unemployment, and when heads of households felt powerless to provide for their families. There is strong evidence for the positive impact of cash transfer on household decision-making, which can be a proxy measure for the mitigation of IPV. Commonly, multi-purpose cash grants targeting women led to women having a greater say in how income was spent, though in some cases this led to their partners feeling emasculated, thus increasing threat or exposure to violence or fighting. This review found no evidence that supports or rejects gender-based targeting in cash programs.

**Tackling the Integration of Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response and Cash-Based Interventions** (Cash Learning Partnership, 2018)

This paper looks at key findings from current practice on integrating cash and GBV programming. It found that while there has been progress on integrating cash and general protection, integrating cash and GBV programming represents a new area of programming. The review identified that while there are some resources available and momentum is building, collaboration between cash and GBV actors is still minimal; both sectors remain siloed within agencies and across communities of practice. This siloing is hampering development of shared understanding of roles and responsibilities and successful approaches, and of maximizing human and financial resources. The review identified anxiety about integrating cash and GBV programming as an inhibiting factor to relevant actors building the skills to collaborate effectively. Positively, there is buy-in for mainstreaming GBV considerations into cash-based interventions with good practices emerging. There is a need to develop and institutionalize guidance in order to scale up effective approaches. The review finally highlights the poor practices in cash and GBV programming, including: a lack of gender and protection analysis; pervasive one-size-fits-all cash programming, despite evidence that cash needs to be tailored to meet specific needs; missed opportunities by cash and GBV actors to pair cash with complementary activities and services for gender-transformative and protective outcomes; lack of training of cash staff in the basics of GBV, including a survivor centered approaches; and lack of understanding by GBV staff of the basics of cash programming. Recommendations are suggested for cash actors, GBV actors and donors to help build on existing good practices and address the poor practices identified.

**Empowered Aid: Reducing Risks of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Cash Assistance** (The Global Women’s Institute and CARE, 2020)

This evidence brief identifies the risks that refugee women and girls in Lebanon face through cash and voucher assistance (CVA) programming. It further collates women and girls’ recommendations about how to make cash assistance safer for them. These recommendations include, among others:
- The provision of cash assistance to vulnerable groups of women and girls such as female-headed households, orphaned girls and widows to reduce the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Identifying pre-determined assigned times to families to collect aid from distribution points to avoid overcrowding, which increases the risk women and girls face to sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Providing transportation to distribution points to ensure that those having to travel long or isolated distances are able to travel safely.
- The implementation of stronger complaints mechanisms against distributors of CVA.
- Ensuring there are a greater number of women aid workers, volunteers and decision makers involved in aid distribution processes.

**Cash Transfers in Raqqa Governorate, Syria Changes Over Time in Women’s Experiences of Violence & Wellbeing** (International Rescue Committee, 2019)

This study is an assessment of an emergency cash assistance program in Syria. The aim of the study was to better understand the influence of conditional cash transfers on protection outcomes for women, including experiences of GBV and other aspects of women’s wellbeing. The study found that women find cash an acceptable form of aid, and indeed it is widely preferred by women. It also found that cash helps women and families to meet basic needs and reduce negative coping. This study also found an increase in reporting of IPV at the endline, however it was not possible to confirm whether this was linked to the use of cash transfers or to the participants feeling more comfortable with the research team. Programs must be designed to reduce risks to women related to the changing household dynamics caused by the cash program. Lessons and recommendations arising from the study include the need to ensure complementary
approaches to cash transfers in addition to ensuring referral to GBV response services within programs. The authors also recommend including a minimum level of risk monitoring to minimize and prevent risks to women and girls throughout the cash transfer cycle and testing of different design and delivery elements to understand how they affect positive outcomes for women and girls. Finally, the authors highlight the importance of improved communication about cash transfer programming with recipients and communities, and of developing clear exit strategies after cash assistance ends, including ensuring that beneficiaries are aware of alternative available economic opportunities.

**Burundi Case Study #GenderCash Revolution: How Can We Reduce GBV Risks in Cash and Voucher Assistance** (de Souza-Monbaron and Friedman, 2019)
This report outlines promising practice identified during a three-day workshop on GBV and CVA in Burundi. Examples of promising practice from Burundi include:
- Facilitate local committees made up of a mixture of women and men (with a majority of women) to identify potential GBV risks throughout a CVA programme and refer GBV cases confidentially.
- Engage with men throughout the programme, especially if the CVA is given to women. Involving men in the programme helps reduce protection risks.
- Creating a GBV referral pathway that is closely linked to the CVA complaint and feedback mechanism. This improves accountability for beneficiaries.
- Disseminate GBV prevention messages at CVA distribution points to reduce protection risks and improve knowledge of support services and referral pathways.
- Implement CVA alongside livelihood strengthening programmes, to provide alternatives to negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage.

**Utilizing Cash and Voucher Assistance within Gender-based Violence Case Management to Support Crisis-Affected Populations in Ecuador** (Manell and Radice, 2019)
This report outlines promising practice and opportunities for improvement regarding the CVA component of a GBV case management programme to support crisis-affected populations in Ecuador. Examples of promising practice include:
- Locally led implementation, with technical assistance from HQ teams, that engaged a diverse group of local service providers contributed to contextually appropriate services.
- The facilitation of a knowledge and skills exchange between GBV and CVA staff across partners caused service providers to collaborate more comprehensively.
- Creating a referral pathway for CVA led to new opportunities to promote existing GBV referral pathways, increasing community awareness of these pathways among crisis-affected populations.
- High quality and comprehensive case management, CVA and complementary support to GBV clients led to high satisfaction among participants.
- This programme piloted the use of a cardless ATM, which was well received by participants and has the potential to improve financial inclusion through initiating engagement with formal financial systems among those affected by crisis.

**Income Changes and Intimate Partner Violence Evidence from Unconditional Cash Transfers in Kenya** (Haushofer et al. 2019)
This study examines the impact of an unconditional cash transfer programme in Kenya. By randomly allocating transfers to either the husband or the wife of a household and studying the resulting changes in IPV, this study identified that transfers to women and men both reduced incidences of physical IPV. However, this study also found that sexual violence only reduced in cases where the transfers were allocated to the wife. This study concludes that the motivations for physical IPV are both extractive (focused on extracting resources) and distasteful (finding his use of violence displeasing because he cares for his wife or because of stigma). However, the continued perpetration of sexual IPV even when cash transfers are allocated to the husband suggests that this type of violence is likely to be motivated by pleasure from perpetrating such violence. In addition, this report examined the impact of transfers on both recipient households and non-recipient households. It found there were significant spillover effects of cash transfers on IPV, suggesting that cash transfers may have affected social norms regarding the justifiability of violence.
However, these spillover effects are weak and would require replication.

**Transfers, Behavior Change Communication, and Intimate Partner Violence: Post Program Evidence from Rural Bangladesh** (Roy et al. 2019)

This study explores the post-programme impacts of randomly assigning women in Bangladesh to receive cash or food, with or without nutrition behavior change communication (BCC) on IPV. It found that six to ten months following the end of the programme, IPV did not differ between those women who had received transfers and a control group. However, those women who received cash transfers alongside BCC experienced 26% less physical violence.

**Cash, Food and Vouchers Reduce Intimate Partner Violence in Urban Areas in Ecuador** (Hidrobo et al. 2019)

This case study explores the impact of a short-term food, cash and voucher programme to targeted to people in urban areas who were experiencing poverty in Northern Ecuador. This programme led to a 30% reduction in physical and sexual IPV, and a 19% reduction in controlling behaviors. There was no significant difference between cash, food and vouchers in decreasing IPV.

### Additional Research, Practical Tools and Resources

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<th>Spotlight on new tools and resources</th>
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<td><strong>Cash and Voucher Assistance: The Cash for Protection Agenda and Integration of GBV Risk Mitigation in Cash (2020)</strong></td>
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<td>This webinar provides protection specialists with a better understanding of the potential of CVA as a method of achieving protection outcomes, evidence and evidence gaps and key stakeholder actions to tackle gaps in evidence and practice.</td>
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| **Cash and Voucher Assistance and COVID-19 Tip Sheet for GBV and SRH Programming (2020)** |
| This tip sheet provides advice on how to design CVA programming during COVID-19 that minimizes protection, GBV and COVID-19 infection risks for women and girls. |

| **Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA): Your Role as a GBV Coordinator (2019)** |
| This paper provides guidance for GBV Coordinators on CVA programming. It includes links to learning resources on CVA programming, an overview of responsibilities of GBV Coordinators engaging in CVA programming, links to organizations to contact for support, and case studies on the work of various GBV subclusters. |

| **Safer Cash Toolkit (2019)** |
| The Safer Cash Toolkit provides tools and additional guidance to ensure CVA programmes proactively consider the safety, dignity and rights of individuals, groups, and affected populations and do no harm, and that they support cash practitioners in designing safe, participatory and inclusive evidence-based programmes. |
Standards for programming

- The Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence In Emergencies (2019)

General GBV livelihoods resources

- Cash Transfer and Intimate Partner Violence Research Collaborative (2019)
- Social Protection and Resilience: Supporting Livelihoods in Protracted Crises and in Fragile and Humanitarian Contexts (2017)
- Women’s Protection and Livelihoods Assistance to Central African Refugees and Chadian Returnees in Southern Chad (2016)
- Examining the Link between Gender-Based Violence & Livelihoods in Displacement Settings (2011)
- CLARA: Cohort Livelihoods and Risk Analysis Guidance and Tools (2016)
- A Double-Edged Sword: Livelihoods in emergencies (2014)
- Preventing Gender-Based Violence, Building Livelihoods: Guidance and Tools for Improved Programming (2011)

Cash transfer resources

- Collected Papers on Gender and Cash Transfer Programmes in Humanitarian Contexts (2018)
- Resources for Mainstreaming Gender Based Violence (GBV) Considerations in Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) and Utilizing CVA in GBV Prevention and Response (2018)
- Optimizing Benefits and Mitigating Risks of Integrating Cash-based Interventions and GBV Programming: Case Studies from Irbid and Mafraq, Jordan (2018)
- Toolkit for Optimizing Cash-based Interventions for Protection from Gender-based Violence: Mainstreaming GBV Considerations in CBIs and Utilizing Cash in GBV Response (2018)
- The impact of cash transfers on women and girls (2017)
- The Cash Learning Partnership
The GBV AoR Helpdesk

The GBV AoR Helpdesk is a unique research and technical advice service which aims to inspire and support humanitarian actors to help prevent, mitigate and respond to violence against women and girls in emergencies. Managed by Social Development Direct, the GBV AoR Helpdesk is staffed by a global roster of senior Gender and GBV Experts who are on standby to help guide frontline humanitarian actors on GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response measures in line with international standards, guidelines and best practice. Views or opinions expressed in GBV AoR Helpdesk Products do not necessarily reflect those of all members of the GBV AoR, nor of all the experts of SDDirect’s Helpdesk roster.

The GBV AoR Helpdesk

You can contact the GBV AoR Helpdesk by emailing us at: enquiries@gbviehelpdesk.org.uk

The Helpdesk is available 09.00 to 17.30 GMT Monday to Friday.

Our services are free and confidential.