

Regional workshop

GBV Risk Mitigation in CVA Programming

Key takeaways from a UNFPA regional Latin American workshop



BACKGROUND

As the use of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) has grown worldwide, including in Latin America and the Caribbean, the need for considering and mainstreaming minimum standards of risk mitigation – including of gender-based violence (GBV) risks – in the region continues. UNFPA, as the lead of the GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR) and a thought leader on the mitigation of GBV risks within CVA programming, is committed to building humanitarian capacity for GBV risk mitigation within CVA in the region.

To this end, in 2022 UNFPA led and co-organized a [workshop](#) on GBV risk mitigation in CVA in Bogotá, Colombia with the National GBV Coordination Group, the Colombia Cash Working Group (CWG) and its Protection sub-group, as well as the inter-agency Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Task Force. During the workshop, CVA and GBV experts from 18 organizations, including UN agencies, NGOs, and the Colombia Red Cross, made commitments to jointly advance GBV risk mitigation in CVA in the country. These commitments formed the basis of an action plan

to implement GBV risk mitigation measures across Colombia, focusing on raising awareness and contextualizing available tools for local use.

Between 2022 and 2023, UNFPA also conducted field research in Colombia with the Global Women's Institute at George Washington University to develop GBV risk indicators to be used and integrated into the monitoring framework of any cash assistance programmes. The findings were validated through a participatory workshop in Bogotá in May 2023 and the resulting [indicators](#) and [case study](#) were disseminated in October 2023 with the support of an Advisory Group, including representatives from donors, UN agencies, and the Cash for Protection Task Team of the Global Protection Cluster.

These activities built on UNFPA's roll-out of its [Toolkit for GBV Risk Mitigation in CVA](#), which was developed in 2022 using a bottom-up approach in conjunction with the GBV AoR, GBV coordinators and other field-based colleagues. The Toolkit aims to support CVA and GBV practitioners to identify

and mitigate GBV risks in CVA programming. The Toolkit includes tools such as a short presentation for cash actors on the need for GBV risk mitigation, a risk matrix to assess GBV risks in CVA programming, and various tools to enhance the detection and mitigation of risks in different phases

APPROACH OF THE WORKSHOP

Given previous support and commitment from the region, the UNFPA Humanitarian Response Division with the support of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office held a 2-day workshop Panama in May 2024 to enhance collaboration and skills related to the mitigation of GBV risks in CVA interventions. The workshop brought together 24 GBV and CVA experts, including GBV specialists, GBV coordinators and CWG coordinators under the two regional coordination mechanisms (Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela and the IASC Cluster System) and belonging to the six countries that have an existing and active CWG (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, and Peru) as well as regional GBV coordinators and specialists.

The objective of the workshop was twofold:

- 1. Enable the exchange of key information and experiences related to GBV risk mitigation in CVA programming between countries, particularly as CVA use grows in the region.**
- 2. Guide and support those responsible for coordinating CVA and GBV sub-clusters/ sub-sectors/working groups in relevant Latin American countries to understand GBV risk mitigation in CVA, to get familiar with available resources, and to establish practical commitments and actionable plans to strengthen field capacity and acceptance of the approach in the region.**

Before the workshop, participants were asked to prepare brief presentations on their countries' efforts in GBV risk mitigation in CVA programming. During the workshop, these presentations sparked key technical discussions on national and regional progress on the approach. Facilitators, led by the CVA and GBV Programme Officer from UNFPA's Humanitarian Response Division, then worked to

of the program cycle. These activities also derived from UNFPA's guidance for GBV coordinators in the document [CVA: Your Role as a GBV Coordinator](#), which outlines the practical ways in which GBV coordinators should support GBV- and gender-sensitive CVA programming across all sectors.

clarify GBV risk mitigation for CVA and introduced the available relevant tools, with a particular focus on the [Toolkit for GBV Risk Mitigation in CVA](#).

With this, Colombian GBV and CWG coordinators colleagues shared their advancements on GBV risk mitigation in CVA programming, especially since the 2022 Bogotá workshop, highlighting their country's significant progress on the theme. Over the last two years, Colombia has updated its Risk Matrix and PDM tool for CVA programming and developed a step-by-step monitoring module which provides contextualized indications on how to implement the PDM tools and interpret the data collected. They have also worked together to raise awareness on the importance of GBV risk mitigation in CVA and to build capacity on the use of the available tools within the sub-national Colombia CWGs. Colleagues attributed this progress to the close and active involvement from various coordination groups including the Colombia GBV National AoR, the protection sub-group of the national CWG, and Colombia's PSEA Task Force, their technical engagement around the approach that was generated by the 2022 workshop, and the establishment of a GBV risk mitigation focal point within the national CWG.

Inspired by the synergies created in Colombia and to operationalize the learning from the workshop, participants engaged in technical debate to agree on actions for transferring knowledge and tools within their national and local coordination spaces and organizations, and their prioritization based on the local context. The GBV and CWG coordinators then devised specific commitments to advance GBV risk mitigation in their respective countries, which were consolidated into actionable plans to be implemented with local teams and the support of the regional coordination mechanisms. Each country then presented their commitments and action plans to the entire workshop group, fostering further cross-country learning and inspiration.

COMMITMENTS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

This workshop demonstrated that while the participating countries might have engaged in initial discussions on GBV risk mitigation in CVA programming, they must now progress into the consolidation stage and create synergies between different organizations and coordination groups in order to move the agenda forward.

The following next steps were presented by the GBV and CWG coordinators of the participating countries in order to fulfill their commitments to advance GBV risk mitigation in CVA programming in their contexts.

1. Increase awareness of the need for GBV risk mitigation measures in CVA country programmes

- Engage with national actors around the need for GBV risk mitigation in CVA in relevant coordination bodies, including the CWG, the GBV Sub-Cluster/Sub-Sector, and relevant PSEA Task Forces.
- Dedicate particular attention and focus to local actors and coordination mechanisms, which are key to promoting the importance of GBV risk mitigation in CVA.
- Include the approach in standard communications (i.e. advocacy, internal messages, communication materials for local populations) and share relevant resources with member organizations of both groups.

2. Identify focal points responsible for GBV risk mitigation and strengthen GBV-CVA coordination

- Designate focal points for the GBV risk mitigation in CVA in the GBV Sub-Cluster/Sub-Sector, the CWG, and among local organizations in order to enhance coordination on GBV risk mitigation between the GBV coordination mechanism and the CWG.
- Establish clear working linkages between coordination bodies to enable further mainstreaming of GBV risk mitigation within CVA activities and to agree on and share a joint action plan on GBV risk mitigation mainstreaming.
- Encourage GBV coordinators or GBV Sub-Cluster/Sub-Sector focal points to participate regularly in CWG meetings in order to provide technical support on GBV and advocate for GBV risk analyses in CVA programming.

3. Build capacity around GBV risk mitigation tools and promote the harmonized and contextualized use of tools:

- Joint presentation of available tools and approaches in relevant coordination bodies, including the CWG, the GBV Sub-Cluster/Sub-Sector, and relevant PSEA Task Forces.
- Work through national CWGs to harmonize and standardize available GBV risk mitigation tools to avoid duplication, reduce burdens, and ensure adaptability to different contexts.
- GBV coordinators to work with the country-level CWGs to plan capacity-building training, including the training national and local actors on GBV risk mitigation for CVA (particularly on the Risk Matrix and PDM tools available in the [Toolkit](#)), and monitor progress on the advancement of the GBV risk mitigation agenda.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The workshop was a valuable opportunity for cross-country knowledge sharing on GBV risk mitigation in CVA programming in Latin America. Before the workshop, many participants felt they lacked a strong understanding of GBV risk mitigation in CVA, available resources and its importance. The workshop clarified these concepts and highlighted the need for GBV risk mitigation, along with defining roles and responsibilities for implementing the approach in cash programming.

Participants appreciated the dedicated time to collaborate with their national and regional CWG and GBV counterparts, enabling them to establish practical, context-specific commitments and action plans to strengthen field implementation. The ample time for exchange between GBV coordinators and CWG colleagues reinforced the importance of coordination and linkages between the different actors.

Participants expressed that a key benefit of the workshop was the time spent learning about the tools in the [Toolkit for GBV Risk Mitigation in CVA](#) and were particularly convinced by their utility and adaptability. Participants also particularly appreciated hearing from colleagues in Colombia on the significant progress they have made on the approach since the 2022 workshop, stating that their

experience with more advanced implementation of the GBV risk mitigation agenda for CVA could serve as a model for the region and work as a roadmap for their own country's efforts.

Challenges discussed included staff turnover, particularly related to leadership, in various countries' Sub-Clusters/Sub-Sectors as well as in the national CWGs, which make it harder to maintain momentum for GBV risk mitigation in CVA programming. Participants also remarked on the need for harmonization of GBV risk mitigation tools, noting that many organizations might have their own internal tools, in order to avoid duplication and to reduce burdens.

Although not all participating countries have an active CWG or are currently implementing cash assistance due to various contextual restrictions, participants from such countries found that the workshop helped them plan for safe CVA implementation in the future and showed how the tools and approaches could apply to other programming areas.

Moving forward, the action plans and momentum established during the workshop will help advance the GBV risk mitigation agenda within CVA programming, making it safer and more inclusive.

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every childbirth is safe and
every young person's
potential is fulfilled

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July 2024

