FEMINIST OPPORTUNITIES NOW

FEMINIST GBV GLOSSARY

BY & FOR AFRICA



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A young woman with hearing impairment who survived sexual violence once said to us: "people talk about us without us. EVEN THE WORDS THEY USE DO NOT REPRESENT WHAT WE HAVE GONE THROUGH." This sentence illustrates how language can be a barrier or a tool for empowerment, hence the need for restorative language.

Restorative language is a way of speaking and writing that refrains from blaming survivors, encourages empathy and recognizes their dignity. It is a practice developed in Solidarité Suisse-Guinée (SSG) training courses on psychosocial support. This language replaces stigmatizing terms with words that restore a person's confidence and dignity.

Women give life; they deserve to be valued, not subjected to violence of any kind.The initiative to create a glossary dedicated to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is commendable. This tool is much more than just a document: it is a gateway to knowledge, awareness, and action. Together, let us reclaim the power of words to reduce violence and promote dignity, equity, and freedom.

This glossary will enable us to better understand the realities of violence, to name them accurately, and to strengthen everyone's ability to prevent and combat it. The positive impact of this initiative will be measured in terms of collective awareness, the empowerment of survivors, and the renewed commitment of social actors to the eradication of gender-based violence.

We are grateful to the FON team for the warm invitation and for initiating such a vital and visionary effort. Tesfa Hiwot which is engaged in grassroots humanitarian work in Ethiopia's Tigray region deeply resonates with the values underpinning this glossary initiative. This is because language is not merely descriptive but also formative. It shapes how survivors are seen, how communities respond, and how systems evolve. Therefore, terminology can either empower or alienate. Survivor-centered language is not just a matter of sensitivity it is a matter of justice. It affirms dignity, agency, and the lived realities of those navigating the aftermath of GBV in complex, often under-resourced settings.

FON's commitment to collective imagination is thus appreciated. Within the work of Tesfa Hiwot, community-rooted expressions often carry profound meaning and healing potential. We are thus glad to contribute insights from our regional advocacy, including how local idioms, cultural framing, and gendered narratives intersect with GBV response and prevention. Tesfa Hiwot looks forward to engaging in this collaborative process and ensuring that the glossary reflects not only technical precision but also the emotional and cultural depth survivors deserve.

Reproductive Health Network Kenya (RHNK), particularly through the Nena na Binti project, has seen how intersectionality plays out in real life for instance, how adolescent and youth in all their diversities, persons with disabilities, or LGBTIQ+ experience unique barriers when seeking GBV or SRHR services.

Using an intersectional lens, it has helped us design interventions that respond to layered vulnerabilities and amplify voices often left out of mainstream advocacy. It reminds us that justice and safety must be inclusive of all lived realities.

We appreciate FON's effort to center African feminist perspectives in shaping language on GBV. This glossary will be a valuable tool for activists and organizations working to challenge stigma and promote survivor-centered advocacy across the continent.

To all those who contributed to the drafting of this glossary, not forgetting IPPF through the FON project, we say thank you. Your work is an essential building block in building a more inclusive, equitable, and human rights-friendly society.

The FON team

FON partners

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- *Hassatou Lamarana Bah, vice-présidente des Amazones de la Presse Guinéenne*
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FOREWORD

This guide, which provides a vocabulary for action and change, is the result of essential collaboration among the partner organizations of the Feminist Opportunities Now (FON) program. This is not simply a collection of definitions, but a strategic and fundamental tool designed to strengthen consistency, relevance, and impact in our joint action against gender-based violence (GBV).

Gender-based violence is a complex and multidimensional scourge, rooted in power structures and gender inequalities. The reality on our continent is alarming and underscores the urgency of our commitment.



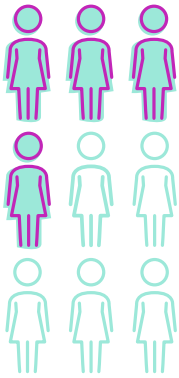
OVERALL PREVALENCE

Globally, figures suggest that one in three women experiences physical or sexual violence in her lifetime, most often at the hands of an intimate partner. These rates are often higher in many parts of Africa.

+10% À +30%

DURING CRISES

Studies in African countries have shown that Covid-19-related lockdowns resulted in significant increases in domestic violence, sometimes by more than 10% to 30% in a matter of months, highlighting the vulnerability of women and girls, particularly in times of crisis.



CHILD MARRIAGE

Nearly 4 in 10 girls in sub-Saharan Africa are married before the age of 18. As a result, they face an increased risk of violence and early pregnancy.

TOLERANCE 1/3

although more than two-thirds of Africans disapprove of physical domestic violence, more than one in three (31%) believe that the use of physical force by a man is “sometimes” or “always” justified, revealing the persistence of harmful social norms.

In light of these devastating statistics, clear language is no longer just an academic necessity, but rather a pressing demand.

The purpose of this glossary:

Establishing a common understanding

This glossary provides a common, feminist terminology for different forms of violence, underlying concepts (such as patriarchy, intersectionality, consent), and intervention strategies (survivor-centered approach, Do No Harm, etc.).

Strengthening program effectiveness

Clear language ensures that our reports, trainings, advocacy, and communications effectively target the root causes and manifestations of GBV. It helps avoid misinterpretations and maximizes the impact of our resources.

Supporting advocacy

By relying on clear definitions based on human rights and feminist frameworks, we strengthen the credibility of our advocacy with decision-makers, funders, and the general public.

Each term in this glossary has been selected and defined from a critical and activist point of view. We intend to make this a living document, one that evolves with emerging knowledge, the realities on the ground in our diverse communities, and advances in feminist theory and practice.

We encourage you to use this glossary as a daily reference for developing your projects, leading your teams, and engaging with survivors and society. We hope it will serve as the foundation for a unified conversation and the driving force behind a stronger collective strategy for the elimination of gender-based violence.

On behalf of all our partner organizations, we thank you for your unwavering commitment and contribution to building a more just and equal world.

This glossary is an initiative of the FON project to propose a common language for action against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

GBV is a systemic and global violation of human rights, taking many forms, profoundly impacting the lives of survivors, and perpetuating structural gender inequalities. As civil society organizations committed to gender equality and social justice, we are on the front lines of preventing, responding to, and combating this violence.

The Importance of precisely defined vocabulary

To be effective in our actions, be they advocacy, awareness-raising, psychosocial support, or research, it is essential that we share a clear and consistent understanding of the concepts we use. Terms related to GBV are constantly changing, becoming more specific and diverse in order to better capture the complexity of the realities experienced by those affected. A common and specific language is an indispensable tool for:

- Harmonizing our interventions in the field.
- Strengthening the quality of our data and analyses.
- Ensuring that survivors and communities use the terms that best describe their experience.
- Facilitating collaboration and advocacy with institutions and other partners.

A Tool for the Feminist Movement

This glossary, developed collectively by Feminist Opportunities Now's NGO partners, is not just a list of definitions; it is a strategic tool for our feminist movement. The glossary aims to:

- Demystify legal, social, and psychological concepts related to GBV.
- Provide a gender-sensitive, inclusive, survivor-centered framework.
- Encourage critical reflection on the norms and power dynamics that give rise to violence.

We invite you to use it as an essential reference guide to ensure that our communication and programs are always informed, rigorous, and transformative.


Validation Workshop on Girls Manifesto
with Girls Representatives, Key
Stakeholders and Partners


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DISCLAIMER

As part of our work, we strive to adapt our language to the context in which we operate. This involves using clear, inclusive, and culturally relevant language to promote understanding, ownership, and effectiveness of our actions. This strengthens the impact of our messages and encourages community engagement.

This entails:

- Taking local sociocultural realities into account: for example, using familiar expressions or examples when talking about rights or equality;
- Using positive language: preferring "women leaders" to "vulnerable women" to promote dignity and empowerment;
- Avoiding stigmatizing or overly technical terms, adapting vocabulary to the level of understanding of the target communities (local languages);
- Respecting local sensitivities while maintaining a discourse that promotes social transformation (e.g., talking about "family well-being" to address equality in certain conservative contexts).

How to use this Glossary

Excellent initiative! An African feminist glossary is a tool for social transformation. Encouraging local voices and involving young girls in this process is commendable.

This glossary should serve as a guide for African women and girls—an instrument of liberation, awareness, and education. Thank you for allowing our voices to shape the words of change.

ABUSE

by Moussa KONE (IPPF)

Abuse is improper or excessive use of something, be it an object, a right, a position, or a person.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

by SANKARA Souleymane, ABEFAB, Burkina Faso

The right of all survivors to obtain redress and justice through the legal system.

ACCOUNTABILITY

by Feven Araya

A process in which individuals, institutions, or systems take responsibility for their actions, acknowledge harm caused, and commit to change through transparent and just means.



AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

This is a voluntary measure that aims to correct historical or social inequalities by giving preferential treatment to marginalized or disadvantaged **groups**. It does not seek to exclude others, but to restore equity where injustices have occurred. This strategic measure aims to give specific advantages to individuals or groups who have been victims of past or present discrimination, in order to promote their access to education, employment, health, or social participation.

AFRICAN COMMUNITY FEMINISM

by Solidarité Suisse-Guinée

A feminist movement rooted in African realities, values, and traditions, promoting indigenous knowledge and collective solidarity. This term is inspired by rural women's and cooperative movements in Guinea and defends a vision of feminism rooted in culture and local autonomy.

ALLYSHIP

by Feven Araya

Being supportive of a person of a group that

ALLIED COMMUNITY AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

by SANKARA Souleymane

Influential people mobilized to deconstruct norms that tolerate violence.

AMAZON OF PEACE

by SANKARA Souleymane, Community Action communautaire pour le Bien-être de l'Enfant et de la Femme Au Burkina Faso (ABEFAB)

A positive term used to describe a courageous woman who is actively involved in conflict prevention, promoting dialogue, community mediation, and peacebuilding. The term embodies resilience, wisdom, and female leadership in peace processes, often in crisis or post-conflict settings. The "Amazons of Peace" work for a more just, inclusive, and nonviolent society, based on solidarity, gender justice, and human rights. This term is key to our peace and social cohesion initiatives, and we have put together a directory of Amazons of Peace whom we have trained and coached with support of AWDF.

ASSAULT

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA (Afrique Arc-En-Ciel, Guinea)

Any coercive, threatening, or violent act committed against a person, often because of their gender, identity, or social role.

ASSAULT AND HARM

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Refers to a form of physical violence that causes bodily harm to a person. In the context of violations of physical integrity, this term is often used to describe physical assaults inflicted on a woman, girl, or any vulnerable person.



B

BLACKMAIL

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Putting pressure on someone by threatening to reveal, do, or not do something in order to get an advantage or make them do what you want. Blackmail can be used to get sexual favors, money, silence, or forced obedience.

BODILY AUTONOMY

by Saa Manda LENO, Mon Enfant Ma Vie, République de Guinée

The fundamental right of every person to freely dispose of their body, without coercion, violence, or external interference. Awareness campaigns on women's reproductive health aim to promote the understanding that every woman is the sole decision-maker with regard to her body and motherhood.

BREAST IRONING

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A practice that involves flattening girls' breasts to delay puberty and "prevent" sexual assault. It is a form of mutilation and gender-based violence that places the responsibility for violence on girls.

BROPROPRIATING

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

This term refers to when a man takes credit for a woman's idea. Sometimes this involves promoting gender stereotypes.

COMMENT: illustrates a mechanism of discrimination and hierarchy of opinions based on gender, for example with derogatory gender expressions: (This idea is more likely to be accepted if it comes from a man than from you (referring to a woman)).

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

by SANKARA Souleymane

Ongoing training for health, justice, security, and social services personnel to ensure a gender-sensitive response. For example, our organization has strengthened the capacity of health workers to communicate with patients in order to improve the quality of interactions and foster an environment of trust that respects women's dignity.

CHEMICAL SUBMISSION

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

The administration of substances to neutralize a victim and commit sexual assault. It is a form of premeditated rape that is often difficult to prove.

CHILD MARRIAGE

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A union in which one of the spouses, often the girl, is a minor. Such a marriage compromises girls' health, education, and future, perpetuating poverty and dependence.

CISGENDER

by Louisa Essendi, Jinsiangu, Kenya

(Cisgenda in Kiswahili)) is a term to describe a person whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth are the same. Cisgender specifically relates to gender and not sexuality. A cisgender person may have any sexual orientation.

CLIMATE JUSTICE

by SANKARA Souleymane

The principle that the impacts of climate change must be understood and addressed not only as environmental issues, but also as issues of social justice and equality. Climate justice recognizes that women, poor, indigenous, and marginalized communities suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change, even though they are the least responsible for it. It aims to promote a just ecological transition that integrates human rights, gender equality, and inclusive participation in environmental decisions.

CORRECTIVE RAPE

by Louisa Essendi

Corrective rape, also called curative rape or homophobic rape, is a hate crime in which somebody is raped because of their perceived sexual orientation or Gender identity. Often victims for this are lesbian women and Transgender women so that they change their sexual orientation to suit particular sociocultural norms.

COLONIALISM

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A form of political, economic, and cultural domination of one people by another, often justified by racist ideology. Feminism points out how colonialism imposed hierarchies based on gender, race, and sexuality, erasing non-Western knowledge and social models.

COLORISM

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Discrimination within racialized groups based on skin colour, favoring light skin at the expense of dark skin. A legacy of colonial racism, colorism influences self-esteem, access to opportunities, and the representation of Black people in the public space.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

by SANKARA Souleymane

Activities aimed at raising collective awareness of the causes and consequences of GBV. Often carried out via community radio stations, discussion days, and forums.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

by SANKARA Souleymane

Consultation frameworks organized in targeted intervention areas to ensure the active participation of women, girls, community leaders, local authorities, young people, and Civil society organizations (CSOs) from the project design phase onwards. These forums enable to: Identify the priority needs of women and girls, particularly displaced women and girls, in terms of protection, access to justice, health services, empowerment, and citizen participation; understand of the social norms and community dynamics that influence the perception and management of gender-based violence (GBV); gather proposals from communities on culturally appropriate and acceptable approaches to preventing violence and strengthening the resilience of survivors; promote local ownership of the initiative and stakeholder engagement around common goals for social transformation.

COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE

by Solidarité Suisse-Guinée

A set of knowledge, practices, and values shared within a community, often transmitted orally, and essential in local approaches to GBV prevention. Inspired by fieldwork with women leaders and community mediators. Values the legitimacy of local knowledge in African feminism.

COMMUNITY MEDIATION / PARALEGAL

by SANKARA Souleymane

Ensure that appropriate community mechanisms are put in place to restore family ties. In some municipalities, local committees monitor cases to prevent social breakdown following incidents of GBV and the impact on children.

COMMUNITY PROTECTION MECHANISMS

by SANKARA Souleymane

Local structures (committees, women's networks, associations) that prevent and respond to GBV.

CONNECTED GIRL

by Thierno Loughoumana Diallo

Young women who use digital technology to learn, raise awareness, or start businesses. Example: "The connected girls of Labé are making a difference."

CONSENT

by Fernand LOUA, Association of Young Women Entrepreneurs of Burkina (AJFEB), Burkina Faso

Refers to a person's free, informed, voluntary, and reversible agreement prior to any physical, emotional, or sexual interaction. It implies clear understanding, without coercion or pressure, and can be withdrawn at any time. The absence of explicit refusal does not constitute consent. Consent is an affirmation of respect, freedom, and individual dignity.

CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A feminist concept that shows that gender-based and sexual violence form a continuum, from microaggressions to femicide, sharing the same logic of domination. The concept demonstrates that violence is not isolated, but systematic and intertwined.

CONVERSION THERAPY

by Louisa Essendi, Jinsiangu,

The term "conversion therapy," also known as "reorientation therapy," "reparative therapy," "reintegrative therapy," "homosexual cure therapy," or "ex-gay therapy" (Mazoea ya Tiba ya Ubadilishaji in Kiswahili) covers all kinds of attempts to modify or change a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. All such attempts, sometimes referred to as "efforts to change sexual orientation and gender identity/expression" (SOGIE), assume that sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression can and should be changed or eliminated if they do not conform to socially imposed norms.

The term "therapy" or "treatment" to describe any of these practices is misleading, as it implies the presence of a dysfunction and is not based on any scientific evidence. All these terms share an underlying and completely discredited belief that sexual orientation and gender identity can be changed, that being LGBTIAQ+ is a dysfunction or illness that requires "treatment" or "cure," and that cisgender heterosexuality is inherently normal and preferable. In this tool, the term "so-called conversion therapy" is used to refer to the harm caused by indoctrination efforts, which are often abusive.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Physical punishment or humiliation inflicted on children to "educate" them. This perpetuates a culture of violence and adult domination.

CORRECTIVE FAMILY VIOLENCE

by TRA Lou Gohi Marie-Josiane

A practice in which the family forces an LBTQ woman into marriage or heterosexual relations in order to change her orientation.

COURAGEOUS SURVIVOR

by Thierno Loughoumana Diallo

A woman or girl who has suffered violence but is seeking to overcome it and rebuild her life. A courageous survivor is someone who speaks out and acts to bring about change.

CULTURE OF RAPE

A set of beliefs, practices, and discourses that minimize, trivialize, or justify rape. It is based on blaming victims, social tolerance of perpetrators, and the constant sexualization of women.

CYBERBULLYING

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Harassment or psychological violence carried out through digital technologies (insults, threats, dissemination of intimate images, etc.). This type of violence is generally intended to intimidate, silence, or drive people away from digital platforms.

CYBERVIOLENCE

by Thierno Loughoumana Diallo, E-ÉDUCATION CITOYENNE, Republic of Guinea

Violence committed via the Internet, often involving insults, threats, or the dissemination or sharing of intimate photos/videos. Example: "39 messages of a sexual or intimate nature—that is the number of photo and video messages Hafsatou receives each day on her Messenger account."

DEFILEMENT

by Amos Simpano

Forced sexual intercourse with minors or underage children, with or without their consent.

DENIAL

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A psychological defense mechanism that involves refusing to acknowledge the reality of trauma or violence suffered. It is a way of temporarily protecting oneself from excessive pain, but it can delay recovery.

DISABILITY

A physical or mental condition that makes it difficult for the affected person to do things that other people can do.



DISCRIMINATION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Action or behavior that excludes, rejects, or treats a person or group of people unfairly because of who they are.

DIGITAL SPEECH

by Thierno Loughoumana Diallo

Using digital tools to express oneself or convey a message. Example: “Thanks to podcasts created by the NGO E-Éducation citoyenne, girls have found their digital voice.”

DISSOCIATION

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A psychological reaction to trauma in which the mind «detaches» from the body in order to survive violence. It explains why some victims appear «calm» during or after an assault. It is a survival reflex and not consent.

DOMESTIC CONFINEMENT

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

The practice of preventing a woman from going out, working, having friends, seeing her family, etc. It is a form of patriarchal control, often masked by “protection” or “tradition.”

DOUBLE DISCRIMINATION

by Aminata Camara, Organisation de secours aux Handicapés de Guinée, Republic of Guinea

A situation in which a woman living with a disability is victimized or discriminated simultaneously on the basis of both her identity, for example based on gender and disability.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

by Amos Simpano

Act that leads to harm to an individual by either a partner, parent, relative or other household members.

DUTY BEARERS

by Amos Simpano, Entashata Loita Community Based Organization, Kenya

Duty bearers are people who are supposed to implement the law on human rights violations like, police, cultural chiefs, administration chiefs, parents, teachers etc.



EARLY MARRIAGE

Marriage of individuals whose level of physical, emotional, sexual and psychosocial development makes them unable to freely and fully consent to marriage.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

by Saa Manda LENO

The process by which women acquire the financial resources, skills, and economic freedom that enable them to support themselves and make their own choices. Through training in women's entrepreneurship, several survivors have established small local businesses, thus contributing to their economic empowerment.

ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF GB

by Moussa KONE-IPPF

Economic support for survivors of GBV includes assistance with socio-economic reintegration through entrepreneurship support programs, access to employment, or direct financial assistance.

ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

by Hassatou Lamarana Bah, Vice President of Amazones de la Presse Guinéenne, Guinea

A form of violence that deprives women of their financial independence. They are unable to make decisions about their property without a man's approval.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCE

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A psychological state in which a person places their self-esteem and well-being in the eyes, validation, or love of others. Women are often socialized to "please" and "sacrifice," which fuels power relations and violence.

EMPOWERMENT

by Saa Manda LENO and SANKARA Souleymane

The process by which a person, particularly a woman or survivor, acquires the material, economic, social, and psychological means necessary to fully exercise their rights and freely choose their life. In other words, it is a process by which an individual becomes aware of their potential, strengthens their skills, and gains access to levers of power in a free and self-determined manner.

At our training center in Conakry, several women who have experienced violence have regained their dignity and economic independence through training in soap making and baking. Their success inspires other survivors to take back control of their future.

EMPOWERMENT

by Fernand LOUA

Empowerment refers to the process by which women, girls, and all marginalized people become aware of their rights, develop their self-esteem, and strengthen their ability to influence decisions that affect their lives. This concept encompasses active participation in decision-making spaces, economic autonomy, freedom of choice, and recognition of individual and collective dignity. Empowerment is not a gift, but a collective and personal dynamic of social transformation that aims for real equality and gender justice. During a community workshop, a participant who was a survivor of GBV said: “Today, I am no longer a victim, I am a woman standing tall.” “This sentence embodies the spirit of empowerment: the ability to reclaim one’s voice, transform suffering into strength, and claim one’s place in society. In the context of feminist action, the term emphasizes the importance of supporting survivors not as beneficiaries, but as agents of change.

ENGAGEMENT OF ALLIED MEN AND BOYS / POSITIVE MASCULINITY

by SANKARA Souleymane

Positive involvement of men and boys in promoting equality and combating GBV. Increasingly popular. Example: clubs of allied men in Tenkodogo host discussions on sharing domestic tasks.

EQUITY

by Moussa KONE (IPPF)

Principle of justice that consists of treating everyone fairly and impartially, giving them what they are entitled to.

EXERT CONTROL OVER

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A mechanism of psychological enslavement whereby one person exercises progressive control over another (isolation, manipulation, fear, dependence). Control is not weakness: it is a strategy of isolation and conscious domination on the part of the aggressor.

FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is sexual mutilation and a serious violation of human rights, justified by norms of purity and control of female desire.

FEMALE INFANTICIDE

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

This involves killing, starving, and/or neglecting female children because they are considered less valuable in society than male children. Infanticide can be perpetrated by a parent or other family members.

FEMALE YINIZATION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Refers to the promotion or valorization of so-called "yin" qualities in the behavior, bodies, or social representations of women and girls.

F

FEMICIDE

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

This is the murder of a woman or girl because of her sex.

COMMENT: In Guinea, in the city of Kankan, a woman named Adama Konaté was stabbed by her partner Bangaly TRAORE in the Dibida neighborhood in March 2025.

Source: https://mosaiqueguinee.com/2025/03/feminicide-a-kankan-le-debat-sur-la-peine-de-mort-doit-etre-relance-mamady-kaba/

FEMINISM

It is a multidisciplinary concept that scrutinizes, evaluates and redefines the global value stream through a gendered lens.

FEMINIST LOGISTICS

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

A set of movements, ideologies, and struggles aimed at promoting equal rights between women and men and combating gender-based discrimination and violence.

FEMINIST / RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

by SANKARA Souleymane

An approach that places human rights, justice, and the transformation of power at the center of action. In our projects, this term is preferred because it emphasizes collective power rather than dependency.

FGM

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Considered a criminal act in several legal provisions, it consists of altering or partially or totally removing the external genitalia of a girl or woman without medical reason, often for cultural, religious, or social reasons.

COMMENT: According to a UNICEF report published in March 2024, more than 230 million girls and women worldwide have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM). This figure represents a 15% increase from 2016 estimates.

Source: https://www.unicef.fr/article/plus-de-230-millions-de-filles-et-de-femmes-ont-subi-des-mutilations-genitales-feminines/

FGM/E

by Fatou Hann

Initiation without excision, because communities associate FGM/C with the entire ritual and educational cycle that is initiation, so they are deaf to any criticism when it is limited to excision. Mutilation is also a barbaric term that conveys barbarism (which is true) but passes excessive judgment on those who practice it and can also turn people off.

FORCED ABORTION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

An act whereby a woman is forced, through threats, pressure, manipulation, or violence, to terminate a pregnancy that she wishes to carry to term.

FORCED CHILD MARRIAGES

by Amos Simpano

Giving out children under 18 years by parents, clan, and community members to stranger husbands against their wishes.

FORCED DISPLACEMENT

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Forced migration due to conflict, crisis, violence, or climate crises. Displaced persons are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, poverty, and exploitation.

FORCED MARRIAGE

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A union imposed without the free and informed consent of both parties. It is a violation of human rights, often justified by traditions, debts, or social alliances.

FORCED PROSTITUTION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

A situation in which a person is forced, through violence or deception, to perform sexual acts in exchange for money.

FORCED SEXUAL PENETRATION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Directly related to rape, this is an extreme form of sexual assault characterized by the non-consensual introduction of an object or body part into an intimate area of the victim, usually through force, threat, or coercion.

FSF

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Acronym in French that refers to women who have sex with women, known as “lesbians,” who are sometimes survivors of specific forms of violence such as curative rape or forced marriage. These practices constitute serious forms of gender-based and sexual orientation-based violence, aimed at controlling or denying their identity.

COMMENT: Many girls find themselves forced into marriage by their parents when the latter discover their daughter’s sexual orientation, for fear of being dishonored within society.

GENDER

by Louisa Essendi

Gender (Jinsia in Kiswahili) is a composite of socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and/or attributes that a given society may consider appropriate for people of a given sex. A person's gender, gender identity and gender expression are different from and not related to their sexual orientation.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

by SANKARA Souleymane

All harmful acts directed against a person because of their sex or gender, including physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or social violence. Used by NGOs and Ministries to refer to all forms of violence in a neutral and inclusive manner. For example, during a session in Ouagadougou, women leaders said: "We must understand that public insults and humiliation are also GBV."

GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

All forms of violence committed on the basis of gender or of a sexual nature. This includes rape, harassment, mutilation, forced marriage, etc. These are political acts of violence aimed at maintaining male domination.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

by SANKARA Souleymane

The process of developing, analyzing, and executing public or institutional budgets that consider the different needs, priorities, and impacts of policies on women, men, girls, and boys. This form of budgeting aims to address gender inequalities by ensuring that allocated resources contribute to reducing disparities, empowering women, and promoting equality. It does not involve creating a separate budget for women, but rather integrating gender analysis at every stage of the budget cycle to ensure an equitable distribution of resources.

GENDER EQUALITY

by SANKARA Souleymane

A situation in which women, men, and people of all genders enjoy the same rights, resources, and opportunities.

COMMENT: It differs from equality in that it considers individual differences and needs in order to achieve more appropriate treatment, even if this means treating people differently, unlike equality, which implies treating everyone the same.

GENDER EXPRESSION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Refers to the way a person expresses their gender through their appearance, behavior, voice, gestures, or clothing choices. Regardless of their biological sex or gender identity, which can sometimes be fluid, violence against transgender women or men.

COMMENT: It differs from equality in that it considers individual differences and needs in order to achieve more appropriate treatment, even if this means treating people differently, unlike equality, which implies treating everyone the same.

GENDER IDENTITY

by Louisa Essendi

Gender identity (kitambulisho cha jinsia in Kiswahili) refers to an individual's personal sense of being female, male, both, or other than female or male. Gender identity may or may not correspond to the biological category assumed or assigned at birth.

GENDER JUSTICE

by SANKARA Souleymane

Recognition of historical injustices and implementation of remedial measures to ensure true gender equality. This term is being increasingly mentioned in Burkina Faso, especially in large cities.

GYNECOLOGICAL AND OBSTETRIC VIOLENCE (GOV)

by SANKARA Souleymane

Acts, behaviors, or omissions that undermine the respect, dignity, and physical and psychological integrity of women during sexual, reproductive, gynecological, and obstetric health care. Common forms of GOV: Medical or gynecological examination without informed consent; Brutal or humiliating treatment during childbirth (shouting, threats, degrading comments); Refusal to provide pain relief; Medically unjustified practices (routine episiotomy, unjustified cesarean section); Negligence, deliberate delay or denial of care; Violation of confidentiality or medical secrecy. ABEFAB, with the support of IPPF through the FON project, has implemented a project entitled «Justice and dignity for women facing gynecological and obstetric violence.» GOV continues to persist, contributing to maternal and perinatal deaths: more than 13,000 cases recorded since the beginning of 2025, according to the quarterly report of Tuesday, October 21, 2025, from the Ministry of Health on the monitoring of maternal and perinatal deaths and the response, in Ouagadougou (https://www.sidwaya.info/deces-maternels-et-perinataux.../)

HARASSMENT

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A series of repeated behaviors (words, gestures, messages, etc.) intended to humiliate, intimidate, or control a person. It is psychological violence, often invisible, which aims to destroy self-confidence.

HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Harmful traditional practices are prejudicial and can be included in other categories of gender-based violence, but they are specific to particular customs and cultures in which girls and women are strongly devalued, considered second-class citizens, and have very few rights. These practices are often carried out in the name of protecting and maintaining culture.

HETERONORMATIVITY

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A system that considers heterosexuality to be the only "normal" and legitimate orientation, based on the assumption that gender is binary and that sexual and marital relationships are more appropriate between people of different sexes. It marginalizes LGBTQIA+ people and fuels violence against non-conforming sexualities and genders.

HIDDEN VIOLENCE / BOBBING THE HEAD DOWN

by Thierno Loughoumana Diallo

Two expressions that refer to the secret suffering that girls/women endure in private and dare not report out of shame or fear of being judged, remaining silent in the face of violence.

HOLISTIC CARE FOR SURVIVORS OF GBV

by Moussa KONE-IPPF

Holistic care for survivors of GBV (gender-based violence) is a comprehensive approach that addresses the victim's needs in their entirety, focusing on medical, psychosocial, legal, and socioeconomic aspects.

HOLISTIC SUPPORT

by SANKARA Souleymane

Comprehensive support in the area of medicine, psychology, law, and economics. This is common practice in the listening centers in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. Example: "We don't just treat injuries, we restore confidence."

HOMOPHOBIA

by Louisa Essendi

Homophobia is the fear, hatred, and/or lack of acceptance of people who define their sexual orientation as something other than heterosexual.

HOMOPHOBIC

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

A person who expresses hatred, rejection, or prejudice towards homosexual people or those perceived as such. It marginalizes LGBTQIA+ people and fuels violence against their non-conforming sexualities and genders.

HONOR KILLINGS, ALSO KNOWN AS CUSTOMARY KILLINGS

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Murder or serious violence committed in the name of "family honor" against a woman deemed "immoral." These crimes reflect patriarchal control over women's bodies and sexuality.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

According to the United Nations, a human rights defender is person who acts individually or collectively to promote or protect human rights. They are committed to peaceful action, without resorting to violence. They may be lawyers, journalists, teachers, activists, or simply committed citizens. Their actions may be discreet or public, but they are always focused on defending the fundamental rights recognized by international instruments.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Organized exploitation of human beings for sexual, economic, or domestic purposes, often through coercion or deception. Women and girls are the main victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

IMPOSTER SYNDROME

An unjustified feeling of illegitimacy despite achievements. Women, especially those who are racialized or marginalized, are often victims of this in positions of power.

INCEST

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Sexual relations imposed between members of the same family or close relatives by marriage. It is one of the most serious and destructive forms of violence, often covered up by family silence.

INCLUSIVE FEMINIST ACCESSIBILITY

by Aminata Camara, Organisation de secours aux Handicapés de Guinée, Republic of Guinea

It is an approach that integrates accessibility (physical, linguistic, sensory, digital) into all actions related to fighting against GBV.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

by Saa Manda LENO

A way of using language that makes all gender identities visible and avoids sexist or exclusionary formulations. In our training courses, we have replaced “beneficiaries” with “participants” to reflect gender diversity. This small change in inclusive language promotes a sense of belonging.

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

by Aminata Camara

A participatory leadership style that recognizes the diversity of experiences, particularly those of women with disabilities. Inclusive leadership training at OSH-Guinea has enabled young women with disabilities to become trainers.

INJUNCTION TO MOTHERHOOD

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Social expectation that a woman must want and have children in order to be “complete.” This injunction denies women the right to choose and renders childless women invisible.

INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE

by TRA Lou Gohi Marie-Josiane

Refusal of assistance by the police, hospitals, or social services due to sexual orientation.

INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE ON GBV

by SANKARA Souleymane

A space for exchange between young people, adults, and elders to promote non-violent behavior.

INTERNALIZED SEXISM

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Unconscious integration of patriarchal norms by women, leading to their own devaluation or the justification of violence. It is a product of patriarchal socialization.

INTERSECTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Sometimes referred to as intersectional discrimination, this term describes a situation in which a person experiences multiple forms of discrimination at the same time, linked to different characteristics of their identity (gender, origin, social class, disability, sexual orientation, age, etc.).

INTERSECTIONALITY

by Roy Wekesa

It is a framework that acknowledges how different aspects of a person's identity such as gender, age, class, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, and location interact to shape their experiences of privilege and oppression. It helps us understand that gender-based violence and inequality do not affect all women and girls in the same way. Recognizing these overlapping identities ensures that feminist and GBV responses are inclusive, nuanced, and responsive to diverse lived realities.

INTERSEX

by Louisa Essendi

Intersex (huntha in Kiswahili) refers to people who naturally have biological traits, such as hormonal levels or genitalia, which do not match what is typically identified as male or female. There are many different intersex variations. Being intersex is a naturally occurring trait in humans; it is not pathological. Being intersex is not linked to sexual orientation or gender identity; intersex people can have different sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.

INTIMATE PARTNER COERCION

by Bereket Daniel, Ethiopian Human Rights Council, Ethiopia

A pattern of controlling behaviors (physical, economic, psychological, digital) within intimate relationships. "Coercion" highlights power imbalance without reducing it to isolated "incidents." Rural Oromia focus groups rejected "violence" because police only act on visible injury; "coercion" includes withheld farmland access or phone monitoring.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Intimate partner violence is any form of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic violence committed by a current or former partner in an intimate relationship. It can involve married couples, couples in a common-law relationship, relationships between sex workers and their clients, or those in emotional or sexual relationships.

COMMENT: Violence perpetrated by an intimate partner remains one of the most common forms of violence against women, and those who are truly exposed to this violence are sex workers (SWs), who are sometimes beaten by their intimate partners (clients) after sexual intercourse with the intention of not paying for the SW's services.

Source: https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/1900b545-4b3b-4fe8-abf4-a8a25eaa5335/content

ISOLATION

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A control strategy whereby an abuser cuts the victim off from their social circle, resources, and autonomy. Isolation often precedes physical and psychological abuse.

IT WAS JUST AN ARGUMENT, AND HE JUST CORRECTED HER, THAT'S ALL

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

This expression is often used to trivialize a situation of gender-based violence, which could be domestic or family violence. It masks serious acts (assault and battery, threats, humiliation) under the guise of a simple verbal disagreement. This prevents the recognition of violence and the protection of victims.



KIDNAPPING OF WOMEN OR GIRLS

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

A form of gender-based violence that involves abducting a woman or girl in order to force her into marriage, subject her to sexual exploitation, or make her a victim of human trafficking.

COMMENT: Some girls under the age of 18 are reduced to servitude in homes, deprived of their freedom, taken out of school or prevented from attending school, and exploited as "maids" for a pittance that they sometimes do not receive and which goes to their employer, who is usually a woman, or even their own parents, who believe that a girl can bring money into the family quickly, unlike a boy.

KEY AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

These are groups within the general population who, due to their social, economic, health, or legal situation, are particularly exposed to violence, disease risks, and inequalities, particularly in terms of access to healthcare, human rights, or development.



K

LEGAL CARE FOR SURVIVORS OF GBV

by Moussa KONE-IPPF

Legal support for survivors of GBV includes legal and judicial assistance, follow-up on complaints, and compensation.

COMMENT: Survivors must be informed of their rights and the services available to help them obtain justice, receive compensation from the perpetrator, or apply for compensation funds if the perpetrator cannot be identified or is not solvent.

LEGAL PROTECTION FOR SURVIVORS

by SANKARA Souleymane

A set of laws and measures guaranteeing the rights and safety of people affected by GBV. Burkina Faso has adopted laws against female genital mutilation and early marriage. Some survivors become community advocates to raise awareness.

LESBOPHOBIA

by Louisa Essendi

Lesbophobia is the prejudice, hatred, and discrimination specifically directed toward lesbians, which is a combination of homophobia (fear of homosexuals) and misogyny (hatred of women). It includes negative attitudes and discriminatory acts towards lesbians as individuals, couples, or a social group. This term acknowledges that lesbians experience a unique form of oppression because they are both women and homosexual, and the term also addresses the sexism that affects all women.

LGBTQIA+

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Acronym referring to diverse sexual and gender identities that do not conform to society's heterosexual or cisgender norms. L: Lesbian, G: Gay, B: Bisexual, T: Transgender, Q: Queer, I: Intersex, A: Asexual, +: Includes other gender identities.

MANSPLAINING

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

This is when a man explains something to a woman in a condescending and reductive manner.

MANTERRUPTING

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Unjustified interruption of a woman by a man when she is speaking simply because she is female.

MARRIAGE COERCION

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Social and cultural pressure pushing women to marry in order to be "respectable" or "fulfilled." It is an instrument of patriarchal control over women's life trajectories.

MARRIAGE PRESSURE

by TRA Lou Gohi Marie-Josiane

Social or religious obligation pushing an LBQ woman to marry a man.

MASS SEXUAL ASSAULT

by Gilliane Elsa Pouamou, IPPF

Also referred to as a gang rape or sometimes a "tournante," is a rape committed by several individuals acting as perpetrators or accomplices.

Source : Viol collectif - cabinet d'avocats pénalistes viol collectif

MÈDÂME

by Catherine Cethou, BAVE Association, Burkina Faso

Originating from: mother+soul

A mother who has lost her child, whose soul lives elsewhere. It is a term that is close to our hearts to describe a mother who has lost her child. The linguistic reality designates words for other losses: orphans, widows. But no word exists for a mother who has lost her child. This linguistic silence is a symbolic injustice. For those of us who work to support these mothers, we have always wondered how such a growing phenomenon, such immense pain, can have no name.

MEDICAL CARE FOR SURVIVORS OF GBV

by Moussa KONE-IPPF

Medical care for survivors of GBV is a multidisciplinary approach that includes emergency care, preventive treatment, and psychosocial support.

MEDICAL VIOLENCE

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Also known as institutional violence, this refers to the refusal by a healthcare provider to provide medical care or treatment to a person due to their disability, sex, gender, or any other reason in a healthcare facility.

MILITANT EMPATHY

by Solidarité Suisse-Guinée

An attitude of listening and active compassion that fuels feminist and community action. It is present in the psychosocial activities carried out with GBV survivors. It humanizes the struggle and promotes a people-centered approach.

MODEL WOMAN / WOMAN OF PRINCIPLE

by Thierno Loughoumana Diallo

A woman who is respected in the community, who sets an example through her actions, and who is independent, courageous, and aware of her rights. Example: Aicha Bah, twice divorced, was convinced that she was a born loser. After a few years of retirement, one day she decided to take control of her destiny; today she is married, the mother of two children, and runs her own sewing workshop.

MOLESTATION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Any physical act of touching an intimate part of the body (breasts, buttocks, genitals) without the consent of the person. This can occur in a family, school, professional, or community setting.

MORAL HARASSMENT

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Repeated behavior aimed at degrading a person's living or working conditions, causing stress, fear, and isolation. It can occur in couples, families, schools, or professional environments.

MORAL POLICE

by TRA Lou Gohi Marie-Josiane

Pressure exerted by religious leaders, families, or peers to impose heterosexuality.

MOVEMENT-BUILDING INITIATIVES

by Roy Wekesa, Reproductive Health Network Kenya, Kenya

Movement-building initiatives refer to collective, sustained efforts that mobilize communities, organizations, and individuals around a shared vision for social change. Unlike one-off awareness-raising campaigns that primarily focus on information dissemination, movement-building emphasizes empowerment, collaboration, leadership development, and long-term systemic transformation. These initiatives create spaces for solidarity, amplify marginalized voices, and strengthen collective agency to challenge injustice and advance gender equality and human rights. Awareness-raising campaigns often raise visibility but may not lead to lasting behavioural or structural change. By contrast, movement-building initiatives such as survivor networks, youth-led advocacy coalitions, or feminist alliances foster ownership, accountability, and sustainability.

Our engagement with community health advocates has shown that when people see themselves as part of a broader movement, they become active change agents rather than passive recipients of information.

MULTISECTORAL COORDINATION

by SANKARA Souleymane

Cooperation between healthcare providers, police, justice, civil society, and local authorities for an integrated response. «GBV consultation frameworks» or «GBV clusters» and «PEAS clusters» regularly bring together local actors to monitor cases and exchange information.

NARCISSISTIC PERVERT

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A manipulative person who seeks to dominate others through control, seduction, and psychological destruction. This term is often used to describe an abuser who practices control and psychological harassment.

NON-BINARY

by Louisa Essendi

The term is used to describe someone whose gender identity blends elements of being a man or a woman, or who has a gender identity that is different from either male or female, some people may not identify with any gender.

N

ONLINE SOLIDARITY

by Thierno Loughoumana Diallo

Mutual aid between girls and women via social media.

ONLINE VOICES

by Thierno Loughoumana Diallo

Presence and expression of young women on social media to defend their rights. Example: "Our girls now have an online voice to denounce GBV."

ORDINARY SEXISM

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A set of normalized attitudes and comments that reproduce the hierarchy between the sexes. It perpetuates rape culture and legitimizes gender inequalities.

OSTRACISM

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Act of excluding, setting aside, rejecting, or marginalizing a person or group of people.

OUTING

by Louisa Essendi

The practice of revealing the sexual or gender identity of a person without their consent. LGBT organizations strongly condemn the outing of a transgender person before they are ready to tell their own story and is also key as outing people makes them more vulnerable and perceptive to violence.

PATRIARCHY

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A social, political, and cultural system in which men hold power and dominate women. It structures most societies through institutions, laws, and norms that establish a hierarchy between the sexes.

PEER EDUCATORS

Peer educators are young people who are trained to provide information and raise awareness among their peers on topics such as health, rights, and social behavior. They draw on their shared experiences, mutual trust, and common language to bring about behavioral change within their social group.

P

PEER SUPPORT

by Aminata Camara

Support between people who have had similar experiences of discrimination or violence. Peer support helps women with disabilities break their silence.

PERPETRATOR

by Amos Simpano

The person who commits the act of GBV. In our context men and boys who abuse women and girls are the perpetrators.

PERPETRATOR / HARM-DOER

by Feven Araya

An individual or group responsible for committing acts of gender-based violence. “Harm-doer” can be used when appropriate to focus on accountability without dehumanization.

PERPETRATOR OF VIOLENCE (PREFERABLE TO “AGGRESSOR”)

by SANKARA Souleymane

A person responsible for an act of violence. This term is more neutral and useful in approaches to restorative justice.

PERPETRATOR / HARM-DOER

by Feven Araya

An individual or group responsible for committing acts of gender-based violence. “Harm-doer” can be used when appropriate to focus on accountability without dehumanization.

PHYSICAL ASSAULT

by Amos Simpano, Entashata, CBO, Kenya

Physical beating or physical torture of women, girls and children.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

by Hassatou Lamarana Bah

Any act deliberately intended to harm a person's physical integrity. It is characterized by physical force causing injury and trauma.

PIMP

by Gilliane Elsa Pouamou, IPPF

A person who derives income from the prostitution of others.

Source : proxénète | Dictionnaire de l'Académie française | 9e édition

PIMPING

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

This is the exploitation of another person's prostitution for financial gain, often through coercion, manipulation, or threats. The person profiting from this activity is called a pimp. Pimping is a form of sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

PLWHIV

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Means a person living with HIV. Sometimes the person is subjected to stigma and discrimination because of his/her HIV-positive status.

PORNOGRAPHY DISCLOSURE

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

The dissemination of intimate images or videos without the consent of the person concerned, often for the purposes of revenge or control. This is a form of digital sexual violence based on blackmail and humiliation.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

A set of symptoms (flashbacks, anxiety, nightmares, hypervigilance) that appear after trauma. It does not reflect weakness, but is a direct consequence of the violence suffered.

THE POWER OF CONSENT

by Nkechi Nnenna UMECHURUBA, FEMMES VEUVES D'AFRIQUE (WIDOWS OF AFRICA) NGO, Côte d'Ivoire

The power of consent is the fundamental right of every woman and girl to decide freely, without coercion or fear, about her body, her words, her relationships, and her life choices. It is a form of autonomy and self-assertion that values dignity, confidence, and personal responsibility.

In the African context, promoting the power of consent means transforming mindsets and encouraging families, schools, and communities to recognize the voices of women and girls as legitimate and essential. This concept embodies a preventive and educational approach to gender-based violence, while paving the way for a culture of respect, equality, and social justice. Consent is not permission given, but an affirmation of power—a key to empowerment and lasting change.

PRACTICES ROOTED IN GENDER INEQUALITY

by Roy Wekesa

Practices rooted in gender inequality are social norms, traditions, or behaviors that reinforce unequal power relations between women, men, and gender-diverse persons. These practices often limit access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making, and can manifest as harmful traditions such as female genital mutilation (FGM), early or forced marriage, or preference for male children. Unlike the broader term "cultural practices," this terminology emphasizes the underlying power dynamics and structural discrimination that sustain such behaviors, rather than attributing them solely to culture.

In our fieldwork, we've observed that labeling all harmful behaviors as "cultural practices" can inadvertently stigmatize entire communities or overlook the root cause of gender inequality.

Using the phrase "practices rooted in gender inequality" encourages a more accurate, rights-based, and transformative conversation that challenges discriminatory norms while respecting positive cultural identity.

PRIVILEGE

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Social, economic, or symbolic advantage granted to a group because of undeserved characteristics (male, white, able-bodied, cisgender, etc.). Recognizing one's privilege is not a guilt trip, but a responsibility in the fight for equality.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CARE FOR SURVIVORS OF GBV

by Moussa KONE-IPPF

Psychological care for survivors of GBV is based on a victim-centered approach, which includes attentive listening, non-judgment, emotional support, and referral to specialized services.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

by SANKARA Souleymane

Assistance aimed at restoring the mental health, dignity, and self-esteem of survivors. At a center in Kaya, a psychologist explains: "Talking is already healing."

PSYCHOLOGICAL TORTURE

by Amos Simpano

Abusive, threats and intimidations of men towards their wives and children causes mental stress.

PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

by Hassatou Lamarana Bah

This is a form of abuse that affects the victim's morale and mental state. It does not involve direct physical violence. It is characterized by hurtful and demeaning words, gestures, and writings intended to harm the person.

PUBLIC STRIPPING

by Louisa Essendi

The public stripping of women accused of indecent dressing in public. Often victims are lesbian, non binary and transgender women.

QUEER

par Lamine DOUMBOUYA

A term generally used for non-normative identities that are often politically asserted in the United States.



RAPE

by Amos Simpano

Forced sexual intercourse with women without their consent.

REFERRAL/SAFE ORIENTATION

by SANKARA Souleymane

Connecting survivors with specialized services, while respecting confidentiality. In rural areas, community referents are often used, these are trusted women who guide survivors.

REIFY

by NIKIEMA Rasmata, Association of Young Women Entrepreneurs of Burkina (AJFEB), Burkina Faso

Transformation of a concept, a social relationship, or a human being into something concrete or material, that is, making something or someone similar to an object.

R

REPRODUCTIVE COERCION

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

Any form of pressure, manipulation, or violence aimed at controlling a person's reproductive choices (imposing or prohibiting pregnancy, refusing contraception, destroying condoms, etc.). It is a form of patriarchal violence against women's bodies, denying their right to freely control their reproduction.

RESCUER SYNDROME

A compulsive need to help or "save" others in order to exist or feel useful. It can lead some women to sacrifice themselves in toxic relationships or activism.

RESILIENCE

by Solidarité Suisse-Guinea

Inner and collective strength that enables people to recover from hardship, heal, and rebuild their lives after trauma or exclusion. This word is often used in the stories of survivors supported by SSG and values women's dignity and capacity for action, without reducing them to their suffering.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

by Saa Manda LENO

An approach to justice that aims not only to punish the perpetrator of violence, but also to repair the harm caused, restore the survivor's dignity, and promote reconciliation. In some communities, community dialogues facilitated by counselors have helped to restore social ties while acknowledging the suffering of survivors.

SAFE SPACE

by SANKARA Souleymane

A physical or virtual place where women can express themselves (exchange ideas, support each other, and obtain services) without fear. “Safe spaces for girls” are being created as part of several initiatives in areas hosting internally displaced persons (IDPs). There, they can talk freely about periods, harassment, and rights.

SAFE SPACES

by TRA Lou Gohi Marie-Josiane, Initiative Tile, Côte d’Ivoire

Homes, associations, or WhatsApp groups offering emotional security and confidentiality to vulnerable and marginalized individuals or communities.

SAFE SPACE / LABÉ GIRLS’ HOUSE IN LABÉ

by Thierno Loughoumana Diallo

A physical space where girls/women can feel safe, confide in others, and speak without being judged. Example: Aïssatou chose the Girls’ House as a landmark and a place of refuge.

SEE THE MOON

by Fatou Hann

Also known as menstruation, this is a physiological phenomenon characterized by periodic blood flow due to the shedding of the uterine lining in women between puberty and menopause when fertilization does not occur.

SELF-DETERMINATION

by Solidarité Suisse-Guinée

This is the right and ability of every woman or community to define their own priorities, life choices, as well as strategies for empowerment. It is a key concept in the economic empowerment projects supported by Solidarité Suisse-Guinée, thereby strengthening the sovereignty of women and local communities.

SELF-DISCRIMINATION

by Berekia Ouedraogo and Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Self-discrimination refers to behavior whereby an individual deprives himself or herself of fundamental (inalienable or universal) rights due to factors such as past stigmatization, fear, or societal perceptions.

SELF-STIGMATIZATION

by Berekia Ouedraogo and Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Self-stigmatization refers to any act of self-inflicted harm by an individual who has experienced stigmatization due to their physical condition, social status, or life experiences. Self-stigmatization results in shame and low self-esteem.

SELECTIVE ABORTION

by Souwaiba Ibrahim, La Ligue nigerienne des droits des femmes, Niger

Termination of pregnancy based on the sex of the fetus, usually when it is female. This practice, linked to patriarchy and male preference, reveals how the value of a girl's life is socially demeaned in certain cultures.

SEX

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

All the physical and anatomical characteristics (reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormones) that distinguish men from women at birth. It is generally classified as male or female.

SEX WORKER

by Louisa Essendi

A sex worker is an adult who engages in consensual sexual activity for payment, which can be money or other goods.

SEXTORTION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

A form of digital blackmail that involves threatening to distribute intimate content (photos, videos, messages) in order to obtain sexual favors, money, or other benefits.

SEXUAL ABUSE

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

A set of immoral acts of a sexual nature committed by an individual without the consent of the person concerned, either because of their age or psychological state. This includes forcible touching, rape, sexual humiliation, sexual exploitation, and any form of coercion related to sexuality.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Any act of a sexual nature committed against a person without their consent, whether by force, threat, or violence.

SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

The acronym (SGM) refers to people whose sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression differs from the dominant norms (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, non-binary). They often face specific forms of violence: discrimination, physical and sexual assault, arbitrary arrests, forced marriages, so-called "corrective" rape, and social exclusion.

SEXUAL BLACKMAIL

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

A form of violence that involves coercing a person into sexual acts under threat of reprisals, disclosure of personal information, or loss of benefits (employment, housing, security, etc.). Very often, women or girls in vulnerable positions give in so as not to lose certain social benefits they enjoy.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Any repeated verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature that is unsolicited, non-consensual, and undermines a person's dignity or well-being. It is characterized by sexually suggestive comments, slapping on the buttocks, and touching the survivor's private parts without their consent.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Any situation in which a person is forced, manipulated, or coerced into performing sexual acts in exchange for money, food, protection, employment, or other benefits, or under threat, pressure, or abuse of power.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

by Louisa Essendi

Sexual orientation (Utambulisho wa kimapenzi in Kiswahili) is the sexual, romantic, and emotional attraction that one has the capacity to feel for others.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

by Hassatou Lamarana Bah

Any act of coercion, threat, attempt, or behavior of a sexual nature without the victim's consent.

SILENT VIOLENCE

by Aminata Camara

This is a form of non-physical violence (exclusion, contempt, infantilization, etc.) frequently experienced by women with disabilities.

SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACE

by SANKARA Souleymane

A harmonious living environment that promotes solidarity and prevents violence, including GBV. Often used in conflict-affected areas. In Ouagadougou, ABEFAB trained "Amazones de la Paix" (Amazons of Peace) from different districts and municipalities. Advocacy led by ABEFAB led to the revitalization of the "Amazones de la Paix" in different regions and provinces of Burkina Faso under the leadership of the Ministry of Humanitarian Action.

SOCIAL GENDER NORMS

by SANKARA Souleymane

Collective beliefs or expectations about "appropriate" behavior for women and men. These norms can be transformed.

SOGIE

by Louisa Essendi

Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression. It refers to the multifaceted aspects of an individual's identity: who they are attracted to (sexual orientation), their internal sense of being male, female, both, or neither (gender identity), and how they present their gender (gender expression). Every person has a SOGIE, and it is a concept used to understand and discuss human identity and diversity.

SORORITY

by Fernand LOUA

Sorority is active and political solidarity between women and people who identify as women. It is based on the recognition of shared experiences of oppression and the desire to build spaces of support, protection, and action together. It is both a human bond and a feminist strategy for resistance and social transformation.

SPIRITUAL VIOLENCE

by TRA Lou Gohi Marie-Josiane

The use of religious platforms (churches, mosques) to condemn, blame, or exorcise LBQ women.

STIGMATIZATION

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

The process of rejecting, marginalizing or socially disqualifying a person or group because of a certain characteristic (rape, HIV status, sexual orientation, disability, etc.). Stigmatization traps survivors in shame and silence.

STREET HARASSMENT

by Souwaiba Ibrahim

A form of sexual harassment in public spaces: whistling, insults, obscene gestures, stalking, etc. It limits women's freedom to move around freely and safely.

SURVIVOR (PREFERRED TO "VICTIM")

by SANKARA Souleymane

A person who has suffered violence but who shows resilience and the ability to act (continues to rebuild and regain control of their life). This term is more neutral, empowering, respectful of dignity, and promotes community dialogue.

SURVIVOR AMBASSADORS

by SANKARA Souleymane

Women or girls who have overcome an experience of violence and are working to raise awareness and support others.

SURVIVOR-CENTERED APPROACH

by Feven Araya, Ethiopian Women Rights Advocate

A framework that prioritizes the safety, rights, choices, and dignity of survivors. It ensures that all responses to GBV are guided by the survivor's needs and preferences.

SURVIVOR-CENTERED CARE

by SANKARA Souleymane

An approach that respects the dignity, confidentiality, and choices of survivors. In counseling centers, social workers are taught to say, "What would you like to do?" rather than "You must file a complaint."

SURVIVOR-LED

by Survivor-led response

Refers to any intervention, support mechanism, or advocacy effort that is designed, guided, or directly informed by the lived experiences, choices, and leadership of survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). It prioritizes autonomy, dignity, and healing, ensuring survivors are not passive recipients of aid but active agents in shaping their recovery and community transformation.

SURVIVOR-LED RESPONSE

by Feven Araya

Initiatives, policies, or movements that are guided and shaped by people with lived experience of GBV, ensuring their perspectives are central to decision-making.


Organisation de Secours aux Handicapés de Guinée
IPPF






Femmes Développement et Droits Humains en Guinée

TAKING LAW INTO YOUR OWN HANDS

by Thierno Loughoumana Diallo

When a victim of violence reacts excessively and makes her abuser pay without going through the law. Example: "Néné Oury stabbed her boyfriend because he beat her all the time."

TALKING FREELY

by Thierno Loughoumana Diallo

Discussing topics related to sexuality without beating around the bush, with the aim of informing, educating, and raising awareness.

T

TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED VIOLENCE

by SANKARA Souleymane

Acts of violence or harassment committed online or through digital tools (cyberbullying, dissemination of intimate images without consent, etc.).

TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE

by Solidarité Suisse-Guinée

An approach to justice that seeks to heal wounds, restore social ties, and transform the power structures that produce violence. It is used in community-based approaches to conflict resolution around GBV and opposes a punitive approach in favor of reparation and prevention.

TRANSFORMING SOCIAL NORMS

by SANKARA Souleymane

Process aimed at changing beliefs and behaviors that legitimize GBV. In some rural areas, projects use forum theater to encourage reflection on sexist "jokes."

TRANSGENDER

by Louisa Essendi

(Transgenda/Mbadili jinsia in Kiswahili) is an adjective to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender people may choose to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identity, and some do not. Being transgender is not dependent upon seeking or undergoing any medical procedures. It is about self-identification.

TRANSPHOBIA

by Louisa Essendi

Transphobia is the fear, hatred and/or lack of acceptance of transgender people.

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

by Feven Araya

An approach that recognizes the widespread impact of trauma and integrates this understanding into services and interactions to promote safety and healing while avoiding a new trauma.



UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR)

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

A mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council that reviews the human rights situation of each UN member state every four to five years.

COMMENT: The Republic of Guinea underwent review on its human rights situation at the 49th session in Geneva on April 29, 2025.

Source : https://www.ohchr.org/fr/press-releases/2025/04/guineas-human-rights-record-be-examined-universal-periodic-review



VBG

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

Acronym for Gender-Based Violence. A key term in the protection, awareness, and reporting of violence suffered by vulnerable groups based on their gender.

VICTIM

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

In community jargon, a victim is a person who did not survive the gender-based violence they suffered.

COMMENT: In the Republic of Guinea, an 8-year-old girlpassed away after being raped.

Source: https://gouvernement.gov.gn/communique-du-gouvernement-relatif-au-viol-suivi-du-meurtre-dune-fillette-de-8-ans-a-kagbelen/

VIOLENCE

by Fernand LOUA

Violence refers to any act, word, behavior, omission, or system that causes or seeks to cause physical, psychological, sexual, economic, social, or symbolic harm to a person. It is not limited to visible assaults: it is also expressed in traditions, laws, discourse, or attitudes that deprive people of their dignity and freedom.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG)

by SANKARA Souleymane

A specific form of GBV, rooted in gender power inequalities. This term is often preferred in community campaigns. We talk about “zero tolerance for violence against women and girls.”

VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS PARTICULARLY EXPOSED TO THE RISK OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

by SANKARA Souleymane

Individuals or groups whose social, economic, physical, or legal situation makes them more susceptible to gender-based violence. This vulnerability may result from their age, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, displacement, or social marginalization. They often face multiple factors of discrimination, limiting their access to information, protection, justice, and essential services, and increasing their exposure to sexual, physical, psychological, economic, or symbolic violence. Examples include internally displaced women and girls, children, people living with disabilities, sex workers, women living in extreme poverty, migrants, and refugees.

WOMAN WITH DISABILITY

by Aminata Camara

A woman living with a physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychosocial disability, etc., who faces multiple forms of discrimination based on gender and disability.

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT

by SANKARA Souleymane

A key term in feminist programs, is the process by which women and girls become empowered, gain confidence, and develop the ability to make their own decisions.

WOMEN LEADERS

by SANKARA Souleymane

Refers to women who exert a positive influence, inspire change, and occupy decision-making roles in their communities, organizations, or spheres of action. They act with confidence, vision, and commitment to advance equality, social justice, and inclusive development. Being a woman leader is not limited to a title or formal position, but reflects the ability to mobilize, represent, defend rights, and make women's voices heard in public and private spaces. ABEFAB uses this term in its interventions to refer to women community leaders and those involved in advocacy initiatives.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

by Solidarité Suisse-Guinée

Women's ability to lead, make decisions, and inspire, both in the public and private spheres, while incorporating the values of listening, collaboration, and fairness, resulting in positive change within the community. This concept redefines power as collective service and social transformation.

W

WOMEN'S RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

by SANKARA Souleymane

The ability of women, particularly those from vulnerable communities, to anticipate, adapt to, and recover from the adverse effects of climate change (drought, flooding, food insecurity, displacement, etc.), while maintaining their well-being and that of their families. This resilience is based on access to resources (land, water, information, financing), capacity building (education, training, leadership), recognition of their role in sustainable environmental management, and their full participation in climate decision-making processes. Promoting women's resilience means fostering more effective, equitable, and sustainable local responses to climate change.

WOMEN'S VOICES

by SANKARA Souleymane

Recognition of women's voices, experiences, and knowledge as essential to social transformation and collective progress.

WOUBI

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

A pejorative and derogatory term, sometimes even stigmatizing, which leads to discrimination within society and casts a negative light on LGBTQIA+ people.



XENO-FEMINISM

by Lamine DOUMBOUYA

A radical feminist movement that advocates emancipation through technology, science, and the voluntary alienation of natural and social norms. It aims to abolish gender categories, prevent gender-based violence, and rethink social justice through a materialist and universalist approach.

X

Côte d'Ivoire

- Mousso djandjigui: Malinké term used in Côte d'Ivoire to refer to a woman.
- Mousso fariman: Used to describe a woman of character.
- Lioness: to refer to a dynamic woman. By Diero Ramatou, Association of Women Lawyers of Ivory Coast (AFJCI), Côte d'Ivoire.
- Woubi: Derogatory and contemptuous term, sometimes even stigmatizing, which leads to discrimination within society and casts a negative light on LGBTQIA+ people.

Ethiopia

- መድፈር - ደፈራት for the term rape the word reflects heroism
- በባልና ሚስት መሀል አይገባም - justifying domestic violence that marriage is private
- ለከፋ ፍቅር መግለጫ ነዉ - justifying verbal harassment
- ስለሚወድሽ ነዉ የሚመታሽ - justifying domestic violence as a language of love
- የተደፈረችዉ - it is not survivor sensitive language its used to refer the survivor by the community
- የቤተሰብ ጥቃት (yebéteseb qitat)
- ተጎጂ (tegogi) Victim > Preferred: ተራፊ (terfi – "one who remains / survives")
  Victim > Preferred: Survivor
  "Terfi" centers agency and resilience rather than passivity. In Ethiopian contexts, women who escape FGM, early marriage, or domestic violence describe themselves as "those who remain standing." The term rejects pity and honors ongoing resistance. In Oromia, a survivor of an acid attack said: "Don't call me tegogi; I am terfi – I still laugh, I still lead my support group."

Republic of Guinea

- "N'fata nè yé fan na" (Malinké): literally "she is not like the others," often used to refer to a woman with a disability in a condescending tone.

  Proposed change: promote neutral and respectful terminology, such as "woman with special needs" or "woman living with a disability."
- "Kadi yé dii" (Soussou): expression referring to a woman considered "useless" because of her disability.

  Proposal: use "resilient woman" to affirm the value and skills of every woman.

BIOGRAPHIES

Amos Simpano has about 30 years of experience working in community- based related interventions which includes women and girl rights, Gender Based Violence, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, Climate Change among other interventions. Amos has a health nursing background and further studies in Community Health and Development and NGO management.

Amos has been overseeing community grassroots interventions among communities in hard to reach rural areas in Kenya, mainly in Narok County. He is a founder and Director of Entashata Loita Community Based Organization which has created significant impact among the rural Loita Maasai Pastoralist community through reduction of Female Genital Mutilation, strengthening formal education for the girl child through sponsorship linkages and establishment of a rescue and learning centre for girls.

Feven Araya is a dedicated women's rights advocate and human rights professional, currently serving as the Founder and Executive Director of the Ethiopian Women Rights Advocate (EWRA). With a background in law and a Master's degree in Project Management, she brings extensive experience in gender equality, governance, and civil society strengthening.

Feven has held key leadership and program roles across government and civil society, including with the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth, the Ethiopian Charities and Societies Forum, and the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association. Her work focuses on advancing gender justice, supporting survivors of gender-based violence, and strengthening institutional responses through advocacy, policy engagement, and capacity building.

Gilliane Elsa Pouamou is currently supporting communications manager for the FON project at IPPF. A trained translator, she has worked as a consultant for several organizations. She is passionate about everything related to the empowerment of women and girls.

Hassatou Lamarana Bah

Journalist and writer from the Republic of Guinea. Founder of the news website www.actualitefeminine.com, vice president of the Amazones de la Presse Guinéenne NGO, general commissioner of the National Colloquium of Women Entrepreneurs in Rural Areas. Author of three books, trainer in introductory journalism and reporting, event moderator, jury member for literary competitions.

Lamine DOUMBOUYA is a committed human rights defender, currently in charge of human rights and gender issues at Afrique Arc-En-Ciel Guinée organization. A lawyer by training and human rights trainer, Lamine DOUMBOUYA uses his skills in law, communication, and advocacy to create safe, inclusive, and supportive spaces. He coordinates awareness campaigns, supports survivors through programs, and contributes to the development of community strategies focused on dignity, justice, and equality for a united and tolerant society, because knowing your rights is the first step to defending them.

Louisa Essendi is a dedicated human rights advocate with over 14 years of experience working to promote the rights and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ communities in East Africa. She specializes in community mobilization, policy development, and stakeholder engagement, working to create safe spaces and influence national and regional frameworks. Louisa has for years provided capacity building and human rights and SRHR and GBV training for marginalized groups. Her work is driven by a strong commitment to social justice, gender equality, and empowering LGBTIQ+ communities to advocate for their rights.

Moussa KONE is currently FON program manager for Africa. A medical doctor by training with a MBA in management and a MPH, Moussa KONE has been coordinating and managing regional SRHR and gender-transformative programs in Africa for 10 years. He is a staunch pro-choice and deeply committed to implementing initiatives aimed at transforming gender and promoting an environment conducive to justice, equality, and equity in society.

Roy Wekesa is a Gender & Inclusivity Programs Officer and Safeguarding Officer at Reproductive Health Network Kenya (RHNK).

He is a lawyer by training and a committed human rights advocate with a strong focus on gender equality and the protection of vulnerable populations. Roy leverages his expertise in law, advocacy, and community engagement to promote safe, inclusive, and supportive environments.

He coordinates awareness campaigns through community dialogues and advocacy initiatives, supports survivors through structured referral mechanisms, and follows up on GBV-related court cases to their conclusion.

BIOGRAPHIES

Solidarité Suisse-Guinée (SSG) is an organization that has been working for several years to empower women, educate young people, and fight gender-based violence (GBV), working closely with rural and urban communities in Guinea. Through our activities in the field, vocational training, psychosocial support, awareness-raising, and the creation of safe spaces, we have seen how words have the power to heal, restore, and transform. Our contribution to this glossary therefore reflects a feminist, community-based, and African vision, rooted in the experiences of the women we support and in the belief that language can be a tool for empowerment and social justice. We hope that these words, inspired by our realities and our collective struggles, will contribute to building a more inclusive, caring, and transformative vocabulary.

Souwaiba Ibrahi is a Nigerien lawyer, researcher, and feminist activist committed to defending the rights of girls, women, and marginalized communities. She is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Nigerien League for Women's Rights, a feminist organization working to promote human rights, combat gender-based violence, and improve access to essential sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortion. She is also a co-founder of the Nigerien Feminist Network, an initiative aimed at bringing together and strengthening feminist organizations across the country.

Thierno Loughmane Diallo is a committed advocate for the promotion of human rights and the fight against gender-based violence in Guinea. He is the Executive Director of the NGO E-Éducation Citoyenne, and also holds several strategic roles at the community level, including Secretary at the Sub-Prefectural Directorate of Youth in Kouramangui, Communications Officer for the CECOJE in Labé, Administrative Manager of the Pottal artistic group, and GBV focal point for the RedIR-GBV project in Labé.


FON











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