

‘HER VOICE’

Investigating the Connection Between
**Climate Change, Digitalisation, and
Violence Against Women & Girls**
in West and Central Africa

All Country Integrated Report

Nigeria | Ghana | Cameroon | Togo



Women Aid Collective
(WACOL)



West & Central Africa Women Rights Coalition
(WAWORC)



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About Us

This report is a product of the 'Her Voice' research initiative, implemented by the Women Aid Collective (WACOL) in partnership with the West & Central Africa Women Rights Coalition (WAWORC), and submitted to UN Women's West & Central Africa Office under the EU–UN Women ACT to End Violence Against Women Programme.

Women Aid Collective (WACOL)

WACOL is a Nigeria-based women's rights organisation working on gender-based violence prevention and response, access to justice, and women's rights advocacy. WACOL led the design, field coordination and quality assurance of the Her Voice research across Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and Togo, coordinating a multi-country team of researchers, field supervisors, enumerators and community liaisons.

West & Central Africa Women Rights Coalition (WAWORC)

WAWORC is the sub-regional coalition of women's rights organisations and networks that Her Voice was designed to inform and strengthen. WACOL at the time of this publication is the Lead organisation for WAWORC. The research findings, disaggregated data and advocacy materials produced under this project feed directly into the coalition's evidence base and regional campaigning priorities.

UN Women – West & Central Africa Office

UN Women's regional office commissioned and oversaw this research as part of its work to end violence against women and girls across West and Central Africa, providing technical guidance and connecting the study's findings to regional policy dialogues, including ECOWAS and ECCAS fora.

The ACT to End Violence Against Women Programme

ACT to End Violence Against Women is a joint European Union–UN Women partnership supporting women's rights organisations and coalitions to strengthen data systems, evidence generation and coordinated advocacy. Her Voice was designed and implemented to directly answer the evidence gaps that ACT's implementing partners identified as critical to feminist coalition-building in the sub-region.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Form
ACT	ACT to End Violence Against Women Programme (EU Commission / UN Women)
ALVF	Association de Lutte contre les Violences faites aux Femmes (Association for the Fight Against Violence Against Women)
ANCy	National Cybersecurity Agency – Togo
ANPC	Autorité Nationale de Protection Civile (National Authority for Civil Protection)
AU	African Union
AUCEVAWG	African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (2025)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSI	Climate Stress Index
DEVAW	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (UN, 1993)
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (Ghana)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSVCMS	Domestic and Sexual Violence Case Management System
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FIDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers (Federación Internacional de Abogadas)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GF2D	Groupe de Femmes pour la Démocratie et le Développement (Togo)
GSMA	GSM Association
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
ITU	International Telecommunication Union

Abbreviation	Full Form
KII	Key Informant Interview
MINPROFF	Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (Cameroon)
NADMO	National Disaster Management Organization (Ghana)
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NCII	Non-Consensual Intimate Images
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
ND-GAIN	Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OGBV	Online Gender-Based Violence
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SMS	Short Message Service
TFGBV	Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VAPP	Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act 2015 (Nigeria)
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WACOL	Women's Aid Collective
WAWORC	West & Central African Women's Rights Coalition
WHO	WORLD Health Organisation

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Project Background and Rationale

'Her Voice: Investigating the Connection Between Climate Change, Digitalisation, and Violence Against Women and Girls in West and Central Africa' is a comparative, multi-country, mixed-methods research and advocacy project implemented by the Women's Aid Collective (WACOL) under the ACT to End Violence Against Women programme – a joint initiative of the European Commission and UN Women under the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence. The project was conceived to fill critical knowledge gaps about how two powerful and rapidly intensifying forces (environmental stress and digital transformation) are creating new forms of, and/or exacerbating existing, violence against women and girls (VAWG) across the region.

Violence against women and girls remains one of the most pervasive human-rights violations worldwide, with one in three women experiencing physical or sexual violence in their lifetime – rates rising to 36% in Africa (European Commission & UN Women, n.d.). In West Africa, four in ten women (40%) are victims of violence; in Central Africa, the figure rises to 65% (UN Women, 2023). An estimated 8.6 million people required GBV assistance in West and Central Africa in 2023 alone (UNFPA, 2024). Despite three decades of commitments since the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, VAWG rates remain stubbornly high. Critically, the interplay of climate shocks and digital abuse now threatens to outpace existing prevention strategies unless up-to-date, intersectional evidence is generated.

Her Voice addresses three interlocking dimensions of this challenge: first, how resource scarcity, displacement, food insecurity, and climate-induced migration amplify exposure to domestic violence, sexual exploitation, child marriage, and trafficking; second, how rapid but uneven digitalisation generates both empowerment opportunities and new harms – including cyberstalking, sextortion, and non-consensual image sharing; and third, how these two forces interact with pre-existing structural inequalities to produce compounded, multi-dimensional vulnerability for women and girls in Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and Togo.

HER VOICE AT A GLANCE

- 751 households surveyed | 56+ focus group discussions | 78+ key informant interviews | 4 countries | 8 country reports.
- VAWG affects 1 in 3 women globally in their lifetime, rising to 65% in Central Africa (UN Women, 2023); an estimated 8.6 million people required GBV assistance in West and Central Africa in 2023 alone.
- VAWG imposes an annual 'violence tax' of US\$1.5 trillion globally through lost earnings and healthcare costs.
- No country in this study has a comprehensive TFSGBV law, and no country's GBV data system adequately captures climate-linked or digital violence.

1.2 Key Findings: Climate Change and VAWG

Primary fieldwork across 747 household survey respondents, 56+ focus group discussions, and 78+ key informant interviews produced the following principal climate-related findings:

- **A 'hunger–anger' pathway confirmed across all four countries:** Climate shocks (drought, crop failure, flooding) → livelihood collapse → food insecurity → male provider-role failure → household tension → intimate partner violence. Between 33% (Cameroon) and 88% (Ghana) of surveyed households reported increased violence during food shortage periods.¹
- **Displacement as the single strongest individual-level risk amplifier:** Displaced households in Cameroon reported violence at 66.7% vs. 41.5% for non-displaced households – a 25-percentage-point gap. In Nigeria's IDP camps, sexual abuse was described as 'rampant with a culture of silence,' as perpetrators held power over survivors' access to shelter and food.
- **An urban vulnerability paradox in Cameroon:** Urban households exhibited statistically higher cumulative climate stress than rural ones, directly challenging the assumption that climate vulnerability is primarily a rural problem.
- **Child marriage as a climate coping strategy:** Documented in all four countries – families marry off underage daughters during prolonged droughts to reduce household economic burden and secure brideprice.
- **Climate stress as the primary destroyer of household wealth:** Ghana's econometric analysis ($R^2=0.627$) confirmed that climate stressors were the single largest predictor of asset decline ($\beta=-0.416$, $p<.001$), exceeding all other variables including digital literacy, which was a statistically null factor ($p=.378$).
- **Seasonal violence rhythms:** Rainy season flooding triggers displacement-related IPV spikes; dry season food scarcity peaks drive economic violence, transactional sex, and child marriage – yet no government system integrates seasonal climate risk with anticipatory VAWG response.

The Climate-GBV Financing Gap



Figure 1.1 The climate–GBV financing gap.

¹ Díaz, J. J., & Saldarriaga, V. (2023). A drop of love? Rainfall shocks and spousal abuse. *Journal of Health Economics*, 89.

1.3 Key Findings: Digitalisation and VAWG

- **A digital paradox across all four countries:** Device ownership is high (86–98% phone ownership) but functional digital literacy is critically low (Togo: 98% low or zero skills; Ghana rural: 0% ever used digital GBV reporting tools), creating populations simultaneously exposed to digital harms and excluded from digital protections.
- **A 'backlash effect' in Ghana:** Women who owned phones experienced more frequent violence ($B=0.362$, $p=.005$) – digital independence in patriarchal households under economic stress triggers controlling and retaliatory abuse. This demands a fundamental redesign of digital empowerment programmes.
- **TFGBV documented across all four countries:** Cyberstalking (Nigeria: 70%+ of women in FGDs); sextortion and NCII (suicide attempt in Lagos; marriage destroyed in Ebonyi); and a climate-displacement-to-digital exploitation nexus (Togo: flood-displaced women targeted by Facebook predators).
- **Institutional inaccessibility for at-risk populations:** Existing digital GBV reporting tools in all four countries presuppose literacy and connectivity levels absent in rural and lower-income populations – the very groups most exposed to climate-linked violence.
- **Proven digital empowerment opportunities:** Mobile money platforms (MoMo, Flutterwave, Opay), e-commerce networks, and digital support groups provide genuine economic autonomy and peer safety resources – but remain accessible only to the digitally literate minority.

1.4 Main Policy Recommendations

The evidence supports six cross-cutting priority recommendations for governments, regional bodies, civil society, and donors:

1. Explicitly integrate VAWG prevention into National Adaptation Plans, Nationally Determined Contributions, and disaster risk reduction frameworks across all four countries – climate response that ignores gender-based violence is fundamentally incomplete.
2. Adopt dedicated TFGBV legal frameworks in Cameroon and Togo; strengthen enforcement in Nigeria and Ghana – explicitly criminalising sextortion, non-consensual image sharing, cyberstalking, and digital coercion with survivor-centred evidence standards.
3. Shift digital safety tools from smartphone/literacy-dependent formats to voice-based IVR and toll-free SMS in local languages – the only formats accessible to the majority of high-risk populations in rural and semi-urban settings.
4. Redesign economic empowerment programmes to address the 'Economic Paradox': pair asset-building with men's engagement, legal property-rights protections, and backlash-aware preparation – standalone asset programmes may inadvertently increase exposure to controlling abuse.
5. Fund civil society GBV service-delivery partners (e.g. GF2D Togo, Caritas Ghana, Reach Out Cameroon, WACOL Nigeria, and others) as sustained, recurrent public partners rather than project-dependent NGOs, given their demonstrated higher community trust.

6. Establish interoperable national GBV case management systems across all four countries; mandate disability-inclusive and climate-linked data disaggregation to capture the populations most at risk.

1.5 Methodology Snapshot

Her Voice employed a two-phase mixed-methods design (June 2025 – January 2026). Phase One (July–September 2025) conducted comprehensive desk reviews of national and regional policy frameworks, existing VAWG data, climate vulnerability assessments, and digital landscape analyses. Phase Two (September 2025 – January 2026) conducted primary fieldwork across 747 household respondents, 56+ FGDs, and 78+ KIs using standardised instruments adapted for each country context.

Data were analysed using quantitative statistical methods (SPSS, including four regression models in Ghana) and qualitative thematic coding (hybrid deductive/inductive). All ethical safeguards (informed consent, anonymisation, voluntary participation, psychological safety protocols, and survivor-centred referral pathways) were maintained throughout. A full methodology description appears in Section 4.

SECTION 2

Introduction

2. INTRODUCTION

KEY POINTS — INTRODUCTION

- Her Voice pursues three interlocking research strands: climate-driven violence, digitally-facilitated violence, and structural/intersectional invisibility.
- Fieldwork spans Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and Togo, aligned to the EU–UN Women ACT to End Violence Against Women programme.
- The study is organised around research questions spanning resource scarcity, displacement, TFGBV, disaggregation and stakeholder prioritisation with triangulation from WROs-partner respondents

This section sets the foundation for the entire Her Voice research project. It explains what the study is about, why it matters, and what specific areas it covers, ensuring that readers (whether policymakers, academics, or advocacy partners) have a clear understanding of the research's direction and purpose. By the end of this section, the purpose, focus, context, and analytical framework of the study will be established.

2.1 Background of the Study

Her Voice aims to fill critical knowledge gaps about how climate change and digitalisation intersect to drive new forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) across West and Central Africa. Violence against women and girls remains one of the most pervasive human-rights violations worldwide, with one in three women experiencing physical or sexual violence in their lifetime – rates that rise to 36% in Africa and 33% in the Americas (European Commission & UN Women, n.d.). Despite Beijing (1995) and subsequent commitments, VAWG rates remain stubbornly high, especially in Africa. Global emergencies (from climate change and conflict to pandemics) have only intensified the underlying drivers and risk factors of violence, while digitalisation has fuelled new forms of abuse such as cyber-harassment, cyberstalking, and non-consensual image sharing.

According to the European Union and UN Women (n.d.), there is stronger evidence than ever that violence against women and girls is preventable. Research has shown that robust, autonomous feminist movements are the single most critical factor in driving policy change on gender-based violence, and that sustained collaboration between governments and civil society can dramatically reduce rates of abuse through coordinated advocacy, expanded access to justice, and comprehensive survivor services. Yet the interplay of climate shocks and digital abuse threatens to outpace existing prevention strategies unless up-to-date and intersectional evidence is generated.

In response, the ACT to End Violence against Women programme was launched in September 2023 as a joint commitment between the European Commission and UN Women, co-leading the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence (EU-DG for International Partnerships, 2023). ACT focuses on three pillars – advocacy, coalition building, and transformative feminist action – to accelerate efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women. Its objectives are to strengthen the leadership and resilience of global and regional women's rights movements, and to enhance advocacy, campaigning, and policymaking through multi-stakeholder partnerships and coalitions. ACT is being implemented initially in Africa and Latin America, the regions with some of the highest VAWG prevalence and dynamic feminist movements now facing renewed backlash. UN Women coordinates overall management and leverages its convening power to connect feminist coalitions with policy and decision-making spaces.

2.2 Alignment of Her Voice with ACT

Her Voice was designed to breathe life into the broader ACT to End Violence against Women partnership. In practice, this meant that every survey question, workshop module, and advocacy brief produced by Her Voice was calibrated to fill the very gaps that ACT had identified as critical for feminist coalitions across West and Central Africa.

When ACT calls for stronger data systems, Her Voice answers with meticulously crafted instruments that, for the first time, capture not only traditional forms of abuse but also the emerging threats born of climate shocks and online violence. In our focus countries (Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, and Togo) enumerators used these tools to gather data and stories of women displaced by floods and desertification, or targeted by cyber-stalkers, stories that will be fed directly into ECOWAS/ECCAS dashboards and national policy fora.

ACT's vision of resilient, networked women's movements finds expression in Her Voice's planned stakeholder workshops. From Douala to Accra, WACOL will bring together local activists and advocacy groups, government officials, UN Women focal points, and academics in spaces of mutual learning. Over one or two days, participants will learn to analyse their own data, debate policy briefs, and leave emboldened to weave climate-and-digital insights into their everyday campaigns, thereby forging the coalitions that ACT needs to mount region-wide advocacy.

By the time the project moves into its final phase (advocacy and dissemination), Her Voice would have already shaped the narrative that ACT will carry forward. Our infographics illustrating the link between drought-driven resource conflicts and spikes in gender-based violence will become centrepiece materials at ACT's regional policy dialogues. Our short documentaries, crafted in partnership with community storytellers, will air on social media platforms affiliated with ACT's media network, putting human faces on otherwise abstract statistics. Finally, our mentorship clinics and mid-project feedback loops will exemplify the 'transformative feminist action' pillar that ACT champions, nurturing a new generation of data-literate advocates who can sustain momentum long after the project's formal end.

2.3 Scope and Objectives of the Study

Through Her Voice, WACOL aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of VAWG in West and Central Africa and inform data-driven advocacy efforts for more effective prevention and response strategies that is easily utilized by WROs/Coalitions and Networks. The study pursues five interrelated objectives:

Objective 1: Identify the key ways climate change and digitalisation are impacting VAWG in West and Central Africa, including how resource scarcity, migration, online harassment,

food insecurity and other factors contribute to violence, leading to increased public recognition of the intersection between climate change, digitalisation and VAWG.

Objective 2: Disaggregate data to understand how these emerging issues affect different groups of women (by age, location, and socioeconomic status), in order to identify the most vulnerable populations and enhance stakeholder capacity for data-driven advocacy and programme initiatives.

Objective 3: Develop a comprehensive picture of the evolving landscape of VAWG in West and Central Africa by combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis, and linked to feminist coalition building structures.

Objective 4: Provide concrete and tailored policy recommendations based on research findings, including interventions to address specific vulnerabilities created by climate change and digitalisation, and recommendations for improving access to survivor support services.

Objective 5: Strengthen data for advocacy through WROs/CSO and coalition networks by creating visually engaging materials that effectively communicate research findings and policy recommendations to policymakers and the public.

Women's and girls' experiences of violence do not occur in a vacuum but are profoundly shaped by the twin forces of environmental stress and digital transformation. While traditional forms of VAW persist, climate change and digitalisation are creating new threats (including structural violence and systemic discrimination) and potentially exacerbating existing inequalities. Existing data on VAWG do not fully capture the impact of these new factors, hindering effective advocacy efforts.

2.4 Definition of Key Terms

2.4.1 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

VAWG has been defined in international, regional, sub-regional, and national legislation. The UN General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) defines VAWG as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (United Nations, 1993). This encompasses eight core incident types: rape/defilement; sexual assault; physical assault; psychological abuse; economic abuse; forced marriage; female genital mutilation/cutting; and other GBV forms including domestic violence, exploitation, trafficking, forced prostitution, sexual harassment (including sextortion), stalking, honour-based violence, forced exposure to pornography, and non-consensual image sharing (The Commonwealth, 2017; Welsh Women's Aid, n.d.). The CEDAW Committee defines VAWG to mean 'all acts perpetuated against women which cause or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm including the threat to take such acts... in peace times and during situations of conflict or of war' (CEDAW, 1992; The Commonwealth, 2017).

UN Women (2024) categorises and illustrates the various forms of violence experienced by women and girls as follows:

- **Domestic/intimate-partner violence (IPV):** behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner causing physical, sexual, economic, or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, and controlling behaviours.

- **Sexual violence:** any harmful or unwanted sexual behaviour imposed on someone, including rape, unwanted touching, sexual harassment, corrective rape, and sexual violence in conflict.
- **Femicide:** the deliberate killing of a woman or girl specifically because of her gender – the most extreme form of gender-based violence, often preceded by physical, sexual, or psychological abuse.
- **Human trafficking:** the trade in people for exploitation through physical and sexual abuse, blackmail, and removal of documents. Women and girls are the primary targets, mainly trafficked for sexual exploitation.
- **Harmful practices:** violations of human rights including female genital mutilation, child and forced marriage, virginity testing, widowhood practices, accusations of witchcraft, honour crimes, and dowry-related violence.
- **Online or technology-facilitated violence:** any act using digital tools or ICT to harm, threaten, or control women (including cyberbullying, non-consensual sexting, doxing, deep-fake abuse, and GPS-tracker surveillance) that both magnifies traditional abuses and creates new threats.

VAWG is widely recognised as an impediment to social and economic development, and to the achievement of the SDGs. It precludes women from contributing to and benefitting from development initiatives by limiting their choices and ability to act (World Bank, n.d.). Violence against women and girls imposes an annual 'violence tax' on society estimated at US\$1.5 trillion in 2016, through lost earnings, healthcare costs, and long-term impacts on children's wellbeing (The Commonwealth, n.d.) – equivalent to at least US\$200 per person globally.

2.4.2 Structural Violence

Galtung (1969) described structural violence as a form of violence in which 'some social structure or social institution may harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs.' Farmer (2004) later elaborated on structural violence in the context of global health, arguing that vulnerable populations experience avoidable harm because of social arrangements that systematically privilege some groups over others.

Structural violence encompasses the systematic ways in which social structures, institutions, policies, and norms harm or disadvantage individuals by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. Unlike overt physical violence, it is built into the political and economic organisation of society – manifesting as unequal access to resources, rights, and opportunities along lines of class, race, and gender. It operates invisibly through accepted norms and policies, making it difficult to identify and redress. Examples include economic inequalities preventing access to food, healthcare, or education (Farmer, 2004); laws or customs limiting women's property rights or political participation (United Nations, 1993); and underfunded public services in minority communities reflecting systemic exclusion. Addressing structural violence requires transforming institutional arrangements, e.g. redistributing resources, reforming unjust laws, and dismantling harmful cultural norms, so that all individuals can realise their basic human rights.

2.4.3 Climate Change

Climate change in IPCC usage refers to a change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or variability of its properties, persisting for an extended period, typically decades or longer (ISDR, 2008). The UNFCCC's Article 1.2 defines it as a change of climate attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere, in addition to natural climate variability, observed over comparable time periods. NASA (n.d.) defines climate change as long-term shifts in average weather patterns driven

primarily since the mid-20th century by the burning of fossil fuels that raise concentrations of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Climate change affects every region and key sectors (e.g. human health, food security, water resources, energy, transportation, and biodiversity) with disruptions projected to grow more severe (IPCC, 2022). There is very high confidence that extreme heatwaves and heavy rainfall events have become more frequent and intense across most continental areas. As global temperatures continue to rise, extreme high-temperature events are virtually certain to increase further, and extreme precipitation events are very likely to become more frequent and intense in most regions (World Bank, n.d.).

2.4.4 Digitalisation

The OECD (2019) defines digitalisation as 'the use of digital technologies and data as well as interconnection that results in new or changes to existing activities' – highlighting it as an active process transforming business models and services with broader economic and social change potential. UNESCO (2023) describes it as 'enabling or improving processes by leveraging digital technologies and digital data,' while the World Bank (n.d.) calls it 'the transformation opportunity of our time,' noting that critical services now rely on connectivity and data. The UNDP's Strategic Plan (2022–2025) lists 'digital transitions' as a core axis of structural change and calls digitalisation a 'powerful enabler' for accelerating development outcomes (UNDP, 2021). UNDP (n.d.) also highlights that digital tools can empower citizens and improve public services (for example, e-government, online reporting); and contextualising digitalisation as integral to the 2030 Agenda, linking it to goals on governance, inclusion, and climate action (Eziakonwa, 2025).

2.5 Geographic and Thematic Coverage

Violence against women and girls remains a significant challenge across the study region. According to the Network of Local Elected Women of Africa, four out of ten women (40%) in West Africa and almost six out of nine (65%) in Central Africa are victims of violence (UN Women, 2023). This study unfolds across four distinct West and Central African contexts – Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and Togo – selected for their varying constellations of climate vulnerability, digital connectivity, and gender-based violence dynamics.

In Nigeria, the sprawling megacity of Lagos sits alongside arid Sahelian landscapes in the north, where recurrent droughts sap water tables and intensify competition over scarce farmlands, while sea-level rise threatens low-lying coastal areas and extreme heat disrupts agriculture and water supply (IPCC, 2022). The ND-GAIN 2024 vulnerability index ranks Nigeria very low (score of 39.4, and ranked 152/187). Ghana combines relatively robust urban infrastructure around Accra and Kumasi with coastal communities besieged by flooding, sea-level rise, and saltwater intrusion, while northern Ghana experiences drought and erratic rainfall (IPCC, 2022); ND-GAIN scores Ghana moderately (45.2 and ranked 112/187).

Cameroon bridges forested, rain-fed agriculture in the south with the semi-arid far north, with the Sahelian north suffering drought and desertification, western highlands facing landslides, and coastal regions around Douala vulnerable to flooding and sea-level rise (IPCC, 2022; Adelphi, 2023). Cameroon's ND-GAIN score is low (38.7 and ranked 155/187). Togo's narrow coastal strip (with much of its population near sea level) and interior savannah highlands further diversify the climate picture; with one of the region's fastest-growing mobile-phone markets (7.53 million cellular mobile phones in 2025, according to DataReportal), it provides a revealing case of digital access outside the largest economies. ND-GAIN rates Togo moderately vulnerable (score of 43.0, ranked 126/187).

By deliberately spanning Anglophone and Francophone settings, high-density urban centres and remote rural areas, this four-country design captures how environmental shocks and technological change play out across different policy regimes and cultural landscapes. In Nigeria and Ghana, where mobile-internet penetration is approximately 39% and 70% respectively (ITU, 2024), online harassment and image-based abuse are already significant threats to women's safety and freedom of expression (APC, 2023). In Cameroon and Togo, where digital literacy is more uneven (45.6% and 35.0% respectively – ITU, 2024), the same platforms can become vectors not only of empowerment but of misinformation, doxing, and non-consensual image sharing that go unreported and unpunished.

Our thematic scope weaves two interlocking strands through these varied contexts. First, climate change: tracing seasonal floods in southern Cameroon (Adelphi, 2023), documenting drought-driven resource conflicts in northern Nigeria (IPCC, 2022), and assessing saltwater intrusions along Ghana's coast undermining women's fishing livelihoods (UNESCO, 2024). Second, digitalisation: mapping smartphone ubiquity in Lagos and Accra against nascent networks in Lomé and Yaoundé, examining both ends of the spectrum – where rapid digital inclusion can empower women's activism, and where gaps in digital safety nets expose them to new forms of violence.

2.6 Research Questions

Her Voice is fundamentally a comparative, multi-country, mixed-methods applied research and advocacy project dedicated to generating actionable insights (policy recommendations, advocacy materials, and capacity-building tools) that directly inform programmes and decision-making. The following research questions, mapped to each of the five objectives, provided a clear roadmap guiding data collection and analysis.

Table 2.1: Objectives and Research Questions

Objective	Research Questions
1. Identify key ways climate change and digitalisation impact VAWG	(i) How does drought- and flood-induced resource scarcity correlate with reported incidents of physical and sexual violence against women? (ii) In what ways does climate-driven migration alter women's exposure to trafficking, exploitative labour, or domestic abuse? (iii) Which forms of online harassment are most prevalent against West and Central African women, and how do these vary by platform? (iv) How do interruptions in food security linked to climate shocks contribute to household or community-level violence? (v) What factors mediate whether digitalisation empowers or further endangers women?
2. Disaggregate data to understand differential impacts on different groups of women	(i) How do rates and types of climate-related violence differ by age cohort (under 24, 25–49, 50+)? (ii) What are the urban vs. rural differentials in climate-driven and digital-driven VAWG? (iii) How does socioeconomic status shape women's vulnerability to online abuse and climate-related exploitation? (iv) Which marginalised sub-groups report the highest incidence of combined climate/digital violence?
3. Develop a comprehensive picture through combined quantitative and qualitative analysis	(i) What quantitative patterns emerge when cross-tabulating climate indicators with VAWG prevalence across the four countries? (ii) Which themes arise from in-depth interviews and FGDs about women's lived experiences of climate- and digital-linked violence? (iii) How do qualitative narratives explain, complement, or contradict the statistical trends?

Objective	Research Questions
4. Provide concrete and tailored policy recommendations	(i) What specific intervention points do the data suggest will most effectively reduce climate- and digital-related VAWG in each country? (ii) Which existing policies require amendments to address identified vulnerabilities? (iii) How do stakeholders prioritise policy actions when presented with combined climate/digital evidence?
5. Strengthen data for advocacy	(i) Which data visualisations are most effective at conveying the climate-digitalisation-VAWG nexus to different audiences? (ii) How does stakeholder comprehension change before and after exposure to advocacy materials? (iii) What adjustments to data-collection systems do practitioners identify as necessary to sustain evidence-based advocacy?

SECTION 3

Context and Literature Review

3. CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

KEY POINTS — CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

- International and regional frameworks — CEDAW GR No. 37, the Maputo Protocol, AUCEVAWG (2025), and ECOWAS instruments — already recognise the climate–digital–VAWG nexus in principle.
- Existing literature confirms a climate–VAW link but rarely quantifies it at household level in West and Central Africa — a gap this study fills.
- Digitalisation–GBV literature remains fragmented and is rarely linked to climate stress in prior research.

This section situates the Her Voice study within what is already known and unknown about VAWG in West and Central Africa and the two emerging drivers – climate change and digitalisation. It covers the policy environment; the climate–VAW nexus in existing research; the digitalisation and GBV literature; identified gaps; and the conceptual framework guiding our analysis.

3.1 Overview of VAW in West and Central Africa

3.1.1 Environmental Stress and the VAWG Landscape

As climate and environmental shocks intensify across the globe, the intersection between gender-based violence and ecological stress is becoming increasingly urgent. There is growing evidence that environmental change does not only destroy livelihoods or displace populations, it also dramatically heightens the risks of violence against women and girls, particularly in already vulnerable communities (NRI, 2022; Fruttero *et al.*, 2023; Delavallade *et al.*, 2025). Women and girls, already marginalised in social, political, and economic systems, become even more exposed during and after such disasters: the need to fetch scarce water, travel farther for firewood, or seek refuge in overcrowded camps makes them easy targets for violence and exploitation. Environmental degradation thus acts as a multiplier of pre-existing gendered vulnerabilities, especially in regions already grappling with conflict or weak governance (NRI, 2022).

Digital platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, X, and Reddit facilitate social interaction but can also become hostile spaces due to anonymity and lack of accountability. This environment enables cyber violence, particularly targeting women and girls, through harassment, stalking, hate speech, and non-consensual sharing of intimate images (EIGE, 2024). These online abuses often lead to real-world harm and are part of the broader issue of gender-based violence rooted in unequal power dynamics.

3.1.2 Environmental Policy and VAWG in Sub-Saharan Africa

The interplay between environmental policy and VAWG in Sub-Saharan Africa is complex and rooted in socioeconomic inequalities exacerbated by climate change and environmental degradation. Women predominantly engage in subsistence agriculture and resource management, making them particularly vulnerable to climate impacts. As environmental policies fail to address these vulnerabilities adequately, women experience heightened risks of gender-based violence (Castañeda Camey² *et al.*, 2020).

Castañeda Camey *et al.* (2020) demonstrate that VAWG is not only a pervasive human rights violation but is tightly interwoven with how communities interact with and manage their natural environments. For instance, discriminatory gender norms and laws restrict women's access to land, water, forests, and fisheries, exposing them to violence when they contest those restrictions. Floods or resource scarcity often force women and girls to travel farther for water, food, or fuel, increasing exposure to assault or coercion (Gevers *et al.*, 2019, 2020). Overcrowded refugee camps and relief shelters created by climate disasters further raise GBV risks (ECOWAS, 2020). At the same time, gender inequalities can magnify climate impacts, creating tensions that fuel domestic and community violence and heighten vulnerability to food insecurity and displacement (Gevers *et al.*, 2020; Blessing, 2023). Ending VAWG and achieving sustainable environmental outcomes thus requires integrated and gender-responsive policies across natural and socioeconomic sectors.

3.1.3 VAWG in International, Regional, and National Policy Frameworks

A range of international, regional, and national policies now address environment and gender jointly. The UNDP (2023) draws attention to the critical intersection between gender equity and environmental resilience: while women disproportionately suffer the consequences of climate change (through food insecurity, displacement, unpaid caregiving burdens, and heightened risk of violence) they also hold untapped potential as climate leaders. UNDP notes that 40 out of 41 African countries have now integrated gender considerations into their updated Nationally Determined Contributions, particularly within adaptation measures. Despite these advances, progress remains uneven and implementation lags far behind intent.

International frameworks provide the normative foundation. CEDAW (1979) and its General Recommendation No. 37 (2018) on gender, climate, and disasters³ urge States to make climate actions gender-responsive and protect women from disaster risks. The Maputo Protocol (2003) explicitly guarantees women 'the right to live in a healthy and sustainable environment' (Art. 18) (SOAWR, n.d.)⁴. In February 2025, African Union member states adopted the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG) at the 38th AU Summit⁵ – a significant continental milestone.

At the regional level, ECOWAS has been a leader in mainstreaming gender in environment policy. Its 2015 Supplementary Act on Gender Equality explicitly names climate change as an issue that 'can undermine the invaluable role of women in the agricultural sector' and obliges member states

² Castañeda Camey, I., Sabater, L., Owren, C., & Boyer, A. E. (2020). Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality. IUCN.

³ CEDAW Committee. (2018). General Recommendation No. 37 on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change.

⁴ Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR). (n.d.). Maputo Protocol, Article 18 — right to a healthy and sustainable environment.

⁵ African Union. (2025). Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWS), adopted at the 38th AU Summit, February 2025.

to reduce the negative impacts of climate change on women (ECOWAS, 2015)⁶. The ECOWAS Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2020–2030) notes that disasters heighten 'domestic violence and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence' (ECOWAS, 2020)⁷. However, implementation remains uneven: ECOWAS relies on member states to transpose these obligations, and many countries lack robust follow-through.

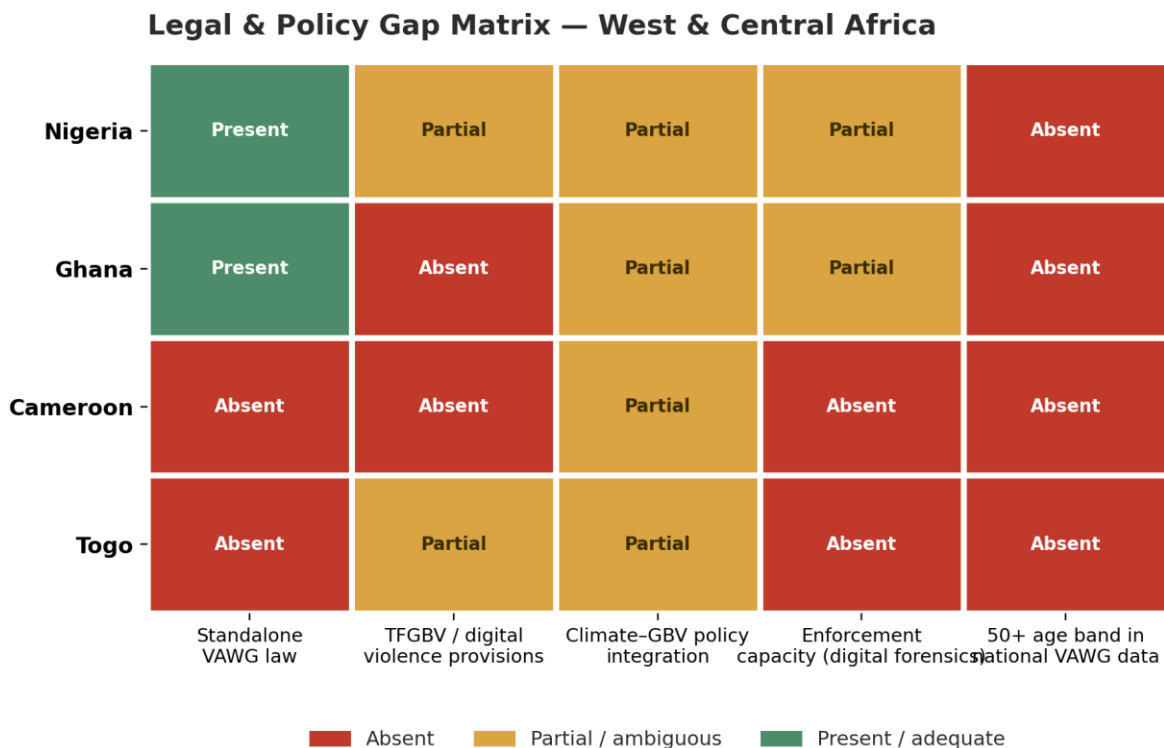
Table 3.1: Policy Frameworks, Key Provisions and Environmental-Climate Link.

Level	Policy/Framework	Key Provisions	Environmental/Climate Link
International	CEDAW (1979); DEVAW (1993); Beijing Platform (1995); CEDAW GR No. 37 (2018); AUCEVAWG (2025)	Global instruments mandating elimination of VAWG in all contexts; GR 37 specifically addresses gender, climate, and disasters	Recognise disaster and conflict as contexts increasing VAWG risk; AUCEVAWG adopted Feb 2025
Regional — Africa	Maputo Protocol (2003); ECOWAS Gender Equality Act (2015); ECOWAS Gender & DRR Strategy (2020–30)	Continent-specific protections; ECOWAS instruments explicitly address climate-disaster-VAWG links	Maputo Art. 18: right to healthy/sustainable environment; ECOWAS DRR Strategy: disasters heighten SGBV
Nigeria	VAPP Act (2015); Lagos DV Law (2007); National Climate Change Policy (2021)	VAPP defines all forms of VAWG; Climate Policy explicitly links climate stress to domestic/sexual violence	Climate Policy: 'climate-induced crisis worsens GBV'; approx. 20% of climate-displaced women experience sexual violence
Ghana	Domestic Violence Act 732 (2007); Climate Change Gender Action Plan (CCGAP, 2021)	DV Act criminalises domestic/sexual violence; CCGAP makes NDC gender-responsive	CCGAP commits to ensuring women benefit equally from climate programmes; climate-GBV linkages not yet formally integrated
Cameroon	Penal Code; NAP (2015, updated 2022); NDC (2021)	No standalone VAWG law; MINPROFF embedded in NAP and NDC	NAP includes gender analysis; forest and displacement harms raise risk of VAWG in conflict-affected areas
Togo	Criminal Code; 2019 Code of Persons; 2018 Cybersecurity Law; NAP (2018)	No standalone VAW law; economic/psychological violence not criminalised; NAP has gender analysis	NAP recognises climate-driven displacement and flooding; no explicit VAWG emergency protocols

⁶ ECOWAS. (2015). Supplementary Act Relating to Equality of Rights Between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region.

⁷ ECOWAS. (2020). Gender-Responsive Social Protection and Disaster Risk Reduction / Gender and DRR Strategy 2020–2030.

Figure 3.1: Legal & policy gap matrix — Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Togo.



Source: Her Voice country desk reviews and fieldwork, 2025–2026.

3.2 Climate–VAW Nexus in Existing Research

A growing body of evidence shows that climate variability and extreme weather events are linked to increases in VAWG, operating through multiple and mutually reinforcing pathways. Empirical studies and systematic reviews identify household and community stressors (income loss, food insecurity, resource scarcity), protection gaps during and after disasters (overstretched services, unsafe shelters), and gendered constraints on adaptive capacity (limited assets, restricted mobility, exclusion from decision-making) as the main channels through which climate shocks raise the risk of intimate partner violence and other forms of GBV (IUCN, 2020; Thurston *et al.*, 2021; Munala *et al.*, 2023). Temperature and rainfall shocks have been causally linked to higher IPV in several econometric studies, suggesting that climatic shocks produce measurable short-term increases in violence through both economic stress and behavioural pathways (Fruttero *et al.*, 2023; Díaz & Saldarriaga, 2023).

Systematic reviews corroborate these causal inferences and document the diversity of contexts in which the climate–VAWG link appears. Reviews of post-disaster settings show recurring patterns: increases in domestic violence, sexual exploitation in displacement settings, and rises in early or forced marriage as coping strategies for climate-induced economic stress (van Daalen *et al.*, 2022; Thurston *et al.*, 2021). Recent modelling warns that without effective mitigation and adaptive policies, domestic violence in sub-Saharan Africa could triple to 140 million people affected by 2060 due to extreme heat and stalled development (UNFPA, IIASA & University of Vienna, 2024). Reviews confirm that heat and climate shocks are systematically linked to increased risks of GBV globally (Mulambo & Thakur, 2025).

Evidence also points to protective interventions. Social protection, inclusive livelihood support, and targeted investments in women's economic security can attenuate the IPV effects of climate shocks – suggesting that climate resilience programming can be designed to reduce secondary social harms when gender is mainstreamed (Delavallade, Gittard & Vaillant, 2025; UN Women, 2024). Yet policy responses remain uneven: GBV services, safe shelter provision, and gender-responsive disaster planning are often underfunded or poorly integrated into climate adaptation strategies, especially in low-resource settings.

Key Research Gap

Existing studies vary in methodological design, geographic focus, and outcome measurement. More longitudinal and mixed-methods work is needed to unpack timing, duration, and heterogeneity of effects. Critically, the intersection of digitalisation with climate-driven displacement, and how technology may both mitigate and amplify risks for women, remains underexamined and merits integrated study within the climate–VAWG framework and the relevance to feminist coalition building.

3.3 Digitalisation and Gender-Based Violence Literature

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) is increasingly recognised as a structural barrier to women's equal participation in digital spaces. A 2020 global survey of 14,000 girls and young women across 31 countries (including Nigeria and Ghana) found that 58% had experienced online harassment, with half reporting it felt more severe than in-person harassment (Plan International, 2023). Nearly 47% of respondents were attacked specifically for voicing opinions on gender equality and feminist issues, underscoring how online spaces can reproduce and intensify offline discrimination.

Evidence from African contexts paints a similar picture: a Policy survey (2020) across five major cities revealed that one in three women experienced some form of online violence, driving many to withdraw from digital platforms altogether (Iyer *et al.* 2020). Internet Sans Frontières (2019) notes that cyberviolence remains a pervasive threat (45% of women on social media in West and Central Africa affected) that not only harms women and girls but also reinforces the digital divide, silencing women's voices and excluding them from the public digital sphere (Agwuegbo, 2024). The rise of TFGBV has been documented as a global trend, with 66% of women reporting experience globally, and harmful impacts on women's mental health, civic engagement, and leadership (Baekgaard, 2024; Amnesty International, 2023; Stevens *et al.*, 2024).

When situated in the climate-digitalisation-VAWG nexus, the implications are profound. Digital platforms are key arenas where women can mobilise for climate adaptation, environmental justice, and policy change. However, online gender-based violence can silence these voices, restricting women's ability to influence decisions on issues where they are disproportionately impacted, such as climate-induced displacement, resource scarcity, and agricultural vulnerability. Addressing online violence is thus not only a matter of protecting digital rights but also a prerequisite for ensuring inclusive and equitable responses to climate change (Agwuegbo, 2024).

3.4 Identified Gaps — Where Climate and Digital Factors Are Under-Explored

Although there is a growing body of evidence linking climate change to increased VAWG risks, important gaps remain, particularly when digitalisation is brought into the discussion. Existing research has primarily focused on how climate-related stressors contribute to IPV, sexual

exploitation, and early marriage (Thurston *et al.*, 2021; van Daalen *et al.*, 2022). However, the digital dimension of violence is rarely examined in relation to climate change. Studies documenting online harassment (UN Women, 2022; GSMA, 2025) tend to treat it as a standalone phenomenon, without considering how digital exclusion or online violence might undermine women's adaptive capacity and resilience in the face of climate shocks.

Similarly, while climate adaptation research has highlighted women's structural barriers to land, finance, and technology (Delavallade, Gittard & Vaillant, 2025), the role of digital access and safety – in terms of how internet connectivity, mobile platforms, or digital finance could both empower and expose women – remains underexplored. Most available studies are cross-sectional or conducted in post-disaster settings, limiting understanding of long-term and compounding impacts. Intersectional perspectives are further underexplored as most studies treat women as a homogenous category, overlooking how age, disability, rural/urban location, and socioeconomic status shape vulnerability at the intersection of climate and digital risks (IUCN, 2020; UN Women, 2022; GSMA, 2025).

Finally, while international organisations increasingly acknowledge that climate programmes must be gender-responsive, policy and programme evaluations rarely account for digital risks. Early warning systems, mobile cash transfers, or digital advocacy platforms are seldom assessed for their potential to expose women to harassment, surveillance, or exploitation. The convergence of climate vulnerability and digital violence remains one of the least explored areas of research despite its growing relevance.

3.5 Conceptual Framework

Climate change and digitalisation are reshaping social vulnerabilities in ways that disproportionately affect women and girls, often reinforcing pre-existing inequalities and driving new forms of violence. The Her Voice conceptual framework illustrates the nexus of interconnections between all three domains, drawing on the evidence reviewed above.

Figure 3.2: Nexus of Climate Change, Digitalisation & VAWG



Each domain generates distinct pressures: climate change exacerbates vulnerabilities through resource scarcity, displacement, and care burdens; digitalisation introduces new risks of online abuse, surveillance, and digital exclusion; while VAWG manifests as entrenched patterns of domestic violence, exploitation, and harassment. The framework identifies three intersectional risk zones:

- **Climate × VAWG:** Resource stress and displacement heighten exposure to IPV and sexual exploitation. Projections show domestic violence in sub-Saharan Africa could triple to 140 million people affected by 2060 due to extreme heat (UNFPA, IIASA & University of Vienna, 2024). Reviews confirm heat and climate shocks are systematically linked to increased GBV risk globally (Mulambo & Thakur, 2025).
- **Digitalisation × VAWG:** Technology enables new forms of control, trafficking, and online harassment, disproportionately targeting women and restricting their voice and participation in public life (Im *et al.*, 2023; Malanga, 2021). Women are less comfortable expressing opinions online than men due to heightened safety fears (Stevens *et al.*, 2024).
- **Climate × Digitalisation:** Climate-related displacement creates new openings for digital exploitation and deepens exclusion from digital platforms. Digital exclusion in climate responses means women's voices are underrepresented in online advocacy and policy debates, creating a compounding silence.

At the core – the triple intersection – the framework highlights compounded vulnerabilities where climate shocks, digital risks, and gender inequalities converge: women displaced by floods may lose safe livelihoods, lack digital literacy, and fall prey to online trafficking networks or sextortion. At the same time, the framework underscores opportunities for resilience: digital tools can empower women with early warning systems, safe reporting channels, and platforms for climate justice advocacy (IUCN, 2020; UN, 2022).

Table 3.2: Climate Change Domain, Sub-Theme and Indicators & Associated VAWG Risk

Domain	Sub-theme	Indicator and Associated VAWG Risk
Climate Change	Resource scarcity and survival pressures	Droughts, floods, and crop failures increase household stress, sometimes leading to domestic violence as livelihoods are threatened
Climate Change	Displacement and migration	Extreme weather forces women and girls into displacement camps or unsafe migration, where risks of sexual exploitation, trafficking, and IPV rise
Climate Change	Child marriage and exploitation	In contexts of poverty caused by climate shocks, families may resort to early marriage of daughters as a coping mechanism
Climate Change	Exclusion from decision-making	Women are often sidelined from climate governance and adaptation planning, limiting their ability to influence protective policies
Climate Change	Increased burden of care	Walking longer distances for water or fuel heightens women's exposure to harassment and violence in public spaces
Digitalisation	Online harassment and abuse	Women face cyberbullying, doxing, stalking, and NCII — often targeting female leaders, activists, and journalists

Domain	Sub-theme	Indicator and Associated VAWG Risk
Digitalisation	Amplified gender stereotypes	Digital platforms reproduce harmful norms, leading to gendered hate speech and coordinated attacks on women
Digitalisation	Digital exclusion	Limited access deepens inequalities, leaving women less able to report violence or access online protection services
Digitalisation	Tech-enabled exploitation	Social media and messaging apps are misused for trafficking, grooming, and exploitation of women and girls
Digitalisation	Surveillance and control	Abusive partners use digital tools — spyware, tracking apps, phone confiscation — to monitor, control, or intimidate women

SECTION 4

Methodology

4. METHODOLOGY

This section explains exactly how Her Voice generated and safeguarded its data so that readers can judge the validity of findings and replicate or adapt our approach. It covers the research design, country selection, sampling strategy, data collection tools, ethical considerations, data analysis approaches, and limitations with mitigation strategies.

4.1 Research Design

Besides the initial WRO/Coalition/Networks Stakeholder survey to ascertain data needs, Her Voice employed a two-phase, mixed-methods comparative research design across Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and Togo, spanning June 2025 to January 2026. The mixed-methods design was chosen deliberately to capture both the breadth of the crisis (through quantitative surveys enabling statistical analysis and cross-country comparison) and the depth of lived experience, through qualitative FGDs and KIIs that surface narratives, coping strategies, and institutional perspectives that surveys alone cannot capture. Triangulation across methods strengthens validity and enables both convergence and divergence analysis.

- **Phase One — Desk Review (July–September 2025):** Comprehensive review of national and regional policy frameworks; existing VAWG prevalence data and longitudinal trends; climate vulnerability assessments (IPCC AR6, ND-GAIN, national climate plans); digital landscape analyses (ITU DataHub, GSMA, DataReportal); and academic literature on the climate–digitalisation–VAWG nexus. Phase One populated the literature review (Section 3) and informed instrument design.
- **Phase Two — Primary Fieldwork (September 2025 – January 2026):** Primary data collection in all four countries using three complementary methods: quantitative household surveys, qualitative Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Phase Two generated the empirical evidence base for country case studies (Section 5), thematic chapters (Sections 6–7), and cross-cutting analysis (Sections 8–9).

4.2 Country Selection Criteria and Profiles

The four focus countries were selected to maximise comparability while capturing variation across climate vulnerability profiles, digital connectivity levels, legal frameworks, geographic zones, linguistic settings (Anglophone/Francophone), and cultural contexts.

Table 4.1: Countries' Comparison table for ND-GAIN, Internet Penetration and VAWG Legal Framework

Country	Selection Rationale	ND-GAIN Score (2024)	Internet Penetration (ITU 2024)	VAWG Legal Framework
Nigeria	Largest economy and population in Africa; megacity-to-Sahel ecological range; highest climate exposure in study (81.9% climate shocks); VAPP Act as regional legal benchmark; most advanced digital market	39.4 — rank 152/187 (very low)	~39%	VAPP Act 2015 (comprehensive); Inspire GBV system non-functional; domesticated in 35 States but 1.
Ghana	Robust urban infrastructure contrasting with drought-affected north; DV Act 732 (2007) as West African model; DOVVSU as institutional benchmark; moderate digital penetration	45.2 — rank 112/187 (moderate)	~70%	Domestic Violence Act 732 (2007); DOVVSU active; One-Stop Centre in Accra only; Domestic Violence Fund not yet established
Cameroon	Ecological and political diversity; Anglophone/Francophone bilingualism; conflict-climate nexus in far north and SW/NW Regions; ALERT GBV digital platform innovation	38.7 — rank 155/187 (low)	~41.9%	No standalone VAWG law; Penal Code provisions only; MINPROFF has coordination role
Togo	Smallest economy; fastest-growing mobile market in study; all six national regions covered for widest scope; unique disability focus; critical legislative gap — no standalone VAW law	43.0 — rank 126/187 (moderate)	~35%	No standalone VAW law; 2018 Cybersecurity Law; 2019 Code of Persons; economic/psychological violence not explicitly criminalized

4.3 Sampling Strategy

4.3.1 Quantitative Household Surveys

Household survey samples were purposive and community-grounded, focusing on populations most directly exposed to the climate–digitalisation–VAWG nexus rather than aiming for national representativeness. Sample sizes reflect the project's capacity and the need for meaningful subgroup analysis.

Table 4.2: A Snapshot of Her Voice Quantitative Survey

Country	N	Study Communities / States	Sampling Approach
Cameroon	70 household interviews; 104 FGD participants	South West Region: Buea Town, Tole, Mile 16, Molyko, Motowo; Littoral Region: Bonaberi, Bois de Senche	Purposive and snowball sampling within communities; sites chosen for climate exposure type (flood, drought, farming, urban, Muslim-majority)
Ghana	60 respondents	Upper East Region: Yarigabisi (Bolgatanga East) and Gowrie (Bongo District)	Purposive sampling of highly climate-stressed communities; quantitative SPSS analysis including four regression models
Nigeria	314 respondents; 41 KIIs; 20 FGDs	Lagos, Rivers, Ebonyi, Taraba, Yobe, Abuja FCT	Multi-stage purposive sampling across 6 states selected for geographic, digital, and climate diversity
Togo	303 respondents; 16 KIIs; multiple FGDs per region	All 6 administrative regions: Greater Lomé, Maritime, Plateaux, Centrale, Kara, Savanes	National regional coverage — only Her Voice country with nationally representative subnational sample
TOTAL	747 HH respondents; 78+ KIIs; 56+ FGDs	—	—

4.3.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs were systematically disaggregated by gender (separate groups of women and men to surface different perspectives and power dynamics), age cohort, and rural/urban setting. Each FGD comprised 8–16 participants. Approximately 56 FGDs were conducted across the project, encompassing farmers, traders, displaced persons, youth, elders, and community leaders. FGDs were conducted in local languages by trained facilitators using standardised but flexible topic guides covering climate experiences, VAWG prevalence and drivers, digital access and safety, and institutional responses.

4.3.3 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

KIIs engaged 78+ key informants purposively selected to cover the institutional dimensions of all three project themes (climate, digitalisation, VAWG) and to provide policy-level perspectives complementing community-level data. Informants included: government ministries (environment, women's affairs, agriculture, digital governance); security and law enforcement agencies; civil society and human rights organisations; digital governance regulators; academic institutions; international organisations (UN Women, UNFPA, UNHCR, Red Cross, Caritas); and community and traditional leaders.

4.4 Data Collection Tools and Ethical Considerations

4.4.1 Data Collection Instruments

A standardised but locally adaptable household survey questionnaire captured: sociodemographic data; device ownership and digital literacy scores; exposure to climate stressors (generating a Climate Stress Index/CSI); food security indicators; violence exposure by type and perpetrator; coping strategies; awareness and use of GBV reporting mechanisms. Instruments were developed by WACOL in collaboration with UN Women, adapted for each country context, translated orally into relevant local languages, and piloted before full deployment.

Semi-structured KII and FGD guides were organised into thematic modules: (1) climate change impacts on livelihoods and security; (2) VAWG prevalence, drivers, and forms; (3) digitalisation opportunities and risks; (4) institutional responses, coordination, and gaps; (5) recommendations for policy and programming. KII guides were tailored by institution type to ensure sector-specific insights.

4.4.2 Ethical Safeguards

All data collection followed robust ethical protocols aligned with international standards for research on violence against women:

- **Informed consent:** Written or verbal consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were informed of the study purpose, voluntary nature of participation, right to withdraw at any point, and confidentiality measures.
- **Anonymisation:** All data were anonymised at collection and in analysis. No identifying information is reported in this document. Participants are referred to by generic descriptors (e.g., 'Women's FGD participant, Gowrie').
- **Voluntary participation:** No incentives were provided that could be construed as coercive. Participants were free to skip questions or end the interview at any time.
- **Psychological safety protocols:** Trained facilitators were briefed on trauma-informed engagement approaches. Referral pathways to local GBV support services were established in each study location, and information on available support was shared with all participants.
- **Do No Harm:** Survey instruments avoided questions that could re-traumatise respondents without clear analytical justification. Data storage followed secure protocols with access restricted to the research team.

4.5 Data Analysis Approaches

4.5.1 Quantitative Statistical Analysis

Household survey data were entered into SPSS and analysed using: descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, cross-tabulations); composite indicators (CSI construction, food insecurity scoring, socioeconomic/asset index); and, for Ghana uniquely, four multiple linear regression models identifying independent predictors of violence, digital inclusion, and household wealth. The Ghana regressions provide the project's only econometric causal analysis and are presented in Sections 5 and 9.

4.5.2 Qualitative Thematic Analysis

Qualitative data from FGDs and KIs underwent a structured five-phase analytical process: (1) familiarisation and narrative arc identification; (2) hybrid deductive/inductive coding – deductive codes derived from the conceptual framework (resource scarcity, displacement, digital access) combined with inductive codes emerging from the data; (3) theme development aggregating codes into major analytical pillars; (4) triangulation against quantitative findings; (5) synthesis integrating divergent perspectives and surfacing policy-relevant conclusions.

4.6 Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

Table 4.3: Study's Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

Limitation	Description	Mitigation Strategy
Underreporting of VAWG	Cultural stigma, fear of reprisal, and normalisation of violence lead to significant underreporting across all forms, especially sexual and technology-facilitated violence	Anonymous survey formats; trained female interviewers; trust-building with community gatekeepers prior to data collection; qualitative FGDs to surface experiences not captured in surveys
Non-random samples	Purposive community selection and snowball sampling limit national representativeness; Ghana and Cameroon samples are small relative to national populations	Results presented as indicative community-level findings; consistent cross-method triangulation; explicit acknowledgement in all cross-country comparisons
Social desirability bias	Respondents (particularly men) may understate perpetration or overstate protective attitudes	Separate gender-disaggregated FGDs; anonymous survey formats; indirect questioning approaches validated in the literature
Recall bias	Self-reported violence data rely on memory of past 12 months	Standardised, WHO-aligned survey protocols; consistency checks across survey items
Security constraints in conflict-affected areas	Active conflict in North West/South West Cameroon and some northern Nigerian states constrained access to the most crisis-affected populations	Intensive community-level liaison; selection of accessible but similarly vulnerable communities; explicit documentation of geographic limitations in country chapters
Under-measurement of digital violence	TFGBV is severely underreported even more than physical violence, given additional stigma and lack of institutional recognition	Online survey supplementing household survey; KI evidence on institutional awareness; qualitative case vignettes to document TFGBV not captured in surveys

SECTION 5

Country Case Studies

5. COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

KEY POINTS — COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

- Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and Togo each present a distinct baseline VAWG profile, climate-vulnerability pattern, and digital landscape.
- Despite contextual differences, all four countries share the same underlying drivers: resource scarcity, displacement, and an unregulated digital space.

This section presents four parallel country profiles – Nigeria, Togo, Cameroon, and Ghana – each grounded in local realities and drawing on primary fieldwork and desk review findings. Each profile covers: (5.1) a country profile and VAWG baseline; (5.2) climate vulnerability and local manifestations of VAW; (5.3) the digital landscape and online-driven VAW; and (5.4) illustrative narratives and case vignettes that humanise the quantitative findings. Together these four profiles establish the empirical foundation for the thematic analysis in Sections 6–9.

5.1 Nigeria

5.1.1 Country Profile and VAWG Baseline

Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation (approximately 220 million people) and its 4th largest economy. It is simultaneously a regional digital leader and one of the continent's most climate-vulnerable states. Women constitute approximately 60% of Nigeria's poor and over 70% of the agricultural workforce; structurally positioning them at the intersection of climate vulnerability, economic dependency, and VAWG. VAWG prevalence is high and pervasive: across the Her Voice fieldwork (n=314, six states), only 25.5% of respondents reported no experience of violence in the preceding 12 months, meaning nearly three-quarters experienced at least one form. Emotional and psychological abuse was the most prevalent form (40.1%), followed by economic abuse (24.8%), physical IPV (15.3%), and online harassment (4.5%).

The Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act 2015 (VAPP Act) represents one of Africa's most comprehensive domestic violence laws – criminalising domestic violence, marital rape, stalking, emotional and economic abuse. It is currently domesticated in all 35 states but 1, and the FCT has also domesticated VAPP, though the Federal Inspire national GBV data management system remains non-functional, and enforcement across states is uneven. A 'justice geography' has emerged: access to digital evidence documentation and survivor services depends heavily on state location (Lagos versus rural Yobe) rather than the nature or severity of the harm.

Table 5.1: VAWG Country Profile (Nigeria)

Indicator	Nigeria Data
Survey sample	314 respondents, 6 states (Lagos, Rivers, Ebonyi, Taraba, Yobe, Abuja FCT)
Reported no violence in past 12 months	25.5%
Most prevalent violence form	Emotional/psychological abuse (40.1%)
Economic abuse prevalence	24.8%
Physical IPV prevalence	15.3%
Online harassment prevalence	4.5%
Phone ownership	92.4%
Do not use internet regularly	54.6%
Used digital tools to report violence	21%
Climate shocks experienced (past 12 months)	81.9%
Legal framework	VAPP Act 2015; Inspire GBV system non-functional; of Nigeria's 36 states, it is domesticated in 35 states but 1.

5.1.2 Climate Vulnerability and Local Manifestations of VAW

Nigeria's climate exposure was the highest across the four study countries: 81.9% of surveyed respondents experienced at least one climate shock in the preceding 12 months. Extreme heat was the most common stressor (52.1%), followed by water scarcity (42.4%), flooding (40.5%), and crop failure (26.1%). More than half (52%) reported selling productive assets as a coping strategy. Regional patterns are highly differentiated: flooding dominates in the South South (72.5%); water scarcity dominates in the North East (83.6%); extreme heat is the primary driver in the South West.

A predictable seasonal violence cycle was documented: rainy season flooding triggers displacement-related IPV spikes in temporary shelters where perpetrators control access to food and shelter; dry season food scarcity peaks drive economic violence, transactional sex in exchange for food, and child marriage as coping strategies. Of respondents reporting resource shortages, 58.6% experienced conflict directly linked to scarcity. In Taraba State, where six LGAs flood annually, community leaders described men exploiting the power vacuum of displacement to compel marriages with minors, framed as 'protective arrangements.' This climate-child marriage link was confirmed across Lagos, Rivers, Ebonyi, Taraba, and Yobe States. Nigeria's climate migration disproportionately affects young, single women aged 15–30; of those who had relocated in the past year (26%), 10.5% experienced sexual exploitation in displacement settings.

5.1.3 Digital Landscape and Online-Driven VAW

Nigeria is Africa's largest digital market. 92.4% of respondents owned a mobile phone; communication practices included voice calls (73.6%), WhatsApp (53.1%), Facebook (44.4%), and TikTok (29.3%). However, 54.6% did not use the internet regularly and only 21% had used digital tools to report violence. Technology-facilitated GBV was extensively documented: over 70% of women in FGDs reported cyberstalking or persistent online monitoring by intimate

partners. Men in Ebonyi State acknowledged monitoring wives' digital activities as a marital right – explicit digital control framed as a legitimate spousal entitlement. Nigeria's Cybercrimes Act 2015 criminalises cyberstalking, but specific NCII provisions are ambiguous; police gender desks outside Lagos lack functioning computers and digital forensic tools. The Lagos DSVCMS (Domestic and Sexual Violence Case Management System) was consistently identified as a national benchmark for digital evidence documentation.

5.1.4 Illustrative Narratives — Nigeria

Nigeria — Survivor Voices

'When the rains come and the river floods, we leave the house. My husband blames me for losing things in the water. Then when we are in the camp together with other families, there is no privacy. Men from outside come at night. I have seen things happen to young women that no one reports because those men control access to the food supplies.' — Woman, 28, Taraba State FGD.

'My husband found out from his brother [about the leaked images]. He didn't ask if I was alright. He asked how I could shame our family. He packed my things outside. I had nowhere to go. The police said it was a Facebook issue.' — Woman, 34, Ebonyi State FGD.

5.2 Togo

5.2.1 Country Profile and VAWG Baseline

Togo is a small coastal country in West Africa with a population of approximately 8.7 million. Togo's DHS-V (2017) estimated 27.8% of women aged 15-49 experiencing physical or sexual violence; earlier studies documented 63% of girls aged 9-19 facing physical violence and 92% experiencing psycho-moral violence. Notably, obstetric violence in healthcare settings has been specifically documented in Togo – representing an institutional dimension of VAWG with no current legal remedy. Togo has made notable legislative progress (2019 Code of Persons and Family; 2018 Cybersecurity Law) but lacks a standalone VAW law, and economic and psychological violence are not explicitly criminalised.

The Her Voice fieldwork covered all six national regions (the only country study with full national regional scope) reaching 303 respondents. The GF2D (Groupe de Femmes pour la Démocratie et le Développement) Listening Centres were identified as the most trusted GBV institution across Togo, preferred overwhelmingly over police stations for accessibility, confidentiality, and non-judgmental response. 40.9% of respondents reported not knowing where to seek help in cases of violence – the highest awareness gap in the project.

Table 5.2: Country VAWG Profile (Togo)

Indicator	Togo Data
Survey sample	303 respondents, all 6 administrative regions
Do not know where to seek help	40.9% — highest awareness gap across four countries
Phone ownership	86.1%
Zero or very low digital skills	98%
Used digital tools to report violence	10.2%

Indicator	Togo Data
Climate events experienced (past 12 months)	41.9%
Food shortages experienced	68%
Most trusted GBV institution	GF2D Listening Centres (preferred over police)
Legal framework	No standalone VAW law; 2018 Cybersecurity Law; 2019 Code of Persons; economic/psychological violence not criminalized

5.2.2 Climate Vulnerability and Local Manifestations of VAW

41.9% of respondents reported experiencing climate events in the preceding 12 months, with 68% experiencing food shortages. Three climate-violence pathways were documented with particular clarity in Togo. First, the drought-to-violence pathway: crop failures create economic stress, which generates accusations against women for empty granaries, escalating to IPV. Second, the flooding displacement pathway: women disproportionately bear the burden of climate displacement, losing access to economic activities and falling into dependent relationships that generate secondary social conflict. Third, the male seasonal migration pathway: men's departure for urban work leaves women as de facto household heads facing isolation, reduced resources, and opportunistic harassment from community members.

The Togo fieldwork makes a unique and important contribution by documenting in detail the compound vulnerability of women with disabilities – a population facing triple risk: disproportionate climate exposure (inability to evacuate quickly from floods or heat), disproportionate violence (elevated IPV, targeted digital harassment, social isolation), and near-total exclusion from GBV services (no adapted shelter, no disability-inclusive emergency communication). Disability organisation KII respondents confirmed: 'When there is a flood, many women with disabilities cannot move quickly. They depend on their loved ones who are not always present. Sometimes they get stuck in the houses, without help.'

5.2.3 Digital Landscape and Online-Driven VAW

86.1% of respondents owned or used a mobile phone, yet 98% had very low or zero digital skills – the starkest digital paradox in the project. Only 10.2% had ever used a digital tool to report violence. ANCy (National Cybersecurity Agency) had received zero official cyberbullying complaints despite National Police and Gendarmerie reporting documented cases – a stark indicator of institutional inaccessibility. The Togo fieldwork documents a distinctive climate-displacement-digital exploitation nexus: women displaced by floods sought help via Facebook and were targeted by men offering fraudulent financial assistance, then subjected to sextortion and blackmail. This cycle, climate displacement → vulnerability → digital help-seeking → exploitation, is identified as likely to intensify as climate events become more frequent.

5.2.4 Illustrative Narratives — Togo

Togo — Survivor and Expert Voices

'When my house was destroyed by the rain, I looked for help on Facebook. A man wrote to me saying he could send me money. He was nice at first, then he asked for pictures. When I refused, he threatened to publish our conversations. I felt humiliated and trapped. I didn't know who to tell.' — Woman, Urban Central Region FGD.

'In the digital space, women with disabilities are highly exposed to harassment. We make fun of their disability, we send them insulting or humiliating messages. To avoid all this, many give up on social networks. It is a form of silent violence, but very present.' — KII Respondent, Disability Organisation, Togo.

5.3 Cameroon

5.3.1 Country Profile and VAWG Baseline

Cameroon, often described as 'Africa in miniature' for its ecological and cultural diversity, occupies a unique position bridging West and Central Africa. With a population of approximately 29 million, its political landscape has been substantially destabilised by the Anglophone crisis in the North West and South West Regions since 2016, compounded by the Boko Haram insurgency in the far North. The 2018 DHS recorded 64% of women as having experienced some form of violence; a 2022 Nkafu Policy Institute analysis documented 43.2% of women in union experiencing domestic violence. Cameroon has no dedicated national law on VAW; domestic violence is addressed through general Penal Code assault provisions. MINPROFF (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family) is formally embedded in both the National Adaptation Plan and the NDC but lacks budget and mandate to enforce GBV responses.

The Her Voice fieldwork covered 70 households and 104 FGD participants across seven communities in the South West and Littoral Regions. A distinctive finding was the urban vulnerability paradox – urban households exhibited statistically higher cumulative climate stress than rural ones, directly challenging the dominant policy assumption that climate vulnerability is primarily a rural problem. 66.7% of displaced households reported violence compared to 41.5% of non-displaced households; a 25-percentage-point gap confirming displacement as the single most powerful individual-level violence risk amplifier in the Cameroon sample.

Table 5.3: Country VAWG Profile (Cameroon)

Indicator	Cameroon Data
Survey sample	70 household interviews; 104 FGD participants; 7 communities (SW and Littoral Regions)
Displaced vs. non-displaced violence rate	66.7% displaced vs. 41.5% non-displaced
Households experiencing 2+ simultaneous climate shocks	75% (Climate Stress Index)
Food shortages 3+ times/year	Over 70%
Increased violence during food shortage	33% of households
Water scarcity reported	58.2%
Flooding reported	50.7%
Phone ownership	98.5%
Average digital literacy score	2.51 out of 5
Used digital tools to report violence	10.4%

Indicator	Cameroon Data
Legal framework	No standalone VAWG law; Penal Code provisions; MINPROFF coordination role; ALERT GBV digital platform operational

5.3.2 Climate Vulnerability and Local Manifestations of VAW

Water scarcity (58.2%) and flooding (50.7%) were the most frequently reported climate stressors. 75% of households experienced two or more simultaneous climate shocks (Climate Stress Index). Over 70% experienced food shortages at least three times in the preceding year; one-third reported increased violence during food shortage periods. Households spent an average of 12 days per month collecting water – with nearly one-quarter spending 20 or more days – a burden borne disproportionately by women and girls with direct implications for safety. The conflict-climate nexus adds specific dimensions absent in other study countries: women in Anglophone crisis-affected communities and in the far North face compounded risks where displacement from conflict and climate change intersect with severely weakened protection infrastructure.

The urban vulnerability paradox was the most striking counterintuitive finding: in Motowo, Buea Town, Bonaberi, and Bois de Senche, recurrent flooding from inadequate urban drainage has become a normalised annual condition. Urban VAWG data typically underrepresent informal settlement populations most affected. This finding has direct policy implications: climate adaptation strategies must include urban informal settlements as a priority vulnerability zone rather than directing all resources toward rural communities.

5.3.3 Digital Landscape and Online-Driven VAW

Phone ownership was near-universal (98.5%), but average digital literacy scored only 2.51 out of 5, with fewer than one-quarter reporting good or advanced skills. Only 10.4% had ever used digital tools to report violence. A gendered digital perception gap was documented across all FGD sites: women described digital harm as 'frequent and routine'; men minimised or denied its prevalence, impeding institutional recognition and response. The ALERT GBV platform (operated by MINPROFF) was identified as an important innovation providing accessible, confidential reporting – but it lacks integration with police, health, or justice systems, limiting its capacity to produce safety outcomes beyond recording complaints.

5.3.4 Illustrative Narratives — Cameroon

Cameroon — Community Voices

'She is harassed every day on Facebook. It is normal now. Nobody does anything.' — Women's FGD, Bonaberi, Cameroon. This phrase — 'it is normal now' — recurred across Cameroon FGD sites and encapsulates how normalisation of TFGBV prevents reporting and institutional response.

'Because of the floods, we can no longer farm well. This means less food and more pressure in the house. Some men take out their frustration on their wives and children. When the food finishes, that is when the trouble begins.' — Female farmer, Mile 16, FGD.

5.4 Ghana

5.4.1 Country Profile and VAWG Baseline

Ghana is a lower-middle-income democracy with a population of approximately 35 million. Ghana Statistical Service (2022) documented 24.4% of women aged 15-49 experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner. The Domestic Violence Act 732 (2007), criminalising marital rape and establishing DOVVSU, was a landmark West African achievement. However, the Domestic Violence Fund mandated by a 2017 Supreme Court ruling has not been established; DOVVSU One-Stop Centre services remain available only in Accra; and forensic medical examinations are paid for by survivors, creating a justice commodification barrier for the most economically marginalised women.

The Her Voice fieldwork was conducted in the Upper East Region (Yarigabisi and Gowrie communities) – a 'left-behind' population whose profile stands in stark contrast to nationally aggregated statistics: 73.3% female, mean age 50.3 years, 60% with no formal education, 0% digital GBV reporting tool use. Ghana's study included four regression models that were run in SPSS, providing a rigorous econometric analysis of the climate-VAWG-digital nexus.

Table 5.4: Country VAWG Profile (Ghana)

Indicator	Ghana Data
Survey sample	60 respondents, Upper East Region (Yarigabisi, Gowrie)
Sample profile	73.3% female; mean age 50.3; 60% no formal education
Drought/crop failure reported	~98%
Food shortage reported	100%
Increased violence during food shortage	88% — highest across four countries
Phone ownership	86.7%
Low digital literacy	78.3%
Used digital GBV reporting tools	0% (rural sample)
Regression finding — climate/violence	Climate stressors = primary predictor of all violence (p=.011); R ² =.627
Regression finding — digital paradox	Phone ownership increases violence risk (B=0.362, p=.005) — 'Backlash Effect'
Legal framework	DV Act 732 (2007); DOVVSU active; One-Stop Centre Accra only; DV Fund not established

5.4.2 Climate Vulnerability and Local Manifestations of VAW

In the two study communities, climate stress was near-absolute: drought and crop failure were each reported by approximately 98% of respondents; food shortages were universal (100%); and 88% reported increased household violence during food shortage periods – the highest food-shortage-violence link of any study country. Women aged 35 and above were consistently identified by community members as the most climate-exposed group – too old to migrate south, physically weakened by intensifying heat, and burdened with grandchildren left by migrating daughters. The regression analysis (Model 4, R²=.627) confirmed that climate stressors were the

single largest determinant of household wealth destruction ($\beta=-0.416$, $p<.001$), exceeding all other variables; and that digital literacy has no independent effect on economic outcomes when climate vulnerability is unaddressed (the 'null factor', $p=.378$).

The 'empty pot as flashpoint' – a phrase generated in FGDs and confirmed across all sessions – encapsulates the hunger-anger pathway: crop failure empties the pot, empty pot creates household tension, household tension triggers violence, violence compounds the poverty that produced the empty pot. This self-reinforcing cycle is the core finding of the Ghana fieldwork and has profound implications for integrated climate-VAWG programming.

5.4.3 Digital Landscape and Online-Driven VAW

86.7% of respondents owned phones, but 78.3% had low digital literacy and 0% in the rural sample had ever used a digital GBV reporting tool. The critical 'Backlash Effect' was identified through regression analysis: women who owned phones experienced more frequent violence ($B=0.362$, $p=.005$) – digital independence in patriarchal households under economic stress is experienced as a threat to male authority, triggering controlling and retaliatory abuse. Men in Yarigabisi confirmed this dynamic directly: 'If you have a phone and the man doesn't have one, he will seize your phone.' The 'Carlos case' documented NCII reaching this rural Upper East community: 'Carlos slept with her and did video and post' – demonstrating that non-consensual intimate image sharing is no longer confined to urban digital spaces.

5.4.4 Illustrative Narratives — Ghana

Ghana — Community Voices

'If the man beats the wife, and you go and report to the chief palace or the police, by the time you come back, your things are outside.' — Women's FGD, Gowrie.

'There is no rule here. If they beat you, they beat you free.' — Women's FGD, Yarigabisi.

'If you farm and you get up to 2 bags, it makes the family shout. If you don't farm, it's better.' — Woman, 50, Yarigabisi, describing the impossible bind of agricultural failure and household violence.

SECTION 6

Climate Change and VAW

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND VAW

KEY POINTS — CLIMATE CHANGE AND VAW

- Drought, flooding and resource scarcity are consistently linked to elevated violence across all four countries.
- Displacement is the single strongest individual-level risk amplifier identified in the study.
- Cultural narratives sometimes frame violence following climate shocks as natural or expected, deepening under-reporting.

The intersection of climate change and violence against women acts as a threat multiplier in West and Central Africa. As environmental shocks (ranging from desertification in the Sahel to coastal flooding in the Gulf of Guinea) destabilise local economies, pre-existing gender inequalities are severely exacerbated, manifesting in distinct patterns of gender-based violence. This section deep-dives across the focus countries into exactly how environmental shocks fuel gender violence, covering patterns of displacement and resource conflict, migration and exploitation corridors, cultural justifications for violence, and cross-country statistical trends.

6.1 Resource Scarcity and Competition

Environmental degradation directly reduces the availability of life-sustaining resources, forcing populations into heightened competition and creating highly gendered physical risks.

6.1.1 Drought- and Flood-Driven Displacement Patterns

Extreme weather events in the region drive distinct displacement typologies. Prolonged droughts in the Lake Chad Basin – spanning Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria – have triggered protracted, slow-onset displacement, while severe seasonal flooding in coastal states like Togo and southern Nigeria causes sudden, acute displacement. Women in transit and within internally displaced persons (IDP) camps face critical security failures. Overcrowded temporary shelters and the breakdown of community protection structures consistently correlate with spikes in sexual violence and domestic abuse. Displacement fundamentally strips women of land tenure and economic autonomy, severely limiting their ability to escape abusive environments (Nagarajan *et al.*, 2024).

Her Voice fieldwork confirmed this pattern across all four countries. In Nigeria's Taraba State, six LGAs flood annually, creating predictable cycles of camp displacement and associated sexual violence, described as 'rampant with a culture of silence' because perpetrators control access to food and shelter. In Togo, flooding displaces women from mud houses and renders them dependent on relatives, generating secondary social conflict. In Cameroon, displaced households reported violence at 66.7% versus 41.5% for non-displaced households – a 25-percentage-point gap confirming displacement as the single most powerful individual-level violence risk amplifier in

the sample. In Ghana, the 'left-behind' older women population (mean age 50.3 years) represent a specific displacement-adjacent risk: too old to migrate south, they face intensifying climate stress with no exit option and no digital support infrastructure.

6.1.2 Intra-Community Resource Conflicts and VAW Incidents

Because women and girls bear the primary responsibility for securing household water and energy (firewood), climate-induced scarcity forces them to travel further into unfamiliar or contested territories. These 'waterline conflicts' and foraging routes are heavily associated with increased exposure to sexual assault and harassment by state and non-state armed actors as well as competing community members. In Cameroon, households spent an average of 12 days per month collecting water (nearly one-third spent 20 or more days) a time burden borne disproportionately by women and girls with direct safety implications. The inability to fulfil traditional household roles due to resource depletion also frequently triggers retaliatory intimate partner violence within the home, as men direct frustration at women unable to fulfil gendered survival tasks (Castañeda Camey *et al.*, 2020).

Of Nigeria respondents reporting resource shortages, 58.6% experienced conflict directly linked to scarcity – the clearest quantitative demonstration of the resource-conflict-VAW causal pathway. In Ghana's Upper East Region, 100% of respondents experienced food shortages and 88% reported increased household violence during these periods, providing the most unambiguous empirical evidence of the 'empty-pot-as-flashpoint' dynamic in the project.

6.2 Climate-Induced Migration and Exploitation

When in situ adaptation fails, migration becomes a primary coping mechanism. However, the gendered nature of this mobility introduces severe exploitation risks that frequently manifest as a new, distinct form of climate-linked VAWG.

6.2.1 Migration Corridors and Risk Profiles for Women

Distress migration from rural, climate-stressed areas (like the agrarian north of Nigeria and Cameroon, northern Ghana) to urban centres creates precarious corridors. Unlike voluntary economic migration, climate-induced migration is often abrupt and under-resourced. Women migrating without capital or male escorts are systematically targeted along transit routes, facing extortion and sexual violence at informal borders and checkpoints. Nigeria's climate migration disproportionately affects young, single women aged 15–30 due to lower relocation costs; of those who had relocated (26% of the sample), 10.5% experienced sexual exploitation, 12.3% domestic abuse, and 8.8% forced labour in displacement settings.

Ghana fieldwork documented the specific experience of *kayaye* – young women who migrate from the climate-stressed Upper East Region to southern cities as head porters – facing informal labour with no protections, exploitation, and the risk of returning with reduced social standing. According to Caritas Ghana KII, 'Climate displacement is happening... people are moving from the north to the south. Some may not be in official camps, but their situation may be worse.' Resource scarcity also forces women to travel long distances for water and firewood, increasing exposure to harassment and assault *en route* – a risk documented across all four study countries.

Her Voice fieldwork quantifies this risk in Nigeria: of 57 displaced respondents, 10.5% reported sexual exploitation, 8.8% forced labour, and 12.3% domestic abuse. In Ghana, the *kayaye* phenomenon — young women migrating from the climate-stressed Upper East to southern cities in search of head-portering work — carries severe safety risks with zero legal protection along the migration corridor.

6.2.2 Trafficking, Forced Labour, and Gendered Vulnerabilities

The destabilisation of rural livelihoods makes women and girls highly susceptible to human trafficking networks operating in West and Central Africa. In the aftermath of sudden-onset disasters, trafficking rings frequently infiltrate affected communities offering fraudulent employment or safe passage. Women are disproportionately trafficked into domestic servitude, forced agricultural labour, and sexual exploitation. The UN Environment Programme identifies climate-induced economic desperation as a primary catalyst pushing women into transactional sex as a survival strategy, which carries high risks of physical violence and coercion (UNEP, 2022).

Across all four Her Voice countries, KII and FGD respondents documented how economic desperation during and after climate shocks creates conditions of structural coercion in which women's 'choices' (including transactional sex, early marriage, or engagement with unknown digital benefactors) are survival imperatives under conditions of acute vulnerability rather than autonomous choices in any meaningful sense. In Ghana: 'five cedis... she will give herself to that man' – a community FGD participant's account of transactional sex during food crisis – captures this dynamic with painful directness.

6.3 Cultural Beliefs and Justifications for VAW

Climate stress does not merely create new violence, it weaponises existing cultural norms, utilising traditional frameworks to rationalise abuse in the face of ecological anxiety. This weaponisation follows two main patterns documented in the fieldwork.

6.3.1 Traditional Norms Around Weather Events

Economic devastation from crop failures often accelerates the weaponisation of traditional norms – most notably child marriage, a recognised form of gender-based violence and child abuse. In agrarian communities across the region, marrying off underage girls becomes a coping strategy to reduce the household economic burden and secure brideprice during prolonged droughts. This practice abruptly halts girls' education and exposes them to early pregnancy and lifetime risks of IPV (Simba *et al.*, 2023). Her Voice fieldwork confirmed child marriage as a climate coping mechanism across all four countries. In Nigeria, the causal sequence was described directly: 'A man came saying he needed a wife. Because there was no food, the family gave their daughter.' (FGD, Ebonyi State). In Ghana, women described the agricultural-violence life course beginning in adolescence, where normalised physical retaliation against girls' assertiveness progresses into adulthood where crop failure becomes the direct trigger for IPV.

6.3.2 Rituals or Taboos That Sanction Violence

In extreme cases of ecological distress, traditional belief systems may be invoked to scapegoat vulnerable populations. Localised, severe weather anomalies (e.g. unseasonal droughts or destructive storms) have historically been attributed to spiritual anger, sometimes resulting in elderly women or widows facing accusations of witchcraft. These accusations serve as culturally sanctioned justifications for public violence, ostracisation, or seizure of the women's land and assets. While the Her Voice fieldwork did not document this phenomenon in its most extreme form during the survey period, KII and FGD respondents in Togo and Nigeria identified widows and older women as specifically vulnerable to asset seizure and social exclusion following climate disasters, framed within cultural narratives that attribute misfortune to their presence. This cultural-ecological attribution of blame compounds and legitimises structural violence against the most marginalised women.

6.4 Cross-Country Comparisons and Statistical Trends

Data collection on VAW in climate-affected regions remains challenging due to underreporting and disrupted governance. However, aggregating Her Voice primary fieldwork across all four countries with localised studies from the research literature reveals stark correlations between environmental shocks and violence. The following table synthesizes the key observed trends.

Table 6.1: Cross-Country VAW Comparisons & Statistical Trends

Climate Shock / Stressor	Country Contexts	VAW Indicator	Observed Trend / Her Voice Finding	Source
Prolonged drought (agricultural failure)	Cameroon (far North), Northern Nigeria, Northern Ghana	Child marriage rates	20–30% localised increase in early marriage during multi-year drought cycles; confirmed in all four Her Voice countries	Simba et al. (2023); Her Voice fieldwork
Acute flooding (displacement)	Togo, Coastal Nigeria, SW Cameroon	Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)	Displaced HHs: 66.7% vs. non-displaced: 41.5% (Cameroon); significant IPV spikes within 6 months post-displacement	Castañeda Camey et al. (2020); Her Voice Cameroon/Nigeria fieldwork
Resource depletion / water scarcity	Lake Chad Basin (Nigeria, Cameroon), Northern Ghana	Sexual assault; household conflict	58.6% of Nigeria respondents with shortages experienced scarcity-linked conflict; direct correlation between foraging distance and assault	Nagarajan et al. (2024); Her Voice Nigeria/Cameroon fieldwork
Food insecurity linked to climate shocks	All four countries	Violence (all forms)	Ghana: 88% of HHs increased violence during food shortages; Cameroon: 33%; Nigeria: 58.6% scarcity conflict; regression confirms climate = primary violence predictor	Her Voice Ghana regression ($p=.011$); Cameroon/Nigeria FGDs
Extreme heat (agricultural failure)	Northern Nigeria, Northern Ghana	Economic abuse / wealth destruction	Ghana regression: climate stressors $\beta=-0.416$, $p<.001$ — single largest predictor of HH wealth destruction	Her Voice Ghana regressions; Mulambo & Thakur (2025)

Statistical Projection

Without effective mitigation and adaptive policies, domestic violence in sub-Saharan Africa could triple to 140 million people affected by 2060 due to extreme heat and stalled development⁸ (UNFPA, IIASA & University of Vienna, 2024). The Her Voice climate econometric findings, confirming climate stressors as the primary predictor of both violence and poverty in the study communities, provide direct regional evidence base for this global projection.

⁸ UNFPA, IIASA, & University of Vienna. (2024). Domestic violence in sub-Saharan Africa will triple by 2060.

SECTION 7

Digitalisation and VAW

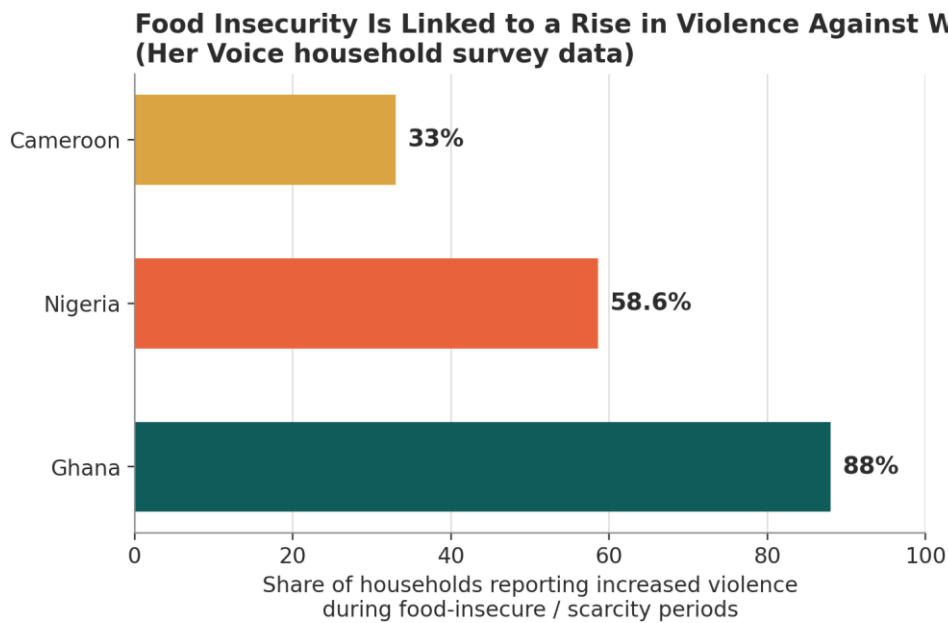


Figure 6.1: Food insecurity and the Link to rise in violence against women (VAW).

Source: Her Voice household survey data, Ghana / Nigeria / Cameroon.

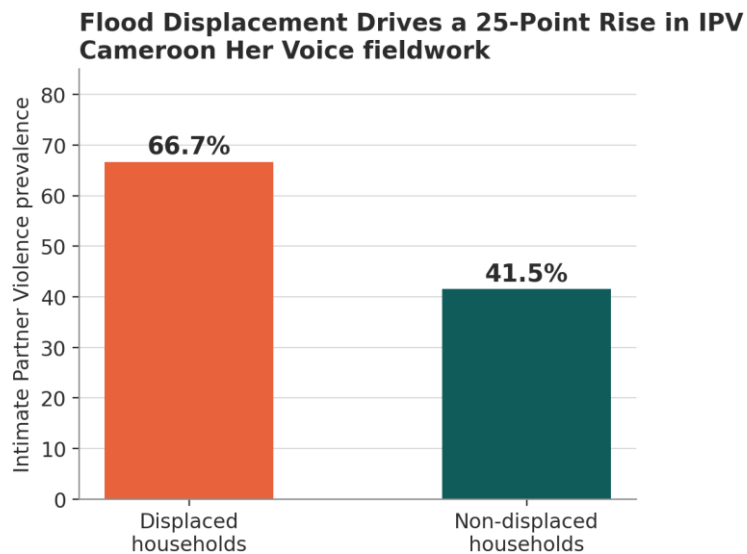


Figure 6.2: Flood displacements a driver of rise in intimate partner violence (IPV)

Source: Her Voice Cameroon fieldwork, 2025–2026.

7. DIGITALISATION AND VAW

KEY POINTS — DIGITALISATION AND VAW

- Digital connectivity is a double-edged sword: it enables both economic empowerment and new forms of technology-facilitated violence.
- Legal frameworks across all four countries lag behind digital realities, especially on non-consensual intimate images and sextortion.
- Enforcement — not law — is the binding constraint: digital forensic capacity is nearly absent outside a few urban centres.

The rapid expansion of mobile broadband and smartphone penetration across West and Central Africa has fundamentally altered the landscape of women's rights. While digitalisation offers unprecedented opportunities for economic independence and social mobilisation, it has concurrently spawned the 'dark side' of connectivity – known as technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). This digital violence mirrors, amplifies, and frequently acts as a precursor to physical violence. This section unpacks which apps and networks are most implicated, how harassment patterns differ by country and demographic, the legal and reporting landscape, the digital divide, and a cross-country typology guiding targeted interventions.

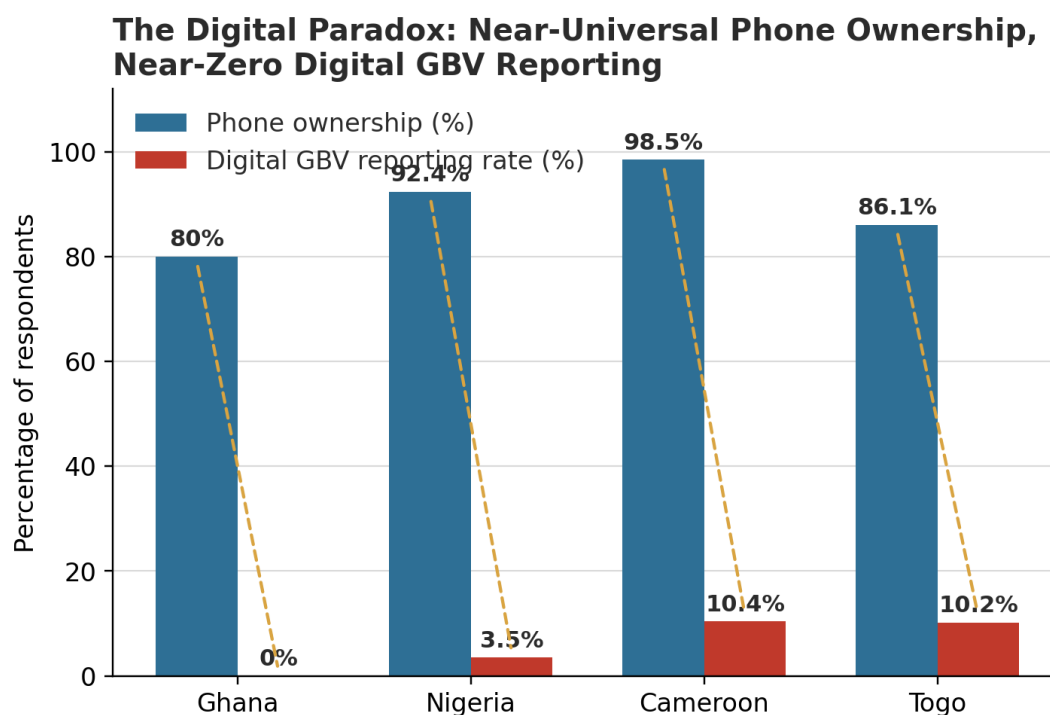


Figure 7.1: The digital paradox: near-universal phone ownership, near-zero digital GBV reporting.

Source: Her Voice household survey data, all four countries, 2025–2026.

7.1 Online Harassment and Cyberstalking

7.1.1 Platforms, Patterns, and Prevalence

Online harassment in the region is highly organised and frequently targets women who occupy public, political, or vocal civic roles. The platforms most implicated in TFGBV are Meta-owned properties (Facebook and WhatsApp) alongside X (formerly Twitter). WhatsApp, due to its ubiquity for both personal and commercial communication, is a major conduit for localised cyberstalking and the rapid dissemination of abusive content. Harassment patterns are heavily gendered: while men typically face political or professional insults online, women are overwhelmingly subjected to sexualised threats, body-shaming, and coordinated misogynistic attacks (UNFPA, 2021).

Her Voice fieldwork documented TFGBV at scale across all four countries. In Nigeria, over 70% of women in FGDs reported cyberstalking or persistent online monitoring by intimate partners or known men, with men in Ebonyi State explicitly framing digital surveillance as a marital right. In Cameroon, a systemic gendered digital perception gap emerged: women described digital harm as 'frequent and routine' while men minimised or denied its prevalence, a dynamic that directly impedes institutional recognition and response. Across West and Central Africa, Internet Sans Frontières (2019) estimates that 45% of women on social media have experienced some form of OGBV; a global survey including Nigeria and Ghana found that 58% of girls and young women had experienced online harassment (Plan International, 2023).

7.1.2 Impacts on Women's Freedom of Expression

The psychological toll of relentless digital harassment leads to a chilling effect on women's freedom of expression. Faced with sustained abuse, many women employ self-censorship or withdraw entirely from digital public spheres – a phenomenon Amnesty International (2018) identifies as a deliberate silencing tactic. For female journalists, politicians, and activists in Nigeria and Cameroon, this digital withdrawal severely curtails professional advancement and political participation, directly undermining democratic inclusivity. Research confirms that women are less comfortable expressing opinions online than men due to heightened safety fears (Stevens *et al.*, 2024). This chilling effect has direct implications for climate governance: women's digital exclusion from advocacy spaces reduces their ability to influence climate policy on issues where they are disproportionately impacted.

7.2 Revenge Porn and Non-Consensual Image Sharing

7.2.1 Incidence Rates and Reporting Barriers

The non-consensual sharing of intimate images (NCII) – often termed 'revenge porn' – represents one of the most devastating forms of TFGBV in the region due to severe offline social consequences. While exact incidence rates are obscured by chronic underreporting, NCII is weaponised primarily by ex-partners to exact revenge or extort victims (sextortion). The reporting barriers are immense: in conservative cultural contexts, stigma falls almost entirely on the female victim, leading to victim-blaming, family shunning, and heightened risk of honour-based or intimate partner physical violence. Consequently, women rarely report these crimes to authorities.

Her Voice fieldwork documented concrete NCII cases across all four study countries. In Lagos, a young woman attempted suicide after intimate images were leaked following a relationship breakdown – the most severe TFGBV consequence documented in the project. In Ebonyi State, a married woman's images shared non-consensually after an online relationship ended destroyed her marriage – the police response was victim-blaming and abandonment. In rural Upper East

Region Ghana, the 'Carlos case' documented NCII reaching a community previously assumed outside the digital harm landscape: 'Carlos slept with her and did video and post' – the communal response was mockery and shaming rather than justice. In Togo, the climate-displacement-sexortion nexus was directly observed: flood-displaced women who sought help online were targeted with requests for intimate images followed by blackmail.

7.2.2 Legal Frameworks and Enforcement Gaps

Regional legal frameworks are struggling to keep pace with digital realities. Nigeria's Cybercrimes Act 2015 criminalises cyberstalking, but specific NCII provisions are ambiguous or absent. Cameroon's 2010 Cybercrime Law provides some coverage but lacks a dedicated TFGBV framework; ANTIC and MINPROFF operate with divided mandates requiring coordination that in practice remains inconsistent. Ghana's Domestic Violence Act 732 does not address digital violence; DOVVSU's digital tools presuppose smartphone literacy absent in the highest-risk populations. Togo's 2018 Cybersecurity Law provides a framework but economic and psychological violence are not explicitly criminalised, and ANCy recorded zero official cyberbullying complaints despite documented prevalence (Paradigm Initiative, 2021)⁹.

Even where legal redress exists on paper, enforcement is abysmal. Law enforcement agencies across all four countries frequently lack digital forensic training and routinely dismiss TFGBV as trivial 'internet issues' or blame the victim for creating the content. Police in Ebonyi State were described as 'lacking functional computers' for digital evidence documentation. The combination of absent or ambiguous laws, enforcement failure, stigma, and institutional victim-blaming creates a near-total impunity environment for TFGBV perpetrators in all four countries.

Table 7.1: Legal Frameworks and Enforcement Gaps

Country	TFGBV Legal Framework	Key Gap	Enforcement Reality
Nigeria	Cybercrimes Act 2015 (cyberstalking, racist material); VAPP Act (stalking, harassment)	Ambiguous or absent NCII/sexortion-specific provisions	Police gender desks outside Lagos lack computers and forensic tools; Lagos DSVCMS = benchmark
Ghana	DV Act 732 (2007) — no digital provisions; no standalone TFGBV law	Digital violence entirely outside DV Act scope	DOVVSU app requires smartphone literacy absent in rural communities; rural forensic examination costs borne by survivors
Cameroon	2010 Cybercrime Law (some coverage); Penal Code assault provisions	No dedicated TFGBV framework; ANTIC and MINPROFF coordination failure	ALERT GBV platform non-integrated with police/justice; no digital forensics capacity in most police stations
Togo	2018 Cybersecurity Law (digital harm framework)	Psychological and economic violence not criminalised; no specific NCII provisions	ANCy: zero official cyberbullying complaints despite documented prevalence; institutional inaccessibility for rural/disabled women

⁹ Paradigm Initiative. (2021). Londa: Digital rights and inclusion in Africa report.

7.3 Internet Access: Empowerment versus Inequality

7.3.1 Digital Literacy Divides by Age, Location, and SES

The gender digital divide in sub-Saharan Africa remains one of the highest globally. The GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report (2025) documents that women in sub-Saharan Africa are approximately 30% less likely to own smartphones and 20% less likely to use mobile internet than men. Access is gated by socioeconomic status, age, and the rural-urban divide. Rural, older, and low-income women face compounding barriers: high cost of mobile data, lack of reliable electricity, and lower literacy rates. Device ownership is often male-controlled within households: women frequently rely on 'borrowed access' to a husband's or brother's or child's phone, eliminating digital privacy and exposing communications to surveillance and coercive control (World Wide Web Foundation, 2020).

Her Voice fieldwork confirmed and extended this picture. In Ghana's Upper East Region: 78.3% of respondents had low digital literacy and 0% of the rural sample had ever used digital GBV reporting tools. In Togo: 34% had zero digital skills (cannot receive calls, send SMS, or open menus without help) and 64% had Level 1 skills limited to basic call reception. In Cameroon: average digital literacy scored 2.51 out of 5. Nigeria, with the project's highest digital penetration (92.4% phone ownership), still had 54.6% of respondents not using the internet regularly. Ghana's regression (Model 4, $R^2=.627$) established a 'Null Factor': digital literacy has no independent effect on household wealth accumulation ($p=.378$) in climate-stressed rural communities – the barrier is structural poverty and climate vulnerability, not skills. This has profound implications for digital empowerment programmes.

7.3.2 Case Studies of Digital-Led Empowerment Initiatives

Despite these barriers, when access is secure and contextually appropriate, the empowerment potential is transformative. Mobile money platforms [e.g. MoMo (Ghana), Flutterwave, Opay, Moniepoint (Nigeria)] have enabled women to bypass traditional male-dominated banking structures, secure financial autonomy and business capital outside male household control. Agricultural information apps provided crop price data and weather updates to farming communities across all four countries. WhatsApp-based women's support groups and 'whisper networks' enabled anonymous sharing of information about abusers, resources for navigating GBV, and collective civic action outside the purview of community gatekeepers.

Institutional digital tools also showed genuine promise where designed appropriately: the Lagos DSVCMS was consistently identified as a national benchmark enabling survivors to self-report and document digital evidence. DOVVSU Ghana's hotline reporting channel provided accessible support for women in peri-urban Accra. In Cameroon, the ALERT GBV platform enhanced confidentiality and accessibility for young and urban survivors. These positive examples confirm that digital empowerment (when designed to address power dynamics, safety, and accessibility for the highest-risk populations) can be genuinely protective and scalable.

7.4 Cross-Country Comparisons and Emerging Typologies

To guide targeted interventions, the Her Voice data enable a typology mapping of how different socio-political environments influence digital VAW and empowerment potential across the region. Four distinct typologies are identified.

Table 7.2: Digitalisation - Cross-country Comparisons and Emerging Typologies

Typology	Country/Context Example	Characteristics	Recommended Intervention Strategy
High-Harassment / High-Access	Urban hubs: Lagos (Nigeria), Douala (Cameroon), Accra (Ghana), Lomé (Togo)	High smartphone penetration; coordinated online abuse against visible women; sextortion and NCII documented; weak law enforcement response	Digital security training for women's organisations; specialised cyber-GBV police units with digital forensics; platform accountability lobbying; explicit legal reform criminalising sextortion and NCII
Low-Access / High-Surveillance	Rural and agrarian communities: Upper East Ghana, Northern Nigeria, North Cameroon, Rural Togo	'Borrowed' device access; high domestic surveillance by male relatives; 0% digital GBV reporting use; digital illiteracy; 'Backlash Effect' documented	Voice-based IVR toll-free reporting in local languages; offline digital literacy via community radio; distribute low-cost, private devices to women's collectives; engage men and boys on digital rights and boundaries
Backlash-Risk / Transitional	Peri-urban and semi-rural settings with growing mobile penetration but entrenched patriarchal norms	Phone ownership triggers retaliatory violence; phone confiscation documented; digital independence experienced as threat to patriarchal authority	Backlash-Aware programme design: pair digital access with men's engagement and legal property rights to devices; household-level negotiation protocols before digital tool distribution
Empowerment Hotspots	Tech incubators, civil society coalitions, educated urban women	High digital literacy; active e-commerce and mobile money use; peer-to-peer support networks; digital climate justice advocacy	Scale funding for women-led digital enterprises; integrate GBV reporting into mobile money/e-commerce platforms; connect digital whisper networks with formal CSO referral pathways

SECTION 8

Intersectional and Disaggregated Analysis

8. INTERSECTIONAL AND DISAGGREGATED ANALYSIS

KEY POINTS — INTERSECTIONAL AND DISAGGREGATED ANALYSIS

- Risk is not evenly distributed: age, geography, socioeconomic status and marginalisation status compound vulnerability differently for climate versus digital harms.
- The urban–rural risk pattern reverses depending on the type of violence — a critical finding for targeting interventions.
- Women aged 50+ are structurally invisible in national data systems, which typically stop surveying at age 49.

This section reveals who is most at risk by slicing the Her Voice data across multiple social axes. Rather than treating women as a homogenous category, it uncovers which sub-populations bear the heaviest burdens of violence in the context of climate shocks and digital change, drawing on quantitative survey data, regression analysis, FGD narratives, and KII expert perspectives from all four study countries. By layering age, geography, socioeconomic status, and marginalisation status, the analysis identifies where compound vulnerability is most acute and where interventions must be most precisely targeted.

8.1 Age Cohorts: Youth, Middle-Aged, and Elderly

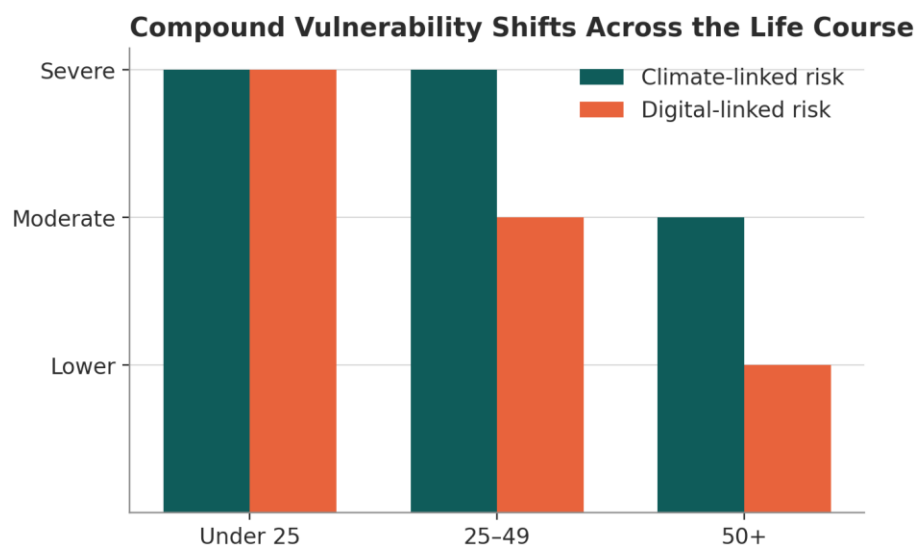


Figure 8.1: Compound vulnerability shifts across the life course.

8.1.1 Adolescence and Young Women (Under 25)

Young women and adolescent girls face a specific and acute vulnerability profile at the intersection of climate stress and digital expansion. The primary climate-linked threat for this age cohort is child marriage as a coping mechanism: documented in all four study countries, adolescent girls from climate-stressed households are married off when crop failures reduce household resources, ending their education and dramatically increasing their lifetime exposure to IPV and reproductive violence. In Nigeria (Taraba, Ebonyi), the sequence was described directly in FGDs: family economic crisis → reduction of household members → expedited marriage of daughters for brideprice. Girls as young as 12–14 were referenced in these accounts.

The primary digital threat for this cohort is NCII and sextortion. Young women aged 18–30 were the dominant victim group in documented NCII cases across all four countries (Lagos suicide attempt; Ebonyi marital destruction; Togo climate-sextortion nexus; Upper East Ghana 'Carlos case'). Their higher digital engagement (including social media use and romantic digital communication) makes them both more accessible as NCII targets and more isolated when harms occur, as stigma and family shame responses often preclude disclosure. Togo's fieldwork specifically identified porno-disclosure targeting as concentrated in the 18–30 age band.

At the empowerment end, young women with digital literacy were the primary beneficiaries of mobile money, e-commerce, and digital support networks – confirming that age is a double-edged axis: the same digital connectivity that enables exploitation when unsupported can enable economic independence when contextually appropriate tools and safety are in place.

8.1.2 Adult Women (25–49)

Women aged 25–49 represent the primary IPV risk cohort across all four study countries. This is consistent with global literature on intimate partner violence peaking in adult reproductive years. Climate stress compounds standard IPV risk for this cohort through the hunger-anger pathway: adult women who are household managers and primary food procurers are directly implicated in the 'empty pot' flashpoint, bearing the visible face of food insecurity even when its structural cause is climate-driven crop failure. Ghana's fieldwork documented this with particular clarity: 88% of households in the Upper East Region reported increased violence during food shortages, and the primary perpetrator-victim dynamic mapped onto adult partnered women.

The Backlash Effect documented in Ghana's regression is most acute for adult women in this cohort: phone ownership increasing violence risk ($B=0.362$, $p=.005$) in patriarchal households under economic stress. Adult women who acquire digital independence, through phone ownership, mobile money accounts, or WhatsApp network membership, face a specific risk of retaliatory controlling behaviour from male partners who perceive digital autonomy as a threat to household authority. This finding directly challenges programme assumptions that digital tools are inherently protective for women in all contexts.

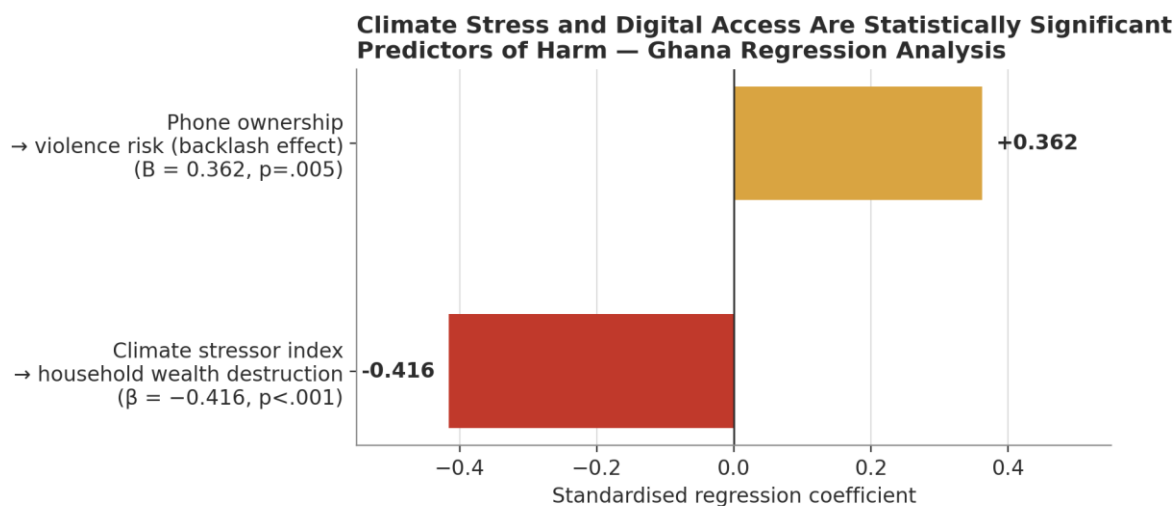


Figure 8.2: Climate stress and Digital access: Ghana Regression Analysis

8.1.3 Elderly Women (50+)

Ghana's study population had the highest elderly representation (mean age 50.3), making it the Her Voice project's primary lens into elderly women's compound vulnerability. Older women in climate-stressed areas represent a 'left-behind' population: too old to migrate, with lower mobility and physical capacity to endure extreme heat, and with no digital tools or literacy to access remote services or support networks. Their invisibility in data systems compounds their vulnerability – DHS surveys typically focus on women aged 15-49, entirely excluding this age band from national VAWG surveillance. The Her Voice Upper East Ghana sample is therefore among the few quantitative datasets capturing this population.

In Togo and Nigeria, older women, particularly widows, face compound victimisation risks linking climate and cultural violence: witchcraft accusations, asset seizure, and social ostracisation following climate disasters. These harms are simultaneously physical (eviction, assault), economic (asset stripping), and social (community exclusion). They fall outside the framing of most GBV services, which centre on intimate partner violence, and therefore receive no institutional response.

8.2 Urban versus Rural Dynamics

A central and counterintuitive finding of the Her Voice project is that the urban-rural vulnerability distinction operates differently for climate versus digital risks; and in some cases is entirely reversed from conventional assumptions.

8.2.1 The Urban Vulnerability Paradox

Cameroon's fieldwork produced the project's most unexpected quantitative finding: urban households exhibited statistically higher cumulative climate stress scores than rural ones. In Buea Town, Bonaberi, and Bois de Senche – flood-prone informal settlements and peri-urban areas – recurrent flooding from inadequate drainage infrastructure has become a normalised annual condition. Urban residents do not have the land, kinship networks, or traditional coping mechanisms available to rural households; when floods come, urban women's coping resources are often more limited, not less. Cameroon's 75% of households experiencing two or more simultaneous climate shocks included disproportionately urban respondents.

This finding has profound implications for climate adaptation policy: directing all climate resilience investment to rural areas, while ignoring climate-vulnerable urban informal settlements, misses the populations experiencing the most acute compound stress. Urban VAWG data also systematically underrepresent informal settlement populations, meaning the urban vulnerability paradox is likely invisible in national statistics.

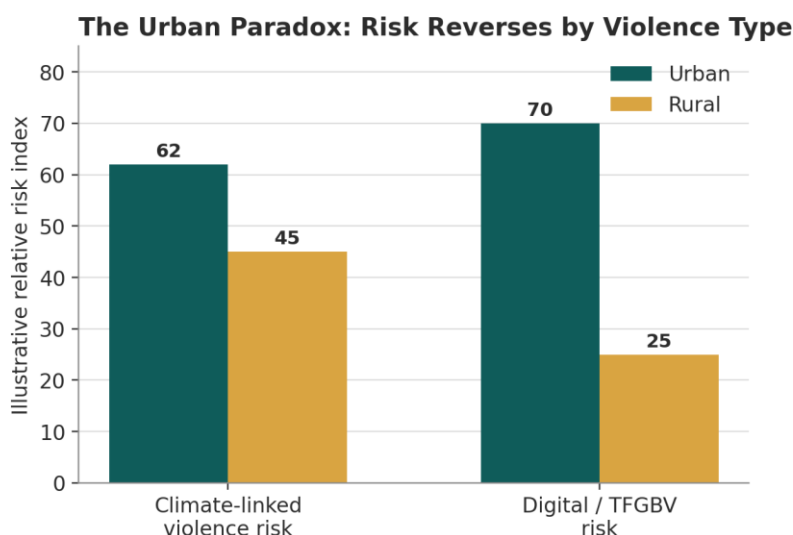


Figure 8.3: The urban paradox: risk reverses by violence type.

8.2.2 Rural Absolute Deprivation

While urban vulnerability is higher than assumed, rural vulnerability is different in character. It is marked by absolute deprivation of services, digital access, and economic safety nets. Ghana's Upper East Region study communities represent the most extreme case: 0% digital GBV reporting tool use; 0% access to formal One-Stop Centre services (DOVVSU operates only in Accra); justice commodification (forensic examinations paid for by survivors); and judicial abandonment ('things are outside' – domestic violence reported to traditional leaders resolved by expelling the female victim). Rural women in this study face violence without any functional institutional response – police, court, health, or digital.

The 'justice vacuum' documented in Ghana's rural communities is replicated across rural study sites in all four countries: police stations distant and unwilling to respond; courts requiring transport and documentation costs far exceeding household income; medical services absent or requiring payment; and digital reporting tools designed for smartphones and literacy levels low in these populations. For rural women, existing GBV systems are systemically inaccessible; they exist on paper but function only in cities.

8.3 Socioeconomic Strata and Education Levels

Ghana's regression analysis (four SPSS models) provides the project's most rigorous quantitative evidence on the intersection of socioeconomic status, climate, and violence risk. The findings challenge several standard programme assumptions.

The Economic Paradox: cash income is protective against violence (households with cash income show lower violence rates), but asset ownership (particularly livestock and land) is associated

with higher violence in climate-stressed contexts. When climate shocks destroy asset value or create competition over remaining productive resources, asset ownership becomes a trigger for conflict rather than a buffer. This Economic Paradox means that standard asset-building programmes (e.g. livestock distribution, land title registration, etc.) may inadvertently increase short-term violence risk for women in communities where male authority over productive assets is contested and climate stress is acute.

The Null Factor: Ghana's regression confirmed that digital literacy has no statistically significant independent effect on household wealth accumulation ($p=.378$) in climate-stressed rural communities. The structural barriers (poverty, drought, lack of infrastructure) dwarf any productivity gains from digital skill. This finding directly challenges the widespread assumption that digital literacy training is an effective poverty-reduction intervention for the most climate-exposed communities. Digital literacy matters at the margin; climate vulnerability is the primary determinant.

Violence traverses all wealth tertiles in the Her Voice study communities: neither middle nor higher wealth was consistently protective across the four countries. Economic precarity drives violence at the lowest quintiles (Ghana hunger-anger pathway), economic competition drives backlash violence at middle quintiles (Backlash Effect), and economic stress following climate-induced asset loss drives violence even in previously stable households (Cameroon displacement data). Education also does not protect in contexts of acute climate stress: Cameroon and Ghana FGDs documented educated women facing violence as climate shocks eroded the economic basis of their households.

8.4 Minority and Marginalised Groups

8.4.1 Women with Disabilities

Togo's fieldwork produced the project's most detailed documentation of disability as a compound vulnerability axis. Women with disabilities face triple risk at the climate-digital-VAWG nexus: climate events disproportionately endanger them (inability to evacuate quickly, physical inability to manage extreme heat or flooding, dependence on others for survival); they are disproportionately targeted for violence (elevated IPV within households, targeted digital harassment, social isolation and exclusion); and they are near-totally excluded from GBV services (no adapted shelter, no disability-inclusive emergency communication, no sign-language or accessible digital reporting tools, no capacity among service providers for disability-sensitive response). A disability organisation KII respondent described the situation thus: 'When there is a flood, many women with disabilities cannot move quickly. They depend on their loved ones who are not always present. Sometimes they get stuck in the houses, without help.' The Togo fieldwork also documented digital harassment specifically targeting women with disabilities through mockery and humiliation related to their condition.

8.4.2 Internally Displaced Women

Displacement is confirmed as the single most powerful individual-level violence risk amplifier in the Her Voice data. Cameroon's 25-percentage-point gap (displaced: 66.7% vs. non-displaced: 41.5%) is the starkest quantitative demonstration, but qualitative evidence from Nigeria's IDP camps in Taraba and Yobe States and Togo's flood-displacement contexts confirms the pattern across countries. Displaced women lose: land tenure (no longer able to refuse a perpetrator from 'her' household); economic autonomy (dependent on camp distribution or hosting families); community protection networks (traditional support structures absent in displacement settings); and digital connectivity (phones lost, damaged, or stolen during displacement). The climate-

displacement-digital exploitation nexus documented in Togo (flood-displaced women seek help on Facebook, are targeted by predatory men, fall into sextortion) confirms that displacement creates compound digital vulnerability, not only physical.

8.4.3 Rural Women Without Digital Access

Women without any meaningful digital access, constituting the majority in rural study communities across all four countries, represent a structurally invisible population in digital-era GBV systems. All four countries have invested in digital GBV reporting platforms (DSVCMS Lagos; DOVVSU hotline Ghana; ALERT GBV Cameroon; ANCy Togo) that presuppose smartphone ownership, internet connectivity, and literacy levels entirely absent in rural communities. This represents a structural contradiction: the populations most exposed to climate-linked VAWG are the least reachable by the digital infrastructure built ostensibly to protect them. Their invisibility is both practical (no access to tools) and statistical (no digital reporting data generated, therefore no evidence base for institutional response).

SECTION 9

Synthesis: Emerging Threats and Structural Violence

9. SYNTHESIS: EMERGING THREATS AND STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

KEY POINTS — SYNTHESIS

- Climate and digital drivers do not act in isolation — they compound pre-existing structural inequalities.
- Data systems and service provision across all four countries are not yet designed to capture these emerging, multi-dimensional harms.
- The evolving VAWG landscape increasingly features invisible and convergent harms that fall outside conventional GBV response models.

This section weaves together the climate and digital findings of the Her Voice project to reveal the systematic drivers of VAWG operating beneath the surface of individual incidents. It identifies how environmental stress and technology gaps co-produce compound risk; where laws, data systems, and service networks fail women facing new threats; and maps the evolving landscape of multi-dimensional VAWG in 2025-2026 West and Central Africa.

9.1 How Climate and Digital Drivers Compound Existing Inequalities

The Her Voice evidence confirms that climate change and digitalisation do not create violence from nothing; they operate through and upon pre-existing structural inequalities, amplifying vulnerabilities that were already present and generating new convergence harms at their intersection. Four compound mechanisms were identified across the four study countries.

9.1.1 Displacement and Digital Exploitation

Climate-induced displacement creates a predictable vulnerability sequence: women lose economic independence, social networks, and physical safety with displacement; their desperation drives digital help-seeking; digital help-seeking (in contexts of near-zero digital literacy and no digital safety infrastructure) exposes them to predatory exploitation through sextortion, romance fraud, and trafficking recruitment. This displacement-digital exploitation nexus was most clearly documented in Togo (Facebook sextortion post-flood), but the conditions for it exist wherever displacement meets low digital literacy and absent regulation – i.e., across all four study countries.

9.1.2 Empowerment and Backlash

Digital empowerment – mobile money, phone ownership, social media engagement – that is not accompanied by safety infrastructure and men's engagement generates a predictable backlash effect in patriarchal households under economic stress. Ghana's regression ($B=0.362$, $p=.005$)

quantifies this mechanism: digital independence perceived as a threat to male authority triggers retaliatory controlling violence. This compound mechanism (empowerment generating violence) is most acute where digital access is recent and partial, household economic stress is high (typically climate-driven), and men's engagement with digital rights and gender norms has not occurred. Its implication is that standalone digital access programmes, designed to empower, may inadvertently increase violence risk in the highest-risk communities.

9.1.3 Food Insecurity and Digital Inaccessibility

The Ghana Null Factor (digital literacy β not significant, $p=.378$, when climate vulnerability is controlled) reveals a structural interaction: climate-driven poverty and food insecurity are so dominant as determinants of household welfare that digital literacy (a resource that might be protective in lower-stress contexts) cannot generate meaningful economic change in communities where drought destroys the agricultural basis of any productive activity. Digital inaccessibility thus compounds food insecurity not only by excluding women from digital safety tools but also by preventing them from accessing agricultural information, market price data, early warning systems, and mobile finance that might attenuate the livelihood collapse driving violence. The two deprivations, climate and digital, reinforce each other.

9.1.4 Climate Stress and the Economic Paradox

Ghana's Economic Paradox (cash income protective, asset ownership risk-increasing under climate stress) reveals that standard development responses (i.e. asset distribution, livelihood diversification, and microfinance) operate on different risk calculi in climate-stressed communities than in stable ones. When climate shocks destroy asset value and create competition for remaining productive resources, new asset endowments without contextual economic security generate conflict rather than reducing it. This paradox is a warning signal for climate adaptation and gender programming. So, every economic intervention must be evaluated not only for its livelihood impact but for its potential to shift household power dynamics in ways that trigger retaliatory violence.

9.2 Systemic Discrimination in Data Collection and Service Provision

The Her Voice evidence reveals that the institutional systems nominally designed to protect women from violence are themselves structured in ways that exclude the populations most at risk, constituting a form of systemic discrimination embedded in data and service architecture.

9.2.1 Data System Failures

The Federal Inspire GBV data management system in Nigeria is non-functional. Togo's GF2D Listening Centres (the most trusted GBV institution in the country) have no category for digital violence, rendering TFGBV statistically invisible in the most used data system. Ghana's DOVVSU collects GBV data nationally; however, there is near-zero recording of certain high-prevalence offences among others (obsolete and stigmatising legal terminology – “carnal knowledge of a female idiot”; classification overlap creating double-counting risk; catastrophic error in the “total case” column; extreme geographic concentration suggesting coverage gaps; and selective regional zeros on key categories in patterns that are difficult to explain by genuine absence). For instance, three offences that are known to be prevalent in Ghana (particularly in the northern regions) are recorded at implausibly low national level: only 1 FGM case was recorded nationally in Western Central Region, with zero cases in Upper East/West where FGM is known to be practiced; only 5 child marriages were recorded nationally, but zero in all northern regions where rates are highest; and only 15 sexual harassment cases were recorded nationally with zero in

Greater Accra which is the highest digital and workplace harassment context. These figures do not reflect true prevalence, but rather reflect either non-criminalisation in practice, victim reluctance to report to the police, or failure to record specific categories. Either way, the data system is producing a picture that is the inverse of what the true field evidence shows.

Nigeria's DHS and other national surveys cover women aged 15-49, rendering Ghana's primary risk cohort (mean age 50.3) statistically invisible. Disability-disaggregated VAWG data exist in none of the four countries. Climate-linked VAWG data, identifying whether violence occurred in the context of a climate shock, displacement, or resource scarcity, exist in no national dataset. These are not technical gaps; they represent structural choices that make the most vulnerable populations invisible to the data systems that determine institutional responses.

9.2.2 Service Provision Handicaps

DOVVSU One-Stop Centre services in Ghana are physically accessible only in Accra, leaving the entire rural population and 15 of 16 administrative regions without specialist GBV services. Ghana's DV Act mandates a Domestic Violence Fund that has never been established despite a 2017 Supreme Court ruling. Nigeria's VAPP Act is domesticated in 35 states but police gender desks outside Lagos lack computers and forensic capability. Cameroon's ALERT GBV platform accepts reports but has no integration with police, health, or justice response – a reporting tool with no operational consequence. Justice commodification is systemic: forensic medical examination costs borne by survivors in Ghana, and transport and documentation costs for court access across all four countries. The result is that formal justice and protection systems function primarily for urban, educated, relatively financially resourced women and excluding precisely the most climate-exposed, most digitally vulnerable, and most economically marginalised communities.

9.2.3 Justice Commodification

'Your things are outside' – the phrase used by a Ghana FGD participant to describe the community response to a woman who reported domestic violence to the chief palace – captures justice commodification in its starkest form: the woman who sought justice was expelled from her own home, her possessions placed outside as notification that she was no longer welcome. Across all four countries, justice-seeking is economically, physically, and socially risky for the women most at risk: reporting violence to police risks arrest for 'domestic matters'; reporting to traditional leaders risks expulsion or community ostracisation; and reporting to civil society organisations requires knowing they exist, being able to travel to them, and trusting they will not inform family or community gatekeepers. For the majority of women in the Her Voice study communities, formal and informal justice systems are simultaneously inaccessible and hostile.

9.3 Mapping the Evolving Landscape of Multi-Dimensional VAWG

The Her Voice evidence enables a mapping of how VAWG is changing in the region – the new forms emerging, the populations newly at risk, and the structural conditions producing novel convergences between climate, digital, and traditional violence pathways.

9.3.1 Compound Vulnerability Architecture

The most significant finding of the synthesis is the emergence of what the Her Voice team terms the compound vulnerability architecture: situations where multiple risk factors from different domains (e.g. climate stress, digital exclusion, displacement, poverty, disability, age) converge on single individuals or households, generating violence risks that are qualitatively different from and quantitatively greater than any single risk factor alone. The flood-displaced elderly woman

with a disability in Togo who cannot evacuate, has zero digital skills, and lives in a community where the only GBV institution she trusts (GF2D) lacks capacity for disability-inclusive response represents not an extreme edge case but a common profile, statistically predictable from the Her Voice data. Current programming, designed around single-axis risk (women in general, IPV survivors, digital harassment victims), cannot identify or reach this population.

9.3.2 Invisible Forms Now Dominant

Emotional, psychological, economic, and digital violence now appear to be numerically dominant forms of VAWG in the Her Voice study populations; yet they are the forms least captured in national data, least recognised in legal frameworks (particularly in Togo and Cameroon), and least addressed in institutional responses. Nigeria's survey found emotional abuse (40.1%) and economic abuse (24.8%) far exceeding physical IPV (15.3%) as the most prevalent reported forms. Ghana's community voices were largely unable to distinguish physical from economic violence: 'if there is no food, that is also a kind of beating.' The invisibility of these forms in data systems means they do not generate institutional responses, allowing them to persist unchallenged and escalate to physical violence without early intervention.

9.3.3 New Convergence Harms

The climate-digitalisation intersection is generating novel convergence harms not yet captured in any legal framework or data system in the region. Three new harm types are documented in the Her Voice evidence: (1) Climate-sextortion: perpetrators specifically targeting flood- or drought-displaced women through digital platforms, exploiting their desperation for relief assistance as leverage for sextortion – documented directly in Togo and referenced as a growing pattern in Nigeria. (2) Digital surveillance as climate coping control: as climate stress increases male provider-role anxiety, phone confiscation, location monitoring, and communication surveillance are being used as tools of economic control – preventing women from accessing mobile money, digital employment opportunities, or support networks that might reduce their dependence on controlling partners. (3) Institutional data violence: the systematic absence of rural, elderly, disabled, and displaced women from GBV data systems – a structural form of violence that renders them ineligible for institutional protection by making them statistically invisible.

SECTION 10

Policy and Programming Recommendations

10. POLICY AND PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY POINTS — POLICY AND PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Six cross-cutting recommendations span climate-responsive prevention, digital safety, data systems, and capacity-building.
- Country-specific priority actions are matched to each country's actual legal and institutional starting point.
- ECOWAS and ECCAS have a clear, actionable role in regional harmonisation and accountability.

This section translates the Her Voice evidence into action blueprints for governments, regional bodies (ECOWAS/ECCAS), civil society organisations, donors, and programme partners. Each recommendation is anchored in specific empirical findings and paired with a problem statement and context-sensitive solution(s). Recommendations are organised across five thematic clusters, followed by country-specific and regional policy pathways.

10.1 Climate-Responsive VAW Prevention Interventions

Problem: Climate shocks (drought, flooding, resource scarcity) are confirmed primary predictors of violence against women in all four study countries, yet VAWG prevention is entirely absent from all four countries' National Adaptation Plans, NDCs, and disaster response frameworks. Women facing climate-induced displacement, food insecurity, and livelihood collapse have no early warning system linked to VAWG risk, and no climate-sensitive service pathway.

1. Integrate VAWG prevention explicitly into National Adaptation Plans, NDCs, and DRR frameworks in Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and Togo – requiring that all climate response plans include a gender-based violence risk assessment and prevention component. Model language: 'All climate displacement protocols shall include GBV risk mapping, safe accommodation standards for women and girls, and referral pathways to specialist GBV services.'
2. Establish seasonal VAWG alert protocols linked to climate calendars: triggers such as flooding onset, drought declaration, or food insecurity threshold should automatically activate expanded GBV outreach, hotline capacity, and emergency shelter provision; not only humanitarian food and water distribution.
3. Deploy anticipatory cash transfer programmes for women in climate-affected households specifically designed with built-in safeguards against the Economic Paradox: pair transfers with community-level male engagement sessions, legal property rights information, and

referral to GBV services. Do not implement asset-distribution programmes in climate-stressed communities without parallel safety preparation.

4. Train local DRR committees, community health workers, and traditional leaders in the systematic integration of GBV prevention into disaster management plans – prioritising identification of women with disabilities, pregnant women, and elderly women as highest-priority evacuation and protection populations.
5. Fund longitudinal research establishing quantitative linkages between specific climate events and VAWG incidence in each country, to build an evidence base for climate-VAWG policy investment. Her Voice has established the correlation; causation and response modelling now require investment.

10.2 Digital Safety and Cyber-Protection Measures

Problem: TFGBV (sextortion, NCII, cyberstalking, digital surveillance) is documented at scale across all four countries. Legal frameworks are incomplete or entirely absent for specific digital harm forms. Enforcement is near-zero. Existing digital reporting tools presuppose smartphone literacy and connectivity absent in the highest-risk populations. The Backlash Effect confirms that digital empowerment without safety infrastructure can increase violence risk.

1. Enact dedicated TFGBV legal provisions in Cameroon and Togo – explicitly criminalising sextortion, NCII/revenge porn, digital coercion, and online intimate partner surveillance with survivor-centred evidence standards that do not require survivors to pay for forensic evidence. In Nigeria, operationalise NCII-specific enforcement protocols. In Ghana, extend the DV Act 732 to cover technology-facilitated forms.
2. Shift digital GBV reporting tools from smartphone/literacy-dependent formats to voice-based IVR (Interactive Voice Response) systems and toll-free SMS in local languages – the only formats accessible to the majority of high-risk populations. Pilot and evaluate voice-based GBV reporting in rural communities in Upper East Ghana and Savanes Region in Togo as priority contexts.
3. Build dedicated TFGBV investigation capacity in national police forces: establish specialist cybercrime-GBV units with digital forensics capability, trauma-informed training, and direct integration with GBV service referral pathways. At minimum, equip all VAPP police gender desks outside Lagos with basic digital forensics tools.
4. Redesign digital empowerment programmes for climate-stressed, patriarchal communities to be Backlash-Aware: (a) conduct household-level negotiation sessions with both women and male partners before distributing digital tools; (b) establish community-level agreements on women's rights to own and use personal devices; (c) provide simultaneous digital safety training to male household members. Standalone women-only digital literacy programmes in these contexts may be net harmful without this preparation.
5. Establish platform accountability mechanisms requiring Meta (WhatsApp, Facebook), X, and TikTok to respond to government and CSO escalation of TFGBV cases within defined timeframes; and to provide localised digital safety resources in all languages covered by Her Voice study communities.

10.3 Strengthening Data Systems to Capture Emerging Issues

Problem: Systemic data failures render the most vulnerable populations invisible: Inspire Nigeria non-functional; Ghana DHS excludes women 50+; no country records digital violence as a standalone category; no country disaggregates VAWG data by disability status; no country includes climate-event context in VAWG records. These are structural choices producing structural invisibility.

1. Establish interoperable national GBV case management systems in all four countries – functionally operational (not dormant like Inspire Nigeria), with mandatory digital violence as a recorded incident category alongside physical and sexual violence, mandatory disability disaggregation, and mandatory climate-event-context field.
2. Extend national DHS and household survey VAWG modules to include: women aged 50+ (currently excluded in Ghana); climate-event exposure as a VAWG contextual variable; digital violence incident types with platform identification; disability status of respondents. These are technical feasibility adjustments requiring no new survey infrastructure – only political will.
3. Support Women’s Rights and Civil Society Organisations (WROs/CSOs) like GF2D Togo, DOVVSU Ghana, ALERT GBV Cameroon, WACOL Nigeria, and other relevant organisations to develop standardised TFGBV intake forms and case management protocols that can aggregate into regional prevalence estimates, thereby enabling ECOWAS and ECCAS dashboards to reflect digital violence for the first time.
4. Conduct an audit of all four countries’ national GBV data systems against a disability-inclusive data standard, and fund the technical upgrades needed to include disability-disaggregated VAW data collection. This is a minimum requirement to fulfil CRPD obligations currently unmet across all four countries.

10.4 Capacity-Building Frameworks for Local Actors

Problem: Civil society organisations are the most trusted and accessible GBV service providers in all four countries (e.g. GF2D Togo, WACOL Nigeria and its coalition-networks, FIDA Ghana, ALVF Cameroon), yet they operate on short-term project grants, lack standardised TFGBV response protocols, and have no sustained capacity building on climate-VAWG integration. Their potential is structurally constrained by donor dependency and under-investment.

1. Establish multi-year, flexible funding mechanisms for civil society organisations delivering frontline GBV services – minimum three-year grants with core operational support, reducing chronic project-to-project uncertainty. Donors should treat GF2D, WACOL, and equivalent CSOs as sustained public service delivery partners rather than discretionary NGO grantees.
2. Develop and deliver a standardised regional capacity-building curriculum for CSO frontline workers on: (a) TFGBV recognition, intake, documentation, and referral; (b) climate-VAWG risk identification and seasonal preparedness; (c) disability-inclusive service delivery; (d) trauma-informed engagement with displaced women. Partner WACOL/WAWORC, UN Women, and ECOWAS for regional roll-out.

3. Train police, prosecutors, magistrates, and health workers in all four countries as continuous, systematised programmes rather than ad hoc workshops – including digital evidence handling, TFGBV recognition, climate-context violence patterns, and disability-sensitive engagement.
4. Invest in inter-country knowledge exchange between Her Voice study communities and CSOs, codifying indigenous community innovations in violence prevention, resilience-building, and climate-coping strategies. Organise annual practitioner exchanges between GF2D Togo, DOVVSU Ghana, ALERT GBV Cameroon, WACOL Nigeria, and others.
5. Support and institutionalise community-based approaches to VAWG prevention that engage traditional and religious leaders, recognising their authority as both a challenge and a resource for norm change. The Notsè Declaration process in Togo (CSO-traditional leader collaboration reducing FGM and early marriage) is a documented model for replication.

10.5 Country-Specific and Regional Policy Pathways

10.5.1 Country-Specific Priority Actions

Table 10.1: Country Specific Priority Actions (Legal Reforms, Programme Investment & Data Action)

Country	Priority Legal Reform	Priority Programme Investment	Priority Data Action
Nigeria	Activate NCII-specific enforcement protocols under Cybercrimes Act 2015; mandate VAPP full domestication in remaining state; make Inspire GBV system operational with mandatory TFGBV and climate-context fields	Replicate Lagos DSVCMS in 5 additional states by 2027; integrate climate-seasonal VAWG alerts into Northern States DRR plans; scale backlash-aware digital empowerment in rural Yobe and Taraba	Fund and activate Inspire system; mandate climate-event field in all VAWG records; extend DHS to women 50+
Ghana	Establish the DV Fund mandated by the 2017 Supreme Court ruling; extend DV Act 732 to cover digital violence forms; establish legal right of women to own personal devices without spousal consent	Expand DOVVSU One-Stop Centre services from Accra to at least three regional capitals; develop and pilot voice-based IVR GBV reporting in Upper East Region; integrate backlash-aware digital training into LEAP social protection programme	Include 50+ cohort in DHS VAWG module; add digital violence intake category to DOVVSU records; fund Upper East climate-VAWG longitudinal study
Cameroon	Enact dedicated national VAWG law (currently absent); adopt explicit TFGBV provisions in cybercrime legislation; integrate MINPROFF GBV mandate into NAP	Integrate ALERT GBV with police and justice referral so reports generate operational responses; develop climate-displacement VAWG protocols for Far North and Anglophone crisis communities; address urban	Establish national VAW case management system integrating ALERT GBV data; mandate disability disaggregation; include TFGBV as a recorded incident type in national police statistics

Country	Priority Legal Reform	Priority Programme Investment	Priority Data Action
	implementation with dedicated budget	informal settlement climate vulnerability	
Togo	Adopt standalone VAW law explicitly criminalising psychological and economic violence; add explicit NCII/sextortion provisions to 2018 Cybersecurity Law	Scale GF2D Listening Centres to all 6 regions with digital violence intake capacity; develop disability-inclusive emergency communication protocols; invest in community radio digital safety education	Fund GF2D to develop standardised TFGBV intake forms; conduct national survey including women 50+ and disability-disaggregated VAWG questions; link ANCy to GBV service referral so digital complaints generate safety responses

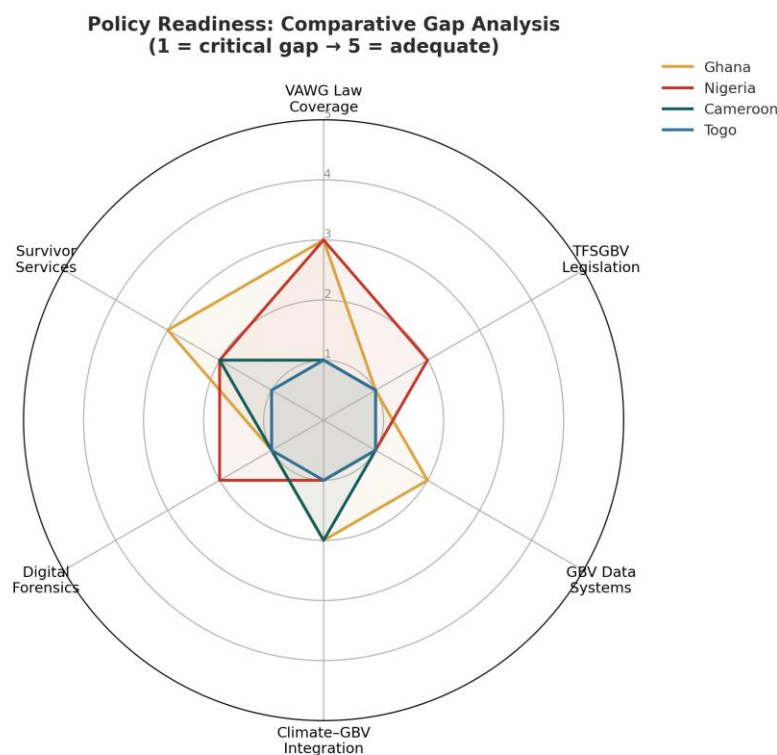
10.5.2 Regional Policy Pathways — ECOWAS and ECCAS

The Her Voice evidence provides a strong empirical foundation for regional policy action through ECOWAS and ECCAS – the two regional bodies with normative and convening authority over all four study countries.

1. ECOWAS should operationalise its Gender and DRR Strategy (2020–2030) with a dedicated climate-VAWG prevention protocol – requiring all member states to include GBV risk assessments and prevention components in climate emergency declarations, and reporting to the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre annually.
2. ECOWAS and ECCAS should jointly adopt a TFGBV regional standard framework, harmonising NCII criminalisation, sextortion prosecution standards, digital evidence admission rules, and survivor-centred response protocols across the sub-region in order to reduce perpetrator impunity from jurisdictional arbitrage.
3. Commission a joint ECOWAS-ECCAS regional VAWG data architecture review, identifying minimum required data disaggregation standards (digital violence, disability, climate-context, age 50+) and funding the national-level technical upgrades needed to achieve them within a three-year implementation plan.
4. ECOWAS should leverage AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG, 2025) ratification momentum to establish a regional accountability mechanism tracking legal reform progress on TFGBV, climate-VAWG integration, and data system strengthening across member states.

10.6 Intervention Readiness and Lead-Actor Recommendations

Complementary analysis prepared for coalition-building and policy-influencing scored each country's intervention readiness across six policy dimensions, on a scale from 1 (critical gap) to 5 (adequate). No country scores above 3 on any dimension; TFSGBV legislation and digital forensics capacity are the most critical gaps across all four countries.



Illustrative reconstruction based on Her Voice country policy-gap findings. No country scores above 3 on any dimension; TFSGBV legislation and digital forensics are the most critical gaps in all four countries.

Figure 10.1: Policy Readiness: A Comparative Gap Analysis

Building on the country-specific priorities in Section 10.5, the following eleven recommendations translate the evidence into action across four cross-cutting policy themes, each assigned to the lead actor(s) best positioned to deliver it. While addressed to a named lead actor, all eleven remain cross-cutting engagement points for WROs, CSOs and coalitions.

Table 10.2: Thematic Recommendations and The Lead Actors

#	Theme	Recommendation	Lead Actor(s)
1	Climate–VAWG	Integrate explicit GBV risk assessments, safe accommodation standards, and survivor referral pathways into all NAPs, NDCs, and DRR frameworks.	Climate & Women's Affairs Ministries
2	Climate–VAWG	Establish seasonal VAWG alert protocols: flood onset and drought declarations automatically activate GBV outreach, hotline capacity, and emergency shelter.	NADMO / ANPC / DRR Committees
3	Climate–VAWG	Integrate GBV risk mapping into climate vulnerability assessments to identify high-risk communities before crises escalate.	Environment Ministries / Planners
4	Digital Safety	Cameroon and Togo: enact dedicated TFSGBV legislation. Nigeria: strengthen NCII enforcement. Ghana: update the DV Act to explicitly cover digital forms of abuse.	Parliaments / Justice Ministries
5	Digital Safety	Redesign GBV reporting tools to operate via voice IVR and toll-free SMS in local languages, removing smartphone and internet requirements.	ICT Regulators / CSOs

6	Digital Safety	Establish cybercrime–GBV police units with digital forensic capacity and trauma-informed training in all four countries.	National Police Services
7	Digital Safety	Require Meta, X and TikTok to respond to TFSGBV escalations within defined timeframes and provide safety resources in local languages.	ICT / Digital Governance Bodies
8	Data Systems	Establish interoperable national GBV case management systems with mandatory disaggregation by TFSGBV, disability status, and climate-event context.	All Governments / UN Women
9	Data Systems	Expand national surveys (DHS) to include women aged 50+, disability status, climate-event exposure, and digital violence categories.	National Statistics Offices
10	Social Protection	Deploy backlash-sensitive cash transfers: pair asset transfers with male engagement sessions, financial rights awareness, and GBV referral pathways.	Social Protection / Donors
11	Social Protection	Strengthen IDP protection: safe shelter design, secure food distribution, accessible GBV reporting, and targeted support for female-headed households.	Humanitarian / UNHCR / Governments

Who Does What — Call to Action

Governments and regional bodies: act on Recommendations 1–3 (climate integration) and 8–9 (data systems) immediately. Operationalise the Ghana DV Fund. Domesticating VAPP in all Nigerian states. Adopt the ECOWAS Gender and DRR Strategy with a specific climate–VAWG protocol and TFSGBV standard framework.

Coalitions and WROs working with donors and international partners: shift from project-cycle to multi-year institutional funding for anchor WROs (WACOL, GF2D, FIDA Ghana, REDHAC/Reach Out Cameroon). Co-invest in digital access and household safety simultaneously — the 0.04% climate-finance allocation for GBV prevention must be treated as a floor, not a ceiling.

WRO/CSO feminist purpose and community-embedding channels with academia, traditional leaders and media: use the Her Voice evidence base in Beijing+30 shadow reports, CEDAW submissions, AU ERAW Convention monitoring, and COP gender negotiations. Train traditional and religious leaders as survivor-centred first responders integrated into formal referral pathways, and provide digital safety resources in local languages.

SECTION 11

Advocacy Strategy and Communication Materials

11. ADVOCACY STRATEGY AND COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

KEY POINTS — ADVOCACY STRATEGY

- Key messages are tailored to three audiences: policymakers and government actors, donors and international partners, and communities and civil society.
- Advocacy materials translate quantitative findings into visual, shareable formats for regional policy dialogues.
- Media, digital engagement and community mobilisation tracks work together to sustain momentum after the project's formal end.

This section outlines how Her Voice will move hearts and minds using its research, laying out the plan for the successful implementation of the remaining phases of the project. It covers key messages for different audiences, communication material prototypes, the media and digital campaign plan, and the metrics framework for tracking advocacy impact.

11.1 Key Messages for Policymakers, Donors, and Communities

Her Voice has generated a distinctive, evidence-based messaging architecture that can be adapted for different audiences and channels. The following key messages are grounded directly in primary fieldwork findings and are designed for use across all advocacy activities.

11.1.1 Key Messages for Policymakers and Government Actors

- **Climate response without gender is incomplete response:** Across Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and Togo, climate shocks are the primary driver of household wealth destruction (Ghana regression: $\beta = -0.416$, $p < .001$) and the single strongest predictor of violence against women. National Adaptation Plans and NDCs that do not integrate explicit VAWG prevention measures are systematically under-serving the most affected populations.
- **Displacement is the highest-risk intervention point:** Displaced women in Cameroon experience violence at 66.7% vs. 41.5% for non-displaced – a 25-percentage-point gap. Disaster preparedness and humanitarian response frameworks must include VAWG prevention protocols, safe shelter standards, and GBV service continuity as non-negotiable components.
- **Legal frameworks are necessary but insufficient:** Cameroon and Togo lack standalone VAWG laws; Togo has no explicit criminalisation of economic or psychological violence. Nigeria and Ghana have landmark laws (VAPP, DV Act 732) but enforcement is

fundamentally broken. The priority is not more laws; it is funded, accessible, operational services that reach the most isolated populations.

- **Digital violence is not a future risk — it is a present epidemic:** TFGBV is documented across all four countries including in rural communities previously assumed outside digital harm landscapes. Specific NCII and sextortion legislation is absent or ambiguous in all four countries. Governments must act now before digital penetration outpaces protective frameworks further.
- **Institutional data systems are failing women facing emerging harms:** Nigeria's Inspire GBV system is non-functional; Togo's ANCy received zero official cyberbullying complaints despite documented prevalence; Ghana's DV Fund has never been established. Investing in interoperable, digitally accessible, disability-inclusive GBV data systems is a prerequisite for evidence-based response.

11.1.2 Key Messages for Donors and International Partners

- **Fund the civil society infrastructure — not just the projects:** GF2D Togo, Caritas Ghana, Reach Out Cameroon, WACOL Nigeria, and others are the trusted, first-response institutions for the highest-risk women. Their effectiveness depends on recurrent, predictable funding and not short project cycles. Donor architecture must shift from project funding to institutional capacity investment.
- **The digital paradox demands investment in access AND safety simultaneously:** Device ownership without digital literacy, privacy, and safety creates conditions for the Backlash Effect (Ghana: $B=0.362$, $p=.005$). Effective digital empowerment programmes require co-investment in the household-level safety conditions that make digital tools genuinely protective rather than exposing.
- **The convergence of climate and digital risk is the defining emerging VAWG challenge:** The climate-displacement-to-digital exploitation nexus documented in Togo is not an outlier; it is a model for what is coming as climate events intensify and digital penetration grows. Donor strategies for GBV prevention in West and Central Africa must be explicitly climate-literate and digitally aware.
- **Invest in disaggregated data:** Women with disabilities, displaced women, rural elderly women, and women in conflict-affected settings are structurally invisible in current VAWG data systems. Only when data captures these populations can programmes reach them.

11.1.3 Key Messages for Communities and Civil Society

- **Violence is not inevitable when food runs out or floods come — and it is never acceptable:** The 'empty pot as flashpoint' cycle documented in Ghana and confirmed across all four countries is predictable and preventable. Communities can identify early warning signs and activate protection mechanisms before escalation occurs.
- **Digital tools can protect — but only if used safely:** Mobile money, digital support groups, and online reporting tools have demonstrably improved women's safety and economic autonomy. But borrowed device access, phone confiscation, and digital surveillance by partners are forms of abuse. Communities, schools, and women's organisations need digital rights literacy, not just digital skills training.
- **Women's voices in climate planning save lives:** Women who are part of early warning systems, disaster preparedness committees, and agricultural adaptation planning produce better outcomes for their communities. Excluding women from these spaces is not just discriminatory; it is operationally costly for climate resilience.

11.2 Communication Material Prototypes

Her Voice will produce a suite of advocacy materials grounded in the primary research findings, designed for different audiences, literacy levels, and media formats. The following prototypes are planned for production in the dissemination phase.

Table 11.1: Communication Material Prototypes

Material	Target Audience	Key Message / Content	Format / Channel	Production Timeline
The Climate-Violence Cycle Infographic	Policymakers, media, educated public	The six-step pathway from drought/flood → food insecurity → economic stress → household violence → impunity → compounding poverty	Full-colour, bilingual (English/French) A3 poster; social media tiles; slide deck	Q1 2026
The Digital Paradox Explainer	Donors, tech sector, civil society	How phone ownership without safety architecture increases violence risk; the Backlash Effect evidence	Illustrated two-pager; animated explainer video (2 min); LinkedIn infographic series	Q1 2026
Country Evidence Briefs (×4)	National policymakers, government ministries, ECOWAS/ECCAS desks	Country-specific findings, policy gaps, and top 5 recommendations for Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Togo	6-page formatted PDF brief per country; bilingual where applicable	Q2 2026
Survivor Voice Short Films (×4, anonymised)	Civil society, general public, advocacy campaigns	Anonymised animated or illustrated narratives — the Taraba IDP camp story, the Lomé sextortion nexus, the Ghana 'things are outside' justice vacuum, the Cameroon 'it is normal now' normalisation	3–5 minute animated/illustrated short films in local languages with subtitles; social media cuts	Q2 2026
Dashboard Prototype	UN Women, government data offices, researchers	Interactive visual dashboard of climate-VAWG correlation data; country comparison; disaggregated sub-group analysis	Web-hosted open-access dashboard with downloadable data tables	Q3 2026
Community Radio Script Pack	Rural communities, community leaders, women's groups	Plain-language explainers on climate rights, digital safety, VAWG services; call-to-action for listeners	8 × 15-minute radio drama scripts in 6 local languages; broadcast partner package	Q2 2026

Material	Target Audience	Key Message / Content	Format / Channel	Production Timeline
Policy Brief for ECOWAS/ECCAS	Regional bodies, member state delegations	Regional synthesis of cross-country findings; priority regional policy recommendations; ECOWAS Gender & DRR Strategy implementation gaps	8-page formatted PDF; bilingual; prepared for submission at next ECOWAS Gender Ministerial	Q2 2026

11.3 Media and Digital Campaign Plan

Her Voice's advocacy communication will be executed across three integrated campaign tracks: institutional advocacy, digital engagement, and community mobilisation. These tracks are designed to operate simultaneously and reinforce one another, creating a multi-directional evidence ecosystem that connects survivor voices to international policy spaces.

11.3.1 Institutional Advocacy Track

This track targets government ministries, ECOWAS and ECCAS gender committees, UN Women national offices, and donor delegations. The primary vehicles are: (1) stakeholder validation workshops in each country combining data presentation with policy dialogue – transforming respondents from research subjects into co-analysts of findings; (2) formal submission of country evidence briefs to national GBV coordination mechanisms and gender focal points in climate and digital governance ministries; (3) side events at ECOWAS summits and African Climate Week connecting Her Voice findings to regional climate-VAWG policy commitments.

11.3.2 Digital Engagement Track

This track uses X (Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to amplify research findings to regional and global audiences, with content packages adapted for different platforms and literacy levels. Core elements include: the #HerVoice campaign hashtag with consistent visual branding across all countries and partners; a weekly evidence thread series ('What the Data Says') sharing one finding per week with source citation and visual; survivor story amplification through partner organisations; real-time monitoring of engagement, reach, and sentiment with weekly review and adaptation. All digital content will be produced in both English and French and translated into at least one local language per country.

11.3.3 Community Mobilisation Track

Recognising that the highest-risk populations have the least access to digital channels, this track uses radio, community theatre, and women's group facilitation to bring Her Voice findings to rural and semi-urban communities. Elements include: broadcast of community radio drama scripts through partner stations in all four countries; facilitated community conversations using translated versions of the Country Evidence Briefs; training of community health workers, traditional birth attendants, and women's group leaders to use Her Voice data in their own advocacy; and establishment of feedback loops so that community reactions to findings can inform subsequent advocacy adaptation.

11.4 Metrics for Tracking Advocacy Impact

Measuring advocacy effectiveness requires tracking both reach and quality of engagement across different audiences and channels. The following metrics framework is organised around three outcome levels: awareness, engagement, and action.

Table 11.2: Advocacy Impact Tracking Metrics

Outcome Level	Metric	Measurement Method	Target (by Dec 2026)
Awareness	Number of policymakers directly reached through institutional advocacy events	Event registration records; follow-up surveys	200+ policymakers across 4 countries
Awareness	Number of community members engaged through radio and community events	Listener surveys; community attendance records	50,000+ community members
Awareness	Social media reach (impressions) of #HerVoice campaign content	Platform analytics	500,000+ impressions across all platforms
Engagement	Number of media articles, reports, or broadcasts citing Her Voice findings	Media monitoring service; partner reporting	50+ media citations in national and regional outlets
Engagement	Number of civil society organisations using Her Voice data in their own advocacy	Partner self-reporting; document review	30+ CSOs across 4 countries
Engagement	Stakeholder comprehension improvement (pre/post workshop assessment)	Paired pre/post survey at each workshop	≥30% improvement in comprehension scores
Action	Number of policy documents (NAPs, NDCs, GBV strategies) referencing Her Voice findings	Document review; government liaison	5+ policy documents at national or regional level
Action	Number of legal or institutional reforms initiated citing Her Voice evidence	Advocacy tracking log; partner reports	2+ reforms initiated (NCII legislation; DV Fund establishment)
Action	Proportion of target government actors who commit to specific follow-up actions	Commitment tracking form at each institutional event	≥50% of institutional event participants

SECTION 12

Conclusions and Next Steps

12. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

This section closes the loop on what Her Voice has learned and identifies where to go from here. It summarises the principal insights, articulates the study's research contributions, provides recommendations for future research, and sets out a roadmap for scaling and sustaining Her Voice outcomes.

12.1 Summary of Principal Insights

Her Voice set out to investigate the connection between climate change, digitalisation, and violence against women in West and Central Africa. The evidence generated (from 747 household surveys, 56+ FGDs, and 78+ KIIs across Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and Togo) is unambiguous: the forces of environmental stress and digital transformation are not peripheral to the VAWG crisis. They are now among its central structural drivers.

12.1.1 Climate Change Is a VAWG Multiplier — Documented, Quantified, and Actionable

Across all four countries, climate shocks systematically amplify pre-existing gender inequalities and produce direct, predictable surges in violence. Ghana's regression analysis, which is the most rigorous econometric evidence in the project, confirms climate stressors as the single largest predictor of both household wealth destruction ($\beta = -0.416$, $p < .001$) and violence escalation ($p = .011$). The 'empty pot as flashpoint' cycle is not a metaphor; it is a causal pathway confirmed by quantitative data, FGD testimony, and institutional KII evidence across all four countries. The 25-percentage-point displacement-violence gap in Cameroon (66.7% vs. 41.5%) provides the clearest individual-level evidence that displacement is the highest-risk transition point for VAWG, requiring immediate integration into disaster response protocols.

Child marriage as climate coping strategy, witchcraft accusations against elderly women during droughts, the targeting of displaced women in IDP camps, and the trafficking of young women along climate-migration corridors are not anecdotal phenomena. They are documented, recurring, and intensifying patterns that demand climate-responsive VAWG prevention as standard, not exceptional, programming.

12.1.2 Digitalisation Is a Double-Edged Sword — Simultaneously Empowering and Dangerous

The digital paradox revealed by Her Voice is both urgent and actionable. Phone ownership is near-universal across all four study countries (86–98%), but functional digital literacy ranges from critically low (Togo: 98% low or zero skills) to moderate. This creates populations simultaneously exposed to digital harms and excluded from digital protections – the worst of both worlds. TFGBV is not an emerging risk; it is a present, documented epidemic in all four countries, including in rural communities previously assumed outside the digital harm landscape.

The Backlash Effect identified in Ghana – phone ownership increasing violence risk ($B=0.362$, $p=.005$) in patriarchal households under economic stress – is the project's most counterintuitive and policy-critical finding. It demands a fundamental redesign of digital empowerment programmes. Providing devices and skills without simultaneously addressing household power dynamics and male attitudes towards women's digital independence may create harm. The 'digital paradox' must be understood not just as a gap in access but as a reflection of structural gender inequality that digital tools alone cannot resolve.

12.1.3 Structural Invisibility Is the Central Challenge

Across all four countries, a recurring pattern was documented: the women facing the highest compound risks are systematically invisible to data systems, institutional services, and policy responses. Women with disabilities in Togo face triple risk: disproportionate climate exposure, elevated VAWG, and near-total exclusion from GBV services. Left-behind older women in Ghana (mean age 50.3) are invisible to both climate adaptation planning and VAWG service mapping. Rural women without digital access cannot use the reporting tools designed for them. Displaced women in IDP settings are undercounted because they are unreachable.

This structural invisibility is itself a form of violence; a product of data systems that measure what is easy to measure rather than what matters most. Addressing it requires deliberate, resource-intensive investment in intersectional data collection, disability-inclusive service design, and geographic reach beyond the urban institutional footprint that currently dominates GBV response in all four countries.

12.2 Research Contributions and Theory-Practice Links

Her Voice makes several distinct contributions to both the research literature and the practice of VAWG prevention and response:

1. **First quantitative evidence of the Backlash Effect in West Africa:** The Ghana regression providing econometric confirmation that digital access increases violence risk in specific household-patriarchal contexts represents a methodological and substantive contribution to the TFGBV literature, where this dynamic has been theorised but not previously demonstrated with regression analysis in the sub-Saharan African context.
2. **First documentation of the climate-displacement-digital exploitation nexus:** The Togo sextortion nexus – flood-displaced women targeted through digital platforms offering fraudulent assistance – represents a new and undertheorised pathway connecting climate displacement to TFGBV. This has not been systematically documented in the existing literature and provides a model for future research in climate-affected digital contexts globally.
3. **Empirical confirmation of the urban vulnerability paradox:** The Cameroon finding that urban households exhibit higher cumulative climate stress than rural ones challenges dominant assumptions in climate adaptation policy and GBV research. It provides a direct evidence basis for redirecting resources toward urban informal settlements as a priority vulnerability zone.
4. **The 'Null Factor' — digital literacy without structural change:** Ghana's regression confirming that digital literacy has no independent effect on household wealth accumulation ($p=.378$) in climate-stressed communities makes a direct contribution to debates on digital development effectiveness. It provides the clearest evidence to date that structural poverty and climate vulnerability must be addressed before digital skills training produces meaningful economic outcomes for rural women.

5. **Multi-country mixed-methods model for climate-VAWG-digital research:** The Her Voice methodology (combining standardised household surveys, disaggregated FGDs, institutional KIIs, and regression analysis across four countries with diverse climate, digital, and VAWG profiles) provides a replicable template for future research on emerging VAWG drivers in the Global South.

12.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Her Voice has generated foundational evidence but has also identified significant knowledge gaps requiring future investigation:

- Longitudinal panel studies tracking the same households over multiple climate seasons are needed to establish clear causal sequences in the climate-VAWG pathway. Current cross-sectional data confirms correlation but cannot fully establish temporal precedence.
- Research integrating climate early warning data with real-time VAWG reporting would enable the development of predictive risk models allowing anticipatory VAWG prevention response. This will provide a significant operational advance over current reactive approaches.
- The climate-displacement-to-digital exploitation nexus documented in Togo requires dedicated follow-up research across multiple climate-affected contexts to determine its generalisability and develop evidence-based counter-interventions.
- Experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of digital empowerment programmes that incorporate Backlash Effect mitigation strategies, specifically, those that engage men and address household power dynamics alongside device distribution, are critically needed to build an evidence base for programme redesign.
- Research on women with disabilities at the intersection of climate and VAWG is near-absent in the literature. Her Voice's Togo findings provide a starting point, but dedicated studies with disability-led research teams are required to produce actionable evidence for this population.
- Digital forensic capacity assessments across the four study countries would provide the evidence base for targeted investments in law enforcement digital capability. This is a prerequisite for meaningful TFGBV prosecution.

12.4 Roadmap for Scaling and Sustaining Her Voice Outcomes

The Her Voice roadmap envisions a three-horizon scaling strategy extending from 2026 through 2030, anchored in the ACT programme framework and building on the institutional relationships, evidence base, and advocacy materials generated in the current project.

Table 12.1: Her Voice Impact – The Sustainability and Legacy Roadmap

Horizon	Period	Priority Actions	Key Partners	Success Indicators
Horizon 1 — Consolidate and Disseminate	2026 (H1)	Complete and validate all primary analysis; produce and launch all communication materials; conduct country-level dissemination workshops; submit country evidence briefs to national	WACOL, UN Women, national Women's Ministries, ECOWAS Gender Directorate	All 4 country reports finalised; evidence briefs submitted to 4 national coordination bodies; 200+ policymakers reached

Horizon	Period	Priority Actions	Key Partners	Success Indicators
		GBV coordination mechanisms		
Horizon 2 — Embed and Institutionalise	2026 (H2)–2027	Embed Her Voice findings in ECOWAS Gender & DRR Strategy review; support at least 2 countries to integrate climate-VAWG provisions in NDC/NAP revision; pilot the IVR voice-reporting tool in partnership with mobile operators; establish Her Voice data dashboard as ongoing national monitoring resource	ECOWAS, ECCAS, national climate and digital ministries, mobile operators (MTN, Orange), CSO partners	2+ NDC/NAP revisions citing Her Voice; IVR tool piloted; Dashboard live and regularly updated; 30+ CSOs using Her Voice data
Horizon 3 — Scale and Sustain	2028–2030	Expand geographic scope to additional West/Central African countries; establish Her Voice as a recurring biennial research programme; integrate Her Voice indicators into ECOWAS gender monitoring framework; develop Her Voice training curriculum for government gender focal points and CSO data analysts	UN Women, EU, national statistics offices, academic partners, next-generation feminist coalitions	Her Voice indicators in ECOWAS framework; biennial research cycle established; 10+ countries covered; 100+ trained data-literate advocates

Closing Reflection

Her Voice was designed not as a single research output but as a living process — a mechanism for connecting women's lived experiences of climate and digital violence to the policy spaces where decisions about their lives are made. The roadmap above is the plan for sustaining and scaling that connection. The evidence is now on the table. The work of turning it into action — legislative, institutional, programmatic, and cultural — now belongs to everyone who has read it.

SECTION 13

Annexes

13. ANNEXES

This section houses the technical back-matter for transparency, replication, and extended reference. It covers: Annex A – the survey instrument structure and interview guide framework; Annex B – codebook and variable definitions; Annex C – detailed country profiles and stakeholder maps; and Annex D – ethics approvals and consent templates.

Annex A: Survey Instruments and Interview Guides

A.1 Household Survey — Module Structure

The Her Voice standardised household survey comprised seven thematic modules, adapted for each country context and orally translated from English into French and relevant local languages. The modules were:

Module 1 — Sociodemographic Profile: Age, sex, marital status, household size, educational attainment, primary livelihood, residential location (urban/rural/peri-urban), and displacement status.

Module 2 — Digital Access and Skills: Device ownership (type, ownership vs. borrowed), internet access (frequency, primary use), platform use (WhatsApp, Facebook, X, TikTok, others), digital skills self-assessment (0–5 scale covering basic call receipt, SMS, internet browsing, data applications, and financial transactions), and privacy of digital access.

Module 3 — Climate Stress Index (CSI): Exposure to 8 climate events in the preceding 12 months (extreme heat, drought, crop failure, flooding, water scarcity, landslide, coastal erosion, pest infestation), frequency, severity (1–5 scale), livelihood impact (asset loss, income reduction, food insecurity), and coping strategies deployed.

Module 4 — Food Security: Household food security status (FIES-aligned), frequency of food shortage (past 12 months), household responses to food shortage, and relationship between food shortage episodes and household conflict.

Module 5 — Violence Exposure: Experience of violence by type (physical IPV, sexual violence, emotional/psychological abuse, economic abuse, online harassment, stalking, NCII, forced marriage, FGM/C, and other) in the preceding 12 months; perpetrator relationship; reporting behaviour; barriers to reporting; and knowledge of available services.

Module 6 — Digital Violence: Experience of cyberstalking, online harassment, non-consensual image sharing, sextortion, digital surveillance by partners; platform on which experienced; response taken (reporting, withdrawal, continued use); awareness of legal protections; and experience with digital reporting tools.

Module 7 — Service Awareness and Use: Knowledge of available GBV services (police, health, NGO, digital, community); use of services in the preceding 12 months; barriers to use; trust levels for each institutional type; and suggestions for service improvement.

A.2 Focus Group Discussion Guide — Framework

FGDs were conducted in disaggregated groups (women only; men only; young boys only, young girls only) using a semi-structured guide organised into four thematic sections: (1) climate change and community livelihoods – how environmental changes have affected daily life, resources, and household dynamics; (2) VAWG in the community context – prevalence, forms, perpetrators, and community responses; (3) digitalisation and gender – access, use, risks, and opportunities; and (4) institutional responses – what exists, what works, what is missing, and what communities recommend. Each section began with an open narrative prompt followed by probing questions. Sessions were facilitated by trained facilitators (a lead and a note-taker) with a community liaison present for safety and logistical support.

A.3 Key Informant Interview Guide — Sector Modules

KII guides were structured around a common core (organisational mandate, VAWG landscape assessment, climate and digital drivers) plus sector-specific modules tailored for: government ministries (policy implementation, legal frameworks, institutional capacity, coordination gaps); law enforcement (digital forensics, VAWG case handling, institutional culture); civil society and NGOs (service delivery, community trust, funding architecture, advocacy priorities); academic and research institutions (data gaps, methodological recommendations, theory-practice links); international organisations (programme priorities, funding mechanisms, regional policy engagement); and digital governance/cybersecurity authorities (TFGBV legal framework, enforcement capacity, platform accountability mechanisms).

Annex B: Codebook and Variable Definitions

B.1 Key Composite Indicators

Variable / Index	Definition	Construction Method	Range / Interpretation
Climate Stress Index (CSI)	Composite measure of household climate vulnerability based on exposure, frequency, and impact of climate events in preceding 12 months	Sum of: (number of climate events experienced × frequency weight) + livelihood impact score. Normalised 0–100.	0 = no climate stress; 100 = maximum climate stress across all dimensions
Digital Literacy Score (DLS)	Self-reported digital competency across five functional tasks	Sum of scores (0–5) for: receiving calls, sending SMS, internet browsing, using apps, conducting financial transactions	0 = no digital skills; 5 = full functional digital literacy
Food Insecurity Score	Frequency-weighted food shortage index	Adapted FIES (Food Insecurity Experience Scale) — number of food shortage experiences in	0 = food secure; higher = more severe food insecurity

Variable / Index	Definition	Construction Method	Range / Interpretation
		past 12 months weighted by severity and duration	
VAWG Prevalence Index	Binary and count measures of violence exposure by type	Binary: any violence in past 12 months (yes/no); Count: number of distinct VAWG types experienced	0 = no violence; maximum = experience of all measured VAWG types
Socioeconomic/Asset Index	Household asset ownership as proxy for economic status	Sum of asset ownership indicators (land, livestock, productive tools, savings, formal financial account) weighted by market value proxy	Tertile split: low/medium/high SES

B.2 Key Variable Definitions

- **Displaced household:** Respondent or household has relocated from primary residence within the preceding 24 months due to flood, drought, conflict, or other forced circumstance, as self-reported.
- **Technology-Facilitated GBV (TFGBV):** Any act of gender-based violence perpetrated through or amplified by digital technology, including cyberstalking, online harassment, non-consensual intimate image sharing, sextortion, digital surveillance, doxing, and online threats.
- **Borrowed digital access:** Use of a device (phone, tablet, computer) owned by another household member (typically a male partner or family member) for internet access, as opposed to device ownership.
- **Backlash Effect:** Statistical relationship in which women's phone or device ownership is positively associated with violence frequency in contexts of patriarchal household structure and economic stress, as identified in Ghana regression analysis (Model 3, $B=0.362$, $p=.005$).
- **Null Factor:** Statistical non-significance of digital literacy as a predictor of economic outcomes (household wealth) in the presence of dominant climate stressors, as identified in Ghana regression analysis (Model 4, DLS coefficient $p=.378$).

Annex C: Detailed Country Profiles and Stakeholder Maps

C.1 Institutional Stakeholder Maps by Country

Annex C presents comprehensive country profiles and detailed stakeholder maps for the four study countries: Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Togo. Drawing directly from all four fieldwork reports, it documents every institution who participated in Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), organised by country and sector.

Each country section includes: (1) a country study profile summarising research sites, sample characteristics, and key baseline indicators; (2) a full KII inventory listing every participating

institution with its mandate and principal findings; and (3) an institutional coordination gap analysis identifying structural weaknesses and siloes observed across the system. Together, these profiles provide the evidentiary foundation for the cross-country comparative analysis and the policy recommendations presented in this main report.

Ghana — Country Profile

Study Region	Upper East Region (Bolgatanga East District – Yarigabisi; Bongo District – Gowrie)
Survey Respondents	60 household respondents (73.3% female; mean age 50.3 years)
Education Profile	60% no formal education; 33.3% primary education
Livelihoods	80% farming; significant food insecurity and seasonal labour migration
Key Climate Risks	Drought, lean-season food insecurity, flooding, seasonal extreme heat
Digital Context	Low smartphone penetration; most women use basic/feature phones or none; 0% uptake of digital GBV reporting tools
Primary GBV Referral	Chiefs and traditional councils (most trusted first responders); formal services largely inaccessible
KIIs Conducted	11 organisations/institutions; including national ministries, regulatory agencies, CSOs, law enforcement, and traditional authorities
FGDs Conducted	4 focus groups (Yarigabisi women, Yarigabisi men, Gowrie women, Gowrie men)
Implementing Team	Local research team; Community Study Associates (CSAs) assisted with sampling

Ghana KII Stakeholder Inventory

SECTOR A: GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP)	Lead ministry for GBV response, social welfare, gender policy, and national gender strategy	Acknowledged chronic underfunding limiting shelter availability, GBV case management training, and rural community outreach. Social welfare officers reported covering multiple districts, creating severe gaps in rural monitoring. Confirmed awareness of climate-gender nexus but noted limited operational guidance at community level.	National
Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA)	Agricultural extension, food security, rural livelihoods, and	Confirmed violence spikes during the lean season: "The major ones will be drought and erratic rainfall." Noted women must "go longer" for water and firewood during	National / District

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
	climate-smart agriculture	climate shocks, increasing isolation and risk of assault. Confirmed integration of 40% women inclusion in agricultural projects and quarterly meetings with MoGCSP. Agricultural extension officers identified as potential climate-GBV early warning nodes.	
Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology & Innovation (MESTI)	Climate policy, National Determined Contributions (NDCs), environmental governance, technology and innovation oversight	Provided the national policy architecture for climate-gender linkage. MESTI confirmed gender is a thematic area in Ghana's National Climate Change Policy and that national communications have been submitted to the UNFCCC since 2005. However, at community level, "policies exist on paper" with limited operational guidance and no explicit GBV components in climate adaptation plans.	National
National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO)	Management of climate-induced displacement, emergency response, and disaster preparedness	Responsible for managing climate-induced displacement, yet coordination with the Gender Ministry on gender-responsive disaster protocols was found to be absent. No joint protocols, private spaces for women, or GBV referral pathways embedded in disaster management frameworks. Identified as a critical collaboration opportunity.	National / District
Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations (MoCDTI)	Digital transformation oversight, ICT policy, cybersecurity governance, cybercrime reporting	Oversees Ghana's digital agenda but rural digital infrastructure remains critically inadequate for the communities surveyed. National digital initiatives assume smartphone usage and internet familiarity, neither of which characterises women in Yarigabisi or Gowrie. Policy does not account for basic-phone users who constitute the majority of women in study communities.	National

SECTOR B: REGULATORY & OVERSIGHT AGENCIES

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Cyber Security Authority (CSA)	Cybersecurity regulation, digital threat management, accreditation, and digital safety sensitisation	Identified specific digital threats disproportionately affecting women, including harassment via social media, non-consensual image sharing, and sextortion. The CSA frames response through regulation and accreditation. However, a critical finding is the complete absence of climate change from CSA's	National

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
		strategic framework. No rural, gender-focused approach exists. CSA uses annual Ghana Cyber Security Awareness Month for sensitisation but this does not reach low-literacy, basic-phone users in rural areas.	
National Communications Authority (NCA)	Telecommunications infrastructure, spectrum management, internet governance, content moderation policy	Explicitly stated it does not have up-to-date gender-disaggregated digital access data, limiting gender-responsive ICT policy. Mandates Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to provide coverage in all regions but focuses on supply-side infrastructure (“building towers”) rather than demand-side access for women. Defers online content moderation to the National Media Commission (NMC). Zero climate change integration in NCA strategy.	National

SECTOR C: CIVIL SOCIETY, HUMANITARIAN & FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Women in Law and Development in Africa (WilDAF)	Legal aid, GBV prevention, women’s rights advocacy, community legal empowerment	Documented sharp rise in technology-facilitated GBV cases in the region, including harassment via voice notes (reflecting low literacy). Observed that women navigate digital risks using analogue methods due to lack of smartphones. Emphasised that the formal referral network fails in practice because “the help is not there.” Advocated for engagement with traditional leaders as key entry points for GBV prevention, while noting their lack of survivor-centred training.	Regional / Community
Caritas Ghana	Humanitarian assistance, climate-related livelihoods, GBV awareness, and faith-based community support	Introduced the most alarming dimension of the climate-conflict nexus: linkage with extremism and armed group activity in the Sahel-bordering northern zones. Confirmed climate displacement is occurring informally with women and girls exploited in transit slums. Noted that the referral network fails because “the help is not there” when cases are identified. Documented how women’s livelihood groups provide protective social cohesion during climate shocks.	Regional / Community
Ghana Red Cross Society	Disaster response, emergency shelter,	Confirmed that current emergency shelters and relocation plans do not	National / Community

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
	humanitarian protection, and community resilience	incorporate GBV risk mitigation: “Most of the time... everyone is together in open space” — no privacy, no lighting, no referral mechanisms. Noted that children and women suffer most during displacement. Identified that displacement during school time — “everybody is there” — creates additional exposure risks. Highlighted the absence of gender-sensitive disaster management.	

SECTOR D: LAW ENFORCEMENT & JUSTICE

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Ghana Police Service — Domestic Violence & Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU)	Operational GBV response, domestic violence case management, victim support, crime statistics	DOVVSU data reveals a critical data system failure: the 2024 national DOVVSU totals documented in the report represent a likely 98.9% undercount due to missing data from most districts and regions. Officers lack infrastructure, transportation, and training in digital evidence handling. Confirmed that victims prefer to report to chiefs rather than DOVVSU because reporting “brings no result.” Proposed mobile service model integrating GBV response with agricultural extension visits. Noted that when people are gathered (e.g., schools during displacement) “privacy is a problem.”	National / District

SECTOR E: TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Paramount Chief — Yarigabisi (Bolgatanga East District)	Traditional governance, community dispute resolution, first-line GBV mediation	Identified as the most trusted first responder by community members. Acknowledged lack of formal training in survivor-centred mediation. Noted that during climate-induced in-migration, “the house becomes full” creating overcrowding and tension. Framed domestic violence as “small small” issues about “provision,” reflecting persistence of minimisation. Confirmed that men assert control over technology during stress periods. Requested capacity building.	Community
Chief — Gowrie (Bongo District)	Traditional governance,	Confirmed that during drought, “they run” (displacement) creating additional	Community

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
	community dispute resolution, first-line GBV mediation	vulnerability. Noted women forced back to traditional leaders for justice when formal systems fail (“where the justice is”). Highlighted that displaced men struggle with economic role loss, leading to increased violence. Acknowledged community norms both protective and silencing: “If the woman leaves, who will take care of the children?”	

SECTOR F: ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS (NOTED ABSENCE)

The fieldwork report documents that several academic institutions were invited to participate in KIIs but declined or did not respond. These include: the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA) at the University of Ghana, the Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability Studies (C3SS), UCC’s Centre for Gender Research Advocacy & Documentation (CEGRAD), the Gender Studies & Human Rights Documentation Center (The Gender Center), and UDS’s Center for Gender & Career Mentorship (CGCAM). CEGENSA confirmed it does not currently have a climate change focus, reinforcing the broader finding of sectoral fragmentation. No direct KII data was collected from academia in Ghana.

Ghana — Institutional Coordination Gap Analysis

⚠ Ghana: Fragmented, Underfunded, Siloed — Key Structural Gaps Identified

- ▶ No integrated climate-digital-GBV framework: MoGCSP, MESTI, MoCDTI and NADMO all operate in separate policy spheres with no joint programming across all three domains.
- ▶ DOVVSU data system failure: The national DOVVSU database likely represents an approximately 98.9% undercount of actual cases, rendering it unusable for evidence-based policy. District-level data is missing from most regions.
- ▶ Digital policy mismatch: National digital initiatives assume smartphone usage. The entire female population in study communities uses basic/feature phones or none, meaning hotlines, apps, and USSD reporting tools are completely inaccessible.
- ▶ No gender-responsive disaster management: NADMO and the Ghana Red Cross both confirmed absence of private spaces, lighting, or GBV referral pathways in emergency shelter protocols.
- ▶ CSA and NCA climate blindspot: Neither regulatory agency has integrated climate change into their strategic frameworks, despite evidence that climate shocks directly affect women’s digital safety and vulnerability.
- ▶ Academic-policy disconnect: Premier gender research centres (e.g., CEGENSA) operate independently of climate policy processes, missing an important evidence-generation opportunity.
- ▶ Chiefs as informal safety net with no formal support: Traditional leaders handle the majority of GBV cases but receive no training, have no survivor-centred protocols, and are not integrated into formal referral pathways.

Nigeria — Country Profile

Study States	Abuja FCT (National Level), Lagos, Rivers, Ebonyi, Taraba, Yobe
Survey Respondents	314 household respondents across six states
FGDs Conducted	20 FGDs – 10 women’s groups, 10 men’s groups across all states
Total KIIs Conducted	36 completed KIIs (41 planned; 5 incomplete/pending transcription) across national and state levels
Key Climate Risks	Flooding (Lagos, Rivers, Ebonyi), drought and erratic rainfall (Yobe, Taraba, northern LGAs), soil erosion, extreme heat
Digital Context	Lagos most digitally advanced; Yobe/Taraba least connected; generational split in platform use (elderly: Facebook; youth: Snapchat, WhatsApp)
GBV System Highlight	Lagos DSVAs have functional digital case management systems; absent in all other states surveyed
Implementing Team	WACOL (Women’s Aid Collective) – national field team with state-level enumerators

Nigeria KII Stakeholder Inventory

NATIONAL LEVEL — ABUJA FCT

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Federal Ministry of Women Affairs	National gender policy, GBV coordination, multi-ministerial collaboration on climate-related interventions	Discussed the INSPIRE framework – a data situation room intended to track GBV cases across states – but confirmed it is currently non-functional. Ministry distributes clean cooking stoves to prevent women facing violence while collecting firewood. Collaborates with various MDAs on climate-related interventions. Significant gap between national policy aspirations and state-level implementation.	National
Women and Girls with Albinism Network	Inclusive healthcare, education, and GBV protection for persons with albinism	Documented that persons with albinism face compounded vulnerability: protection services are limited and hindered by severe social stigma. No specialised services for digital violence affecting this group. Climate change adds economic stress increasing women’s vulnerability to domestic violence, while UV radiation exposure creates distinct health risks.	National
Co-Creation Hub (CcHub) — Tech and Society Practice	Technology for development, digital innovation, gender and tech policy	Documented that digital harassment and disinformation are being weaponised to discourage women from political participation. Reporting tools (Orange Directory, GBV mobile apps) exist but lack public visibility. Emphasised need for	National

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
		digital safety education reaching beyond urban middle class.	
ActionAid Nigeria	Humanitarian emergency response, GBV prevention in IDP settings, women's rights advocacy	Confirmed work in both IDP camps and development spaces. Noted that while many laws exist, lack of political will and investment limits enforcement. Specific climate-violence link documented: crop failures lead to girls being withdrawn from school; droughts force women into dangerous long-distance treks for resources.	National
Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja	Academic research on gender, leadership development, climate-disaster-GBV intersection	Documented that climate-induced flooding disproportionately affects women maintaining household care and food security during disasters. Limited funding is primary barrier to scaling research. Technology identified as vital for early warning and emergency communication during climate crises.	National / Academic

LAGOS STATE

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA)	GBV case management, survivor support, cross-agency coordination, digital evidence preservation	Lagos DSVA has a functioning Digital Case Management System (DCMS) and self-reporting tool for preserving digital evidence – a benchmark absent in all other states surveyed. Jurisdictional issues hinder enforcement in cross-border cybercrime. No direct policy links between GBV and climate change documented.	State
Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA)	State gender policy, digital skills training, GBV response coordination	COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation, enabling remote work and faster case handling. Budget constraints identified as primary barrier to scaling digital skills training. Only 6 of 25 survey questions answered — suggesting limited engagement or data availability.	State
Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs (Lagos)	Local governance, community services, administrative coordination	Noted that flooding disrupts schooling and creates cascading household vulnerability. Observed that the internet is often used for economic survival without safety measures, especially by young women.	State
Nigeria Police Force — Special	GBV law enforcement, criminal investigation,	Documented lack of digital case management system; inadequate funding	State

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Unit for Protection of Women and Girls (Lagos)	women and girls' protection	for airtime to coordinate cases; lack of basic equipment including recording devices and cameras. These gaps severely limit the ability to investigate technology-facilitated violence.	
Women Advocacy Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC)	GBV legal aid, research, documentation, feminist advocacy	Handles cases involving flood-related displacement and technology-facilitated abuse. Critical gap in forensic capacity to secure digital evidence admissible in court. Significant underreporting in climate-related GBV cases. Noted that survivors' rights are often compromised by informal settlements mediated under social pressure.	State / National
Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA)	Environmental governance, accountability, human rights, disaster-violence nexus	Documented direct link between climate disasters and violence: rape and molestation cases reported in IDP camps following the Aro Dam collapse. Emphasised systemic gap in disaster management regarding gender-based violence.	State
University of Lagos (UNILAG) — Department of Mass Communication / Women & Gender Research Centre	Gender research, data systems, academic policy advocacy	Documented that Nigeria's data systems are weak and inconsistent. Advocated for open-access policy on gender data. Noted that climatic conditions affect the effectiveness of contraceptives — an under-explored dimension of climate-reproductive health-violence intersection.	Academic / State
Community Leader — Surulere Progressive CDA, Ikorodu	Community development, local security, neighbourhood governance	Reported that installing boreholes in every community unit would reduce sexual violence associated with women and girls fetching water. Identified water infrastructure as primary violence prevention entry point.	Community
Traditional Ruler — Ekpete Okepopo, Lagos Island	Traditional governance, community dispute resolution, women's safety	Documented that water scarcity leads directly to conflict and violence. The palace mediates online violence cases for married women but no formal training provided for local leaders. Only 5 of 11 questions answered.	Community

RIVERS STATE

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Rivers State Ministry of Environment	Environmental governance, climate	Flooding identified as the major climate risk in Rivers State. Other climate datasets include rainfall, run-off, temperature,	State

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
	risk monitoring, disaster preparedness	extreme heat, and fire-related incidents. Documented institutional and political obstacles to incorporating gender and protection concerns into disaster management frameworks.	
Nigeria Police Force — Gender Desk, Rivers State	GBV law enforcement, gender-sensitive policing	Gender desk exists but resources and case management capacity remain severely limited, consistent with national police constraints documented in Lagos.	State
Centre for Gender, Conflict and Development Studies (CGCDS), University of Port Harcourt (Uniport)	Academic research on gender, climate crisis, digitalisation, and policy translation	Centre specialises in translating research on gender, climate crisis, and digitalisation into policy-relevant knowledge. Partners with government ministries, CSOs, and international agencies. Conducted via Zoom.	Academic / State

EBONYI STATE

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
CIRDOC Nigeria (Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre)	CSO support, GBV documentation, women's rights programmes	Works on rights documentation and women's GBV support programmes at state level.	State / CSO
NAPTIP (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons) — Ebonyi State	Anti-trafficking enforcement, survivor support, referral coordination	Handles trafficking cases with intersection of climate vulnerability: climate-induced poverty and migration create trafficking pipelines. State Commander documented cases linked to economic stress from climate shocks.	State
Ebonyi State Ministry of Women Affairs	State gender policy, GBV response coordination	Limited resources documented across state gender machinery.	State
Ebonyi State Ministry of Environment	Environmental monitoring, climate risk response	State-level documentation of climate change impacts including flooding, drought, and crop failure. Limited integration with gender or protection responses.	State
Ebonyi State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources	Agricultural extension, food security, rural livelihoods	State-level agricultural data on climate impacts on farming communities. Limited gender integration in agricultural programming.	State
Ebonyi State Ministry of Human Capital	Human development, social welfare monitoring	Monitors human capital investments including education and skills development.	State

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Development and Monitoring			
Nigeria Police Force — Juvenile, Women and Children Unit (Ebonyi)	GBV law enforcement, protection of women and children	Documented systemic resource constraints consistent with national police findings: limited equipment, inadequate digital forensics capacity.	State
Neighbourhood Environment Watch Foundation	Community environmental monitoring, accountability, GBV-environment nexus	Documented environment-GBV linkages at community level, including how environmental degradation creates conditions for increased violence.	State / Community
Traditional Ruler — Okposi Kingdom (Ebonyi)	Traditional governance, community dispute resolution	Provided community-level perspective on dispute resolution and traditional governance in Ebonyi. Confirmed role of traditional institutions in GBV case management.	Community

YOBE STATE

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Yobe State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA)	State disaster management, emergency response, displacement coordination	State-level emergency management authority. Flooding in multiple LGAs (Gudjuba, Fika, Gulani, Potiskum) documented. No specific GBV protocols embedded in emergency management framework.	State
Centre for Gender Studies and Girl Child Education — College of Legal Studies, Nguru	Gender research, education, girl child protection	New institution established August 2025 as initiative of the college Provost. Collaborates with key ministries and international organisations. Funding challenges limit scale. Works in gender space but resource-constrained.	State / Academic
Yobe State Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	Agricultural extension, food security, rural livelihoods	Documented flooding in multiple LGAs and drought/low yield in others, confirming the dual climate risk profile of the state. Limited gender integration in agricultural programmes.	State
Yobe State Ministry of Environment	Environmental monitoring, climate risk management	State-level environmental governance. Documented climate risks but limited cross-sectoral integration with gender or protection systems.	State
Nigeria Police Force — Yobe State	Law enforcement, GBV response	Cases of violence among young persons from 17 years downward are coded. Challenges include lack of funds and lack of community cooperation with police	State

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
		reporting. Digital forensics capacity absent.	
International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA) — Yobe State Chapter	Legal aid, GBV legal representation, women's rights	Partners with Ministry of Women Affairs, National Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Justice, and NGOs. Key civil society entry point for legal aid in a context of low formal justice access.	State / CSO

TARABA STATE

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Nigerian Red Cross Society — Taraba State	Humanitarian response, emergency shelter, displacement, survivor assistance	Documented that six LGAs in Taraba are annually affected by flooding with intense need for temporary shelter and survivor assistance. Confirmed absence of gender-sensitive disaster protocols.	State
Taraba State Ministry of Women Affairs	State gender policy, GBV coordination	KII partially completed: responded to only 15 of 25 questions, suggesting engagement constraints. Limited resources documented.	State
Taraba State Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	Agricultural extension, food security	Documented inconsistent rainfall, soil erosion, pest infestation, and high humidity. Noted that Northern Nigeria communities are most affected. Limited gender integration.	State
Taraba State Ministry of Environment	Environmental governance, climate monitoring	Reported regional heat and drought. Limited cross-sectoral integration with gender or GBV response.	State
Nigeria Police Force — Gender Unit, Taraba State	Gender-sensitive policing, GBV response	Gender unit exists but capacity severely constrained consistent with national police findings.	State
International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA) — Taraba State Chapter	Legal aid, women's rights advocacy, GBV legal representation	Provides legal services in a context of low formal justice access. Partners with state women's affairs ministry and other agencies.	State / CSO

Nigeria — Institutional Coordination Gap Analysis

▲ Nigeria: Clashing Mandates, Chronic Underfunding, and Digital-Climate Blindspots

- Stark state-level inequity in GBV systems: Lagos DSVAs have a functioning digital case management system and self-reporting tool; this benchmark capability is entirely absent in all other surveyed states (Rivers, Ebonyi, Taraba, Yobe).

- ▶ Federal Ministry's INSPIRE data room non-functional: The national GBV tracking system intended to aggregate case data across states has not been operationalised, creating a complete evidence gap at the national level.
- ▶ Police lack basic digital forensics capacity: Across all states, the Nigeria Police Force documented absence of recording equipment, digital case management, and forensic tools to investigate technology-facilitated violence.
- ▶ No cross-sector climate-GBV framework: Despite multiple ministries of environment and agriculture confirming significant climate risk documentation, none have integrated GBV response protocols into climate or disaster management policies.
- ▶ Capital budget freezes: Budget constraints were cited by multiple state agencies (WAPA, DSVAs, police) as preventing scale-up of critical GBV services and digital training.
- ▶ Trafficking-climate nexus underdocumented: NAPTIP's Ebonyi documentation confirms climate-driven trafficking pipelines, but no national framework connects climate risk assessment to anti-trafficking strategy.
- ▶ New academic institutions emerging without coordination: New centres (Veritas University, Nguru College) established in 2025 lack resources and inter-institutional coordination to contribute evidence at scale.

Cameroon — Country Profile

Study Sites	South West Region: Buea Town, Mile 16, Tole, Molyko; Littoral Region: Motowo-Limbe, Bonaberi-Douala
FGDs Conducted	12 FGDs across communities (104 participants: 8 men + 8 women per group)
Household Interviews	70+ household interviews across 6 communities (at least 10 per community)
KIs Conducted	11 KIs with 14 named participants (some institutions had two representatives)
Key Climate Risks	Flooding (Lagdo Dam, Logone-Chari basin, Limbe, Booyah coastal zones), erratic rainfall, landslides, displacement
Digital Context	Near-universal phone ownership (98.5%); WhatsApp dominant; technology-facilitated GBV growing especially on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok; low digital literacy
GBV System Highlight	MINPROFF's ALERT GBV platform is an innovation enhancing confidentiality for urban survivors; police remain paper-based and station-centred
Crisis Context	Ongoing Anglophone crisis affects South West region; presidential election period during data collection affected participation

Cameroon KII Stakeholder Inventory

SECTOR A: GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF)	National lead for GBV prevention, survivor referral, sensitisation, monitoring, and gender strategy	MINPROFF operates the ALERT GBV digital reporting and referral platform, widely regarded as an important innovation for confidentiality and access, especially for young urban survivors. However, Cameroon has no dedicated national policy specifically addressing technology-facilitated VAW – digital harms are addressed indirectly through broader GBV strategies. Cybersecurity and data governance are not within MINPROFF's jurisdiction, requiring strong inter-ministerial coordination that currently remains inconsistent.	National / Regional
Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED)	Environmental governance, climate risk monitoring, gender mainstreaming in environmental programming	Highlighted flooding as a recurring acute hazard in Lagdo Dam area, Logone-Chari basin, and coastal zones. Limited digital monitoring tools and unclear budget lines for integrating gender and protection concerns into environmental programming. Collaboration across sectors "depends on projects, workshops, or emergency responses" rather than permanent mechanisms.	National
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) / SOWEDA	Agricultural extension, rural development, gender mainstreaming in agriculture, seed multiplication	Documented erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, rising temperatures, and stronger winds with most severe impacts in Adamawa, North, and far North regions. Noted consistent misunderstandings of gender concepts within institutions ("gender" still interpreted as "women only"). Gender mainstreaming in agricultural programming remains limited.	National / Regional
Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MINPOSTEL)	Telecommunications regulation, digital access policy, gender-disaggregated connectivity data	Confirmed challenges of digital affordability, urban-rural connectivity gaps, and absence of gender-disaggregated data at regional level. Collaboration with MINPROFF on technology-facilitated violence is project-dependent rather than systematic. No permanent inter-ministerial mechanism on digital-gender nexus.	National / Regional

SECTOR B: REGULATORY & TECHNOLOGY GOVERNANCE AGENCIES

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
National Agency of Information and Communication Technologies (ANTIC)	Cybersecurity, cybercrime investigation, digital governance, data protection	ANTIC confirmed that Cameroon lacks a fully integrated national case-management system. Cybersecurity and cybercrime responsibilities sit with ANTIC rather than MINPROFF, creating a structural division that requires strong but inconsistent inter-ministerial coordination. Shortage of trained personnel in cyber investigations, digital forensics, and survivor-centred digital evidence handling — particularly outside major urban centres.	National

SECTOR C: CIVIL SOCIETY & HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
REACH OUT Cameroon	Human rights, GBV response, governance, community-based protection	CSO describing the vulnerability pathway from flooding to displacement, loss of shelter, overcrowding, and heightened risk of sexual violence and exploitation. Confirmed that climate-related incidents act as risk multipliers overwhelming already fragile protection systems.	Regional / Community
Her Innovations Cameroon	Digital safety, women's technology access, GBV and digital rights advocacy	Identified adolescent girls and young women aged 14–25 as particularly exposed to digital abuse in intimate relationships, peer conflict, and public shaming. Noted that during periods of climate shock or economic hardship, digital spaces are used to amplify misinformation and stigma, discouraging reporting.	National / CSO
REDHAC (Réseau des Défenseurs des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale)	Human rights documentation, GBV advocacy, advocacy for rights defenders	REDHAC documented patterns of digital surveillance, blackmail, and harassment targeting women already experiencing intimate partner violence. Highlighted the absence of safe reporting pathways for human rights defenders and survivors of digital violence.	Regional / National

SECTOR D: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Cameroon Police Service (Police de Police)	GBV law enforcement, criminal investigation, physical violence response	Confirmed a largely paper-based, station-centred reporting process requiring physical presence and relying on archives for statistical reporting. This limits real-time	National / Regional

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
		national tracking and contributes to high case attrition. Survivors frequently withdraw complaints due to threats, stigma, informal settlements, and economic dependence. Digital forensics capacity absent.	

SECTOR E: ACADEMIA & RESEARCH

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
University of Buea — Department of Women and Gender Studies	Gender research, academic training, policy evidence generation	Confirmed technology-facilitated violence as a growing concern, especially among adolescent girls and young women. Noted that misunderstanding of gender concepts within institutions (“gender” = “women only”) affects effective mainstreaming across all sectors. Documented how digital spaces are used to amplify stigma during climate shock periods, discouraging survivor reporting.	Academic

SECTOR F: SHELTER SERVICES & HUMANITARIAN

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Displacement Camp Wututu (Shelter Services / Camp Manager)	Internally displaced persons management, emergency shelter, humanitarian protection	Confirmed that flooding-induced displacement overwhelms protection structures, with overcrowding increasing exposure to sexual violence and exploitation. Camp-level GBV protocols are limited. Absence of integrated case management for camp residents.	Community / Humanitarian

SECTOR G: TRADITIONAL & COMMUNITY AUTHORITIES

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Traditional Council — Buea Town	Traditional governance, community dispute resolution, community protection structures	Traditional authorities acknowledged that survivors frequently withdraw formal complaints under pressure from families or traditional leaders to resolve matters privately. Traditional councils remain critical community-level structures but without formal integration into GBV referral pathways or survivor-centred training.	Community

SECTOR H: PRIVATE SECTOR / ICT INCUBATORS

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
NERVTEK ICT Incubator	Digital entrepreneurship, ICT training, technology-based economic empowerment	Identified technology-facilitated violence as a growing concern among young women using digital platforms for economic activity. Digital literacy gaps create vulnerability; women use digital tools for livelihoods but lack knowledge of digital safety or reporting mechanisms.	Private Sector / Regional

Cameroon — Institutional Coordination Gap Analysis

△ Cameroon: Active but Structurally Fragmented — Key Coordination Gaps

- No dedicated technology-facilitated VAW policy: Cameroon lacks a national legal framework specifically addressing digital violence against women. This gap sits at the intersection of MINPROFF, ANTIC, and MINPOSTEL mandates with no clear lead.
- Police system is paper-based and station-centred: Absence of real-time national tracking creates high case attrition. Survivors who cannot attend in person — often the most vulnerable — face systemic exclusion.
- ALERT GBV platform is urban-centric: MINPROFF’s digital reporting tool reaches young urban survivors but remains inaccessible for rural women, those with lower literacy, and those in crisis-affected zones.
- Inter-ministerial coordination is project-dependent: MINEPDED, MINPOSTEL, and MINADER all noted collaboration “depends on projects or workshops” rather than permanent shared protocols.
- Urban vulnerability paradox: Contrary to expectations, the study found urban households experience higher climate stress than rural ones — a finding explained by urban infrastructure failure (flooding, drainage collapse) — yet urban GBV services are designed for more stable conditions.
- Anglophone crisis creates blind spots: Ongoing insecurity in the South West Region — the primary study site — inhibits data collection, limits participation, and creates additional displacement-related GBV risks that national statistics do not capture.
- Gender ‘misunderstood’ across institutions: Multiple KII informants noted that “gender” is still narrowly interpreted as “women only” across government ministries, limiting effective intersectoral mainstreaming.

Togo — Country Profile

Study Regions	Greater Lomé, Maritime, Plateaux, Centrale, Kara, Savanes (all six administrative regions covered)
Survey Respondents	303 household respondents (54.8% women; 45.2% men)
Marital Status	75.6% married or cohabiting — reinforcing centrality of intra-family dynamics in GBV analysis
FGDs Conducted	6 FGDs (one per region; 8 participants each; mixed urban and rural)
KIIs Conducted	16 KIIs covering national ministries, regulatory bodies, civil society, traditional authorities, disability organisations, and digital incubators
Key Climate Risks	Drought and crop failure (northern regions), flooding (coastal and urban zones), water scarcity (rural areas)
Digital Context	Toll-free reporting number (1011) exists but has low visibility; no specific mechanism for online harassment reporting in northern regions; WhatsApp emerging for informal referrals
Key Structural Gap	40.9% of respondents do not know where to seek help — the highest ‘do not know’ rate across all four countries

Togo KII Stakeholder Inventory

SECTOR A: GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES & STATE INSTITUTIONS

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Ministry of Agriculture (KII-TG01)	Agricultural policy, food security, climate-smart agriculture, gender mainstreaming in agricultural programmes	Acknowledged that national action plans are beginning to integrate climate change impacts on women “but it is still not enough.” Social and gender aspects are not yet fully integrated into agricultural and climate policies. Cited lack of dedicated funding for gender mainstreaming in climate and agricultural programming as a primary constraint.	National
National Agency for Civil Protection (ANPC) (KII-TG03)	Disaster risk management, emergency response, national civil protection coordination	ANPC coordinates the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (PNRRC), bringing together multiple ministries and security actors. However, “in the national disaster management policy, there is no specific provision on GBV.” It is only partially addressed in the national harm reduction strategy. Confirmed: “We do not yet have specific ‘women’ procedures for cases related to climate displacement.”	National
Ministry of Social Action / Ministry in	Social protection, GBV case management,	Responsible for setting up One Stop Centres for GBV victims in Kara and	National

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
charge of Social Action (KII-TG011)	'One Stop Centre' coordination, gender policy implementation	Lomé — described as “holistic care centres for GBV victims.” Acknowledged that economic and digital violence are “almost never reported, not because it doesn’t exist, but because women don’t know that they can ask for help.” Confirmed limited scope of cross-sectoral integration: “there is still a lot to be done to integrate digital and climate issues.”	
High Authority for Audiovisual and Communication (HAAC) (KII-TG02)	Broadcast media regulation, content governance, digital communication oversight	HAAC regulates content but lacks capacity to monitor or respond to cyberbullying and online harassment: “We don’t have the necessary means to carry out surveys on connectivity.” When illegal content is identified, HAAC can notify the editor, but “for all harassment on digital platforms, it is beyond our means.” No specialised tools for technology-facilitated VAW. No collaboration mechanism with gender or GBV institutions.	National
State Structure — Digital Reporting / GBV Coordination (KII-TG016)	Digital GBV reporting mechanisms, state-level coordination	Acknowledged that “reports of harassment are often hidden from us. It is during post-disaster assessments that information is found to reveal instances of harassment. These are cases that are treated at the community level.” Confirmed structural gap in proactive GBV detection in disaster contexts.	National / Community

SECTOR B: CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS & NGOS

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
GF2D / Listening Centre Network (KII-TG12)	Women’s rights, GBV survivor support, listening centres, community referral	GF2D is among the most trusted referral points by women survivors. Described resource crisis: “We receive a lot of women, especially abused by their husbands. But we lack human and material resources. Sometimes we know that the woman should not go home, but we do not have a solution for the night.” Confirmed that police-social sector information sharing is absent: “If the police don’t pass on cases to the social sector, if the social sector doesn’t make the link with health, then the woman gets lost in the system.” Documented that resources are insufficient: “organisations like ours don’t have the necessary means of pressure.”	National / CSO

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Association of Persons with Disabilities / Organization for Persons with Disabilities (KII-TG14)	Rights of persons with disabilities, inclusive protection, disability-inclusive GBV response	Documented compounded vulnerability: women with disabilities face heightened exposure to online harassment and digital surveillance due to dependency networks. “Women with disabilities are trapped in dependency networks. It is a form of silent violence, but very present.” Challenged accessibility of GBV services: “A listening centre without a sign language interpreter? Or without ramps?” Confirmed that climate plans and digital policies do not sufficiently account for disability-specific needs. Called for stronger protection against cyberbullying and accessible digital platforms.	National / CSO

SECTOR C: TRADITIONAL & COMMUNITY AUTHORITIES

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Village Chief — Rural Community (KII-TG05)	Traditional governance, community mediation, first-response for GBV cases	Confirmed that water scarcity creates direct violence against women: “When there is no water, there are arguments. The husband blames the wife, and that creates arguments, sometimes violence.” Village chiefs serve as first-line GBV mediators in rural areas where formal services are absent. Limited training and no integration into formal referral pathways.	Community
Canton Chief — Rural Community (KII-TG15)	Traditional governance, cantonal administration, community protection	Described being overwhelmed by GBV cases in the absence of formal services: “When a woman comes to complain to me, I do what I can. But I’m not trained for that. We should have focal points or community relays, because cases of violence against women are increasing.” Confirmed community norms as simultaneously protective and silencing. Noted almost no digital safety resources reach rural areas: “For digital, there is almost nothing.” Acknowledged rising violence linked to climate: “when the man cannot provide, he takes it out on his wife.”	Community

SECTOR D: DIGITAL / TECHNOLOGY ACTORS & INCUBATORS

Institution / Organisation	Mandate / Focus Area	Key KII Insights & Findings	Level
Female Digital Incubator — Dapaong / Savanes Region (KII-TG010 / KII-TG10)	Digital entrepreneurship for women, ICT skills, economic empowerment through technology	Documented critical gap: “There are toll-free numbers, but there is not yet a mechanism to report harassment or online content that is intended to harass in our locality. Women don’t know where to turn when it comes to digital abuse.” Highlighted complete absence of digital GBV reporting mechanisms in northern Togo. Also noted: “girls feel abandoned” when seeking support related to digital abuse. Identified digital inclusion without digital safety as a structural vulnerability.	Regional / Private Sector
Telecoms / Cybersecurity Reporting Operator (KII-TG8 / KII-TG9)	Telecoms service provision, cybersecurity operations, digital reporting infrastructure	Documented that no effective mechanism currently exists bridging the gap between telecoms operators and gender or social protection services: “There is no whistleblowing on the digital or telecoms services side between the State and civil society.” The National Gendarmerie reports cyberbullying cases. Toll-free numbers exist but are not widely known or used for digital violence cases.	National / Private Sector

Togo — Institutional Coordination Gap Analysis

△ Togo: Rich Legal Architecture, Deep Implementation Gaps, Total Siloing

- Highest ‘do not know where to seek help’ rate: 40.9% of Togo survey respondents do not know where to turn for help — the highest rate across all four study countries — despite multiple institutions and a toll-free number (1011) nominally available.
- ANPC manages disasters without GBV provisions: The national civil protection agency coordinates disaster risk reduction across multiple ministries but the national disaster management policy contains no specific GBV provision. Women’s protection during climate displacement is unaddressed at the policy level.
- HAAC cannot monitor digital harassment: The media and communications regulator lacks the specialised tools, capacity, and mandate to address technology-facilitated violence against women, including cyberbullying and sextortion.
- One Stop Centres exist only in Kara and Lomé: Holistic GBV care centres are limited to two urban locations, leaving all rural regions — where climate risk and service absence are greatest — without access to integrated survivor support.
- Complete sectoral siloing: GBV institutions (Ministry of Social Action, GF2D), digital governance bodies (HAAC, ARCEP, Ministry of Digital Economy), and climate institutions (ANPC, Ministry of Agriculture) operate entirely independently with no joint protocols or shared data systems.
- Northern Togo digital blind spot: No mechanism exists for reporting digital harassment in the Savanes region. The digital incubator in Dapaong confirmed women “don’t know where to turn.”

- ▶ CSO resource crisis: GF2D and disability organisations document acute resource shortages: shelters cannot take in survivors overnight, services lack interpreters and ramps, and funding for gender mainstreaming is scarce across all institutions.
- ▶ Traditional leaders carry unacknowledged burden: Canton and village chiefs handle the majority of rural GBV cases without training, formal protocols, or integration into national referral systems.

Annex D: Ethics Approvals and Consent Templates

D.1 Ethical Governance Framework

Her Voice's ethical governance framework was developed in accordance with the WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence against Women (WHO, 2001, updated 2016) and the UN Women Ethical Framework for Research on Violence against Women (UN Women, 2012). The framework was reviewed and approved by WACOL's institutional review board.

The framework comprises four foundational principles applied throughout the research: (1) Participant safety – the safety of participants takes precedence over data collection at all times; (2) Confidentiality – all data are anonymised and no identifying information is shared; (3) Non-maleficence – no data are collected where collection could plausibly cause harm that outweighs the research benefit; (4) Informed autonomy – participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any point without penalty.

D.2 Consent Protocol Summary

Informed consent was obtained from all participants using a standardised consent protocol adapted for literacy levels, languages, and research modalities:

- **For household survey respondents:** Oral consent in local language, read aloud by enumerator where literacy was limited, with verbal confirmation as a go or no go. Respondents informed of: research purpose, anonymisation, voluntary participation, right to skip questions, right to withdraw, and local referral resources.
- **For FGD participants:** Group verbal consent process facilitated by lead facilitator. Group confidentiality agreement by all participants agreeing not to share other members' disclosures outside the session.
- **For KII respondents:** Oral consent with organisation/individual. Respondents informed of right to review quotes attributed to them before publication and to request removal of specific statements.
- **For participants under 18 (none were enrolled without parental consent):** Parental or guardian oral consent was obtained in addition to the young person's assent, consistent with national child research protection frameworks.

D.3 Referral and Safeguarding Protocols

Before each data collection activity, the research team established referral pathways to local GBV services in partnership with the community liaison. A referral card was provided to all participants containing local service contacts (GBV hotline, NGO partner address, police gender desk contact) in local language. Facilitators and enumerators received trauma-informed interviewing training. A

designated safeguarding contact within the WACOL team was available throughout fieldwork to support any participant or enumerator requiring immediate support or referral.

CONSOLIDATED REFERENCES

Annex E: Coalition Building and Feminist Movement Strengthening

This annex synthesises complementary Her Voice analysis on how the research findings connect to, and can strengthen, the wider feminist coalition and movement-building landscape across Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and Togo, drawing on a dedicated WACOL–ACT stakeholder survey of seven women's rights organisations and networks operating across 17 countries.

E.1 The Existing Coalition Landscape: Assets and Fragmentation

Fieldwork and desk review across all four countries document a vibrant but fragmented civil society ecosystem: organisations with deep community trust and pioneering local innovations, carrying disproportionate service-delivery loads, but operating largely in isolation from one another. Her Voice engaged a wide range of these actors directly — including FIDA Ghana, Ark Foundation and WILDAF Ghana; WACOL, WARDC, WARIF and the Mirabel Centre in Nigeria; REACH OUT, REDHAC and ALVF in Cameroon; and GF2D, WiLDAF-Togo and AFAD-Togo in Togo — as key nodes in a regional feminist network that would benefit from greater cohesion.

E.2 Evidence for What Strengthened Coalitions Can Achieve

The research documents concrete, measured outcomes of coalition-led advocacy. In Togo, a coalition of CSOs and traditional leaders behind the Notsé Declaration process reduced early marriages from 335 cases in 2020 to 261 in 2021 — a 22% reduction in a single year. In Nigeria, traditional leaders working with CSOs in Okposi, Ebonyi State enacted community bye-laws imposing fines on perpetrators, reported as a highly effective local deterrence mechanism. Community savings groups (tontines, ajo, akawo, esusu) in Togo and Nigeria also emerged as a coalition asset: pre-existing networks of economically active women who mobilise resources for members in crisis.

“With our tontine, we can save a little. When a woman has a problem, she can use the money to leave home for a while or to pay school fees. Money gives courage.”

— FGD participant, Togo Fieldwork Report, 2025

FOUR COALITION-STRENGTHENING PRIORITIES EVIDENCED IN THE RESEARCH

- Thematic, cross-sectoral convening across the climate, digital and GBV sectors, which currently operate in institutional silos in all four countries.
- Traditional and religious leader engagement — the most trusted first responders across all four countries, as the Notsé and Okposi outcomes demonstrate.
- Intergenerational, technology-literate feminist leadership — connecting younger digital advocates (Cameroon's Her Innovations, Togo's NanaTech) with established WROs.
- Financial resilience — multi-year, flexible funding from UN Women and donors, alongside coalition-owned resource-sharing mechanisms.

E.3 The WACOL–ACT Stakeholder Survey: What the Feminist Network Is Telling Us

A dedicated survey of seven women's rights organisations and networks, collectively covering 17 countries, surfaced four consistent findings that validate and extend the four-country fieldwork.

1. TFSGBV is the unifying coalition demand: cited by 86% (6/7) of respondents as a priority theme — the highest-ranked issue in the survey — and the area of greatest documented data-capacity gap.
2. Coalition advocacy is already the norm, but infrastructure is missing: all seven respondents engage in networked advocacy, yet consistently ask for formalised MoU templates, coordination secretariats and shared digital tools rather than more advocacy activity itself.
3. Intergenerational knowledge transfer is explicitly demanded, with established organisations prioritising mentoring of younger feminists and newer organisations prioritising horizontal experience-sharing.
4. Financial and technical constraints are universal but structurally different: limited technical expertise (5/7) and financial constraints (4/7) affect organisations of every size and maturity, showing that longevity alone does not close the capacity gap.

E.4 A Five-Component WRO Data and Knowledge Capacity Framework

Drawing on both the fieldwork and the stakeholder survey, five capacity-building components are validated as priorities for strengthening women's rights organisations' data and knowledge systems:

1. Standardised VAWG data collection tools, harmonised from the Her Voice household survey instrument, with mandatory climate-context, digital-modality, and disability/displacement disaggregation fields.
2. Digital evidence preservation training — screenshot authentication, metadata documentation and chain-of-custody protocols — directly addressing a documented TFSGBV accountability gap.
3. Practice-based learning documentation, capturing innovations such as the Notsé Declaration process, the Okposi bye-laws, and WhatsApp vigilance groups as structured, replicable case studies.
4. Data advocacy skills, including freedom-of-information requests, data-quality auditing and budget analysis, given that national data systems in all four countries remain non-functional or inaccessible.
5. South-South knowledge exchange, structured around proven models such as Lagos's DSVCMS, the Notsé Declaration, and the ALERT GBV platform.

E.5 What Her Voice Has Already Contributed to the Evidence Base

The Her Voice research programme has itself measurably strengthened the evidence base for advocacy in each country: the first household-level quantification of climate–VAWG co-occurrence in the region; the first community-level documentation of TFSGBV prevalence in rural contexts; the first disaggregated quantification of the displacement–violence link (Cameroon's 66.7% vs. 41.5%); and the identification of digital literacy — not device ownership — as the key mediating factor behind safe digital inclusion.

E.6 Four Documented Structural Barriers to Coalition-Building

Complementary analysis prepared for coalition-building and policy-influencing purposes identifies four structural barriers that recur across all four countries and must be addressed for WROs and coalitions to convert Her Voice's evidence into sustained influence:

1. Siloed institutional mandates: gender, climate, and digital agencies work separately, and WROs lack the convening power and evidence to force cross-sectoral coordination.
2. Intentionality for coalition-building: WROs/CSOs/coalitions across all four countries operate on short-term project grants without multi-year, flexible resourcing, limiting their ability to build sustained coalitions or invest in data systems.
3. Data invisibility: VAWG is under-counted (Ghana's DOVVSU records an estimated 98.9% undercount of actual cases), disaggregated climate- and digital-violence data is absent from national systems, and WROs lack the technical capacity and tools to produce or leverage credible evidence at scale.
4. Norm-change requires sustained presence: quantitative data alone does not shift behaviour; community-level norm change requires persistent, trusted, locally-rooted organisations — exactly what WROs and feminist coalitions provide through community embeddedness and accountability structures.

E.7 Building Coalition Power: Collaboration, Leadership, Resilience

Coalition power across the four countries rests on the same three pillars — collaboration, leadership and financial resilience — but each is unevenly developed.



Evidentiary summary: coalition power, rooted in collaboration, leadership and financial resilience, overcomes fragmentation and under-resourcing in women's rights movements.

Figure E.1.: Building coalition power in women's rights organisations and networks.

Only 28.6% of surveyed WROs/networks report regular cross-movement strategy sessions of measured frequency, despite traditional leaders being consistently identified as the most trusted first responders across all four countries. Intergenerational leadership and male allyship — through structures such as Nigeria's He-for-She university clubs — are strongly linked to long-term coalition sustainability. Most critically, 100% of WROs/coalitions/networks surveyed report struggling with financial fragmentation, underscoring the case for multi-year, flexible institutional funding over project-cycle grants.

Annex F: Objectives and the Dual-Pathway Digitalisation Framework

This annex presents the five research objectives that framed the Her Voice study design, and the dual-pathway framework used throughout this report to explain when digitalisation empowers women and when it exposes them to harm.

F.1 The Five Her Voice Research Objectives

1. Identify key climate and digital VAWG impacts across the four study countries.
2. Disaggregate data by vulnerable sub-groups (age, geography, disability, displacement status).
3. Combine quantitative and qualitative analysis, linked to feminist coalition-building structures.
4. Provide tailored, country-specific and regional policy recommendations.
5. Create visually engaging advocacy materials for policymakers, donors and communities.

F.2 The Dual-Pathway Framework

Across all four countries, digitalisation is characterised as an ambivalent force — a 'dual pathway' that can empower or endanger women depending on six interacting structural and

individual mediating factors, rather than on connectivity or device ownership alone.

The Dual-Pathway Framework: Digitalisation as Empowerment vs. Endangerment

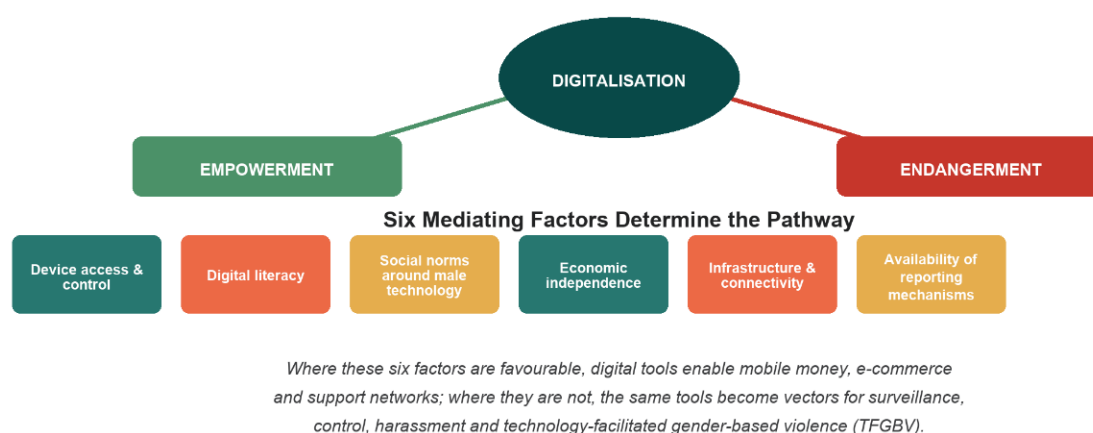


Figure E.2: The dual-pathway framework — digitalisation as empowerment vs. endangerment.
“Women have more phones than men. That’s the trouble... unless I seize your phone before you buy me a phone.” — Men’s FGD participant, Ghana Fieldwork Report, 2025

Where these six factors are favourable — digital literacy, supportive social norms, economic independence, functioning infrastructure and trusted reporting mechanisms — digital tools enable mobile money use, e-commerce participation and access to support networks. Where they are not, the same tools become vectors for surveillance, control, harassment and technology-facilitated gender-based violence. This framework underpins the analysis in Section 7 (Digitalisation and VAW) and the disaggregated findings in Section 8.

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