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RESILIENT, INCLUSIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTS (RISE) CHALLENGE REPORT 2019–2022



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Acronyms

AGENT	IUCN's Advancing Gender in the Environment Program
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ARM	Alliance for Responsible Mining
ASEFA	Action to Protect Abandoned Women and Children
ASM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CI	Conservation International
CREAW	Center for Rights, Education, and Awareness
CSAGA	The Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
EPIC	Exploratory Programs and Innovation Competitions
FAA	Fixed Amount Award
FGRM	REDD+ Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GenDev	USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub
HHI	Harvard Humanitarian Initiative
iDARE	Identify, Design, Apply, Record, Expand
IFDP	Innovation and Training for Development and Peace
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KWCA	Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association
LEMU	Land Equity Movement of Uganda
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MEP	Male Engagement Program
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPRR	Principles, Practices, Rights, and Responsibilities
PROMSEX	Center for the Promotion and Defense of Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
RISE	Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments
SAA	Social Analysis and Action
SOCADIDO	Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organization
TA	Technical Assistance
ToT	Training of Trainers
TTWCA	Taita Taveta Wildlife Conservancies Association
TWP	Trees, Water, & People
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
Utz Che'	Community Forestry Association of Guatemala Utz Che'
WfWI	Women for Women International
WI-HER	Women Influencing Health, Education, and Rule of Law



Executive Summary

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The United States Agency for International Development (USAID's) Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev) developed the Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments (RISE) Challenge under the USAID Catalyst Project to increase awareness of and develop solutions at the nexus of environmental conservation and gender-based violence (GBV). As the impacts of climate change accelerate, addressing the interconnection between GBV and environmental destruction is critical to ensure the security and development of nations, communities, and individuals around the globe.

The RISE Challenge was initially launched in 2019 (RISE 1.0) and four programs were selected for funding. In 2020, under RISE 2.0, five programs were selected for funding. All nine RISE grantees have addressed GBV within environmental programs focused on conservation, artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), and land tenure and property rights while working with local communities in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Fiji, Guatemala, Kenya, Peru, Uganda, and Vietnam.

One of the primary objectives of the challenge is to test proven and promising approaches that prevent and respond to GBV across environmental sectors. This took many forms among RISE grantees, from helping men and women secure land rights, to empowering women miners to advocate for better treatment, to supporting safeguarding policies within conservation organizations.

While each approach is slightly different and was adapted to be culturally appropriate, including through the use of local languages, there are underlying similarities across the programs. Each employs principles of localization, including stakeholder mapping and co-creation, engages trusted decision-makers in the community, draws on rights-based frameworks, and uses a series of facilitated discussions and training to support community-led change. While the grantees achieved varying levels of success, they all gained valuable insights through their implementation.

The RISE Challenge incentivized partnerships between environment and gender organizations. RISE aimed to build a cohort of organizations dedicated to addressing the GBV-environment nexus within their RISE program and beyond. The challenge management team used an adaptive approach, encouraging grantees to experiment, reflect, learn, and adapt to findings and impacts. Strong partnership results enhanced the achievement of program results and contributed to progress in key partnership outcome areas, such as increased ability to work with other organizations.

RISE sought to influence the intersection of GBV and environmental programming at both the community and institutional levels. By supporting grantees to form innovative cross-sectoral partnerships, pilot implementation approaches that integrated GBV and environment, and gather and share evidence on their interconnection, the challenge simultaneously affected change among participants across the world, within the grantee organizations themselves, and at USAID.

Over the course of implementation, the RISE grantees impacted nearly 15,000 direct beneficiaries and over 92,000 indirect beneficiaries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Central and Latin America. Through their approaches, they successfully increased awareness of the link between GBV and environmental degradation, enhanced the capacity of the communities they serve to address both issues in an integrated manner, and achieved positive GBV prevention and response outcomes.

Introduction



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Background

GBV and environmental degradation—amplified by climate change—are among the world’s most critical challenges, both with a complex and widespread impact. Pervasive GBV and environmental destruction affect the security and well-being of nations, communities, and individuals; jeopardize development goals; and contribute to cycles of vulnerability. Ending GBV and securing environmental sustainability are global, interlinked priorities, yet are rarely addressed together.

GBV refers to any harmful threat or act directed at an individual or group based on actual or perceived biological sex, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, and/or lack of adherence to varying socially constructed norms around masculinity and femininity.¹ It can take many forms, including sexual, psychological, community, economic, institutional, and intimate partner violence. Given pervasive gender inequalities that almost universally affect women’s unequal access to resources and rights, a majority of victims are women, and it is estimated that GBV affects more than one in three women worldwide.

In 2019, USAID commissioned a study from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to explore the ways in which GBV is used to maintain or promote unequal gendered power dynamics surrounding the ownership of, access to, uses of, benefits derived from, and control over natural resources. Titled Gender-Based Violence and Environment Linkages: The Violence of Inequality, the research revealed that GBV is pervasive across environmental sectors and is used systematically to control, enforce, and protect existing privileges around natural resources. National and customary laws,

1 USAID. (2021). “Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response.”

societal gender norms, and traditional gender roles dictate who can access and control natural resources, often resulting in the marginalization of women compared to men.

Demonstrated increases in gender inequality, power imbalances, and GBV—including sexual violence, domestic violence, and early childhood marriage—were noted in response to the impacts of climate change and worsening environmental conditions. For example, the report found that the deprivation of land rights can be employed as a form of economic GBV, as it leaves women dependent on male relatives for land security with limited means to withdraw from or influence situations of violence. Further, discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes shape how women and men working to protect the environment are treated, which can ultimately influence the effectiveness of their outcomes.

The report found that opportunities to integrate and address GBV and environmental sustainability together are limited due to a lack of awareness of their correlation, limited evidence-based solutions, and insufficient coordination and collaboration among environmental, gender, and other relevant organizations. While some promising practices do exist, more methodologies and tools are needed to better understand and address GBV related to land and natural resources.



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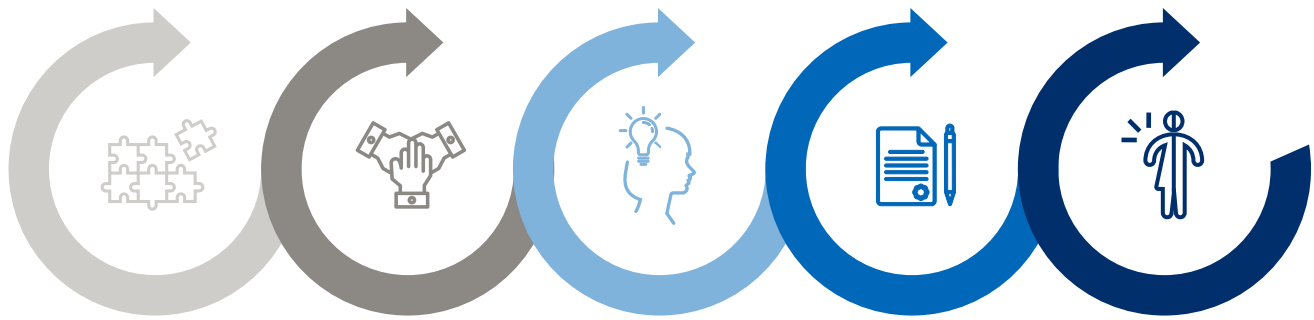
Overview

In response to these findings, USAID’s GenDev developed the RISE Challenge under the USAID Catalyst Project. To develop the challenge statement and objectives, the team convened 35 stakeholders from organizations focused on environmental, gender or GBV, and human rights issues—many of whom had never collaborated before—for a two-day co-creation workshop in June 2019. This participatory design process was critical to establish the parameters and criteria for success informed by organizational needs and on-the-ground realities.

The challenge had four main objectives:

- Increase awareness of the nexus between environmental conservation and GBV
- Incentivize, source, and test promising or proven interventions that prevent and respond to GBV across environmental sectors
- Engage and encourage non-traditional partners and partnerships to respond to and elevate this issue
- Build and communicate an evidence base for interventions that successfully address GBV in environmental programs

THEORY OF CHANGE



IF USAID's RISE Challenge incentivizes partnerships between environment and gender organizations to identify, implement, test, and raise awareness about policies and practices to address GBV in programs that focus on the access, use, control, and management of natural resources

THEN organizations (RISE grantees) will form cross-sector partnerships, test policies and practices to address GBV across natural resource programs, and share learnings

SO THAT RISE grantees' capacity to address GBV across natural resource programs is increased and uptake of evidence, tools, and lessons learned from implementation of approaches is increased

SO THAT policies and practices within RISE grantee organizations and USAID to promote greater integration of approaches and collaboration of organizations to address GBV in natural resource programs are increased

SO THAT natural resources programs that prevent or reduce instances of GBV can contribute to development outcomes.

Grantees

The RISE Challenge was initially launched in 2019 (RISE 1.0) and received 190 applications from 49 countries, with four programs selected for funding. RISE 2.0, launched in 2020, garnered 240 applications from 66 countries, with five programs selected for funding. The nine RISE grantees addressed GBV within environmental programs focused on conservation, ASM, and land tenure and property rights. In addition to launching at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, most programs operated in challenging environments, including post-conflict countries and/or locations with large numbers of internally displaced persons or returning migrants, adding an extra layer of complexity to their work.



Grantee Profiles

Guatemala

FORESTRY

Utz Che' & TWP

Tz'unun: Ending Environmental Violence Against Indigenous Women in Guatemala Through Empowerment in Community Forestry, Agroecology, and Collective Healing Spaces

Years: 2021–2022

Types of GBV Addressed: Physical, Psychological, Sexual

Direct Beneficiaries: 487 (301 women; 186 men)

Uganda

LAND TENURE AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Trócaire, LEMU, & SOCADIDO

Securing Land Rights and Ending Gender Exclusion

Years: 2020–2022

Types of GBV Addressed: Physical, Psychological

Direct Beneficiaries: 9,910 (5,280 women; 4,630 men)

Colombia

ARTISANAL AND SMALL SCALE MINING

ARM & MIT D-LAB

Creative Capacity-Building to Address GBV in the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Sector

Years: 2020–2022

Types of GBV Addressed: Economic, Physical, Psychological, Sexual

Direct Beneficiaries: 93 women

Kenya

CONSERVATION

KWCA, CARE, CREAM, & TTWCA

Advancing Equitable Gender, Social and Power Norms in Community Conservancies

Years: 2021–2022

Types of GBV Addressed: Physical, Psychological

Direct Beneficiaries: 601 (280 women; 321 men)

Vietnam

CONSERVATION

WildAct & CSAGA

Reducing GBV in Vietnamese Conservation

Years: 2020–2022

Types of GBV Addressed: Psychological, Sexual

Direct Beneficiaries: 325 (222 women; 103 men)

Peru

FORESTRY

CI & PROMSEX

Alto Mayo Landscape Without Gender Violence

Years: 2021–2022

Types of GBV Addressed: Economic, Physical, Psychological, Sexual

Direct Beneficiaries: 96 (57 women; 39 men)

DRC

LAND TENURE AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

WfWI & IFDP

Rising Up! Promoting Congolese Women's Land Access and Preventing GBV in Eastern DRC

Years: 2020–2022

Types of GBV Addressed: Economic, Physical, Psychological

Direct Beneficiaries: 2,859 (1,418 women; 1,441 men)

ARTISANAL AND SMALL SCALE MINING

ASEFA & HHI

Resource-ful Empowerment: Elevating Women's Voices for Human and Environmental Protection in Congolese Small-Scale Mining

Years: 2020–2021

Types of GBV Addressed: Economic, Physical, Psychological, Sexual

Direct Beneficiaries: 720 (360 women; 360 men)

Fiji

FORESTRY

Marstel-Day & WI-HER

Gender Empowerment and Transformation: Tackling Resource-Based Conflict and GBV in Fiji

Years: 2020–2022

Types of GBV Addressed: Economic, Physical, Psychological, Sexual

Direct Beneficiaries: 102 (46 women; 56 men)



Challenge Impact

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RISE sought to influence the intersection of GBV and environmental programming at both the community and institutional levels. By supporting grantees to form innovative cross-sectoral partnerships, piloting implementation approaches that integrated GBV and the environment, and gathering and sharing evidence on their interconnection, the challenge simultaneously achieved positive outcomes among participants throughout the world as well within the grantee organizations themselves and at USAID. Based on this success, RISE 3.0 was launched in 2022 and is being managed by IUCN.

BY THE NUMBERS: Challenge Launch and Implementation



\$4 million

invested to design and implement the challenge

430 
applications

from 66 countries

9 prime organizations

11 partner organizations

5 organizations receiving USAID funding for the first time

6 new partnerships between gender- and environment-focused organizations



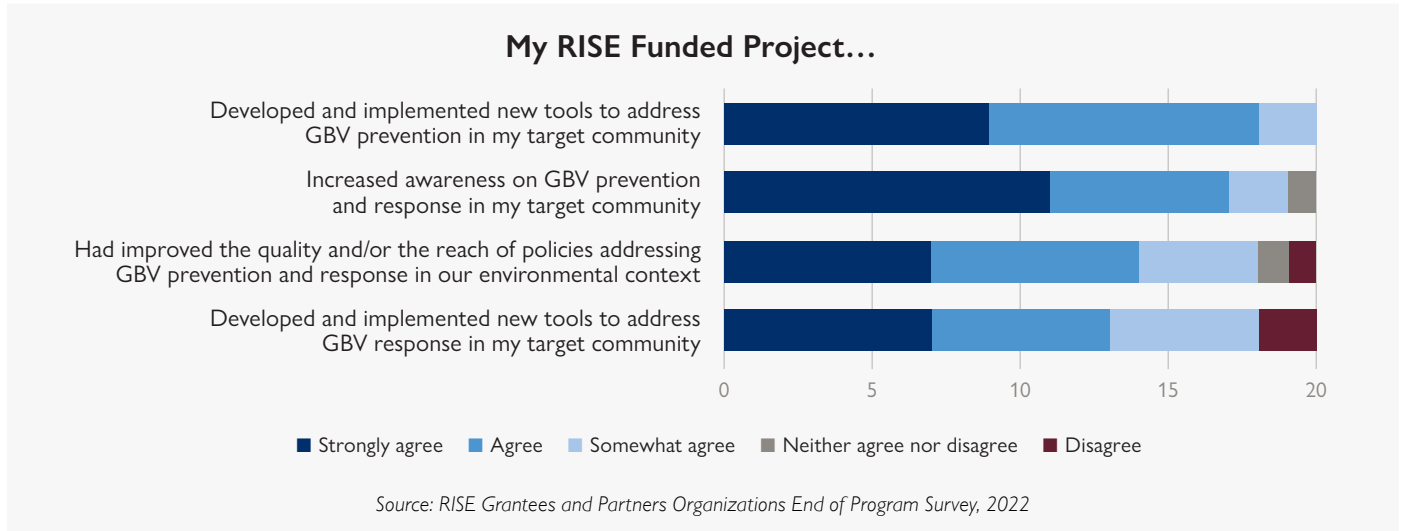
9 projects funded in eight countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Central and Latin America



65 expert judges

Community Impact

KEY RESULTS 	3	50	15,133	92,478+
	Organizations working with indigenous communities	Tools and knowledge products developed	Direct beneficiaries (8,058 women and 7,136 men)	Indirect beneficiaries



The challenge worked with indigenous communities in Fiji, Guatemala, Kenya, and Peru, as well as with people living in conflict and post-conflict areas in Colombia, the DRC, and Uganda. The RISE Challenge grantees also trained other conservation organizations in Vietnam, Kenya, and Peru on approaches to incorporate GBV prevention and response into their environmental programming, including tools to identify and shift harmful gender norms and technical assistance (TA) to develop safeguarding policies.



RISE grantees used a variety of proven and promising approaches to prevent and respond to GBV. While each approach is slightly different and adapted to be culturally appropriate, there are underlying similarities. Each employs principles of localization, including stakeholder mapping and co-creation, engages trusted decision-makers in the community, draws on rights-based frameworks, and uses a series of facilitated discussions and training to support community-led change.

Through these approaches, which are described below, RISE grantees have successfully increased awareness of the link between GBV and environmental degradation, enhanced the capacity of the communities they serve to address both issues in an integrated manner, and achieved positive GBV prevention and response outcomes.

Approaches Adapted and Developed Under RISE

<p>SASA! Faith²</p>	<p>SASA! Faith is an evidence-based community mobilization approach to prevent GBV. In Uganda, Trócaire adapted SASA! Faith to engage religious leaders and community activists to lead their communities through a phased process to change individuals' attitudes as well as community norms and structures around women's land rights. The four phases of SASA! Faith are: start (acknowledge there is a problem), awareness (engage people in better understanding the problem), support (help people consider alternatives while receiving support and encouragement from each other), and action (create ways to change together and sustain that change).</p>	<p>Over 24 months, Trócaire saw an increase in knowledge³ of GBV in 64 percent of women (1,059 of 1,666) and 43 percent of men (522 of 1,218).⁴</p>
<p>Social Analysis and Action (SAA)</p>	<p>SAA, developed by Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE),⁵ is a facilitated four-step process through which individuals and communities challenge harmful gender norms that negatively impact women's and men's well-being and enable them to collectively envision and create gender-equitable alternatives. In Kenya, Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) worked with CARE to adapt and apply SAA in the conservation sector for the first time.</p>	<p>As a result, four conservancies have reflected on how norms relate to gender and influence GBV, and challenged harmful norms by electing an increased number of women rangers and women board members in conservancy management.</p>
<p>Identify, Design, Apply, Record, Expand (iDARE) Methodology⁶</p>	<p>The iDare methodology enables stakeholders to assess their existing local system; identify gaps, barriers, and inequities; and then design, test, and scale local solutions. In Fiji, Marstel-Day and Women Influencing Health, Education, and Rule of Law (WI-HER) adapted the iDare methodology to apply a GBV lens and examine existing grievances and conflicts around land and resource rights in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) programming.</p>	<p>The grievance redress framework now integrates steps that manage GBV with appropriate sensitivity and awareness, and includes referral processes for GBV survivors. In addition, 78 REDD+ stakeholders were trained in GBV prevention.</p>
<p>Movement-Building</p>	<p>Movement-building is a facilitated approach where women share their personal and collective stories to build solidarity, design solutions, and advocate for the skills they need to implement the solutions.</p>	<p>In Colombia, the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) D-Lab adapted the movement-building approach to engage 48 women small-scale gold miners in three movement-building workshops, and 100 percent of participants had an improved understanding of GBV as a result.</p>

2 Trócaire. (2016). *SASA! Faith: A Guide for Faith Communities to Prevent Violence Against Women and HIV*.

3 Trócaire indicator measures the proportion of community women and men with knowledge on GBV. GBV prevention involves having the right knowledge on GBV, a positive attitude towards GBV and methods to avoid its occurrence.

4 The number reported is from Indicator 1.1.2.1: Positive change in knowledge on GBV of women and men at community level. Trocaire conducted monthly surveys with community members to monitor the knowledge levels of the community in GBV before, during, and after awareness-raising. The community members provided feedback on the effectiveness of the awareness-raising strategies. The survey data was analyzed bi-annually. The baseline was 0 and the target was 60 female community members.

5 CARE. *Social Analysis and Action (SAA)*.

6 WI-HER. *iDARE Methodology*.

Interconnectedness Curriculum	<p>Action to Protect Abandoned Women and Children (ASEFA) and Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) created and tested two versions of a curriculum focused on shifting harmful gender norms and promoting safe mining practices to determine which was most effective. The core curriculum and interconnectedness curriculum emphasized women's protection and environmental best practices. The interconnectedness curriculum also incorporated an emphasis on the links between people in mining towns, as well as the links between people and the environment.</p>	<p>In total, 509 people (269 men and 240 women) were trained on GBV prevention, and 100 percent of participants in both curricula reported increased knowledge of safe mining practices, such as reinforcement of mining tunnels and land recovery post-mining. However, the endline study confirmed that the interconnectedness curriculum was more effective at reducing sexual harassment and sexual coercion.⁷</p>
Collective Healing Spaces (CHS)	<p>Collective Healing Spaces are safe spaces for women to gather and identify different forms of violence, share their experiences with GBV, collectively build solutions, and empower women as decision-makers in the community. Collective Healing Spaces can be physical spaces, such as a community center or school, or virtual spaces created through a video calling platform or WhatsApp.</p>	<p>In Guatemala, the Community Forestry Association of Guatemala Utz Che' (Utz Che') and Trees, Water, & People (TWP) established nine Collective Healing Spaces and trained 160 indigenous women in GBV prevention and response. After participating in the Collective Healing Spaces, 73 percent of women showed an improved understanding of GBV and knowledge of support services.</p>
Focal Contact Points Training	<p>Focal Contact Points training is a curriculum to train volunteers within a conservation organization to become advocates for colleagues who experience GBV or sexual harassment in the workplace. Focal Contact Points support survivors to navigate organizational policies and procedures and refer them to external services as requested.</p>	<p>In Vietnam, WildAct and the Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender (CSAGA) established 27 Focal Contact Points (21 women and 6 men), and 18 local and international conservation organizations signed up to join the Focal Contact Points network. The Focal Contact Points were trained as a cohort and received follow-up support from WildAct and through an online support group created for Focal Contact Points.</p>

■ Proven approach adapted for the environmental context ■ New approach developed under RISE

Testimonials from RISE Trainings



“I am among the women of Kailo who exchanged sex to have certain services on the site. I was doing it... for survival because I lacked the financial means, but since I was persuaded by the training, I learned that I was running the risk of coming into contact with [acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)] and other sexually transmitted diseases by doing so. I [decided] with four other friends to give [that] up while looking for other means for survival, even if the cost of living is so difficult here in Bikenge.”

— Participant in an ASEFA training

⁷ This number is derived from the baseline and endline assessment conducted with project participants that were asked about experiences with sexual harassment in the last year and last month. The interconnectedness curriculum group had 82 percent lower odds of past-year harassment ($p < 0.0001$). Twenty percent of women in the core curriculum group compared to 4.2 percent of women in the interconnectedness curriculum group experienced past-month harassment.

“I personally can say that we have become more aware of what gender equality entails. The training opened our eyes to understand that societal power norms are the key barriers towards women’s participation in conservancies and many undertakings in the community.”

— KWCA staff member on SAA training

“For me, this project is an important opportunity to minimize conflicts between girls and boys around land inheritance... in the Nyangezi community. I have two wives with whom I have 16 children, including ten girls and six boys. Eight of my daughters and four of my sons are already married. With this training, the idea that I should bequeath land also to my daughters just became a decision. I will distribute my land fairly among my sons and my daughters. I am also committed to helping my daughters secure their lands by obtaining customary land titles to prevent them from losing the land in the future and this will serve as a lesson for all the men in my village.”

— 65-year-old male participant in a Women for Women International (WfWI) training



CAPACITY-BUILDING

KEY RESULTS



2,215

individuals trained in GBV prevention and response, including 930 women

71%

of trained individuals reported increased awareness of GBV

60%

of trained women report increased awareness of GBV

GBV is a sensitive topic that, in most of the contexts in which RISE grantees operate, is not openly discussed or even recognized by staff or community members. In response, all nine RISE grantees included awareness-raising components to increase community understanding of both GBV prevention and response and its connection with environmental stewardship. As the GBV-environment nexus was a new topic for many grantees, they used a multi-prong awareness campaign, first focusing on their staff and other key implementing partners, and then designing outreach efforts to reach target community members. Programs employed a range of communication methods best suited to their target audience, including workshops, community dialogues, radio broadcasts, podcasts, theater performances, Instagram posts, and Facebook groups. When community gatherings were prohibited due to COVID-19, some organizations drove through towns broadcasting their messages via loudspeaker. These sensitization interventions, often aimed at leaders or other respected community members, became foundational elements of RISE projects.

Having equipped communities more broadly with the tools to acknowledge GBV itself, grantees then focused capacity-building efforts on addressing GBV within environmental programs.



GBV PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

KEY RESULTS



14

grantee and grantee partner organizations changed policies and/or practices to integrate GBV into environmental programming

85%

of female participants assisted to increase access to productive economic resources*

59%

of participants reported increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities

* Based on reporting from two grantees, Trócaire and Utz Che'

Women's Empowerment – Participant Voices



“I leave here with my most vivid hopes of getting ahead as a woman, and that my voice will be heard.”

— Participant in the ARM/MIT D-Lab program

“Conservation International has vindicated women. It has helped us recover our customs we were about to lose.”

— Participant in the Conservation International (CI)/Center for the Promotion and Defense of Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights (PROMSEX) program

“When that organization started and I entered Sustainable Family Agriculture, I entered training workshops... and my fear was gone, and I went to defend myself, I have the right, I am a woman, and women have a right. Just with that training, I woke up.”

— Participant in the Utz Che'/TWP program



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RISE grantees have contributed to women's empowerment by providing judgment-free spaces for women to discuss their experiences with GBV, identifying and referring survivors to organizations that provide GBV support services, spreading awareness about women's rights, and supporting women's economic advancement. All programs updated referral lists during COVID-19 as GBV was increasing and the availability and accessibility of services were decreasing. In the DRC, WfWI formed a partnership with the Panzi Foundation, another local non-governmental organization (NGO) that provides psychosocial support for GBV survivors, while in Guatemala, Utz Che' created safe spaces and used indigenous healing practices to address the trauma that women had experienced.

In addition, tools such as ARM and MIT D-Lab's Movement-Building Curriculum (see [text box](#)) gave women the confidence to tackle issues related to GBV and the environment. The two organizations observed, *“Prior to the movement-building workshops, women miners from Andes would ask a male leader to represent them, but after completing the workshops, the women established new women leaders to participate in the mining meetings. The women also have begun to get involved in protests and mining political activities. They developed and implemented their own campaign to become recognized as professional miners and regularly visit political figures to advocate for their interests.”*

Innovative Movement-Building Approach Helps Women Address GBV in Mining Communities

ARM and MIT D-Lab's movement-building methodology is designed to mitigate GBV and promote environmental stewardship in mining territories using three proven approaches devised by Harvard University, MIT D-Lab, and ARM, respectively:

- Public Narrative uses personal and collective stories to build solidarity and mobilize groups into action around joint objectives
- Creative Capacity-Building employs co-design to harness local creativity and knowledge to design solutions to identified challenges
- Advocacy Capacity-Building empowers miners with advocacy skills to influence changes in governance at local and national levels

Gender Norms and Engaging Men

RISE grantees recognized that empowering women alone was not sufficient; they also needed to create a better enabling environment by engaging men and people in power to address cultural and structural barriers to women's advancement.

In response, five programs (CI, KWCA, Trócaire, WfWI, and WildAct) successfully engaged men in dialogues about positive masculinity and gender norms to shift long-standing perceptions of men's and women's roles and foster related behavior change.



“In [the] Nasula Conservancy, we had to make a lot of efforts to ensure that we women are in leadership positions. For me, it has taken quite a lot of struggles and fighting for my rights among the men to ensure that the voice of women is captured at the decision-making table. I mobilized women from everywhere around my conservancy to ensure that I was able to have their support...I managed to get a position on the board due to my mobilization of the women in my community. On the board, I was able to push all the agendas that support [women] in their community.”

— Chairperson at the Nasulu Conservancy in Kenya

Men Mobilizing Men to Spur Gender Equality

Sarah and Adroa, a couple living in the Katakwi District of Uganda, have been married for more than 20 years, during which time Adroa verbally and physically abused Sarah and spent much of the family's resources on alcohol. Sarah tried reporting his transgressions to the Local Council to no effect. When Trócaire began implementing the Securing Land Rights and Ending Gender Exclusion program, Sarah urged her husband to attend the community meetings, but it was not until a male clan leader added his encouragement that Adroa agreed to go. The topic that day was GBV—its root causes, forms, and consequences—and Adroa took the lessons to heart. He now helps Sarah with household chores, and it is Sarah who handles the family's finances. As Sarah remarked, *“He was touched and when he returned home, that was the turning point in our family. Now the way things are done in our family is very different from the way things used to be.”*

In South Kivu, the DRC, discriminatory norms are coupled with women's limited knowledge of their land rights, which results in the reinforcement of power imbalances and women's subordination to male partners. Even when women have legal rights over land, norms around decision-making in the community and household leave them susceptible to property and land grabbing, which are often accompanied by GBV. WfWI and Innovation and Training for Development and Peace (IFDP) addressed this by engaging male chiefs and community leaders in dialogue and supporting men to register their land.

By the end of the program, 133 women had received customary land titles free from violence.

One of the village chiefs in the DRC was originally against the registration of land in a woman's name, but after participating in the men's training, he changed his perspective, gave land to his wife, and encouraged other men in his village to do the same. He commented, *“Thanks to the discussions on women's access and control of land, I understood that women also have the same rights as men. I started to sensitize the men of my village and I like it because there are men who have followed my example and who have already granted land to their wives. It is useful for household security.”*

Trócaire took a similar approach in Uganda, engaging male clan leaders to mobilize other men to attend trainings focused on GBV awareness and behavior change (see [text box](#)). The program achieved a significant drop in the percentage of women who reported that they were likely to experience GBV when obtaining or exercising a right to land, from 85 percent at the midterm to six percent at the endline.

Other programs challenged gender norms by highlighting their contradiction with official policies, whether those of indigenous communities or national laws. As a foundation for the implementation of its gender-sensitive alternative dispute resolution mechanism, the Trócaire program printed a Principles, Practices, Rights, and Responsibilities (PPRR) booklet in the local language and facilitated awareness sessions so that everyone could understand the rules in the community. They observed, “The PPRR written rules made it easier for community members to challenge the statement that ‘under customary land tenure, women do not own land.’ The rules spell out the responsibilities of the traditional institutions to protect the land rights of women and children, and the need for spousal consent to sales of land.”

IUCN’s GBV-Environment study noted that women park rangers face specific GBV risks: “When the remoteness of workplaces is compounded by men vastly outnumbering women ranger colleagues, along with inadequate housing and facilities, the risk for rape is high.”

In Vietnam, WildAct worked with CSAGA to address the challenges of GBV and workplace harassment in the conservation sector by engaging men. The project empowered women by increasing their agency while improving the conditions and power relations in their work environment by engaging male leaders. For example, with support from its male director, Cat Ba National Park has agreed to develop and pilot a safeguarding policy and has taken steps to train its staff to address issues of sexual harassment.

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Using Gender-Sensitive Alternative Dispute Resolution to Support Women’s Land Rights

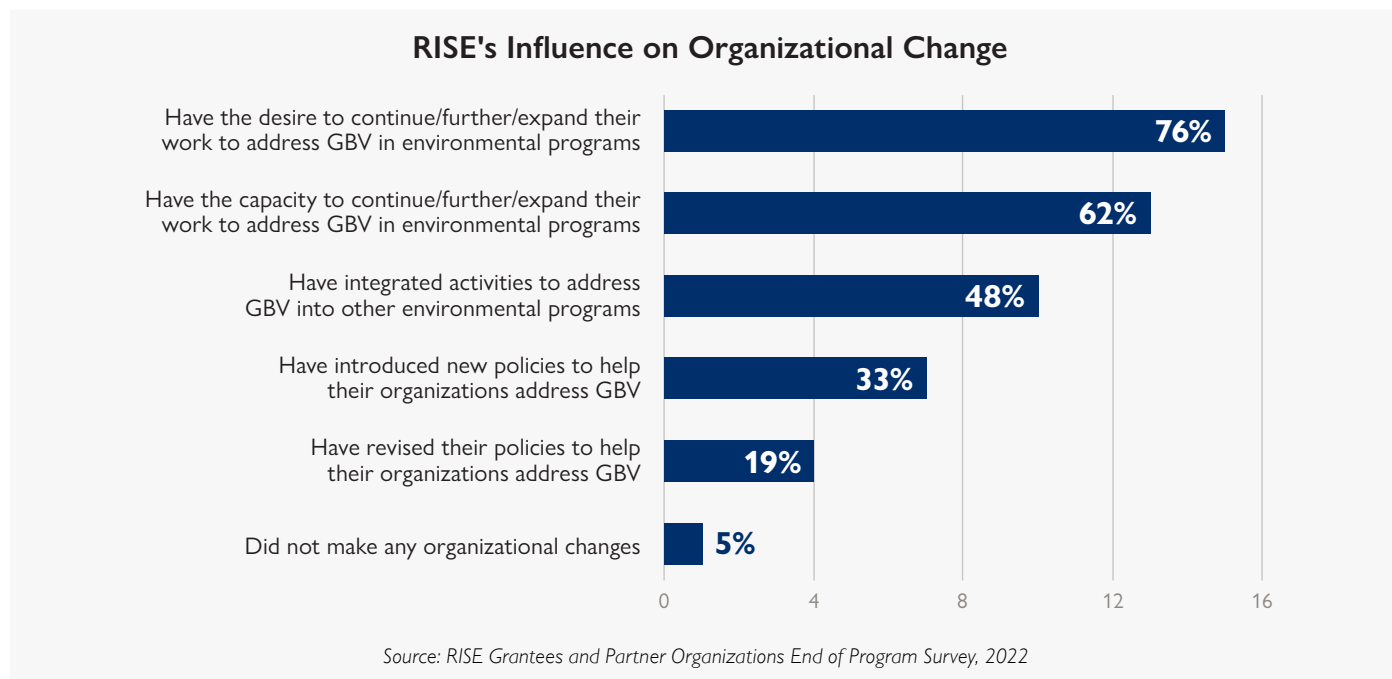
An alternative dispute resolution is a structured negotiation process in which the parties to a dispute negotiate their own settlement with the help of a trained, neutral intermediary. In eastern Uganda, where—according to a 2017 study conducted by Land Equity Movement of Uganda (LEMU) and the Infectious Diseases Research Collaboration—up to 80 percent of the unmarried or divorced women who reported land cases to the traditional structures experienced a combination of violence as a result, an alternative dispute resolution represents an important alternative to the formal court system. Trócaire’s program developed a Gender-Sensitive Alternative Dispute Resolution Toolkit that covered, among other topics, steps to mitigate risks to women engaging in an alternative dispute resolution such as training mediators and leaders in gender sensitivity, inviting security officials to be present at negotiations, assessing patterns of violence, and monitoring unintended consequences. The program successfully employed its gender-sensitive alternative dispute resolution process to help 98 women and men resolve their land disputes in a manner that allowed them to continue to live harmoniously as family members and neighbors.



Similarly, in Kenya, the SAA tool opened spaces for community dialogues that are important to challenging gender norms. KWCA observed, “There is a change of attitude among the conservancies as male and female community members are becoming more responsive to female leadership in conservancy management. Compared to previous years, after the implementation of the SAA training and community dialogue sessions, there is a rise in the number of elected board members in conservancy management. Also, more women are pursuing conservation jobs that were initially male-dominated, resulting in more female rangers.”

Policy and Practice Changes

Understanding GBV and environment linkages is critical for effective policymaking, planning, and interventions, as these issues influence one another in ways that can hinder or negate progress. Fourteen grantees and partner organizations have reported changing their policies and practices related to GBV prevention and response, and all but one are in the process or expressed the intention to do so.



Some RISE grantees had an impact on official policies and practices related to GBV prevention and response at the local and national levels. In Guatemala, where women’s exclusion from decision-making within community-based organizations left them more vulnerable to various forms of GBV, Utz Che’ worked with women to advocate for greater political participation and increased recognition of their rights. Community-based organizations are now reinvesting funds in the management and initiatives of women’s councils and have also revised their statutes to include the women’s councils in decision-making processes. Utz Che’ also implemented interventions to encourage agricultural practices that increase resilience to climate change and foster greater food security. Women’s groups that participated in the Sustainable Family Agriculture program successfully lobbied to incorporate local crops grown on their land into elementary school meals via the School Feeding Law and are now receiving direct payments from the Guatemalan government for their role in food production.

In Fiji, Marstel-Day successfully designed an adapted, gender-sensitive feedback and grievance redress mechanism (FGRM+) for the country’s REDD+ program that can be easily scaled and replicated for other national-level payment for ecosystem services schemes. In Peru, after indigenous women informed public officials from the nearest Women’s Emergency Center of the significant social stigma around reporting a GBV incident outside the community, the agency agreed that staff would no longer wear their institutional uniform—a conspicuous red vest labeled “Ministry of Women”—when responding to GBV complaints in indigenous communities.

Generation of Local Evidence on the Linkages Between GBV and the Environment

GBV undermines efforts toward gender equality and women's empowerment, and failing to address GBV issues in environmental programming weakens successful interventions and harms the overall well-being of communities and ecosystems. It is essential to build evidence to better understand these dynamics, including properly preventing and responding to GBV across environmental sectors. However, even when environmental projects are aware of GBV, they may not pursue strategies to address it because there are limited interventions in the environmental space, and as a result, limited evidence to support them. RISE grantees took significant steps to overcome this shortfall. Five RISE grantees undertook a comprehensive analysis to deepen their understanding of GBV in the ASM sector in Colombia and the DRC, GBV in indigenous conservation in Peru and Fiji, and GBV in land tenure in the DRC. The gender or GBV analyses and documentation of their implementation not only informed their program design and implementation, but also contributed to the collective knowledge base on risks and successful approaches to address GBV.



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In the DRC, ASEFA and HHI tested two different versions of a new curriculum to address environmental protection and women's rights in the ASM sector. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to the core curriculum, while the other half were assigned to the interconnectedness curriculum (see [page 11](#)). The differences between the two curricula groups were rigorously evaluated via a pre- and post-survey assessing self-reported attitudes and behaviors among both participants and staff before versus after the intervention. Both curricula resulted in significant increases in gender equitable attitudes, namely:

- An 11 percent increase in participants agreeing that men and women should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities.
- Tangible evidence that the curricula changed attitudes about pay: at one site, men and women who attended the training worked together to advocate for equal pay in mining towns and were able to raise wages for women.
- Significant increase in knowledge in several areas: a 61 percent increase for safe digging practices, a 94 percent increase for reinforcement of mining tunnels, and a 150 percent increase for land recovery post-mining.
- A 25 percent increase in agreement with the statement *"I believe that the well-being of people and the well-being of the environment are linked."*
- Participants in the interconnectedness curriculum reported lower rates of sexual harassment and having to trade sex for access to mining towns during the project period compared to those in the core curriculum group. This is particularly noteworthy considering that the project was conducted during the pandemic when women faced a heightened risk of economic and sexual exploitation.⁸

⁸ African Union Commission, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2020). [Gender-Based Violence In Africa During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

Institutional Impact

In addition to community development, RISE also raised awareness of the GBV-environment nexus among grantee organizations themselves as well as USAID and other partners. Beyond just generating insights, the challenge successfully influenced the ways in which these groups operate.



AWARENESS-RAISING

KEY RESULTS



52

communications products created

111,066

website page views

To increase awareness of the nexus between environmental conservation and GBV—one of the challenge’s four primary objectives—RISE staff, stakeholders, and grantees engaged in strategic communications efforts at multiple levels to share information on the need for GBV-sensitive environmental programming, both internally within their own organizations as well as externally among other stakeholders.

The challenge engaged 66 USAID staff from across the Agency and world to serve as expert judges responsible for evaluating challenge applications. As judges, they deepened their awareness and understanding of the GBV-environment nexus by reviewing the research⁹ underpinning the challenge, reading applications where organizations powerfully describe how they experienced the issue and proposed solutions, and obtaining new insights about proven and promising practices to address GBV.

The collaboration between USAID, IUCN, and Catalyst was instrumental in providing a strategic platform to amplify the learnings and impact of RISE via the Gender and Environment Center. Over its one-year implementation, CI Peru made three presentations to internal CI units and seven presentations to local, regional, and international stakeholders. They noted, “We believe that the greatest impact of the project is to make GBV visible not only in the Shampuyacu community but also in CI Peru... On the CI Peru side, the greatest long-term impact has been generating interest in addressing this issue in different projects, and the team is beginning to be aware of the links that exist between GBV and nature conservation and the fullness with which people, especially women, can participate in conservation actions.”

9 IUCN. (2020). Gender-Based Violence and Environment Linkages: The Violence of Inequality.

Calling Attention to the GBV-Environment Link

RISE was featured in or presented at:

- “Breaking Gender Barriers: Taking USAID’s Programming to the Next Level,” USAID’s first Agency-wide gender conference in November 2019
- USAID Internal Gender Champs Meeting in December 2020
- USAID’s briefing to the House of Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Development, International Organizations, and Global Corporate Social Impact in April 2021
- USAID Exploratory Programs and Innovation Competitions’ (EPIC) Open Innovation Training in May 2021
- IUCN World Conservation Congress in September 2021
- White House and General Services Administration Open Innovation Forum: Building Equitable Partnerships in August 2022



GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

KEY RESULTS



4

environment organizations integrated GBV for the first time

5

first-time partnerships formed between environment and gender organizations

6

gender organizations integrated environmental issues for the first time

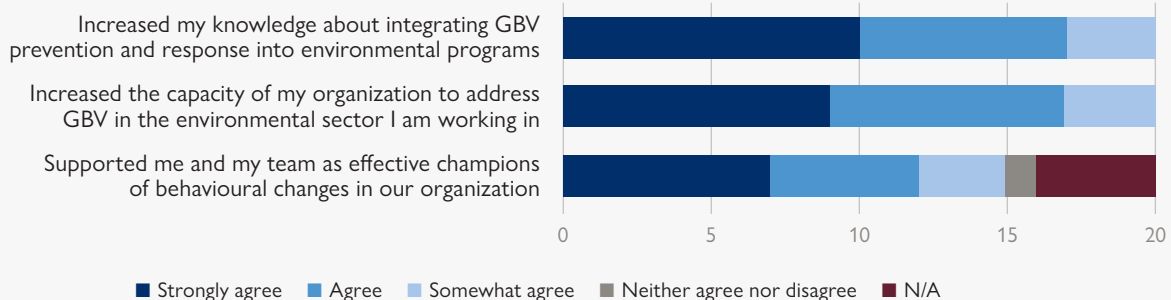
80%

of grantees reported increased performance based on knowledge/skills obtained as a result of peer learning

100%

of grantees reported added value of partnerships to address GBV in environmental programs

My RISE Funded Project...



Source: RISE Grantees and Partners Organizations End of Program Survey, 2022

All RISE programs were required to include a partnership between at least one environment and one gender organization. Through the process of implementing their projects and with support from peer learning and other TA, grantees have begun to change the way that they operate with respect to GBV and environmental programming. These changes will have lasting impacts not only on the organizations, but also on the people and communities they serve. Examples include:



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- CI's local Peru branch created a new rights-based approach and gender coordinator role to continue the group's GBV work in the Shampuyaco community and replicate the approach in four other communities where it works.
- PROMSEX, a Peruvian gender organization that partnered with CI, adapted its gender norms and GBV training approaches to work with indigenous communities and plans to continue working with indigenous groups in the future.
- International NGO WfWI introduced materials used to train change agents and men on land rights into its regular programming in the DRC, and are looking for opportunities to expand to other countries.
- IFDP, a local NGO that partnered with WfWI, adopted tools such as gender analysis and gender-sensitive budgeting in other land rights projects.
- Global environmental consulting firm Marstel-Day incorporated WI-HER's iDARE methodology, which was used in Fiji, into its conservation program in Tanzania.
- With the support of USAID, Congolese NGO ASEFA developed and rolled out a new safeguarding policy and received training on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse.
- International NGO TWP now includes a gender component in all new grant proposals based on its experience implementing RISE with partner Utz Che' in Guatemala.
- Vietnamese NGO WildAct is adapting all of its conservation programming to include addressing sexual harassment and is seeking funding to continue its partnership with CSAGA Vietnam.
- Kenyan NGO KWCA amended its constitution to incorporate a two-thirds gender principle in the composition of the national conservancies' council, ensuring greater women's representation, and added a sexual harassment clause to its membership guidelines.

RISE partnerships created added value in a number of important areas. Based on an endline project survey, 75 percent or more of respondents strongly agreed or agreed on five key elements as added value created from partnerships:

- Gaining better recognition for work
- Bringing specific expertise
- Learning new approaches to tackle GBV in an environmental context
- Learning or teaching specific skills
- Engaging with target communities

More than half also strongly agreed or agreed that partnerships contributed to attracting new opportunities for scaling or sustainability and reaching more beneficiaries.

Thanks to the Partnership in Place, We Were Able to...



Source: RISE Grantees and Partner Organizations End of Program Survey, 2022



USAID POLICIES AND PRACTICES

KEY RESULTS



1

USAID Mission where a RISE-funded project has been implemented that has adapted policies or practices to integrate GBV into environmental program design or implementation

RISE's impact and influence within USAID was more limited. In the DRC, USAID launched a new Environment and Gender Working Group to ensure Mission-wide compliance with Automated Directives System 205, which provides guidance on integrating gender equality and female empowerment in USAID programs, and to better integrate GBV into environmental programming.



© KWCA

Lessons Learned and Good Practices

Grantee Implementation



GBV PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

One of the primary objectives of the challenge is to test interventions that prevent and respond to GBV across environmental sectors. This took many forms among RISE grantees, from helping men and women secure land rights, to empowering women miners to advocate for better treatment, to supporting safeguarding policies within conservation organizations. While different approaches achieved varying levels of success, all grantees gained valuable insights through their implementation.

GOOD PRACTICE: Conducting a gender analysis with a GBV lens at program inception provides critical insights for implementation.

All RISE grantees were required to conduct a gender analysis as part of the application design process. However, several grantees chose to conduct a deeper analysis of how and why GBV manifests in their environmental sector as their first activity in implementation, which had significant benefits. For example, WfWI and IFDP's assessment informed their programmatic approach, including the theory of change, work plan, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan. They also adapted training tools and strategies as a result of their findings. After the analysis identified village chiefs as key stakeholders who could significantly influence community norms, they decided to include the chiefs in their men's engagement program. In fact, WFWI found the exercise so useful that it now conducts a gender analysis before implementing any program that addresses GBV.

GOOD PRACTICE: A highly contextualized GBV response programming, especially in indigenous communities, is most effective.

All grantees considered the cultural context in which they operated, but this was particularly important for organizations working with indigenous groups. In Peru, given Awajún perspectives on harmonious living, CI and PROMSEX focused initial GBV conversations on the importance of equal rights and equal access to opportunities for both men and women, and intentionally avoided using the word “violence” in their first meeting with the community. In Guatemala, Utz Che’ also attributed the success of its Collective Healing Spaces and Sustainable Family Agriculture initiatives to the fact that they were culturally responsive and rooted in ancestral and indigenous worldviews. Working in collaboration with the Q’anil Center for Training, Healing, and Transpersonal Research, the program developed culturally informed spaces for collective healing through the building of trust and self-esteem rooted in Mayan and Xinkan cosmovisions and community feminisms that helped participants identify different forms of GBV. During virtual and in-person meetings, participants shared knowledge to collectively build solutions and empower each other as decision-makers in community forestry and agriculture.



GOOD PRACTICE: The ability to offer referrals for GBV services is an important component of RISE programming.

All RISE projects included an element of sensitization around the very concept of GBV, which was not typically discussed in public, and in some cases, was not even recognized as a problem. As grantees spread awareness, they encountered survivors who required more urgent physical, emotional, and/or legal support. This was also true for data collectors who, in the process of asking targeted questions about GBV, encountered women in need of services to mitigate GBV. In response, seven grantees developed or updated and distributed referral pathways for organizations providing immediate services for GBV survivors. For example, ARM, ASEFA, Trócaire, and Marstel-Day updated referral lists and shared them with community leaders and other stakeholders. WfWI formed a partnership with a GBV services organization, and CI formed a connection with a local support center operated by Peru’s Ministry of Women. The COVID-19 crisis also highlighted that referral lists are living documents that need to be regularly updated to remain useful.

GOOD PRACTICE: An alternative dispute resolution offers a multitude of benefits for women as compared to formal systems.

Three grantees implemented projects adapting community alternative dispute resolution approaches to incorporate a gender lens (Marstel-Day, Trócaire, WfWI). Gender-sensitive alternative dispute resolution processes can be more effective for women than formal systems because they: 1) are generally more accessible in terms of their cost and location; 2) are conducted in local languages; 3) promote consensus rather than pass judgment in favor of one party, often those who are wealthier; 4) provide a mechanism for disputing parties to reach agreement and continue to live harmoniously; and 5) typically achieve resolution faster than formal processes. In Bukedea, Uganda, a fee of 65,000 UGX (approximately 18.10 USD) was agreed upon to facilitate the entire process of land demarcation, documentation, and alternative dispute resolution when required. Trócaire trained 191 clan leaders and influencers (63 women and 128 men) in gender-sensitive alternative dispute resolution processes for land conflict resolution and peacefully resolved 98 cases.



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LESSON LEARNED: Helping women secure land rights and empowering women in mining and conservation requires comprehensive approaches.

Two RISE programs focused on helping women secure land rights: Trócaire and WfWI. In both cases, the programs discovered that their initial approaches were not necessarily adequate to address the full complexity of the issue. In Uganda, Trócaire commented, *“We learned that women may need additional support to request their land being documented. The awareness-raising on formal and informal legal systems for land conflict resolution and the land demarcation and documentation process by itself was not sufficient.”*

Similarly, WfWI observed that women seeking land rights in the DRC often lacked financial resources to acquire land titles and noted that future programming should combine land rights activities with economic empowerment initiatives. WfWI tried to negotiate a reduced price for women to demarcate this land, but their efforts were unsuccessful. The program worked with 112 women to save 40 percent of the land demarcation costs, and WfWI covered the remaining land demarcation fees.

A need for greater financial opportunities also arose in the ASM and conservation sectors. ASEFA noted, *“Women have formed an association for more savings and loans in order to accelerate their economic activity and increase their power by having sufficient financial means to shake up their female entrepreneurship activities and effectively fight against sexual violence.”* In Colombia, women miners visited the National Training Service, a government entity that offers vocational training programs, to learn about and gain skills toward economic opportunities outside of the mining sector. The Taita Taveta Wildlife Conservancies Association (TTWCA) in Kenya remarked, *“Through economic empowerment of women at the conservancies, they will gain enough confidence to lead various sectors in the community.”*



GENDER NORMS AND MALE ENGAGEMENT

For RISE grantees to effectively address GBV within environmental programming, stakeholders had to first understand and acknowledge that GBV exists. Programs could then focus on changing long-held norms and behaviors. As Trócaire commented, *“You cannot erase social norms built over a lifetime in two years.”* However, many grantees took important steps in that direction and learned valuable lessons along the way.

GOOD PRACTICE: Creating safe spaces for discussion of GBV facilitates other programming.

Providing women with a forum where they felt comfortable discussing GBV formed the foundation for other interventions in many RISE programs. For example, ARM/MIT D-Lab’s use of personal stories to unearth common GBV challenges in the ASM sector proved to be effective at building solidarity and activating women to change their realities. In some cases, as Utz Che’ explains, it was also an end in itself: *“[Collective Healing Spaces] opened old wounds of abuse, exclusion, and abandonment of women and the recognition of dynamics of violence perpetuated in their lives. However, they have often shared that having a safe space for the first time to externalize these experiences has in itself been healing.”*



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GOOD PRACTICES from RISE grantees on how to create safe spaces for GBV discussions included:

- Depersonalize the experience: use fictional vignettes or ask people to share about a friend or colleague rather than their own personal incidents
- Invite the same participants to every workshop or training session so they can build rapport over time
- Provide frequent opportunities to pause or stop the conversation for participants to thoughtfully reflect on their individual experiences
- Employ local, trusted facilitators

LESSON LEARNED: Engaging men is critical to change gender and gender norms and behaviors.

GBV is often erroneously viewed as a “women’s issue,” leading many stakeholders and programs to focus on only half of the population. Changing the gender norms that underpin GBV, however, requires shifting mindsets across entire communities. Men are often the gatekeepers or key decision-makers who can help unlock broader change, and their support—or lack thereof—can enhance or hinder project objectives. For example, CI struggled to engage men from the Shampuyacu community: of the 36 men invited to attend trainings on positive masculinity, only 21 participated, with ten of those dropping out after the first session. In Vietnam, WildAct found that many of the male directors of national parks or conservation groups were averse to conversations about GBV, making it difficult to address the issue within their organizations.

On the other hand, KWCA successfully persuaded male conservancy board members to reflect on gender norms, ultimately gaining their critical support to involve women in decision-making spaces. KWCA engaged 321 men and boys and trained 51 of them. This was necessary to transform the social and gender norms that reinforce patriarchy and inequality and harm both women and men, and it had to be done without instrumentalizing men and boys as the pathway to women’s empowerment or marginalizing women and girls in the process. In Uganda and the DRC, Trócaire and WfWI identified and trained a cadre of male champions among leaders and decision-makers to raise awareness of gender equality and social inclusion issues within their communities, support women’s customary land tenure, and address GBV. As a result, 289 people (188 women and 101 men) received customary land titles with no reported backlash or incidents of violence.

Suggestions from RISE grantees on how to increase male engagement included:

- Employ men on the program staff. The CI/PROMSEX team was predominantly female and struggled to engage the Awajún men, and they noted, “*Not having male CI staff engaged in the project was also an issue.*” Research shows that men are more likely to participate in activities unpacking gender norms and promoting positive masculinities when they are facilitated by other men.
- Avoid framing interventions using words such as “gender” or “women.” Again, CI noted that using these terms may have inadvertently caused men to dismiss the trainings as irrelevant to them. In the future, they plan to use terms such as “increasing productivity” to describe the trainings for men.
- Emphasize men’s participation. For example, WfWI found that men were more interested in attending trainings when they learned they could be directly involved in the plot survey process and help support the registration of land titles under their wives’ names.



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LESSON LEARNED: Compelling demonstrations of why conservation organizations should care about GBV are necessary to change mindsets.

Multiple RISE grantees, including CI, KWCA, and WildAct, worked within the conservation sector. All of them experienced some form of resistance from the other conservation organizations they engaged, which did not believe that addressing GBV fell within their mandate, and/or did not want to admit that sexual harassment and gender inequality existed within their workplaces for fear of reputational harm. As reported by one male participant in the SAA training in Kenya, “The SAA training was very much relevant to us. We have become more aware of issues of gender inclusion, and we make [a] deliberate effort to achieve this, including [by] giving equal opportunity for employment at the secretariat.”

WildAct found that leaders in this male-dominated industry often took a defensive posture, making it difficult to engage them in program activities. In response, WildAct adapted to design and promote activities in ways that empowered male conservationists to be part of the solution and emphasized the goodwill that implementing gender equity would bring to their organizations.

LESSON LEARNED: Successful norms change can also impact power dynamics.

In addition to conducting an initial stakeholder mapping exercise that incorporates community power dynamics, grantees continually evaluated the ways in which their programming might shift those dynamics and adapted accordingly. For example, in Colombia, efforts to empower women miners occasionally drew the attention of armed groups who frequently exert control over mining areas. Understandably, the women miners were hesitant to take on leadership roles within the nascent organizations they were forming for fear of being singled out for retribution. In response, ARM/MIT D-Lab worked with the women to develop communal leadership models. When the movement was asked to send a leader to participate in the USAID Mining Horizons National Dialogues in Bogotá, the group insisted that a team of four be allowed to attend instead.



ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES



While RISE placed greater emphasis on GBV prevention and response, the challenge also sought to achieve positive environmental outcomes through grantee programming. Areas of focus included land rights, conservation, and small-scale mining.

LESSON LEARNED: It is difficult to underscore the link between GBV and environmental outcomes.

Although this was one of RISE’s primary objectives, grantees found it quite challenging in practice to help their stakeholders understand the interrelationship. As the ARM/MIT D-Lab program observed, “We made many attempts to create the connection between GBV and environmental outcomes in our movement-building workshops with no luck.” Despite this apparent failure, their awareness-raising efforts were not completely in vain; during their final conference, women requested more information regarding environmental degradation in mining territories. In commenting on the difficulty of making the GBV-environment linkage, Marstel-Day noted the importance of framing: “When the team positioned gender equity and

social inclusion as a mechanism to ensure acceptability and community buy-in for conservation programs, environmental actors were more likely to accept these concepts. Furthermore, increasing stakeholders' understanding of GBV, including the various forms of GBV (e.g., economic violence), made clearer how violence can undermine conservation efforts." ASEFA also experienced some measure of success, as post-training surveys revealed that respondents favored the Safe Mining and Environmental Best Practices presentation the most.

LESSON LEARNED: It is important to educate stakeholders on environmental conservation in addition to GBV.

RISE grantees were acutely aware of the need for sensitization on GBV in their programs; however, many overlooked the equal importance of environment-focused trainings. For example, in reflecting on successes and challenges, ASEFA indicated that the first phase of their program did not delve deeply enough into the environmental dimension, leading to poor knowledge among field workers on environmental governance. Similarly, Trócaire noted, "Moving forward, the project requires partners who have technical capacity on environment management to educate the communities on the different approaches of environmental conservation besides just exhausting the land."



PARTNERSHIPS

The RISE cohort included diverse partnerships between local organizations (WildAct/CSAGA), local and international organizations [Utz Che/TWP, WfWI/IFDP, CI/PROMSEX, KWCA/CARE/Center for Rights, Education, and Awareness (CREAW), Trócaire/LEMU/Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organization (SOCADIDO), ASEFA/HHI, ARM/MIT D-Lab], and international organizations (Marstel-Day/WI-HER). Partnership formation and implementation were set out from the beginning as critical elements of the theory of change. Key performance indicators to measure partnerships were both output and outcome focused. Strong partnership results enhanced the achievement of program results and contributed to progress in key partnership outcome areas, such as increased ability to work with other organizations.



© WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL

GOOD PRACTICE: Requiring partnerships between environmental and gender organizations is transformative.

All applications for the RISE Challenge were required to involve a partnership between at least one gender organization and one environmental organization. Five of the gender organizations partnered with environmental organizations for the first time and six environmental organizations partnered with a gender organization for the first time.¹⁰ This fostered positive collaboration, relationships, and outcomes that would have been difficult for one organization to achieve without the other—demonstrating the power of innovation competitions to stimulate innovative partnerships—and helped reinforce the link between the two program areas. Without the incentive of the challenge, most organizations would never have worked together, and the majority are still actively collaborating after the end of their RISE-funded programs.

¹⁰ Environmental organizations working on GBV for the first time: Marstel-Day, IFDP, ARM, KWCA, WildAct, and CI. Gender/GBV organizations working on the environment for the first time: WI-HER, WfWI, CSAGA, CARE, and CREAW.

GOOD PRACTICE: Effective partnerships leverage complementary skills and strengths.

For many grantees, RISE was their first experience working in a new sector, which meant they needed to leverage each other's respective strengths and expertise. CI noted the importance of involving all partners in program design to ensure that roles do not overlap and that both organizations' needs are met. Their success is evident in this quote from partner PROMSEX: *"[The CI partnership] was a success story for us. It is the first time for PROMSEX to reach not just a Peruvian but an indigenous community. Also, this is a new subject in our work: the nexus between gender and environment. This experience with CI allowed us to learn about this nexus on the field."*

The need to establish clear expectations up front was also something that WildAct learned. WildAct originally partnered with CARE, but when it became clear that CARE was not in a position to dedicate the time required to support the program, they engaged local NGO CSAGA instead. The expected commitment was clearly communicated from the beginning and resulted in a highly productive partnership. Marstel-Day attributed its fruitful partnership with WI-HER in part to the fact that *"there was no judgment around lack of knowledge [of the other's technical area]."* For Trócaire, assigning each partner a thematic area—in this case, alternative dispute resolution and land management issues for LEMU and GBV for SOCADIDO—increased the utility of the partnerships.

LESSON LEARNED: Consider different ways of operating and different capacity levels when forming partnerships.

Two-thirds of RISE grantees partnered with each other for the first time under this program, and many grants also featured alliances between large global institutions and smaller local or regional organizations. A period of training and adjustment was required for tasks as basic as familiarizing one partner with another's financial and technical templates. Combined with the added challenges of remote collaboration under COVID-19, successful partnerships depended on team members maintaining flexibility and staying focused on shared values. In Kenya, first-time partners KWCA, CARE, and CREAMW initially had one RISE point of contact in each organization, but found that it was difficult for them to connect. They eventually adapted to include two points of contact each and established a monthly meeting to plan and reflect, greatly facilitating their collaboration. Given the limited implementation period, in general, the most successful partnerships typically featured at least one hyper-local organization that was based in the target communities with activities that leveraged existing programming.

LESSON LEARNED: Provide in-depth onboarding for partners new to a given community.

Many RISE gender organizations had not worked in environmental conservation before, and in some cases, had no experience with indigenous populations. Given the sensitive nature of GBV, implementers must have the full trust of the people with whom they are working. This poses challenges when introducing a new partner who has no experience in a target community. For example, although CI had been working with the Shampuyacu community for years, partner PROMSEX was not only new to the area, but also had no prior experience working with indigenous groups. CI noted, *"We overcame this situation by having several meetings to explain to [PROMSEX] the history of the community and the work developed by CI in previous years, and we accompanied them to all the training sessions...so that the community would always see someone they knew and trusted and feel safe and open to participate and talk about this sensitive topic."*

Internal staffing changes among grantee and partner organizations can pose similar challenges. For example, when ARM experienced a leadership transition, new staff members did not initially support the movement-building concept. In response, MIT D-Lab conducted a series of meetings and awareness-raising sessions to familiarize the new team members with the approach and obtain their support.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Addressing GBV and environmental challenges often involves systemic change and direct engagement with diverse stakeholders with a range of interests, incentives, and influence. As part of the work planning process, RISE grantees developed stakeholder maps with a power-interest grid to analyze the different groups of stakeholders that would be engaged in the project, including individuals in their own organizations who would be critical to ensure the adoption of similar practices in the future. Each RISE grantee identified key assumptions about how the project might influence and impact key stakeholders and reflected upon those assumptions in their learning agenda throughout implementation. The stakeholder mapping exercise also helped grantees develop and implement inclusive, locally-driven activities. A key learning from this exercise is the importance of identifying and engaging the right community stakeholders, particularly men and those in positions of power.

TABLE: A Portion of the Stakeholder Map for ARM/MIT D-Lab in Colombia

STAKEHOLDER	INTERESTS	INFLUENCE	INCENTIVE	ASSUMPTIONS/RISKS
National government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimata Convention 2. Social pressure 3. Escalating violence in mining regions 	2.5	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are interested in the topic and want to support miners 2. They want to consult with local actors, in particular multinationals 3. They are concerned about GBV 4. They are concerned about the health and safety of miners
Women miners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Income 2. Livelihood 3. Voice and agency 	4	4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They want to create and grow associations 2. They will be comfortable with the risk 3. They can manage another responsibility
Multinational mining companies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maximize profit 2. Maintain control 3. Shut down small illegal mines that either about or are within their territories 	3	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are committed to keeping women miners safe 2. They are committed to environmentally responsible mining practices
Organizations (NGOs, universities) working with women miners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop projects concerned with rights of small-scale miners, gender equity, and environmentally responsible mining practices 	2	4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are committed to developing practices and strategies that support rights, equity, and environmentally responsible practices

Note: Influence and Incentive were measured on 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most.

GOOD PRACTICE: Cultivate local ownership in their target communities by providing guidance and supporting key actors to make decisions on and manage the implementation of activities.

For example, in WfWI's Rising Up! project, men and local authorities ensured the security of women change agents as they conducted their advocacy work, visibly demonstrating to the community the extent of their buy-in for the program. Similarly, in Fiji, Marstel-Day remarked, *"We understood quickly that a deeper resistance exists to Western-led ideas that are not locally owned. By engaging the iTaukei communities from the beginning and along the project, as well as engaging the broader civil society organization and government stakeholders, we used the participatory, locally-led approach of WI-HER's iDARE methodology to shift the perception of the FGSM+ to be a mechanism that belonged to the iTaukei stakeholders."* When MIT D-Lab staff were unable to travel to Colombia due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they selected women miner leaders who had been identified through the stakeholder mapping exercise to lead the movement-building sessions in their stead. Although training the leaders virtually required extra effort, it ultimately resulted in greater buy-in from the target community, which responded positively to the local leadership.



GOOD PRACTICE: Spreading awareness, especially through word-of-mouth, is a powerful communications mechanism.

Recognizing this, RISE grantees leveraged trusted local individuals and stakeholders to spread awareness of their programs. For example, when Trócaire encountered resistance from locals who mistook their interventions to be a land-grabbing venture, they worked with influencers such as clan leaders, local councils, and community development officers to counter these misperceptions. Once community members learned that their leaders supported Trócaire's activities, they no longer objected to its work. Similarly, Marstel-Day encountered resistance from local organizations that objected to working with the United States government. Marstel-Day overcame this challenge by developing close relationships with the Government of Fiji and the Fijian Women's Rights Movement, which vouched for the project, and through the trust the community had toward additional local partners that joined the project.

GOOD PRACTICE: Involving local stakeholders in design and implementation supports sustainable impacts.

In many cases, the greatest legacy of RISE projects around the world will be the continuation of the work they started through local stakeholders. After the pandemic forced HHI to cancel travel to the DRC, the program pivoted to employ a local MEL organization to support ASEFA with data collection, enhancing their capacity for similar work in the future. As a result of the Training of Trainers (ToT) approach that Utz Che' and TWP implemented in Guatemala, indigenous women leaders will continue to engage community members in Collective Healing Spaces, supporting more women to share personal experiences and knowledge to foster greater empowerment in community forestry and agriculture. In Uganda, clan leaders and community activists will continue to advocate for women's land rights, and in Kenya, conservancies will continue to meaningfully include women in decision-making positions.

GOOD PRACTICE: Government entities are important allies and resource partners.

Depending on the country and context, engaging local and/or national governments can lend credibility to a program and offer critical GBV referral services. For example, Trócaire found that collaborating with local chairmen—the lowest level of government position in Uganda and one that is typically most involved in day-to-day community affairs—was critical to ensure harmonization and secure their ongoing support for land rights. Trocaire's partnership with the local government

facilitated 140 people (53 women and 87 men) to receive customary land titles. Marstel-Day and ARM/MIT worked with government entities in Fiji and Colombia, respectively, to provide GBV referrals.



AWARENESS-RAISING

Both RISE implementing partners and target community members typically had limited experience in addressing GBV in environment projects. In response, the majority of RISE grantees implemented awareness-raising activities to help prevent and respond to GBV in various environmental contexts. Initiatives focused on identifying and discussing the types of violence experienced, educating individuals on their legal and customary rights, supporting women and men to reflect on and challenge harmful gender norms, and informing stakeholders of available GBV support services.

GOOD PRACTICE: Use a range of media and include local languages to reach the broadest audience.

Restrictions on face-to-face engagements due to the global pandemic added new challenges for programs trying to raise awareness of an already complex issue. RISE grantees employed a variety of innovative techniques to share information among their target stakeholders, including workshops, handouts/leaflets, radio, social media,



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posters in prominent public locations, and music and theater performances, often printed or conducted in local languages. These approaches allowed key messages to transcend literacy levels and reach people at convenient times and in convenient locations. For example, in the DRC, ASEFA and HHI translated their safe mining and GBV curriculum into French and then hired local artists to illustrate the lessons so that participants did not have to know how to read to understand the message. RISE grantees also observed that the most effective awareness-raising activities included participatory group sessions where stakeholders could critically reflect on power and gender inequality. It was more difficult to measure the impact and effectiveness of didactic, short-term, or one-way awareness-raising interventions in addressing GBV. For example, Trócaire observed that community dialogue meetings and community theater dramas—which were interactive and provided opportunities for immediate feedback—were more effective than radio spots at raising awareness. KWCA found that informal “tea-point chats” within a group of colleagues are almost as important as creating formal spaces to discuss gender and GBV.

GOOD PRACTICE: Leading by example can be a powerful form of communication.

As the saying goes, success breeds success. Many RISE grantees found that their programs generated ripple effects whereby the visibility of activities and their participants helped spur additional demand for the activities without any direct action from the grantee. As ASEFA observed, “*Interaction with beneficiaries through training and sensitization sessions are the basis for the ownership of the project by local communities. Massive scale-up sessions... are part of the evidence of this appropriation. [We are now] receiving calls from other sites where the project did not directly intervene requesting similar support.*” Similarly, WildAct has received requests from conservation organizations in Laos and Cambodia to support them in addressing sexual harassment.



CAPACITY-BUILDING

RISE programs addressed the connection between the environment and GBV—particularly economic, physical, and sexual GBV—by developing and facilitating trainings for women and men that challenged gender stereotypes and promoted environmental stewardship. The grantees adapted approaches from different sectors and applied them to secure land tenure, strengthen conservation, and improve ASM conditions.

GOOD PRACTICE: Grantees prioritize training their own staff before undertaking capacity-building activities with other stakeholders.

In a survey conducted as part of the IUCN GBV-Environment study, 71 percent of respondents noted that staff awareness and understanding of GBV-environment linkages was needed to address GBV, but only nine percent had actually received training on how to do so in environmental initiatives. For most grantees, RISE was their first time working on a program focused on the intersection of environmental programming and GBV. Project staff and implementing partners needed support to understand the linkages between the two areas before they could engage with target communities. In particular, staff of environmental groups frequently required capacity-building on GBV and gender norms change, while those from gender organizations were often unfamiliar with engaging indigenous populations. Many grantees also required additional guidance on how to collect insights and/or evidence about the environmental impact of their programs. Programs that allotted adequate time and resources to train staff—including ARM/MIT D-Lab, ASEFA, KWCA, Trócaire, WfWI, and WildAct—were generally the most successful, though even some of these groups struggled with staff capacity.

GOOD PRACTICE: Trainings are most effective when tailored to participants' interests and practical needs.

RISE grantees offered trainings to different groups of stakeholders with varying backgrounds, capacities, and learning styles, and adapted their approaches accordingly. For example, since Awajún is more of a spoken than written language, CI developed participatory, kinetic capacity-building approaches such as drawing, painting, and dancing to promote dialogue between participants. Similarly, ASEFA observed that participants valued the practical approaches to safe mining practices, such as safe digging practices, as opposed to the theoretical or long-term environmental risks. In the future, they plan to incorporate more practical approaches such as establishing forest tree nurseries and training individuals to reforest already abandoned mining sites.

GOOD PRACTICE: ToT approaches are critical for scale and sustainability, but may be hindered by participant constraints.

Several RISE grantees employed ToT models whereby local individuals and/or organizations were taught to further train other community members, helping to reach greater numbers of people with fewer resources while maintaining vital knowledge within the community. In most cases, they were highly successful, with Trócaire indicating that ToT accounted for 75 percent of their results and WfWI remarking, *“The ToT was critical to the success of the project. It allowed us to have a pool of male trainers with experience in training other men and with influence in the community.”*

ASEFA also trained nine local facilitators, each of whom trained an additional 80 community members around different mining sites. In Kenya, KWCA plans to use ToT in the future, noting *“The SAA training can be enhanced by adapting the [ToT] model in which members of the Women Forum can learn the methodology and approach and implement it at the grassroots level. This will help to ensure project sustainability is not limited to staff/board members (at a higher level) but instead, capacity is built at a lower level as more people get to learn and challenge the existing negative social norms.”*

CI had to adapt its ToT approach due to difficulties women had completing the program. CI trained ten women who were then assigned to train seven more women they did not know. However, the ten women did not engage the other women due to lack of time, personal connection, and confidence to discuss GBV and other sensitive topics. In future programming, CI will ask the trainers to engage women within their social network where they feel more at ease and confident.



SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding, or preventing harm to people during the delivery of development assistance, is a critical component of any GBV program, where privacy and confidentiality concerns are paramount. All RISE grantees incorporated safeguarding in their programming, either as the main thrust of their projects or as a complement to their other work.

GOOD PRACTICE: Contextually relevant safeguarding principles are most effective.

Although the basic principles of safeguarding remain the same no matter where a project is implemented, approaches that consider the organizational and cultural context are most effective for actual application in the field. For example, a large NGO may have a long and comprehensive policy document, whereas a smaller local organization may need only a few pages. This is particularly true for programs working with indigenous communities, which tend to differ most radically from typical Western ways of thinking and operating. In Vietnam, WildAct developed safeguarding guidelines that used simple language and included contextually relevant information for rangers who tend to have lower levels of formal education and spend most of their time working in the field rather than in an office environment. RISE grantees also noted the following good practices regarding safeguarding:

- **Make information on GBV accessible so that people can learn about it without drawing attention to themselves.** For example, Trócaire placed posters in public places such as health centers, community notice boards, police posts, and under large trees at market points for wide viewership at people's convenience. The posters included both text and graphics to accommodate different literacy levels.
- **Establish contextually-relevant systems that ensure reporting forms and databases are kept confidential.** This is especially critical for sensitive issues such as GBV, where individuals can face the risk of retaliation, conflict, or violence from the community if their identity is disclosed. Multiple programs highlighted the benefits of phone-based reporting options in local languages, including via short message service, to help preserve confidentiality. Marstel-Day included multiple reporting options within the FGRM+ to ensure that women of all literacy levels could report GBV.

GOOD PRACTICE: Mainstreaming safeguarding is essential for applying safeguarding policies in practice.

In the environmental sector, safeguarding is often focused on the protection of natural resources. Environmental practitioners may not be familiar with how to integrate policies and practices that focus on staff and program participant safety or may not view it as part of their role at all. In fact, several RISE grantees, including ASEFA and KWCA, did not have safeguarding policies of their own; the challenge was to help them establish internal policies before they could advocate for other organizations to develop and/or adopt safeguarding principles. The challenge provided resources and TA to support these grantees in developing and implementing their safeguarding policies—from proposal development to project planning, implementation, and monitoring—as well as training all new staff and partners in safeguarding approaches.



MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

One of RISE's primary objectives is to build the evidence base for interventions that successfully address GBV in environmental programs. To do so, the challenge worked with grantees to develop robust MEL frameworks.

GOOD PRACTICE: Employ multiple methods to collect data about GBV depending on the situation and context.

RISE grantees employed a variety of data collection methods—influenced in part by the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited in-person interactions—that offered unique benefits and drawbacks:

- **Focus group discussions** were most effective for small (around five participants) homogenous groups (e.g., groups comprising only women or men of a certain age). The group setting encouraged participants to share more when they heard others reveal similar experiences, while the smaller group sizes required by the pandemic fostered richer discussions and allowed each participant more time to speak.
- **One-on-one interviews** were helpful for individuals who had experienced significant trauma or were otherwise uncomfortable sharing their stories.
- **Telephone interviews**, while cost-effective and suitable for pandemic protocols, posed several constraints for GBV-related discussions. In some cases, lack of network access and/or consistent charging opportunities (particularly in more remote locations) limited participation by phone, introducing bias in results as only those who were accessible could respond. In other cases, respondents were unable to answer questions safely and comfortably at home due to a lack of privacy. Good practices for collecting sensitive data by phone include: 1) understand the environment respondents are in when you call; 2) ask if they are on speaker phone; and 3) adapt questions if you can sense they are in an uncomfortable position.

LESSON LEARNED: Obtaining MEL data from participants requires creative approaches.

Gathering accurate, timely, and complete data is a common challenge to most development practitioners, but it is particularly difficult when dealing with a sensitive subject such as GBV.

For example, Marstel-Day indicated that women interviewed through key informant interviews or focus group discussions did not generally feel comfortable discussing GBV. To mitigate this obstacle, they introduced the following approaches:

- Tested questions with counterparts before interviews to be sure that questionnaires followed the “do no harm” principle and did not put respondents at risk of re-traumatization
- Spent time during the consent process to establish familiarity and confidence in the process, emphasizing respondents' right to decline to respond to any questions if they felt uncomfortable without any negative consequences
- Initiated interviews with broad, open questions to allow respondents to grow comfortable with the interview process (especially for online interviews) and to establish some common ground with data collectors
- Reassured respondents that questions did not have correct or incorrect answers.



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LESSON LEARNED: Decentralized data collection requires strong coordination for quality assurance.

Many grantees employed local data collectors to support their MEL efforts, especially after COVID-19 restricted travel. Although generally quite effective, these outsourcing efforts were not without challenges. For example, Trócaire discovered that when local families in Uganda were asked how many individuals of each gender were in their household, the classifications of male and female were mistakenly interpreted as boy and girl, leading respondents to exclude the number of adults. To address this and other issues, the organization developed data collection templates and held daily debrief meetings with enumerators to identify gaps in questionnaires and fix problems that arose during the process.

Challenge Design and Operation

The RISE Challenge was designed to incentivize partnerships between environment and gender organizations and to fund promising or proven solutions to address GBV across all environmental sectors. RISE aimed to build a cohort of organizations dedicated to addressing the GBV-environment nexus within their RISE program and beyond. The challenge management team used an adaptive approach, encouraging grantees to experiment, reflect, learn, and adapt to findings and impacts.

Adapting to a Global Pandemic

COVID-19 created both challenges and opportunities for RISE grantees. Along with the rest of the world, grantees had to quickly retool their approaches, such as by shifting to virtual platforms or ToT models using local facilitators rather than flying in experts. The flexibility of Fixed Amount Awards (FAAs) allowed RISE to extend timelines and modify the content of milestones to account for these changes. Programs noted unexpected benefits; in some cases, virtual engagements proved more successful as they allowed participants a greater level of privacy in discussing sensitive GBV issues, and the use of local partners enhanced program buy-in and sustainability.



CHALLENGE STRUCTURE

GOOD PRACTICE: FAAs offer several key benefits.

RISE grantees were engaged under FAAs, which provide payments based on the achievement of specific milestones, with payment amounts negotiated during due diligence based on a verified budget and review of the organization's cash flow. Record-keeping requirements for both the grantee and the grantor are less stringent than other forms of grants, reducing the administrative burden for both parties. Under the FAAs, RISE also provided standard milestone reporting templates for work plans; MEL reporting; and progress reports. These aspects were particularly helpful for the five grantee organizations that were receiving USAID funding for the first time (ARM, ASEFA, Trócaire, Utz Che', and WildAct). FAAs also allow for modifications to milestones after the award. This proved critical in allowing grantees the flexibility to adjust their projects in response to unexpected circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic (see text box), as well as new information and insights that arose through implementation. For example, after CI conducted GBV sensitization activities, participants established a women's community patrol for GBV prevention and response. It was not an initiative designed or anticipated by CI, but the organization seized the opportunity to adapt its programming and added trainings for the patrol to enhance its capacity to handle GBV-related conflicts.

GOOD PRACTICE: Operating in multiple languages is a necessary complexity for a global challenge.

The RISE Challenge accepted applications from partnerships between environmental and gender organizations working to address GBV in environmental programming anywhere in the world. The winners of the RISE cohort implemented programs

in Spanish, French, English, Vietnamese, and multiple local languages. Initially, all RISE documents were in English, including the Request for Applications, application submissions, grant agreements, and grantee milestone reports, as were all grantee check-in and peer learning calls. This may have deterred some qualified applicants from applying, and in some cases, presented additional challenges for implementation, hindering grantees' ability



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to directly connect with each other. Although it adds significant costs, engaging stakeholders in multiple languages—for example, by including translation on group phone calls, as the challenge eventually did, or by issuing and accepting documents in languages other than English—would encourage more local organizations to participate, make it easier for judges to evaluate the technical content of an application, increase grantee understanding of expectations around program management and reporting, and facilitate exchanges among grantees.

LESSON LEARNED: Longer implementation timelines allow for more time to gather evidence and demonstrate impact on what works and what does not.

RISE Challenge winners received between \$100,000 and \$300,000 in grant funding to be implemented over 12- to 24-month periods. All grantees noted that a longer implementation timeline—five to ten years at a minimum—would increase the effectiveness of their programs. Given the sensitive nature of GBV, it takes time to introduce the concept to a target community and gain their trust before organizations can pursue more targeted changes to policies and behaviors.¹¹ In addition, entrenched norms governing gender roles are a significant barrier to overcome in a short project period. As WildAct remarked, “We would need to keep working for ten years to change norms [in Vietnam.]” There are, however, always trade-offs due to resource constraints since a longer period of time would require bigger implementation budgets. Programs also needed more time to measure environmental impact. For example, two years was sufficient to help individuals secure land rights, but not enough to support them to then use the land sustainably.

LESSON LEARNED: Prioritize and align reporting requirements and methods with challenge goals and grantee capacity.

A primary RISE objective was to establish a strong evidence base on effective approaches to address GBV in environmental programming. To support this, the RISE team developed a comprehensive MEL plan with a robust results framework and 19 key performance indicators that required supporting data collection tools and processes. At the same time, the challenge aimed to engage local and indigenous organizations with nascent MEL systems. A range of challenges during implementation yielded the following lessons learned:

- Grantees with limited MEL experience need space to learn and adapt without the burden of a complex set of quantitative indicators and sometimes required additional capacity-building to meet USAID reporting requirements.
- Grantees needed additional training to understand how to set accurate key performance indicator baselines and realistic targets.
- Some of the indicators at both the portfolio and grantee levels—particularly those focused on environmental or economic impact—were not realistic to measure in the short RISE time frame.
- Simple systems for data collection (e.g., Microsoft Excel rather than Airtable, a cloud-based spreadsheet and database hybrid) are better, especially when working with organizations with limited MEL experience.

11 Caroline Harper, Rachel Marcus, Rachel George, Sophia M. D’Angelo, and Emma Samman. (2020). *Gender, Power, and Progress, How Norms Change*.

- Allow for alternative, culturally-appropriate qualitative data collection methods that are useful to grantees as well as USAID to document change. For example, Utz Che' recommended including storytelling as a form of reporting change as shifts in gender norms were difficult to quantify in the Mayan context.
- Shifting reporting from quarterly to semi-annually can allow more time for the cycle of implementation, reflection, and sharing of learnings. Semi-annual reporting would also reduce the burden on organizations—especially those with limited MEL experience, or limited time in the office.

One approach to address these issues would be to revise the MEL plan to incorporate more complexity-aware MEL methodologies, such as developmental evaluation or outcome harvesting. However, these approaches would have required additional resources to operationalize. On future challenges, the trade-off between additional qualitative information and additional MEL costs can be discussed with the Mission to determine the optimal balance.



PEER LEARNING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

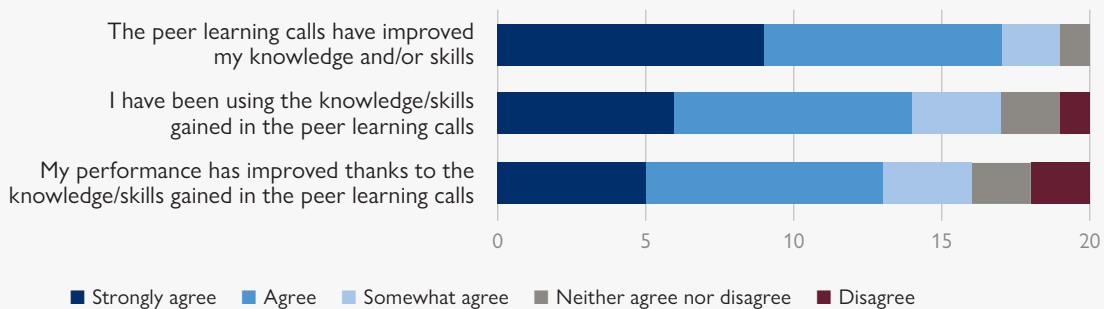
The RISE program fostered real-time collaboration and learning to support grantees and maximize impact. Topics for the calls were sourced through an advanced survey that was sent to the cohort and then selected according to grantees' needs and preferences (see below). The calls featured grantees with identified good practices and shareable results, and external experts with specialized experience or expertise. They focused on providing practical knowledge and a space for grantees to exchange ideas and lessons learned. All grantees reported benefits, such as increased knowledge and collaboration, from both the calls and the training sessions. In particular, grantees valued learning from peers working on similar topics in different regions, as well as gaining practical knowledge on challenge resolutions.



“Learning calls improved skills and knowledge because they allowed us to share experiences and showcase our learning.”

— RISE grantee

Grantee Reflections on Peer Learning Calls



Source: RISE Grantees and Partner Organizations End of Program Survey, 2022

- **85 percent** of RISE grantees reported application of knowledge/skills obtained as a result of peer learning
- **80 percent** of RISE grantees reported increased performance based on knowledge/skills obtained as a result of peer learning
- **95 percent** of RISE grantees reported increased ability to work with other organizations to implement policies and practices to address GBV in programs that focus on the access, use, control, and management of natural resources

RISE hosted a total of nine virtual peer learning sessions, three virtual training sessions, and one in-person learning event to build grantee capacity to implement technically strong and operationally compliant USAID-funded programs and to foster knowledge sharing among grantees. The sessions provided insights about process learning, such as technical and organizational capacities, MEL, and fundraising and sustainability, as well as technical issues such as safeguarding design, male engagement, good practice, conducting and implementing a gender analysis, and effective community-led approaches.

GOOD PRACTICE: Group size and composition can positively influence engagement.

Peer learning calls typically included a mix of RISE staff, grantees, and USAID representatives, mostly from GenDev. Calls also featured different technical experts addressing topics such as safeguarding, engaging men and boys, and land tenure, which were highly valued by grantees. Grantees appreciated that the composition of breakout rooms stayed the same, allowing the groups to build a rapport, and that RISE project facilitators participated in small group discussions to help report back key lessons and ideas.

GOOD PRACTICE: Align grantee capacity with timing, content, and delivery of TA.

RISE grantees represented a wide range of organizations, from small, local groups that had never received USAID funding to large international NGOs, and most were working on topics of gender or environment that were new to them. The first-time USAID grant recipients found value in training and ongoing TA on USAID operational and reporting requirements. Most grantees were new to working in the GBV-environment nexus and found that trainings with internal and external experts were essential to fill knowledge gaps. For example, IUCN, FHI 360, and the USAID Passages project provided guidance on GBV and gender norms change, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and safeguarding, while USAID's land tenure team offered insights on the linkages between intimate partner violence and land rights.

Lesson Learned: Timing Is Everything

Some grantees noted that it would have been helpful to receive more training before their projects began so that they could incorporate the lessons into their program design. For example, CI Peru noted that the session on the differences between attitudes, behaviors, and norms that took place two months into its implementation would have been more beneficial earlier in the process.



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**GOOD PRACTICE AND LESSON LEARNED:
A geographically, linguistically, and technically diverse cohort presents both challenges and opportunities for peer learning.**

RISE grantees hailed from eight countries, spoke four languages, and had varying degrees of technical expertise in a range of sectors. During peer learning sessions, organizations were often grouped by region or sector, which facilitated conversations between individuals who spoke the same native language or worked in the same technical area (e.g., WildAct and KWCA shared experiences to develop safeguarding guidelines for conservation organizations in Vietnam and Kenya), but limited engagement across the cohort. Face-to-face meetings can help overcome some of these obstacles by providing more time for grantees to get to know one another in a forum that promotes stronger relationship building, but they are significantly more expensive than virtual gatherings. RISE was only able to host one in-person learning event before the onset of the pandemic, and based on feedback following the event, participants found the event to be instrumental in building connections and increasing grantees' understanding of the GBV-environment nexus.

LESSON LEARNED: Grantees prefer more time for peer exchanges.

Grantees were in near unanimous agreement that peer learning calls should feature more time for breakout sessions to allow for more in-depth discussions, where they felt the most valuable shared lessons emerged. To address this issue, the length of time for each call could be expanded or calls could be more frequent. The challenge could also consider developing separate communities of practice or thematic sub-groups to provide more opportunities for peer exchanges.

LESSON LEARNED: Incorporating elements that foster inclusion can enhance peer learning calls.

RISE stakeholder meetings were initially conducted in English, but in response to grantee feedback, the program began offering simultaneous translation services in Spanish and French in 2021. Grantees were very appreciative of the shift, which facilitated more active participation and learning. Others suggested that moderators request that participants limit their speaking in breakout sessions during peer learning calls and that sessions integrate more time for reflection to encourage more reluctant speakers to participate. Grantees also noted that it would be helpful to receive materials in advance so participants could follow along better, particularly those struggling to overcome poor internet connectivity.



ENGAGEMENT WITH USAID MISSIONS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS

USAID Missions and other key stakeholders play an important role in amplifying RISE's impact. The challenge engaged Mission staff in multiple ways, including by involving them in the evaluation and selection process as judges and interviewers; sharing grantee milestone reports; presenting RISE learnings to individual Missions and at public events; facilitating Mission site visits; and engaging Mission staff to train RISE grantees in Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse approaches. However, stronger engagement with and potential funding buy-ins from USAID Missions and other donors would ultimately help further the RISE objective of integrating GBV into ongoing and future USAID environmental programming.

GOOD PRACTICE: Align with Mission priorities.

In Kenya, KWCA had previously received Mission funding to design a gender strategy. RISE support allowed KWCA to incorporate GBV into the strategy and then implement it. The alignment of RISE funding with Mission priorities fostered an environment where USAID was actively engaged in implementation—including by providing TA—and ultimately offered KWCA additional funding for integrated climate change and GBV programming.

GOOD PRACTICE: Develop institutional partnerships to support impact and sustainability.

The partnership with IUCN and the USAID Advancing Gender in the Environment (AGENT) program was critical for linking RISE grantees to a larger audience, sharing impact, and ensuring the sustainability of the challenge. IUCN is now implementing the third round of the challenge. The RISE Challenge was open, transparent, and collaborative with IUCN, which ensured a seamless transition in the challenge's management.

LESSON LEARNED: Provide consistent communication on RISE impact that aligns with stakeholders' priorities.

The challenge could have better leveraged Mission and other stakeholder support by providing more tailored and frequent communications on RISE's impact. During exit interviews, Mission stakeholders recommended that the communications be more frequent, concise, focused on impact, better aligned with Mission priorities, and formatted to be easily copied to a newsletter, social media handle, or briefer notes.

ANNEX

Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Colombia

Gender-based violence (GBV) affects more than one in three women worldwide, and it is used across environmental sectors to assert control over land and natural resources. GBV is exacerbated by the degradation and biodiversity loss caused by climate change, extractive industries, and environmental crimes, creating complex crises that have dire human impacts worldwide, especially on women and girls.

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments (RISE) Challenge is the first of its kind to incentivize environment and gender organizations to work together to address GBV in environmental programming. Since 2019, the challenge has funded nine interventions that reduce and prevent GBV in environmental contexts and climate-related sectors.

USAID awarded funding to the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) D-Lab to implement the Creative Capacity-Building to Address GBV in the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) Sector project. This project addressed GBV and environmental degradation in mining territories of Colombia.



THE PROBLEM

Women artisanal and small-scale miners in Colombia commonly experience harassment, sexual violence, and domestic violence. A 2018 study conducted by ARM found that half of the women surveyed reported experiencing sexual violence and nearly all of the women miners face economic GBV, as they are relegated to activities that are not considered central to mining, such as working as a *chatarrera* (sifting through tailings pulled from the mines by male miners to scavenge for leftover gold) or as a *barequera* (panning for gold in waterways). These activities require little to no qualifications, receive limited economic and social recognition, and are often targets of exploitation by middlemen.

The informality, remoteness, and limited state presence at ASM sites reinforce gender inequality and create opportunities for GBV and transactional sex. Additionally, widespread *machismo* and gender roles in mining communities reproduce and enhance discrimination and GBV against women. While Colombia has made progress in instituting policies and laws that mitigate GBV and promote gender equality in recent years, the culture in mining territories continues to lack gender awareness and gender-sensitive social norms.

THE APPROACH

ARM and MIT D-Lab adapted proven approaches to address GBV in the mining sector in Colombia. The project held three-day movement-building workshops for women miners, with each focused on implementing a different approach. At the first workshop, the project applied the Public Narrative approach, developed at Harvard, to bring the women miners personal and collective stories to build solidarity and mobilize them into action around joint objectives. At the second workshop, they implemented the Creative Capacity-Building approach, developed by MIT D-Lab, which uses co-design to harness local creativity and knowledge of women miners to design solutions to identified challenges. At the third workshop, the project used ARM's Advocacy Capacity-Building approach to provide women ASM miners with advocacy skills and empower them to advocate for safer and more equitable working conditions at the mines. The project team also refined these approaches according to findings from a gender analysis conducted early on in the project.



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By combining these tried-and-tested methodologies, the project offered women miners in four Colombian communities—Andes, Zaragoza, Nechí, and El Bagre—a safe space to share stories of their experiences with GBV, identify specific GBV challenges, and collectively build solutions. The workshops also provided training on environmental degradation and safe mining practices. Additionally, some local women miners received training to facilitate the workshops themselves, boosting feelings of empowerment and enabling them to run workshop logistics and finances.

THE PARTNERS

ARM is a local organization in Colombia that contributed deep knowledge of mining communities to this project, while MIT D-Lab offered its gender and co-design research and expertise. Together, these partners successfully addressed GBV and increased the movement-building capacity of women miners to ensure that the program can scale throughout Colombian mining regions beyond the life of USAID funding.

The project also built partnerships with municipal governments, the engineering and mining departments at Universidad Nacional in Colombia, the Colorado School of Mines, and multinational mining company Naples Prime. Finally, USAID-funded program Mining Horizons helped the project reach a broader audience and achieve its goal of incorporating women miners' voices into national dialogues, influencing policy, and building the movement throughout the country.

THE IMPACT

Over the 23 months of the project, ARM and MIT D-Lab trained 48 women miners at a total of three movement-building workshops in Bajo Cauca and three in Andes, with more than half of the women attending all three of the workshops in their area.

A key goal of the program was to increase women miners' knowledge of GBV and to provide them with a space to understand and share their experiences with GBV in their communities. As a result of the workshops, all of the participants surveyed agreed that they had a greater understanding of GBV. All of the participants also showed an increase in advocacy skills, indicating that they knew how to create a campaign in their community after receiving the opportunity to practice doing so during the program. Additionally, 92 percent of the women miners reported an improvement in their narrative skills and more than half of the women miners reported an improvement in their co-design skills after participating in the workshops.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the program, Naples Prime has committed to funding movement-building conferences moving forward, including one for 500 women in October 2022, and Universidad Nacional will support the women in co-designing a gender-sensitive formalization process.

Reducing Gender-Based Violence in Mining Communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Gender-based violence (GBV) affects more than one in three women worldwide, and it is used across environmental sectors to assert control over land and natural resources. GBV is exacerbated by the degradation and biodiversity loss caused by climate change, extractive industries, and environmental crimes, creating complex crises that have dire human impacts worldwide, especially on women and girls.

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) [Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments \(RISE\) Challenge](#) is the first of its kind to incentivize environment and gender organizations to work together to address GBV in environmental programming. Since 2019, the challenge has funded nine interventions that reduce and prevent GBV in environmental contexts and climate-related sectors.

USAID awarded funding to Action to Protect Women and Abandoned Children (ASEFA) and the [Harvard Humanitarian Initiative \(HHI\)](#) to jointly develop and implement a new training called Resource-ful Empowerment: Elevating Women's Voices for Human and Environmental Protection in Congolese Small-Scale Mining.



THE PROBLEM

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), artisanal and small-scale mining provides revenue to 16 percent of the population. More than two million people work in this sector, half of whom are women. While mining offers economic opportunities to workers, there is also a great risk of exploitation and abuse, particularly for women. According to a study undertaken by HHI and the World Bank, four in ten women stated that they were forced to trade sex for access to work or basic goods in mining towns. Thirty percent of women stated that they had been harassed by men in the mines, and only one out of seven women had discussed this harassment with others.



“Women are discriminated against in mining sites, victims of physical, economic, and psychological violence. The objective of this workshop is to empower women so that they can take their place in decision-making bodies and make men understand that women have an equal right to work in the mining sector. This is why women must know their rights in order to defend them.”

— Annie Sinandugu, Director of ASEFA

THE APPROACH

The project created, implemented, and evaluated two versions of a newly developed evidence-based, scalable curricula. Each version aimed to reduce sexual harassment and abuse and promote environmental best practices in mining towns in the DRC. The core curriculum focuses on human rights and Congolese law, women's protection, gender norms, and measures for mitigating mining's environmental impact, particularly erosion and landslides. The interconnectedness curriculum covers the same topics, but also includes additional emphasis on the links between people in mining towns and the links between people and the environment. The project theorized that the additional interconnectedness module may help improve both environmental and human outcomes. Both curricula utilized context-appropriate pictures to allow women and men with varying levels of literacy to easily understand its messages.

Using an A/B testing methodology, the training curricula were randomly assigned to mining communities and implemented over a one-year period. Each community participated in four training sessions, and they trained "champions" to train other members of their community on women's protection and safe mining practices. The project conducted a baseline and endline assessment to evaluate and compare the impact and effectiveness of the curricula.



© ASEFA/HHI

THE PARTNERS

ASEFA and HHI worked three local organizations—Initiative des Femmes Entrepreneures pour le Développement Durable (IFEDD), Solidarité des Femmes pour le Développement Intégré (SOFEDI), and Research Initiatives for Social Development (RISD)—to implement their project.

SOFEDI led implementation on the ground in North Kivu and IFEDD led implementation on the ground in South Kivu. When the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the HHI team from traveling to the DRC to provide the initial training and conduct the project assessments, the project team pooled their resources to recruit RISD to conduct the baseline and endline surveys. The decision to use RISD to conduct these assessments helped to ensure that those surveyed felt comfortable sharing their honest feedback about potentially sensitive topics, including attitudes towards gender equality, environmental protection, and safety practices in mining towns.

THE IMPACT

Over 22 months, 720 women and men miners located in nine communities in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Maniema completed the training. Facilitators used a combination of lecture, art-based learning, participatory approaches, and roleplay to discuss gender norms, GBV, mining code, and Congolese law.

A key component of this project was to test the difference between two different curricula to determine which was the most effective at changing attitudes. Both curricula improved the participants' knowledge of occupational safety and how to protect the environment. Participants in both versions of the curricula reported a 100 percent increase in knowledge of safe mining practices, such as reinforcement of mining tunnels and land recovery post-mining. As a result of the training, 75 percent of male participants and 66 percent of women participants were more aware of the mining code.



© ASEFA/HHI

The communities that received the interconnectedness curriculum also reported a 34 percent increase in feeling strongly connected to the environment and a desire to expand the use of safe mining practices. The interconnectedness curriculum was more effective at reducing sexual harassment and sexual coercion. The number of women who reported experiencing sexual coercion in mining towns within the last year was reduced by half, and the number of women who reported experiencing sexual coercion in the last month was reduced from 15 percent to five percent.

During a monitoring visit to Kailo, a mining town in Maniema province, ASEFA's program director heard from women who escaped the practice of exchanging sex in return for job opportunities at mining sites, known locally as the Mavula system. Some of these women stated that ASEFA's work supported them in this process by not only increasing their awareness of their rights, but also generating a form of community awareness that made it possible for them to find another job through non-coercive means.

Shifting Gender Norms to Reduce Violence in Peru’s Nuwas Forest

Gender-based violence (GBV) affects more than one in three women worldwide, and it is used across environmental sectors to assert control over land and natural resources. GBV is exacerbated by the degradation and biodiversity loss caused by climate change, extractive industries, and environmental crimes, creating complex crises that have dire human impacts worldwide, especially on women and girls.

The United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments (RISE) Challenge is the first of its kind to incentivize environment and gender organizations to work together to address GBV in environmental programming. Since 2019, the challenge has funded nine interventions that reduce and prevent GBV in environmental contexts and climate-related sectors.

USAID awarded funding to Conservation International Foundation (CI) and local partner Center for the Promotion and Defense of Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights (PROMSEX) to implement the Alto Mayo Landscape Without Gender Violence project. The project shifted harmful gender norms and beliefs about women’s and men’s roles in society, the sanctioning of violence, and community processes for dealing with violence in Peru’s Nuwas Forest.



THE PROBLEM

The Alto Mayo landscape in Peru is home to 14 Awajún communities and has some of the highest rates of deforestation in the country. Awajún women face social and economic disadvantages due to their gender.

For over a decade, CI has been working with communities in this area to reverse deforestation and biodiversity loss, while promoting gender-equitable economic growth. CI observed that activities to increase women’s sustainable economic opportunities did not elevate their voices in decision-making bodies and even put them at a higher risk of experiencing GBV. Women play a fundamental role in environmental conservation as guardians of traditional knowledge, which is key for conservation actions, and engaging them as conservation partners requires responding to the issues they face, including GBV, so they can better and more safely engage in the conservation space.

THE APPROACH

The Alto Mayo project worked with one Awajún community to shift harmful gender norms and beliefs about women’s and men’s roles in society, the sanctioning of violence, and community processes for dealing with violence by addressing the

drivers of GBV. CI and PROMSEX provided training on legal rights and sexual violence prevention to women who manage the Nuwas Forest, and they also helped the community to develop informal support systems for GBV survivors. CI engaged with male leaders and spouses in the community to explore concepts of masculinity and transform attitudes that contribute to GBV. Additionally, they built the capacity of CI staff, partners, and the local indigenous federation to respond appropriately to incidents of GBV and improved awareness of GBV in an indigenous context for local officials.



© CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

THE PARTNERS

While CI was able to identify the unintended harm caused by increasing women's sustainable economic opportunities in Awajún communities, they lacked the technical expertise to address the issue. That is why they enlisted the help of PROMSEX, a local gender and GBV organization with experience in norms change and addressing GBV. PROMSEX's work and expertise helped CI to more clearly understand its role in addressing GBV as a conservation organization. Since the project's inception, other CI offices and environmental organizations working in Peru have reached out to project staff to express interest in learning more about the project. CI is now addressing GBV in two other conservation programs in Peru and tracking the impact of preventing and responding to GBV.

Prior to this project, PROMSEX had not worked in environmental programming. Their work with CI helped them realize the impact that gender-based projects can have on environmental issues. The challenge taught them how to adapt and contextualize their approach to work with indigenous communities.

THE IMPACT

Over 17 months, the partners trained 70 women who manage the Nuwas Forest on their legal rights, prevention of sexual violence, and sexual and reproductive health. The project also engaged 24 men from the community and implementing partner staff on topics such as gender, positive masculinity, and how to achieve justice for GBV survivors.

By the end of the project, all of the women participants agreed more strongly with the idea that men and women should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities. Additionally, 70 percent of respondents reported feeling safer engaging in conservation activities and 73 percent demonstrated knowledge of the resources and organizations available for GBV survivors. Of the male community members trained on activities that prevent GBV, 76 percent reported that they better understood positive masculinity. During one of the last training sessions, a community chief recognized the importance of addressing GBV in the community and publicly signed an act of commitment that new community regulations will include a section on how to address GBV cases.

In November 2021, a community chief and women in the community formed a women's community patrol, which now has 20 members, most of whom were trained as part of the RISE project. Three regional government authorities that oversee GBV government representatives attended a three-hour session with the community patrol where they learned about the indigenous context and listened to testimonies of the women about the difficulties they face in making a GBV complaint. After listening to the testimonies, the officials committed to training community leaders and the women's patrol members, who are usually the first responders in cases of GBV, on how to respond to GBV according to the law. The first training session for the women was held in January 2022.

CI will be using funds from a project financed by the BHP Foundation to build upon its work from the RISE Challenge by addressing GBV in five other Awajún communities.

Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Kenyan Conservancies

Gender-based violence (GBV) affects more than one in three women worldwide, and it is used across environmental sectors to assert control over land and natural resources. GBV is exacerbated by the degradation and biodiversity loss caused by climate change, extractive industries, and environmental crimes, creating complex crises that have dire human impacts worldwide, especially on women and girls.

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USAID awarded funding to Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) to implement the Advancing Equitable Gender, Social, and Power Norms in Community Conservancies project. This project addressed GBV and ensured more equitable access to and control of natural resources in conservancies in Kenya by advancing equitable norms.



THE PROBLEM

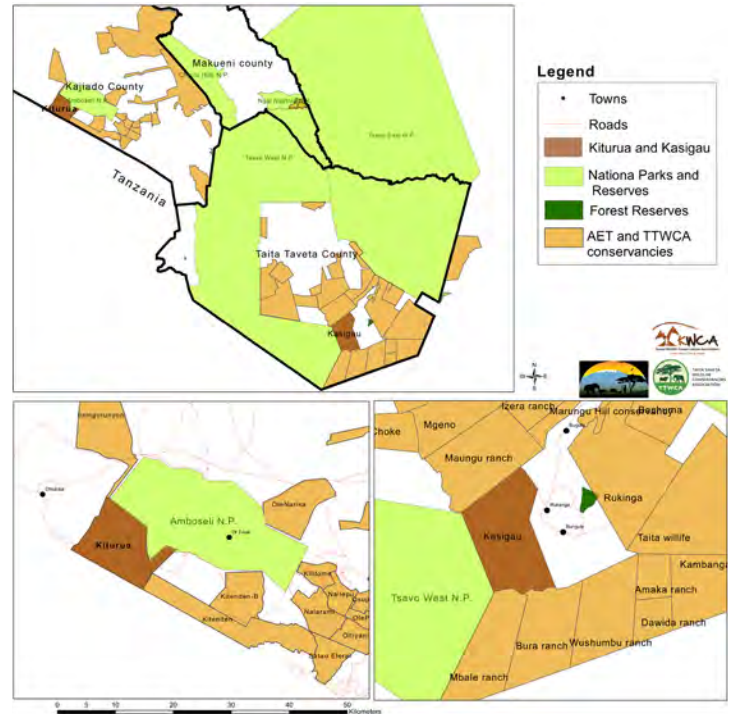
Conservation is the work of preserving and protecting Earth’s resources, and in many countries, it is essential to maintaining the biodiversity of local ecosystems and ensuring the livelihoods of the people who rely on those ecosystems. In Kenya, women traditionally do not own land and comprise less than ten percent of conservancy membership. Only five percent of conservancy manager positions, two percent of conservancy ranger positions, and five percent of conservancy committees are made up of women. Conservancy governance entrenches gender biases and ensures that decision-making and power remain with men, making it difficult for women to access, influence, and benefit from conservancies.

The social norms, practices, and beliefs that lead to women’s marginalization within conservancies both are perpetuated by and contribute to GBV. The inequitable access and control of natural resources manifest as GBV primarily through social, institutional, and economic exclusion.

THE PARTNERS

Prior to participating in the RISE Challenge, KWCA and Fauna & Flora International (FFI) worked together to increase KWCA's capacity and resources to address gender equity in conservation. Under RISE, KWCA and FFI formed new partnerships with Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) Kenya and Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW), which brought expertise in gender transformative approaches and GBV mitigation to conservancies across Kenya.

The partners also engaged the staff and boards of two regional conservancies associations, Amboseli Ecosystem Trust and Taita Taveta Wildlife Conservancies Association (TTWCA). While the regional associations were initially skeptical about the topic of GBV in conservation, the project helped members understand the importance of addressing the issue.



THE APPROACH

KWCA's project adapted elements of CARE Kenya's Social Analysis and Action (SAA) model to facilitate staff transformation and raise awareness and confidence in discussing gender and power norms in conservancies. The SAA model is a facilitated four-step process through which individuals and communities challenge harmful gender norms that negatively impact women's and men's well-being and enable them to collectively envision and create gender-equitable alternatives. KWCA, Amboseli Ecosystem Trust, and TTWCA staff and leadership reflected on their own biases and beliefs around gender norms and how these biases influence their conservation efforts, and the project then built their capacity to promote gender equality and GBV prevention through their work.

The project also undertook a gender analysis and used the results to integrate gender and GBV prevention into KWCA's organizational policies and programming. These learnings contributed not only to KWCA's improved gender capacity, but also to the wider knowledge base around GBV, access and control of land and natural resources, and conservation initiatives that support sustainable management.

Finally, CARE supported TTWCA to formulate a safeguarding policy and incorporate it into the organization's operations and programming. KWCA and TTWCA staff and leadership reflected on their own biases and beliefs around gender norms and how these biases influence their conservation efforts, and the project then built their capacity to promote gender equality and GBV prevention through their work.

THE IMPACT

Over the 22 months of the project, KWCA and its partners successfully trained 280 women and 321 men from conservancies in Taita Taveta on how to prevent GBV, with 98 percent of participants reporting higher awareness of GBV as a result of their efforts. Participants included KWCA, Amboseli Ecosystem Trust, TTWCA staff and leadership, members of the Kasigau Ranch Wildlife Conservancy, and representatives from the Tsavo, Amboseli, and Mara landscapes. The project's work also reached 435 indirect beneficiaries, including 13 landscape-level regional associations and 174 member conservancies.



© KWCA

Among KWCA staff, the SAA training created a shift in mindset against harmful gender norms and toward gender equality and GBV prevention. Following the gender analysis, KWCA proposed and approved several amendments to the organization's constitution and conservancy guidelines related to gender equality and women's participation. TTWCA approved and adopted a safeguarding policy that established structures to protect women working with the organization.

At the Kasigau Ranch Wildlife Conservancy's Annual General Meeting, more than half of the respondents to an evaluation reported that the number of women who vied for positions at the conservancy had increased in 2022. Also at the meeting, the board of directors passed a motion nominating three women to be included in the board, and nine women ran for conservancy leadership positions, more than ever before.

“There is a change of attitude among the conservancies as male and female community members are becoming more responsive to female leadership in conservancy management. Compared to previous years, after the implementation of the SAA training and community dialogue sessions, there is a rise in the number of elected board members in conservancy management. Also, more women are pursuing conservation jobs that were initially male-dominated, resulting in more female rangers.”

— A KWCA staff member

Addressing Gender-Based Violence, Resource-Based Conflict, and Climate Change in Fiji

Gender-based violence (GBV) affects more than one in three women worldwide, and it is used across environmental sectors to assert control over land and natural resources. GBV is exacerbated by the degradation and biodiversity loss caused by climate change, extractive industries, and environmental crimes, creating complex crises that have dire human impacts worldwide, especially on women and girls.

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments (RISE) Challenge is the first of its kind to incentivize environment and gender organizations to work together to address GBV in environmental programming. Since 2019, the challenge has funded nine interventions that reduce and prevent GBV in environmental contexts and climate-related sectors.

USAID awarded funding to Marstel-Day and Women Influencing Health, Education, and Rule of Law (WI-HER) to implement GBV and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) in Fiji: Tackling Resource Conflict and Addressing Gender-Based Risk (GBR) in the Environment. The project promoted gender equity and transformation by supporting institutional changes that identify and address GBV in resource-based conflicts in Fiji.



THE PROBLEM

Fiji is highly vulnerable to climate change, including rising seawater, floods, and extreme weather events. The impacts of climate change place a disproportionate burden on vulnerable and marginalized populations, especially women and girls, who already face significant structural and cultural barriers to owning land and benefitting from land-generated resources. Further, 72 percent of Fijian women experience one or more types of violence in their lifetime.

Development solutions that seek to address or mitigate the impacts of climate change through carbon offset programs can deliver multiple benefits, such as reducing carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and protecting important biodiversity. However, these climate initiatives do not always result in equitable, positive change for all community members, and can actually exacerbate economic disparities and incidences of GBV.



“...It’s always the men that make the decisions in terms of natural resource development, even though women are recognized [as having] the greatest impact on the development of a resource. But when it comes to decision-making, they are always the last voice or second voice as compared to the husbands, the men.”

— A key informant from the project

THE APPROACH

The project built upon Marstel Day’s previous work establishing a feedback, grievance, and redress mechanism (FGRM) in Fiji to address the unintended consequences of REDD+ programming. The FGRM provides a transparent and legitimate mediation framework for communities, government agencies, and companies to resolve resource-based disputes. With RISE funding, mechanisms to mitigate GBR and address GBV were integrated into the FGRM using the Identify, Design, Apply, Record, Expand (iDare) methodology, which emphasizes participatory approaches, continuous learning and adaptation, cost-effectiveness, and clear sustainability metrics that enable self-reliance. The project team allowed REDD+ communities, government officials, and non-governmental organizations to play an active role in shaping the FGRM+ by helping with the re-design and extensive field analysis, and in the process, improved REDD+ stakeholders’ understanding of the linkages between GBV and forest conservation and climate change.

The FGRM+ integrates steps that manage GBV cases with appropriate sensitivity and awareness, and introduces processes to facilitate linkages to existing resources in Fiji for potential instances of GBV. It includes protocols to protect privacy and training guidelines that encourage safe and respectful grievance uptake and response. The project also developed an updated communications strategy to help guide government strategies for raising awareness around GBR, advocating increased access to and use of the FGRM+, and engaging indigenous women and men in the ongoing improvement of REDD+ services.

© MARSTEL-DAY



THE PARTNERS

Throughout the implementation of the project, Marstel-Day and WI-HER worked with the [University of the South Pacific \(USP\)](#), the [Fiji Environmental Law Association \(FELA\)](#), [Live & Learn Environmental Education](#), and [Fiji's REDD+ Programme](#). These local counterparts built trusting relationships with beneficiaries and provided technical expertise in conservation, natural resource management, land use, gender studies, human and environmental rights, and REDD+.

USP built the capacity of their staff and environmental studies students to understand the linkages between GBV and the environment. FELA spread awareness of environmental law, compliance, and policy review and enforcement, and they became a well-informed resource for locals on how to better integrate gender-based issues into future policies and initiatives. Live & Learn Environmental Education, a regional non-governmental organization network, directly engaged with project activities to ensure staff would be able to provide future training, awareness-raising, and technical expertise on GBV and the environment. Finally, the REDD+ Programme communicated findings from the project to ensure that the FGRM+ would be institutionalized and scaled for future use. It will serve as an example for how to integrate and readily address GBV and environment linkages, and it provides a model for replication across the region.

THE IMPACT

Over 23 months of implementation, Marstel-Day's and WI-HER's project reached 46 women and 56 men who were directly consulted in the FGRM+ adaptation process, and over 1,000 people indirectly through awareness-raising and capacity-building activities.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Marstel-Day and WI-HER pivoted to remote interviews and focus group discussions, which were particularly challenging given the discussion of sensitive topics like GBV. The project developed a remote interview protocol and used a trusted local partner to support the consultations. These adaptations supported a deeper understanding of local needs, capacities, and sensitivities, and ensured the FGRM+ was appropriately adapted to address GBV in the Fijian context. At the project's socialization event and the final FGRM+ training workshop, over half of the participants demonstrated an increase in knowledge and understanding of GBV and GBR in the country.

The FGRM+ has been approved by the Fijian government, the World Bank, and key REDD+ stakeholders. It provides a much-needed gender-responsive blueprint for tackling resource-based conflict further aggravated by environmental conservation initiatives. The FGRM+ incorporates protections for women and vulnerable groups into conservation programs and safeguards against unintended negative consequences of development solutions. It is a resource efficient, adaptable framework that can be easily scaled and incorporated into new and existing environmental programming to help development practitioners, host nation governments, and communities understand the linkages and true impacts of conservation and benefit-sharing activities.

Addressing Gender Norms and Power Imbalances to Improve Women’s Land Rights in Uganda

Gender-based violence (GBV) affects more than one in three women worldwide, and it is used across environmental sectors to assert control over land and natural resources. GBV is exacerbated by the degradation and biodiversity loss caused by climate change, extractive industries, and environmental crimes, creating complex crises that have dire human impacts worldwide, especially on women and girls.

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USAID awarded funding to Trócaire and partners Land Equity Movement of Uganda (LEMU) and Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organization (SOCADIDO) to implement the Securing Land Rights and Ending Gender Exclusion project. This project addressed power imbalances between men and women to prevent and respond to GBV, and improved land tenure and property rights in Uganda.



THE PROBLEM

In Northeastern Uganda, where land is an important source of wealth and power, land rights are often dictated through the customary tenure system. Harmful social norms that suggest women cannot own land or widows have no right to stay on marital land after their husband’s death have been used to justify land-grabbing from women. A 2016 study by LEMU indicates that 85 percent of widows in this area experience land conflicts within the first six months of widowhood, and a 2014 study by Oxfam International found that 58 percent of female divorcees experienced land conflict. When women seek to assert their land rights, they risk experiencing further psychological, emotional, or physical violence. The adjudicators of land justice and the community at large are often insensitive to the violations women experience, and less than five percent of disputes are resolved in a court of law.

THE APPROACH

The project aimed to strengthen women's customary land tenure in the Teso sub-region in Northeast Uganda while mitigating and responding to land conflicts and GBV. The project partners adapted the SASA! Faith methodology to address harmful gender norms and power imbalances between men and women that act as a barrier to women safely securing land rights. The project facilitated dialogues and training with customary leaders, community activists, and community leaders on gender roles, customary land rights, GBV prevention and response, and appropriate referral pathways.

SASA! Faith created an enabling, supportive environment for both women and men to claim their customary land rights and resolve land disputes. The project used proven and culturally appropriate tools, such as the Principles, Practice, Rights, and Responsibilities (PPRR), the Family Land Rights and Lineage Tree, and the MyGPS application, to guide community members through the land demarcation and documentation process. When conflicts arose, the project trained and supported customary leaders to resolve disputes using the gender-sensitive alternative dispute resolution mechanism. Alternative dispute resolution is implemented within the community, making it more accessible and affordable than the formal court system, and it aims to find a resolution that is agreeable to both parties. Clan leaders used alternative dispute resolution to restore relationships between aggrieved parties and to refer GBV survivors to appropriate services.



© TRÔCAIRE

THE PARTNERS

LEMU is a women-led and women-centered organization that works with communities to understand and protect their land rights while advocating with the government for improved laws and policies focusing on women's land rights protection. LEMU was the lead technical partner on land, as its staff developed land materials and trained on land demarcation, documentation, and alternative dispute resolution processes.

SOCADIDO is the development wing of Soroti Catholic Diocese and works with communities on agriculture, land governance, and women's empowerment. SOCADIDO was the lead technical partner on gender, as its staff developed gender materials and training manuals and trained other implementing partner staff on GBV prevention and response, as well as the appropriate handling of disclosure and referrals.

Both LEMU and SOCADIDO were responsible for carrying out the day-to-day implementation of the project activities, including training and accompaniment on GBV prevention and response, land demarcation, and dispute resolution with the gender-sensitive alternative dispute resolution. They were also responsible for collecting quantitative and qualitative data on the project activities.



© TRÓCAIRE

THE IMPACT

Over the two years of project implementation, Trócaire and its partners supported 53 women and 87 men to document and demarcate a total of 356.83 acres of land. Community activists and clan leaders also conducted awareness-raising sessions that provided 4,191 people with the skills and knowledge necessary to demarcate and document their land using customary methods. The alternative dispute resolution was used to successfully resolve land disputes for 98 men and women in a manner that allowed the two parties to continue to co-exist peacefully as neighbors or families.

By the end of the project, 73 percent of women and 71 percent of men surveyed in the target communities reported that they did not accept gender inequality or behaviors that lead to GBV, an increase of over 60 percent from when the project began. As a result of training sessions that aimed to increase awareness of GBV prevention, one male clan leader stated, *“It is true that both women and men can experience violence, but it is clear that women are at a higher risk, and we as men need to acknowledge this and see how to end the cycle.”* Some of the positive social norms that were more widely adopted as a result of the project included women and girls having the right to inherit property from their parents or husbands, as well as a belief in collective responsibility and decision-making within households.

Empowering Women and Creating Collective Healing Spaces in Southern and Eastern Guatemala

Gender-based violence (GBV) affects more than one in three women worldwide, and it is used across environmental sectors to assert control over land and natural resources. GBV is exacerbated by the degradation and biodiversity loss caused by climate change, extractive industries, and environmental crimes, creating complex crises that have dire human impacts worldwide, especially on women and girls.

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USAID awarded funding to Community Forestry Association of Guatemala Utz Che' (Utz Che') to implement Tz'unun: Ending Environmental Violence Against Indigenous Women in Guatemala Through Empowerment in Community Forestry, Agroecology, and Collective Healing Spaces. This project addressed GBV in community forestry in southern and eastern Guatemala.



THE PROBLEM

In Guatemala, women experience a heteronormative, sexist, and patriarchal system that not only prioritizes the exploitation of bodies and territories, but also leads to economic and physical GBV. Women are often relegated to unpaid domestic activities like caring for the children and the home, and have little time or space to achieve economic empowerment or healing. Additionally, women working in community forestry or agroecology, particularly indigenous women, face gendered dynamics of resource access that are worsened by climate change and socioeconomic challenges.

THE APPROACH

The project aimed to address GBV through Utz Che's ongoing activities with nine indigenous communities in eastern and southern Guatemala to reclaim ancestral knowledge, support conservation through agroforestry, and promote community-based economies.

With RISE funding, the project partners also established Collective Healing Spaces for women to identify different forms of violence, share their experiences with GBV, collectively build solutions, and empower women as decision-makers in community forestry and agriculture. Collective Healing Spaces were formed within nine community-based organizations, and one or two representatives per community led the sessions.

The project improved women's participation in the Sustainable Family Agriculture program, which helps smallholder farmers, particularly farming women, to reclaim their traditional ecological knowledge and ensure their communities and lifestyles will endure a changing climate and socioeconomic hardships. Utz Che' and Trees, Water, & People (TWP) also established Collective Productive Ventures by providing seed funding and training to the nine community-based organizations. The Collective Productive Ventures strengthen women's economic empowerment and build knowledge around sustainable environmental entrepreneurship, including how to start income-generating enterprises.



© UTZ CHE'

THE PARTNERS

Utz Che' is a local entity that represents and supports the sustainable management of resources for indigenous, multicultural, and campesino associations in Guatemala. Utz Che' served as the umbrella organization for the Collective Healing Spaces and has long facilitated spaces for community reflections about collective and individual rights. The Sustainable Family Agriculture program is also the result of Utz Che's efforts to facilitate farmer-to-farmer exchanges for the purpose of diversifying farms and increasing food security. Utz Che' was recently named a recipient of the 2020 Equator Prize, an award that represents outstanding community and indigenous initiatives that are advancing nature-based solutions for local sustainable development.

On this project, Utz Che' partnered with TWP, an environmental organization that works with American Indians and indigenous communities in Central America to design and implement programs that produce tangible benefits for people and the planet. Utz' Che and TWP have been in partnership since 2012, and both organizations share an indigenous-centered worldview and focus on programs that can be developed by and for community members. TWP helped with the development of the program, co-implemented of project activities, and provided strategic support to field staff.

Utz Che' and TWP also partnered with Q'anil, a GBV-focused organization that assisted with project implementation by hosting training workshops for women to spread awareness about the different types of GBV and the services available for Guatemalans to deal with violence.



© UTZ CHE'

THE IMPACT

Over the 18 months of the project, Utz Che' and its partners brought 124 families from eastern Guatemala and 45 families from southern Guatemala into the Sustainable Family Agriculture program to exchange knowledge related to agroforestry and ancestral agricultural practices. As a result of the program, 82 percent of women reported that they had increased the quantity and quality of their products in gardens and plots, which is the first step to diversifying crops for family consumption. For women participants, this was not only a transformative material process, but also a social, personal, and political one.

The nine community-based organizations are participating in the project's Collective Productive Ventures, with 296 women having already benefited from increased access to productive economic resources in the form of seed funding. TWP has also secured flexible funding for the next six months in order to follow along with the progress of the Collective Productive Ventures and provide staffing to Utz Che' as they accompany the efforts.

Through this project, the team reached 160 women with Collective Healing Spaces by providing training workshops to 16 women who went on to replicate the safe spaces for others. These safe spaces contributed to women's increased participation in local environmental management and provided them with the skills to overcome social, economic, psychological, and physical GBV at the household and community levels. After participating in the Collective Healing Spaces, 73 percent of women showed an improved understanding of GBV and knowledge of support services to prevent and address GBV.

Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Unsafe Working Environments in Wildlife Conservation in Vietnam

Gender-based violence (GBV) affects more than one in three women worldwide, and it is used across environmental sectors to assert control over land and natural resources. GBV is exacerbated by the degradation and biodiversity loss caused by climate change, extractive industries, and environmental crimes, creating complex crises that have dire human impacts worldwide, especially on women and girls.

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) [Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments \(RISE\) Challenge](#) is the first of its kind to incentivize environment and gender organizations to work together to address GBV in environmental programming. Since 2019, the challenge has funded nine interventions that reduce and prevent GBV in environmental contexts and climate-related sectors.

USAID awarded funding to [WildAct Vietnam](#) to implement the Reducing GBV in Vietnamese Conservation project. This project sought to empower local women, leaders, and conservation organizations in Vietnam to address the challenges of gender inequality, harassment, and unsafe working environments that women face in wildlife conservation.



THE PROBLEM

In Vietnam, conservation professionals, especially women, face significant challenges in the workplace—sexual harassment, physical violence, and sexual assault. In June 2020, WildAct conducted a survey to study GBV in Vietnamese conservation organizations and found that five out of six participants experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. Of the participants who experienced sexual harassment at work, five percent also reported attempted rape or rape. Three out of every eight people who experienced sexual harassment chose not to inform their organization, and almost 31 percent of people who shared their experience with colleagues were told that it is “normal.”

Conservation is a male-dominated sector where most mid-level and senior positions are held by men. Research shows that female conservationists are more likely to resign than women in other professions, especially when they work in an unfair and unsafe working environment. While conservation organizations in Vietnam have expressed interest in cultivating a safer workplace environment, many organizations lack the policy framework necessary to do so. WildAct's survey found that the majority of organizations had no specific sexual harassment policies or regulations in place, and none of the policies included information on existing referral mechanisms for women.



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THE APPROACH

The project aimed to empower women by increasing their agency and improving the conditions in their work environment in line with the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) Empowerment Framework and the Model of Women and Girls' Empowerment. WildAct held workshops with employees of international and local wildlife conservation organizations and stakeholders from the national parks to discuss their working environment, including safety while conducting fieldwork and perceptions and experiences of harassment in the workplace. Using results from the workshop and other feedback loops, WildAct and the Vietnamese Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender, Family, Women, and Adolescents (CSAGA) developed safeguarding guidelines that conservation organizations can use to develop and implement their own safeguarding policies.

The project established a Focal Contact Points program, which trains volunteers within a conservation organization to become advocates for colleagues who experience GBV or sexual harassment in the workplace. Focal Contact Points support survivors to navigate organizational policies and procedures and refer them to external services as requested. The project also held meetings with organization and agency managers to exchange knowledge, experiences, and ideas about how to create a safer environment for employees, especially women.

During implementation, WildAct found that leaders in this male-dominated industry often took a defensive posture, making it difficult to engage them in program activities. In response, the project was adapted to design and promote activities that empowered male conservationists to be part of the solution and emphasized the goodwill that gender equity would bring to their organizations.

THE PARTNERS

To implement this project, WildAct partnered with CSAGA, a local non-governmental organization. Since participating, CSAGA has improved its understanding of the dynamics of the wildlife conservation sector. While WildAct originally planned to work with CARE Vietnam, CARE did not have sufficient resources to devote to the program. WildAct was able to adapt and form the partnership with CSAGA to successfully complete the work.

THE IMPACT

Over three years of implementation, WildAct Vietnam and CSAGA offered capacity-building around addressing gender inequality, harassment, and unsafe working environments in wildlife conservation to 325 beneficiaries, which includes 222 women and 103 men. The partners also established 27 Focal Contact Points, including 21 women and six men at 18 local and international conservation organizations. The Focal Contact Points were trained as a cohort and received follow-up support from WildAct and CSAGA through an online support group.

WildAct and CSAGA provided 50 organizations with safeguarding guidance, and the project offered [Animals Asia Foundation](#), [CHANGE Vietnam](#), [Cat Ba National Park](#), and [Pu Mat National Park](#) private, individually-adapted training to develop their own safeguarding policies. These four organizations participated in the private training sessions on sexual harassment identification, response, and prevention, as well as applying safeguarding guidelines to create a safeguarding policy.

The project empowered women by increasing their agency while improving the conditions and power relations in their work environment by engaging male leaders. For example, with support from their male directors, Cat Ba National Park and Pu Mat National Park have agreed to develop and pilot safeguarding policies and have taken steps to train their staff to address issues of sexual harassment. WildAct's and CSAGA's successes have even reached beyond Vietnam, as they have received requests from conservation organizations in Laos and Cambodia to support them in addressing sexual harassment.



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Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Securing Women’s Land Rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Gender-based violence (GBV) affects more than one in three women worldwide, and it is used across environmental sectors to assert control over land and natural resources. GBV is exacerbated by the degradation and biodiversity loss caused by climate change, extractive industries, and environmental crimes, creating complex crises that have dire human impacts worldwide, especially on women and girls.

The United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments (RISE) Challenge is the first of its kind to incentivize environment and gender organizations to work together to address GBV in environmental programming. Since 2019, the challenge has funded nine interventions that reduce and prevent GBV in environmental contexts and climate-related sectors.

USAID awarded funding to Women for Women International (WfWI) to implement Rising Up! Promoting Congolese Women’s Land Access and Preventing GBV in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This project promoted women’s rights and improved women’s access to land and GBV referral systems.



THE PROBLEM

In the DRC, women’s access to land and property is central to women’s empowerment, as land is an important household asset that supports food production and income generation. Secure land tenure enables greater levels of overall economic well-being, but in Eastern DRC, the land tenure system is opaque and complex, and it is further complicated by conflict and displacement. Though the state legally owns all land and formal legislation governs land use, a significant percentage remains subject to customary law. Both customary and formal law discriminates against women, and this combined with harmful gender norms and decades of insecurity and conflict in the region place women at high risk of experiencing emotional, economic, physical, and sexual GBV.

THE APPROACH

WfWI and Innovation and Training for Development and Peace (IFDP) adapted WfWI's proven women's empowerment and GBV prevention approaches, the Male Engagement program and Change Agent program, and applied them to a new sector—land rights.

The project team completed a rapid gender analysis to better understand the linkages between GBV, land tenure security, and community power structures, and to inform program design. WfWI and IFDP trained male community leaders, community land reflection groups, and women change agents on land rights and how to identify and address GBV. The project worked with these key stakeholders to integrate GBV prevention and response into IFDP's existing Customary Decentralized Land Management Resource Model, which was implemented to safely strengthen land tenure security for men and women in the community. The training and sensitization efforts built change agents' capacity to educate women on their land rights and support them to claim and receive customary land titles using the model. Male leaders, including village chiefs, began to examine and shift norms and customs that prevented women from accessing land, used gender-sensitive approaches to resolve land disputes, and when necessary, referred GBV survivors to appropriate support services. Since village chiefs are highly respected and influential members of the community, placing them at the forefront of changes in gender norms and land management facilitated broader community adoption.



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During implementation, WfWI and IFDP discovered that first-born sons were challenging their mother's newly acquired land rights. The partners quickly adapted to create a Youth Engagement program that sensitized boys between the ages of 18 and 30 on land inheritance laws, land conflict management, and the Decentralized Land Management Resource Model.

THE PARTNER

For the past eighteen years, WfWI has worked to improve the lives of women in the Congolese province of South Kivu by addressing the drivers of GBV and gender inequality at the community level. WfWI applied the Male Engagement and Change Agent programs to land acquisition during this project, and throughout implementation, helped build its partners' skills and capacity to incorporate gender considerations into their natural resource management interventions.

WfWI partnered with IFDP, an organization with extensive experience in the DRC working on land tenure, access to land use rights, and how these issues are intertwined with peace and violence. IFDP had previously established the Customary Decentralized Land Management Resource Model, as well as land reflection groups, both of which were adapted for and used during the project.

THE IMPACT

From July 2020 to March 2022, WfWI and IFDP successfully increased understanding of land rights and women's access to land among men and women in the Nyangenzi community in South Kivu, leading to 133 women securing a total of



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145 customary land titles. An additional 262 women are currently in the process of claiming their customary titles. By the end of the project, women from eight target villages understood their land rights and had the tools to engage with local stakeholders to obtain land titles.

WfWI and IFDP increased 1,418 women's knowledge of land rights and GBV through training efforts, well beyond the target. The project also ensured that land reflection groups have the knowledge and tools to support women as they exercise their land rights and prevent GBV and land tenure conflict. At the end of the project, about 85 percent of members of land reflection groups demonstrated improved knowledge of women's land rights and what constitutes GBV and had more favorable attitudes toward women's access to land rights. In addition, none of the women who received customary land titles experienced GBV as part of the process.

As the project team carried out community sensitization activities and the Male Engagement program to raise awareness about topics such as preventing GBV, positive masculinity, and women's land rights, the number of reported GBV cases declined among project participants. Men who participated in the training exhibited shifts in behavior and attitudes toward women and land rights, including male leaders who serve as role models to other community members. One village chief who was initially opposed to registering land in a woman's name changed his perspective after attending the training, gave land to his wife, and encouraged other men in his village to do the same. By the end of the project, all male community leaders that participated in the project provided land to their wives.