

# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

RESILIENT, INCLUSIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTS (RISE)

JULY 2023

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

## THE EVALUATION

NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) undertook a portfolio performance evaluation for the United States Agency for International Development Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Hub (USAID/GenDev). One cluster of activities NORC evaluated was the Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments (RISE) Challenge implemented by Resonance, that sought to reduce GBV in environmental programming at both the community and institutional level. The Challenge promotes partnerships between environmental organizations, local communities, indigenous people’s organizations, and gender and GBV experts to bridge knowledge gaps and build an evidence base of effective GBV interventions. Listed below are the activities, the data sources for the evaluation, evaluation questions posed by NORC, and key lessons.

### Activities

1. Creative Capacity-Building to Address GBV in the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Sector (Creative Capacity Building) in Colombia
2. Alto Mayo Landscape Without Gender Violence (Alto Mayo Without GBV) in Peru
3. Securing Land Rights and Ending Gender Exclusion (SLEDGE) in Uganda
4. Advancing Equitable Gender, Social, and Power Norms in Community Conservancies (Advancing Equitable Norms in Conservancies) in Kenya
5. Rising Up! Promoting Congolese Women’s Land Access and Preventing GBV in Eastern DRC (Rising Up!)
6. Reducing GBV in Vietnamese Conservation in Vietnam
7. Gender Empowerment and Transformation: Tackling Resource-Based Conflict and GBV in Fiji (GBV/FGRM+)

### Data Sources



Desk review of 73 program documents



22 focus group discussions (FGDs)



33 key informant interviews (KIIs)



Web survey with 47 activity participants in Vietnam

1

Is the activity cluster based on context-specific and international evidence?

2

To what extent is the activity cluster achieving the targeted GBV results?

3

To what extent is the activity cluster sustainable?

## LESSONS LEARNED

### What worked?

- ▲ Rigorous needs assessments conducted at the beginning of the grant were useful to grantees and led to important intervention adaptations before implementation.
- ▲ The most effective mechanism across activities was different programs' ability to raise awareness about gender dynamics, equality, and GBV.
- ▲ Changes in intervention design during implementation were dictated by the COVID-19 pandemic and local realities. The flexibility of the awards and the use of adaptive management allowed grantees to modify interventions in ways that were critical to success.
- ▲ Activities provided new insight on the intersection of GBV and the environment, such as how women are treated within conservation organizations and the roles women are expected to take around natural resource management, that can be applied to future interventions.

### What did not work?

- ▼ The assumption that evidence produced by RISE will support causal linkages between GBV and environmental outcomes was not feasible within the timeframe and resource constraints of the grants.
- ▼ Norms and attitudes posed challenges to implementation in activities that focused on GBV at the community and institutional levels. For example, at the community level, social tolerance for GBV influenced community uptake for the Alto Mayo without GBV activity.
- ▼ Some activities are unlikely to be well sustained or scaled up because of the limited time and funding to expand or entrench the activities in local practice. Promised outcomes need to be ensured, such as delivering land titles that were paid for by participants. In the Rising Up! case, the land titles were available, but participants could not afford to travel to the offices where they were to obtain them past the end of the grant period.

## RECOMMENDATIONS



### ESTABLISH RIGOROUS EXIT PLANS.

There must be sufficient funding and time to achieve sustainable results. Key stakeholders should be strengthened, so they are equipped to take ownership of an activity, and the local community and/or the community leadership should be engaged to ensure that they can take ownership of the activity once the grant ends. There should be follow ups after the end of the activity to ensure that natural resource management reforms persist and have what they need to continue. Local leaders should participate in rigorous exit planning to ensure that these new systems are sustained past the end of the grant.

*“The big problem that we had was the money that many beneficiaries were giving to get the land titles of their fields, it is as if this money did not arrive at its destination because the activity ended, and they did not receive any document, until now there is a big problem between the community and the people who received this money, even we who sensitized these people were not well seen in the community” (Rising Up! FGD)*



## UTILIZE FLEXIBLE AND USER-FOCUSED MONITORING FOR INTERVENTION ADAPTATIONS.

Techniques that permitted grantees to shift their intervention designs based on emerging monitoring data generally led to useful program adaptations. However, intervention monitoring processes need to be feasible, not burdensome for small organizations, and emerging data needs to be fed back in ways that are useable by the implementing partners. Future monitoring processes are likely to work better if they are co-designed by the implementing agencies, with support from management partners or research agencies familiar with co-production or user-centered design techniques.



## CONDUCT CONTEXT-SPECIFIC PLANNING AND DESIGN.

Future iterations of RISE should continue to integrate context-specific planning and design (e.g., integration of local culture, customs, and interests). Implementers should seek information about the practical needs of participants. If it is not possible to ascertain sufficient information about those needs, interventions should be designed and budgeted in ways that can accommodate unknown or unanticipated practical needs of participants during implementation.

*Something that was very important was to assure them that the logistical issues of transportation, food and refreshments would be addressed. At the moment that these issues were addressed, they saw that the program not only came to provide them with knowledge, but also took into account their sacrifice, the issue of their food, the risk of leaving their homes.” (Creative Capacity Building KII).*



## UTILIZE ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT.

Future iterations of RISE should continue to utilize Fixed Amount Awards (FAAs) and adaptive management techniques since they provided critical flexibility during intervention implementation. The challenges of COVID-19 and unanticipated local realities are likely not unique to this iteration of the RISE Challenge. Future natural or human-made disasters may necessitate similar intervention or implementation adjustments that FAAs and adaptive management can accommodate. Furthermore, given the nature of GBV interventions, unanticipated challenges related to norms and attitudes (e.g., resistance from first-born sons for the Rising Up! activity) are not uncommon and can be accommodated through FAAs and adaptive management. The Rising Up! activity successfully shifted attitudes for first born sons and other family members through adapting their activities in response to resistance, a positive example of adaptive management.

*“We hadn’t noticed this role in the gender analysis, but we noticed during the implementation because we were collecting feedback from the people who are on the activity. And we learned that there are young first-born sons in families who didn’t like this activity. [...] When we learned that, we adjusted. [...] Young focal points who were trained on the right to land and on gender continue today to make programs on community radio. [...] Young people who were a blockage of the activity were fully implicated in implementation at the end, without any resistance at the community level.” (Rising Up! KII).*



## COMBINE AWARENESS RAISING WITH LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES.

Respondents emphasized that combining awareness raising around GBV with livelihood activities can spark behavioral change. For example, participants across two activities described how knowledge of their rights and new skills empowered them to push back when experiencing GBV, knowing they have other ways to generate income. The combination of awareness-raising and programming related to economic activities can encourage men's engagement and foster desired outcomes related to GBV and livelihoods that can be adapted and replicated.

*“This is why GBV incidences have gone down; both men and women are engaged in economic activities that build the home, and the woman is not begging the man for money, which is always what makes the couples in the home to fight all the time, and the man end up beating and injuring the woman.”* (Advancing Equitable Norms in Conservancies FGD).



## ESTABLISH REALISTIC OBJECTIVES AND MEASURABLE OUTCOMES.

Future community-targeted programs should continue to invest in collaboration between GBV and environmental programming because these joint activities appear to promote valuable changes in attitudes and behaviors. Donors who plan to fund interventions to achieve institutional change and or policy implementation should undertake a realistic feasibility assessment to determine what “successful implementation” looks like and what outcomes are achievable and measurable in the funding timeframe.

*“In the beginning [...] we had a very lofty idea of what we could measure and what would be feasible. And then as we got more into implementation, I think a lot of the changes were adjusting for what was appropriate to be collected quantitatively versus qualitatively through a learning question.”* (Resonance KII)



## COMMISSION AND FUND RIGOROUS RESEARCH ON LINKAGES BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE AND GBV.

RISE activities demonstrated the benefits of joint funding (environment and GBV), but it was beyond the scope of the program to produce robust data establishing causal linkages between GBV and climate change. If donors want evidence on these causal linkages, they should invest in equitable partnerships between professional research teams who can ensure rigorous study designs and local groups who know the context and populations—and who are likely to benefit from learning these types of research techniques.

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