RESILIENT, INCLUSIVE, & SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTS (RISE): A CHALLENGE TO ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Gender-based violence (GBV) is estimated to affect more than one in three women worldwide. This widespread problem takes a variety of forms and can affect nearly every aspect of a survivors’ life. At the same time, environmental degradation, loss of ecosystem benefits, and unsustainable resource use are creating instability and control imbalances over natural resources. When these environmental threats occur, GBV increases.

In 2019, USAID’s Office of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GenDev) designed the RISE Challenge to identify and fund the innovative application of promising approaches to address GBV across programs that address the access, use, control, and management of natural resources.

THIS CHALLENGE AIMS TO:
- Increase awareness of the intersection between environmental conservation and GBV
- Test new environmental programming approaches that incorporate efforts to prevent and respond to GBV
- Share evidence of effective interventions and policies widely
- Elevate this issue and attract commitments from other organizations, including implementing partners and donors, for collaboration and co-investment

THE CHALLENGE WINNERS:

ACTION TO PROTECT WOMEN AND ABANDONED CHILDREN
Action to Protect Women and Abandoned Children (ASEFA) is partnering with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) and two other women-led local organizations to implement the project in the Democratic Republic
of the Congo (DRC): Resource-ful Empowerment: Elevating Women’s Voices for Human and Environmental Protection in Congolese Small-Scale Mining.

The project will address GBV and environmental degradation associated with artisanal mining in the eastern DRC, where one study found that one in seven women were required to trade sex for access to work in mining. Building upon research conducted by HHI in 2016, ASEFA and HHI will train 360 women and mine miners through a year-long curriculum on human rights, women’s protection, and measures for reducing the environmental impact of artisanal mining in four project sites within each of the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Maniema. Two of the four communities will receive additional training that examines the link between people who work in mining towns and how humans are connected to their environment with the main goal of improving both environmental and human outcomes. The project aims to develop an evidence-based, scalable, and replicable curriculum to address human rights, GBV, and environmental protection.

ALLIANCE FOR RESPONSIBLE MINING

The Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) is partnering with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Development Lab (MIT D-Lab) to implement the project in Colombia: Creative Capacity Building to Address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Sector.

The project introduces GBV prevention and response into an existing MIT D-Lab project that aims to increase socio-economic opportunities for women miners while reducing environmental impacts in the Antioquia region of Colombia. In 2018, ARM completed a study in Antioquia that found that gender inequality and GBV are widespread in the mining communities. With RISE funding, the project will use a proven and innovative movement-building approach to address GBV in mining. Through this approach, ARM will create safe spaces for women to share their GBV experiences and receive guidance on how to identify specific GBV challenges to collectively build solutions. The project will also guide women on best practices in organizing themselves into associations and how to effectively implement a strategy to address GBV in their communities. This project will increase awareness and provide women miners with the skills and spaces to overcome social and economic gender-based violence.

MARSTEL-DAY

Marstel-Day and WI-HER, as well as their counterparts, the University of the South Pacific, the Fiji Environmental Law Association, Live & Learn Environmental Education, and Fiji’s REDD+ Programme, are working together to promote gender equity and transformation by tackling resource-based conflict and GBV in Fiji.

With funding from the World Bank, Marstel-Day staff supported the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) program’s readiness efforts and led to the design and implementation of the Feedback, Grievances, and Redress Mechanism (FGRM), a promising framework for resolving resource-based disputes and conflicts that may arise from REDD+ programming. The FGRM facilitates two-way communication between communities and national government agencies or companies to solve issues arising from REDD+ programming through formalized dialogue. With RISE funding, the consortium will use WI-HER’s proven approach to integrate gender (iDARE) to improve the FGRM so that it better addresses gender-based risk and GBV as a result of payment for ecosystem services programming, like REDD+. 
TRÓCAIRE
Trócaire is partnering with Land Equity Movement of Uganda (LEMU) and Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organization (SOCADIDO) to implement the project in Uganda: Securing Land Rights and Ending Gender Exclusion Project.

In eastern Uganda, approximately 80% of women report experiencing physical and psychological violence when claiming their land rights, and only 8% of men believe it is wrong to commit violence against women. With RISE funding, the partners will integrate SASA!, a proven methodology that addresses power imbalances between men and women to prevent and respond to GBV, while improving land tenure and property rights in Uganda. They will train faith-based leaders and partner staff to promote positive social norms that support women’s rights to access and control land and to live free from GBV. The partners will also help women better document their land rights by developing and training traditional leaders to use an alternative dispute resolution mechanism that takes into consideration the rights of women.

WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL

Women for Women International (WfWI) is partnering with Innovation and Training for Development and Peace (IFDP) to promote women’s rights and improve women’s access to land and GBV referral systems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

In the DRC, women experience high levels of GBV and low levels of land ownership. For the past fifteen years, WfWI has worked to improve the lives of over 100,000 women in the Congolese province of South Kivu by addressing the drivers of GBV and gender inequality at the community level. With RISE funding, WfWI and IFDP will adapt their promising GBV interventions and apply them to land rights and access, which is an area where women are particularly at risk. This project will engage men in shifting social norms, train change agents to prevent GBV, and expand women’s land rights, thereby boosting their economic security.