REDUCING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN VIETNAMESE CONSERVATION SECTOR

WildAct’s Final Report, (7200AA18C00072)

Period December 2022 - December 2023
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GRANT INFORMATION

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<th>Primary Implementing Organization:</th>
<th>WildAct</th>
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<tr>
<td>Other Implementing Partners:</td>
<td>CSAGA Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Title:</td>
<td>REDUCING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN VIETNAMESE CONSERVATION</td>
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<td>Location(s) of implementation</td>
<td>Hanoi, Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Number:</td>
<td>2020-Catalyst-GA035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Under the Catalyst Project Prime Contract: 7200AA18C00072)</td>
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<td>Time period covered in the report (Grant Start Date &amp; End Date:</td>
<td>8 January 2020 – 8 FEBRUARY 2023</td>
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

List all acronyms and abbreviations pertinent to the activity. The first time a word requiring an acronym or abbreviation is used in the body of the report, spell out the word in full with the acronym in parentheses. Thereafter, use only the acronym.

GBV  Gender-Based Violence
GenDev  USAID Office of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
RISE  Resilient, Inclusive & Sustainable Environments
USAID  United States Agency for International Development
CARE  CARE International in Vietnam
CSAGA  CSAGA Vietnam
VNPPA  Vietnam Association of National Parks and Protected Areas
WSN  Wildlife Supporting Network
WCBN  Wildlife Conservationists for a better world of work network
GBV  Gender Based Violence
FCP  Focal Contact Points
RISE OVERVIEW

Gender-based violence (GBV) is estimated to affect more than one in three women worldwide. This widespread problem takes a variety of forms, including sexual, psychological, community, economic, institutional, and intimate partner violence, and in turn affects nearly every aspect of a person’s life, including health, education, and economic and political opportunities. At the same time, environmental degradation, loss of ecosystem benefits, and unsustainable resource use are creating complex crises worldwide. As billions of people rely on these natural resources and ecosystems to sustain themselves, the potential human impacts are dire, with disproportionate effects on women and girls.

In 2019, USAID’s Office of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GenDev) designed the Resilient, Inclusive, & Sustainable Environments (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 the issue of GBV in environmental programming and attract commitments from other organizations, including implementing partners and donors, for collaboration and co-investment

The RISE Challenge was relaunched in 2020 and received nearly 240 applications from 66 countries. After a competitive procurement process, four projects were selected for funding. The second round of RISE winners are implementing and testing solutions in Guatemala, Kenya, Peru, and Vietnam. These projects work on a variety of issues across the globe, including artisanal small mining, sustainable resource management, building grievance processes that address gender-based violence, and strengthening land rights.

After a competitive procurement process, WildAct Vietnam was selected for an award to be implemented in Vietnam under the Challenge. The following is the final report for the “Reducing gender-based violence in the conservation sector”.
INTRODUCTION

PROBLEM STATEMENT

WildAct aims to harness the self-motivation and enthusiasm of individuals working in biodiversity conservation in Vietnam and develop their skills and abilities to combat the illegal wildlife trade. However, conservation researchers, especially women, face threats including gender-based violence (GBV), including harassment, physical violence, and sexual assault (Rinkus et al., 2018). In June 2020, WildAct in partnership with CARE conducted the first-ever survey to understand how GBV, with the focus on sexual harassment, is experienced within conservation organizations in Vietnam. 114 conservationists from NGOs and government agencies participated in the survey. The survey revealed that five out of six participants experienced sexual harassment, in various forms, in the workplace. Of the participants who experienced sexual harassment at work, 5% also reported attempted rape or rape. Worryingly, three out of every eight people who experienced sexual harassment chose not to inform their organization, and almost 31% of people who shared their experience with colleagues were told that it is “normal”. One young woman conservationist supported by WildAct reported experiencing sexual harassment from a senior forest ranger on her first field trip as a wildlife conservation scientist, and received no immediate support from her colleagues. When she mentioned the events, she was left feeling she was “making a big deal out of nothing”.

These challenges can be career-limiting for women in conservation. Furthermore, conservation work as a whole is diminished when it is absent the insights, experiences, and perspectives that women conservationists provide. Conservation is a male dominated sector, and in Vietnam most mid-level and senior positions are held by expatriate or Vietnamese men. Research demonstrates that female scientists are more likely to resign than women in other professions, especially when they work in an unfair, unsafe working environment (Clancy et al., 2014; Glass et al., 2013). Anecdotally, one of WildAct’s graduates commented that although conducting fieldwork was her dream, she had considered only accepting desk-based positions, or even giving up on conservation completely as a direct consequence of the harassment she experienced. GBV and workplace gender inequality undermine conservation’s ability to achieve its key goals of biodiversity protection and ecological stewardship (Matulis & Moyer, 2016).

Conservation organizations in Vietnam have expressed interest in cultivating a safer workplace environment. However, the organizations lack a policy framework to do so. During the survey (2020) referenced above, WildAct reviewed the Safeguarding policies of nine conservation organizations that operate in Vietnam. Some international organizations had comprehensive anti-harassment policies, developed in their overseas headquarters, where others had anti-harassment policies embedded in codes of conduct, disciplinary, grievance or whistle-blowing procedures. The majority of organizations
had no specific policies or regulations in place regarding sexual harassment, and none of the policies included any information on existing referral mechanisms for women in Vietnam. As a professional organisation, WildAct cannot encourage women to participate in biodiversity conservation if the working environment is unsafe for them.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

In this project, WildAct worked with CSAGA Vietnam to address the challenges of GBV and workplace harassment in the conservation sector in Vietnam. In line with the CARE Empowerment Framework and the Model of Women and Girls' Empowerment (Eerdewijk et al., 2017), the project aims to empower women by increasing their agency, while improving the conditions in their work environment and the power relations in which they operate. This project’s long-term goal is to ensure women and men are able to safely and effectively engage in wildlife conservation in Vietnam and contribute to improved social and environmental outcomes. The project achieved this goal by increasing the capability of wildlife conservationists to address and prevent challenges of gender inequality and harassment and promote safe conservation working environments in Vietnam. Specific activities include: i) Workshops and training with employees of wildlife conservation organizations and agencies to discuss their working environment, safety while conducting fieldwork and their perceptions and experiences of harassment in the workplace; ii) Meetings with organization and agency managers to exchange knowledge, experience and ideas to create a safer environment for employees, especially women and iii) Created a Safeguarding and supporting materials for women in conservation, as well as establish the WCBN.

**TARGET STAKEHOLDER**

The project benefited both male and female employees of organizations (local and iNGOs), National Parks and Nature Reserves working in environmental protection and nature conservation in Vietnam, as well as WildAct’s current students and young people who are planning to work in wildlife conservation. In addition, local women, leaders, organizations and society are benefiting from gender equality, harassment-free and safer working environments.

We worked with a total of 28 organizations and agencies, directly involving 1-2 staff members of each organisation to create Focal Contact Points.

Below is the stakeholder mapping conducted at the beginning of the project. There are no major changes to the relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project.
IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the CARE Empowerment Framework and the Model of Women and Girls’ Empowerment (Eerdewijk et al., 2017), the project empowered women by increasing their agency while looking at the conditions in their environment and the power relations they are subjected to. Our activities engaged both conservation employees and organizational leaders to create a work environment that fosters individuals with high self-efficacy and who are encouraged to participate in addressing challenges. The activities in this project were evidence-based, designed specifically for the needs of conservation employees, as the results of our survey in 2020.

This Project has three objectives and seven major activities. All of which contributed to the Project’s performance framework:
GOAL
Women and men are able to safely and effectively engage in wildlife conservation in Vietnam, contributing to improved social and environmental outcomes.

OUTCOME
Capability of wildlife conservationists to address and prevent challenges of gender inequality, harassment and unsafe working environments in

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1
Access to a platform for supporting women in wildlife conservation and environmental projects, information sharing, and capacity building increased

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2
Agreement with gender-equitable concepts within wildlife conservation organizations increased

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 3
Adoption of Gender Equitable workplace policies and practices in wildlife conservation organizations increased

SUB IR 1.1
Women in Conservation Network in Vietnam established

SUB IR 2.1
Increased awareness of challenges of gender inequality, harassment and unsafe working environments in wildlife conservation in Vietnam increased

SUB IR 3.1
Support to design and implement workplace policies for wildlife conservation organizations

SUB IR 3.2
Identification and training of policy focal points within wildlife conservation organizations increased

SUB IR 3.3
Availability of gender-equitable resources for wildlife conservation organizations increased
KEY ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED


The workshop took place on April 10th 2021 in Hanoi, attended by 59 people from 21 provinces in Vietnam, representing 27 organizations/agencies in the field of conservation. The workshop aimed to:

- Identify and classify sexual harassment in conservation.
- Prevent and respond to sexual harassment at an organizational level.
- Discuss and contribute to the “Safeguarding Policy” to prevent GBV at the workplace, “Focal Contact Points” and “Wildlife Conservationist for a better world of work” network.

This activity provided an opportunity for conservationists to share their opinion on sexual harassment in the workplace. This is the first workshop of its kind in the conservation sector to address GBV and gender prejudices related GBV. 41 participants responded to our post-workshop survey, and 100% participants want to have a Safeguarding guideline & Code of Conduct at their organizations as well as to have at least 2 Focal Contact Point in their own organizations to receive gender-based violence complaints at their workplace.

To prepare and conduct this workshop, Trang Nguyen and Ngan Nguyen worked closely with CARE gender specialists in designing the agenda and Giang Ta in our team was in charge of organizing the event. Phuong Anh was in charge of designing materials for the workshop and posting social media posts on our network. We provided the context as well as case studies from the conservation sector to CARE specialists to customize the workshop agenda. Examples of GBV situations used in the workshop were based on real cases in the sector.

The workshop created an open space for conservationists to present their ideas and recommendations to the own organizations on sexual harassment prevention. Through discussion, we collected their recommendation as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations on Safeguarding</th>
<th>Recommendations on FCP network</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Provide training on sexual harassment for the management and human resources team</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Clearly define the levels of involvements for each managers/leaders who will be involved in the case process</td>
<td>● There should be at least 1-2 FCP(s) in each organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● “Focal Contact Points” should be well-trained in counseling skills for the victim.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
● Include definition, classification and identification of sexual harassment in the Safe guardings.
● Identify clearly the role of managers in the case-handling process.
● Consult with leaders as well as employees for the drafting of the Code of Conduct.
● Diversify the reporting channels (via comment box, hotline, phone, SMS, …)
● Build a department to verify and investigate the reported cases.
● Organizations should be proactive in expressing their attitude towards sexual harassment and issue an official announcement to their partners about their Code of Conduct.

● Survivors should also be provided with emotional support from specialists.
● For serious cases beyond authority, consultations and support from the law if requested by the survivor.

A summary video of the workshop was posted on WildAct’s social media resulting in 2,492 views, an infographic report has been created and shared to participants and their organizations, a blog from a participant was also created online on WildAct’s website. As of 2nd August 2021, 182 people who are working in the wildlife conservation sector in Vietnam have joined our “Wildlife Conservationist for a better world of work” network.

The results of this workshop shaped our approach to designing the “Gender based violence in Conservation – from the managers’ role” workshop for leaders and HR staff. Recommendations from conservation’s staff will be discussed with their managers/leaders. Leaders will consider whether the recommendation is appropriate for implementation in their organization. It was considered as a kick-off event in the project so the participants showed their interest by joining the group “Wildlife Conservationist for a better world of work” (WCBN) on Facebook.

One of the best elements of the workshop Gender-Based Violence in Conservation & Discussion On Solutions To Create A Better World Of Work is the interactive activities. At the beginning of the workshop, we established a “No judging and kept confidential” rule to create a safe environment for participants to express their views. Discussions are valuable because the process in dealing with GBV and sexual harassment at every organization is different and so is everyone’s experience. The role-play session on dealing with sexual harassment received a positive response. An option of writing opinions on a flashcard was given to those who do not feel comfortable to speak in front of the group during the discussion, to ensure everyone has a chance to provide their views to the issue and solutions.
However, the discussion sessions - which were scheduled for 15 minutes per group, could be longer as 59 participants did not have enough time to express their views and opinions (see appendix II for the workshop’s agenda). In addition, it would be better if we could highlight the solutions for ensuring the safety of sexual harassment victims in specific field-related cases. Delegates would feel more encouraged to explore and adopt the FCP and Safe Guarding if we were able to provide case-study example of those who have successfully adopted these models to reduce GBV and sexual harassment at their workplace. Currently, we could not provide delegates’ inquiry regarding these models’ success rates, or examples of successful stories.

A1.2. Organize a meeting with wildlife conservation organization and government agency leaders named “Gender-Based Violence In Wildlife Conservation – From Managers’ Role”.

The meeting took place online, on July 20th and 21st 2021 with 30 delegates, who were managers/leaders and represented 18 organizations/agencies in the field of conservation, from 10 provinces in Vietnam. 03 new agencies participated in this meeting (who did not join the previous workshop in April, namely Cat Ba National Park, Ba Vi National Park and Management board of the Special-used for est in Thai Nguyen. The meeting aimed to provide information and knowledge on:

- Identify and classify sexual harassment in conservation.
- Prevent and respond to sexual harassment
- Discuss ideas to develop “Safe guardings” to prevent GBV at the workplace, “Focal Contact Points” network.
- Identify at least 3 organizations to pilot Safeguarding” and the “Focal Contact Points”

Results from the first workshop with conservation’s employees were used to discuss at this meeting. We believed that to implement this model, the opinions of leaders and employees are equally important. If there could be an agreement between the manager board and employees on gender-equitable concepts within wildlife conservation organizations, intervention models will be easier to implement. Post-meeting survey revealed 42.92% (n=18) delegates agree to participate in developing and piloting the “SafeGuardings”. 63.75% (n=18) delegates want to develop and maintain “Focal Contact Points” at the organizations.

Unfortunately, CARE Vietnam could not participate in the project due to their schedule, they recommended that we should partner with CSAGA for future activities of the project. CSAGA is a local NGO established since 1997, dedicated to promoting the realization of women and girls’ rights. They provide support to women and girls via many activities and channels, including a support office for victims of gender-based violence with a hotline operated by gender experts. They have a network of journalists, lawyers, shelters for victims of violence, and extensive experience in supporting victims of gender-based violence in Vietnam. We approached CSAGA and
invited them to join our project as our main partner in late April, and we signed an MOU in May 2021. We also had a meeting with CSAGA and Ms. To Thi Bay (external consultant) to brief the content, goals and results of the April workshop to prepare for the meeting. Trang Nguyen and Ngan Nguyen worked closely with CSAGA and Ms. To Thi Bay in designing the agenda and Giang Ta were in charge of organizing the event. Phuong Anh was in charge of designing materials for the workshop and posting social media posts on our network.

The discussions in the workshop were focused on discussing the progress of solving GBV cases and the possibility of applying our Safeguarding and FCPs network at iNGOs & NGOs, government agencies as well as research institutions in the wildlife conservation sector. Recommendations on the Safeguarding were collected based on discussion of 2 groups. Group 1 includes organizations that already have regulations regarding sexual harassment policy while group 2 includes organizations that do not yet have this policy in place. The two groups have different opinions on the current situation of settlement at their agencies, however, both groups share the same opinions when it comes to the importance and the necessity of regulations. Please see the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussing topics</th>
<th>Organizations already had regulation regarding Sexual Harassment Policy</th>
<th>Organizations have not had regulation regarding Sexual Harassment Policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The current situation of sexual harassment in their organization</td>
<td>At iNGO, this is a global mechanism. For example at WWF, employees can report to 1) Line manager 2) HR staff 3) Independence and anonymous channel. When a case is reported it will be notified in WWF global within 24 hour.</td>
<td>Currently, very few cases are reported because 1) People do not think these behaviors are sexual harassment 2) Most cases are resolved through reconciliation</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The importance of preventing and reducing sexual harassment

1) Representing an equal and safe working environment. This will also minimize the negative effects on the quality of work and the psychology of employees

2) Organizations/agencies that show great interest and focus on preventing and reducing GBV and sexual harassment at workplace will create trust and peace of mind for their partnering organizations.

The necessity of having regulation regarding Sexual Harassment Policy

1) The Safe Guarding Policy sets standards for behaviors in the workplace. If a clear definition of sexual harassment exists, then the line between sexual harassment and merely joking around in the workplace will be more distinguishable.

2) It shows the civilization of the workplace. The Safe Guarding and code of conduct are not developed because sexual harassment has happened in the organization. Rather, it prevent the sexual harassment in the workplace.

3) At the same time, the Code of Conduct also protects those who are accused of sexual harassment. When all members of the organization thoroughly understand the definition of sexual harassment, then the identification of what counts as sexual harassment will be clearer.

We also collected the recommendation on Focal Contact Points (FCP). Those are:

- Each organization should have 1-2 FCP. FCP should be both men and women.
- Criteria for choosing the FCP: objective, neutral and unbiased
- Who can be FCP: HR staff, Women Union, Labor Federation and Youth Union Representative. These bodies were nominated by the participants as their role is to protect the rights of employees and women at the workplace. They also have the ability to connect with other departments within and outside of their organisation.
- Managers have the key responsibility in operating Focal Contact Point. Participants suggested that although employees are voluntarily signed up to work as Focal Contact Point, however, they would still need support and/or even supervised by the managers. It is important to highlight the roles of the managers in supporting and maintaining the FCP.
• Build different levels of FCP in dealing cases. The first level is line manager and the second one is the HR department. If the survivors want to seek other services, we should provide external channels: hotlines of supporting services (i.e., those in operation from CSAGA and Department of Labor Union).

After the meeting, three types of organization in conservation had customized a suitable procedure on dealing sexual harassment based on the characteristics of their organizations. There are similarities and differences between NGOs, government agencies, and research institutions in their expectation of the FCP’s roles. Please see the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The similarities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FCP will follow each case until it is closed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCP can be: HR staffs, HR staffs, Women Union, Labor Federation, and Youth Union</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>The differences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research Institute &amp; Government Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature Reserve &amp; National Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- In serious cases, FCP should report to manager board to have an appropriate form of resolving
- Need to define the disciplinary level of each case. The result will affect the reputation of the organization and related parties so each agency should discuss more about it.

- FCP should propose a manager board to solve the reported cases.
- Should establish an investigation department when receiving the cases.
- Have different levels of FCP and work together in each case.

- Define seriousness of each case
- Provide external hotline for employees to report
- FCP should be well-trained and trusted by staffs
- Define the level of manager that could be involved in such cases. Because in some cases the manager could be the perpetrator
- Should have an investigation process and should not be left to HR/Manager.
- If the case is solved informally, it is necessary to make an apology agreement
- If the case is solved formally, the organization should inform the result.

Important notes:

- The participant’s discussion results only focused on punitive measures, and not yet on supporting survivors. It is important for organizations to develop survivor-centered responses;
- Need to define what “problem solves” looks like. I.e "Solved = punish perpetrator" and "solved = victim feels healed and safe, conditions are improved;
- The need to help organizations and staff to overcome the fear of “damaging organization’s reputation”.

After the meeting, 2 National Parks expressed their wish to participate in piloting the model and 3 other NGOs are considering participating in our program. These organizations will pilot both models, and the piloting will be started from August 2021 - February 2022.
After the meeting, WildAct will directly contact organizations/agencies participating in piloting the Safeguarding and FCP model as well as developing an action plan in accordance with each participating organization from now until June 2022. We will establish, train and maintain the “Focal Contact Points” network.

We had carefully designed the meeting's activity to maintain the high level of interaction between facilitators and participants. Online tools, such as zoom poll and jamboard were adopted in all discussions. To avoid giving the impression of “fingers pointing” and “male blaming”, the activities were designed to empower male conservationists in building an equal equality and equitable workplace. Secondly, the workshop focused on the importance of Safe Guardings in tackling GBV and sexual harassment at workplace. Taking a stand to reduce GBV and sexual harassment will also help to increase the organization’s reputation and brandings, especially when cooperating with other partners.

However, we encountered connectivity issues during the meeting as it was hosted online. We also had to have a session at the beginning of the meeting for participants to introduce and get to know each other, which prolonged the meeting. In addition, as this is the first project of its kind, we could not show-case any successful example to encourage participants to sign up for our Focal Contact Point piloting activities.

**Key result:** Access to a platform for supporting women in wildlife conservation and environmental projects, information sharing, and capacity building increased

**A2.1. Focal contact point to report unsafe behavior for NGOs and forest departments staff**

In the first 6-months of the project, we introduced the Focal Contact Points network model with both managers and employees. The purpose in this period is:

- Introducing FCP network: definition, mechanism, main tasks and responsibilities.
- Collect contributions to the operation of FCP networks.

Ngan Nguyen worked directly in collecting ideas for FCP while Trang Nguyen partnered with leaders at conservation organizations to run the FCP network. We also have technical support from CSAGA.

We created a core team from the organizations that participate in the pilot process in August 2021. After a few months of piloting and receiving feedback from these organizations, we extended this model to more organizations and agencies, as the success of these organizations encouraged others to follow. Training program for the FCP group was carefully designed with gender experts from CSAGA. 03 training sessions were given as a group for FCPs from different organisations, and 04
workshops and training sessions were hosted privately for 04 organisations who wished to receive the training internally. A total number of 96 people participated in these training sessions.

A2.2. Establish a Women in Conservation Network in Vietnam. We changed the network’s name to “Wildlife Conservationists for a better world of work network” (WCBN) to avoid the impression that the group excludes men in the gender equality issue.

The private Facebook group was created in April 2021 and currently there are 182 members participating in the group. Due to Covid19 situation, we were not able to host any offline event with our members, however we created a mini game named “Wildlife Experience Review”. Members were encouraged to join the contest by reviewing their" experience in nature, including: review of good security locations to stay, review of national parks, local food, viewpoints or outdoor activities). Ngan Nguyen and Phuong Anh were in charge of designing and running this activity. The contest aimed to encourage members to share their opinions and gain the group popularity among conservationists. After two weeks, we received 10 posts with 368 reactions and 144 comments. We considered this contest as an ice-breaking activity in the group.

In June, we started a podcast series named “Conversation with Pangolin”. This is an Anonymous talk with Vietnamese conservationists about the difficulties and advantages at work. Ngan Nguyen is the host of the show and Phuong Anh Lam is the editor/designer. This podcast aims to stimulate the important role of man contributing to combating GBV at work and empowering women in wildlife conservation. Currently we had 3 episodes of the first season with 308 streams. The stereotype that women are not suitable for conservation has been broken by the male conservationists. The fact that we invited male conservationists to discuss this topic has made gender equality issues more multidimensional. In the future, we are planning to release the second season of the podcast series with different formats. Both men and women will be invited to debate and express their view on gender equality in the workplace.

Anonymous podcast received fundamental support from the community on how to engage men in the gender equality issue. However, maintaining the interest of the group is quite challenging. People feel shy to speak/comment on this topic because of fear that the others will judge them. We are currently working to find the suitable solution. Currently, there are 207 people participating in the network.

A2.3. Create a Safeguarding Guideline

Appropriate and context-sensitive guidelines created by Vietnamese GBV experts with input from wildlife conservationists working in Vietnam will be the first step towards reduction and prevention of GBV in our field. From September 2021, Trinh started to develop a Safeguarding Guideline (SG) framework with the contribution of two government agencies who registered to pilot the SG when it is final. Thanks to technical support of the USAID experts, the framework was finalized. Currently,
Trinh and CSAGA are working closely together to produce the SG first draft in Vietnamese in late December. The English version was approved by the USAID Rise Challenge experts before printing.

Key result: Reduce harassment and unwanted behavior through the introduction and distribution of specific Safeguarding policy

A3.1. Distribution and implementation of the Safeguarding guidelines
Women will not report incidents due to fear of retaliation or a belief that reporting will not lead to change, if they perceive harassment policies and reporting mechanisms to be inadequate or in situations where these are completely absent (Jones & Solomon, 2019). On 07 January 2023, we created a one-day event, introducing 56 participants to the safeguarding guidelines and how to use it effectively within their own organisations.

With additional support from USAID Rise Challenge, we also hosted an Innovative for a better world of work, where staff from organisations and agencies can come up with their own ideas to make their working environment better, safer and more equitable. Unfortunately, only 2 organisations submitted their applications. They were invited to give a presentation of their proposed projects, answering questions from the judge as well as receiving feedback from the judging panel. Currently, the candidate organisations are adjusting their project according to the judge’s feedback.

Activity 3.2. Evaluation of the workshop series and application of the Safeguarding guidelines
To evaluate the success of each workshop and training, a pre and post survey were created for each event. The results of each evaluation were shared to USAID Rise Challenge experts and to the participants of the activities. Survey results from each activity were presented in the activity’s section.

The Safeguarding guidelines were well received. At the time of this report writing, Animal Asia Foundation responded that they have successfully applied the guidelines and created a suitable Safeguarding policy for their staff in Vietnam. Cat Ba national park is using the guideline to create their Code of Conducts.

KEY CHALLENGES

Throughout the 2 years of implementing this project, we realised that many NGOs and agencies still do not want to admit that sexual harassment in the workplace and gender inequality exist in their organization due to the fear of losing organization’s reputation. They also prioritize conservation activities rather than addressing GBV and gender equality in the workplace. Male conservationists, including male leaders might feel that they are being blamed and withdraw from the project activities. In addition, male leaders from some local organisations even ban their staff from attending our training due to fear of reputation damage. Male leaders to verbally supporting the project (through attending our workshop, engaging in the discussion etc) might not means they actually openly and honestly accepting that sexual harassment is an issue at their workplace. For example, it is very often to hear from male leaders and their staff that their working environment is “completely GBV and sexual
harassment free”, but once spending time and have a conversation with them, WildAct were able to pick up many red flags, showing a varieties degree of sexual harassment, from verbal to physical at their own workplace.

To tackle these issues, we ensure to design all activities and media materials to include and empower male conservationists to be involved as part of the solution. Throughout all activities, whether it was a workshop, meeting or a post on our network group, we always carefully introduced our “rule of thumb” to participants (no judging and kept it confidential) to create a safe and open environment for every member to speak out. We also stressed that by actively engaging and implementing gender equality practice, the organization's reputation will be increased in the sector. There are some successful examples of this approach, for example, an organisation who was not interested in our project when we approached them in 2020 had participated in both workshops and gave us positive feedback. In addition, the participation of the 03 national parks and nature reserve, whose directory boards are all men, were very encouraging. They did not participate in the workshop in April, but joined the managers’ meeting and 02/03 signed up to pilot the models without hesitation.

In addition, while implementing the project, we realized there are cultural disparities between staff at the same and/or different organization. For example, researchers, officers and/or program coordinators may be better educated and more aware of GBV and sexual harassment than the animal keepers and maintainers. Those who are working in urban areas within NGOs are also more aware of the problem than national park’s staff working in remote areas. To address this challenge, we divided the training participants into smaller groups, based on their position/locations.

Regarding human resources, our Gender Officer, namely Ngan Nguyen and Trinh Nguyen, resigned from their position in July 2021 and January 2022 respectively. To address this problem, WildAct signed an MoU with CSAGA to assign a staff from CSAGA to take over the Gender Officer position for the last 6 months of the project.

**KEY SUCCESSES**

Some key success of the project are:

- A total of seven workshops and meetings, including a workshop to train the international organization Asian Turtle Program’s staff on GBV and sexual harassment. A total of 206 participants, representing 34 different organisations from 26 provinces in Vietnam received our training.
- 4 National Parks and 2 other NGOs participated in the private FCP training and the piloting of our Safeguarding guidelines.
- 207 members joined the group WBCN with 03 minigames hosted, 85 participants and 10 winners.
- A podcast series named “Conversation with Pangolin” with 3 episodes and 387 streams.
- 18 organizations and agencies with a total of 27 members signed up to our FCP network.
- A video series titled “Conservation - untold story” with 2 episodes, 1800 followers and 519 views.
● 2 organisations applied to our Innovative for a Better World of Work;
● A total of 56 participants joined our Final event on 1st July and received a hardcopy of the Safeguarding guidelines.

LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson Learned #1 Activity Host a workshop in Vietnam on sexual harassment prevention among wildlife conservation workers named “Gender-Based Violence in Conservation & Discussion On Solutions To Create A Better World Of Work”

Issue Encountered
Participants were not satisfied, as many examples used in the training, workshop and key scenarios have men as the penetrator and women as the survivors.

Adaptation of Approach
We explained to the participants that any genders could be victim of GBV, including sexual harassment. However, there might be more examples used in the workshop and training portraying men as the penetrators and women as the survivors, due to the dynamic of the conservation sector, where men are more dominant. In addition, as many of our examples are real life events, it also reveals the truth that men might be less likely to admit, or report that they were sexually harassed by women, due to social pressure.

We also make sure to include more examples of men and other genders are survivors of sexual harassment, to avoid finger-pointing feeling toward men who participate in the training sessions.

The explanations were well received by the participants. The examples used with men are survivors of sexual harassment also open up a new way of thinking for participants, as at the beginning, many people, including both men and women participants found it “funny” to think of men being sexually harassed by women. Their attitudes changed after our workshop, especially in the role play activity.

Solution and Recommendations
It is important to make sure all genders feel included, and thus, confident, trusted and thus, more likely to share their experience during the training sessions.
Simple solutions, such as including men in the examples, role plays, and make it clear that any genders can be the problem, but also the solution helps remove the gender barriers and reduce the negative feelings of fingers pointing toward men participating in the workshop.

Lesson Learned #2 Organize a meeting with wildlife conservation organization and government agency leaders named “Gender-Based Violence In Wildlife Conservation – From Managers’ Role”

Issue Encountered
Leaders of organisations and agencies in conservation mostly are not yet taken gender issues seriously. They prioritise conservation work, and might not understand the link between gender inequality can
damage conservation efforts. Some organisations even stop their staff from participating in our workshop/training session.

**Adaptation of Approach**

Through our meeting sessions with leaders of organisations and agencies, we have stressed the importance of including gender equality in wildlife conservation efforts, as well as the impact of a safe, equitable working environment to employees’ productivity, and even funding opportunities. This has given a mixed result, as some organisations take it very seriously and have a positive response to our other activities, but some still ignore the problems. For example, Animals Asia Foundation is an excellent participant. After joining our workshop in 2021, they have created their own team on gender diversity, beside the FCP. They also host internal workshops for men and women to increase their understanding and improve attitude towards gender diversity and inclusion, empowering women in the bear caretaker group to excel at their job.

From what we see, is that organisations like AAF, with a female leader are more willingly to open to genders and sexual harassment prevention training. They are also more likely to encourage their staff, whether male or female, to create a follow-up activity after the training and sharing what they’ve learned with others in the organisation.

We also hosted most of our workshops and training sessions on the weekend, out of working hours, to make sure if staff from NGOs who were not approved to attend the training during work can still attend our training during their freetime.

**Solution and Recommendations**

Tackling this problem needs support on all different levels. From the donors who give out funding, who have the power to require organisations to include gender equality and reduce GBV at their own grantee’s working environment.

We included men, who are working at leaders level at different organisations and agencies to take lead and influence other male leaders from other organisations to participate with us.

**Lesson Learned #3 Focal Contact Point to report unsafe behavior for NGOs and forest departments staff.**

**Issue Encountered**

Employees interested and signed up to act as FCPs, however leaders/managers are not actually supporting this role. It is also proven to be difficult to maintain the FCP network.

**Adaptation of Approach**

Although NGOs and agencies stated that they were interested in having FCPs at their organisations, however, as their priorities still wildlife conservation work. This leads to several complaints from our FCP members, for example, they want to attend our training but their managers did not give them the permission, due to their main workloads.
To overcome this issue, we send out date options for participants to choose, and try to avoid busy reporting periods of the year (i.e year end), to maximise the opportunity for FCPs to get involved.

It is also important to note that although FCP has been established at 18 different organisations, none has received any complaint or report. This might be due to the lack of awareness within the organisation (that FCP has been established), or that FCP might not be trusted enough by their colleagues. In the best case scenario, no harassment case occurs and thus, no report or complaint.

Solution and Recommendations

It is challenging to establish a network, but more so to maintain and make sure the network is operating effectively. The members of the FCP network also need to receive refreshment training equipped with in-depth knowledge and understanding of the complex gender issues. We recommend that a refreshment meeting and discussion with managers of organisations is necessary to make sure leaders are enabling their FCP in the best conditions to complete their tasks.

Lesson Learned #4 Establish a “Wildlife Conservationists for a better world of work network”.

Issue Encountered
Members are not active.

Adaptation of Approach
Although the network was established in April 2020, and reached over 200 members; they are not actively using the created online platform. This platform was created as a private group on facebook, as suggested through a survey with participants of the first workshop in April.

We have tried several methods, such as creating online mini-games, challenges, podcasts and so on. When activities were led by WildAct, the interactions increased and members actively participated. Once completed, members remain silent again.

Solution and Recommendations

It is important to find key members, who are willing to lead the activity of the network. However, as mentioned, conservationists tend to be very busy with fieldwork and research and thus, they might not be interested in leading online.

In the future, we recommend to host the meeting for this network offline, to create a good relationship between members of the network. A face to face meeting will foster the relationship and trust, which is vital for information and experience sharing.
PROJECT PERFORMANCE: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK AND GRANT GOALS
For the following questions, please provide approximately 3 to 4 sentences answers, depending on the information included, as relevant for the response.

● What was your objective when you applied for the RISE Challenge? Was this achieved / did it put you on the path to achieving this goal? Why/How?

We identified 3 objectives when applied for the RISE Challenge, namely: Obj1: Understanding and addressing gender-based violence in the Vietnamese wildlife conservation context; Obj2: Increase support to conservationists for a safer working environment and Obj3: Reduce harassment and unwanted behavior through the introduction and distribution of specific Safeguarding guidelines.

Obj1 & 2 were achieved and Obj 3 was partly achieved. Prior to our project, no conservation body in Vietnam has ever raised issues related to GBV in the workplace. Our survey was also the first, and remaining the only survey looking into sexual harassment in the working environment of wildlife conservationists. With our activities, from the workshop, training, to online podcasts, videos etc, conservationists in Vietnam has start talking about gender issue, and positively involved in activity to reduce GBV and sexual harassment in the sector. However, Obj 3 will take time to estimate the success, as the reduce of GBV and sexual harassment will take time.

● In your opinion, what is the most significant positive impact your project had on your targeted stakeholders?

As mentioned above, the most significant positive impact is that wildlife conservationists, from staff to leaders starting to talk, and discuss about GBV and sexual harassment. The fact that FCP models were welcome and adopted at 18 different organisations, national parks and nature reserves directors in Vietnam participate in our workshops and meetings to discuss how to reduce GBV and sexual harassment at their workplace is something not many sectors in Vietnam achieved.

● Did the project have any unintended (beneficial or adverse) effects on the target population(s)?

We did not expect this project to be very well-known by early career conservationists, including students who wish to become wildlife conservationists. We have received many inquiries from early career conservationists and students about our project. Some cases of sexual harassment were also reported directly to us by them.
● To what extent was your project driven by its stakeholder? What feedback or impressions have they given?
Many activities created in this project were meant to be driven by our partners. For example, the creation of FCPs would not be successful without the participant’s organisations. Overall, our partners expressed positive feedback to our project, stating that they were very glad that a wildlife conservation organisation in Vietnam is focusing on the issue of gender.

● How did partnership help you achieve your goals and/or improve performance? What was the value added?
The project’s goal is to establish a baseline and create guideline workplace safety materials for women in conservation, with specific relation to the social and cultural context of Vietnam, that organizations and government agencies can both adopt. The partnership that we were able to create with CSAGA - a local organisation working to resolve gender issues, and other wildlife conservation organisations/agencies in Vietnam is vital to help us create Safeguarding guidelines that they can use and adopt.

● What is the most needed/best kind of collaboration for this type of project?
This type of project needs collaboration from people who have different backgrounds and have a decision making power.

● What was the added value of each partnership established throughout implementation?

➔ Learning, knowledge & expertise: Both WildAct and CSAGA have learned much from each other. For example, as wildlife conservationists, WildAct members do not have much understanding on gender; whereas CSAGA has never worked with the conservation sector before. Our partnership with CSAGA increased our understanding on gender issue, especially sexual harassment immensely and resulted in a completed Safeguarding policy of our own organisation. CSAGA has also benefited from learning about the environmental and wildlife conservation sector, widening their understanding on gender issues and how it is different to issues in other sectors that they have worked with.

➔ Networking: Through CSAGA, we have connected to other gender organisations, such as UN Women Vietnam and GBVNet Vietnam. This networking opportunity is super useful, as it will benefit our future project. For CSAGA, they have benefited from connecting with over 30 organisations and agencies working in the conservation sector. It has resulted in 03 organisations inviting CSAGA to their own organisation to provide internal training.

➔ Innovation: As mentioned, this is the first project of its kind in the conservation sector in Vietnam; and as partnering of this project, our reputation - from both WildAct and CSAGA have been increased. Many conservation organisations in Vietnam referring others, who also interested in GBV and sexual harassment prevention to us and vice versa. In addition, we are planning to work together on a proposal to secure funding for the next steps of the project, after funding from USAID Rise Challenge ends.
LEARNING AGENDA

List your Learning Questions from your MEL plan. Please reflect and provide responses/insights to each question. If you have already responded to one of your learning questions in the section above, please do not include it here again.

LEARNING REFLECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISE Learning Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What factors enable and/or inhibit healthy partnerships when collaborating to address GBV across environmental programs?</td>
<td>So far, we realised that leaders/managers understanding and acknowledging the GBV issue is a very important factor that enables healthy partnerships in collaborations across environmental programs. For example, leaders/managers of organisations might approve of their staff to participate in our activities to save face (i.e. other organisations participating in our workshop might somewhat put a social pressure that they also need to send their staff). However, when the staff came back to the office after being empowered to make changes, they were prevented from doing so by their managers. This can restrain the relationship within their own organisation, and impact our partnership as a whole (as leaders might finger pointing and blame that we are causing troubles to their organisations by changing their staff mindset).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within RISE activities, what has influenced the role of gender organisations in contributing directly or indirectly to environmental activities?</td>
<td>It definitely directly creates opportunities for gender organisations to contribute to conservation efforts. Prior to our project, gender organisations in Vietnam had not collaborated with any environmental and/or wildlife conservation organisation to address gender issues. The connection and partnership that we created with CSAGA has expanded to other organisations, for example, Save Vietnam’s Wildlife and Asian Turtle Program have invited CSAGA to provide private workshops for their own staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What activities that address GBV contribute to a direct or an indirect impact on environmental outcomes?

Our activities contribute to an indirect impact to the wildlife conservation sector in Vietnam. By creating a safer and more equitable workplace environment, wildlife conservationists are empowered to deliver their work more effectively.

### SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALING PLAN

For the following questions, please provide approximately 3 to 4 sentences answers, depending on the information included, as relevant for the response.

- **Will integration/expansion of the project be sustained after the funding support from RISE ends? Why or why not?**

  Currently we are looking for funding to continue our efforts. As this project funding has come to an end, it is important to secure more funding to continue this work. We are afraid that without continuous efforts, what we have achieved through the project might vanish.

- **What are some potential pathways to sustainability for your project? What strategies/next steps have you defined for this?**

  We are planning to collaborate with CSAGA to continue our activities, even with low funding. For example, our conservation partnering organisations who wish to continue receiving training and workshops can reach us and we can share materials that they can learn online, and/or receive external support free of charge.

- **To what extent can we consider your impacts "long-term" ones?**

  The supporting network that we were able to create definitely will leave a long-term impact. Many organisations and individuals were not aware of gender organisations operating in Vietnam, such as CSAGA, and now they do. They can contact CSAGA directly for help, whether it’s domestic violence or harassment at work.

- **What, if anything, is being done to scale the project policies and practices?** What are the bottlenecks (e.g. skills, resources), if any, and what are your plans to address them?

  Our Safeguarding guidelines support organisations and agencies to create or adjust their safeguarding policy and code of conduct to be more suitable for their own workplace.

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1. Though most discussions of scaling focus exclusively on the number of intended adopters and stakeholder (beneficiaries), the scaling of products, services or benefits can occur along any of the following five vectors: • Geographic coverage (extending to new locations) • Breadth of coverage (extending to more people in currently served categories and localities) • Depth of services (extending additional services to current clients) • Client type (extending to new categories of clients) • Problem definition (extending current methods to new problems)
For future growth, what kind of partners are needed moving forward to ensure broader market engagement and/or sustainability where relevant?

We need to focus our partnerships with gender organisations and government authorities, especially the Labour department, to advocate for changes in the government laws and policies.

CONCLUSION

In the 16th most biodiverse country, issues around gender inequality and harassment impact women’s involvement with conservation initiatives, hindering progress on the vital work being undertaken to protect Vietnam’s fauna and flora. This project empowered individuals and conservation organizations in Vietnam to address the challenges of gender inequality, harassment, and unsafe working environments that women face in wildlife conservation. WildAct-Vietnam and its partners established workshops and trainings with employees working at all levels within wildlife conservation organisations to discuss their working environment, fieldwork safety, and perceptions of harassment in the workplace. Meetings were also hosted with managers and other leaders to exchange knowledge and experiences in order to create a safer environment for employees. A “Wildlife Conservationists for a Better world of Work” and Focal Contact Points networks were also created to provide a safe platform where people can exchange knowledge, share experience and provide support to each other. These activities gave a platform for wildlife conservationists in Vietnam to speak up and discuss issues, as well as solutions to resolve gender issues.

ANNEXES

Final event video - also shared via WeTransfer
Final event pictures
Project summary video
Safeguarding guideline in Vietnamese

WORK PLAN GANTT CHART

Please see the online gantt chart here.

COMMUNICATIONS

Provide photos from your project and either a Success Story or Case Study. A communication product could be:

High-Resolution Photos: For photos to look good on websites, we recommend 1200 pixels x 628 pixels in size and 300 pixels per inch in resolution). Photos must include captions and credit information.

Success Stories: Here is a template in Word for success stories. Below are some examples.
- Ducks for Doa
- A Safer World for Girls
- I’m Empowered and Resilient! I’m Living the Dream!
- My Commitment, Her Empowerment, Our Shared Progress

First Person Blog: Below are some examples.
- Blog Example 1
- Blog Example 2

Brief Case Study: This case study should describe a problem, solution, results, and lessons learned. Below is an example.
- Case Study Example

Writing Tips for Success Stories, Blogs, and Case Studies:
- Use powerful statistics where available. Statistics should show change. Include interesting data from your MEL plan, but be sure that context and/or scale are clear.
- Tell personal, human stories of real people and quote them.
- Do not use jargon or technical words. Write using plain language.
- Avoid acronyms where possible. If an acronym is necessary, be sure to tell us what it means.
- Use high-resolution photos of people engaging in activities.

Elevator Pitch Videos: This will be the first communications product you will be asked to submit. An elevator pitch video is a 45 to 60 seconds video explaining your project and how it is addressing gender-based violence in environmental programs. These videos will be posted on YouTube and embedded on the RISE Challenge website, shared by USAID through email and social media, featured in RISE newsletters.

Make sure to:
- Record in high quality mode
- Have clear audio
- Appear natural and speak at an adequate pace
- Mention your project’s name, location, and goals
- Mention who your project will benefit and how
- Provide image release forms for participants if applicable
If you prefer to record your video in Spanish, we can help you include subtitles. Here are some examples of videos from another challenge that Catalyst works on: Democracy International, Voices of Venezuela, and Young Change Makers.