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USAID's Collective Action to Reduce Gender-Based Violence (CARE-GBV)

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# Foundational Elements for Gender-Based Violence Programming in Development

SECTION 3.5. SECTOR-SPECIFIC PROGRAM ELEMENTS

## **Addressing GBV through Environment and Natural Resource Management Programs**

Analytical Services IV Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ)  
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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

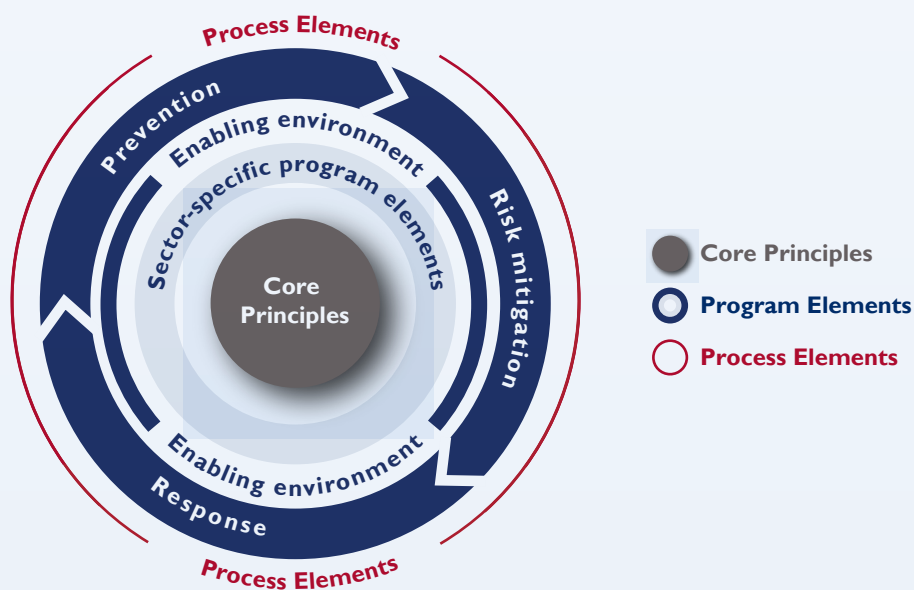
<b>AGENT</b>	Advancing Gender in the Environment
<b>CARE-GBV</b>	Collective Action to Reduce Gender-Based Violence
<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GBV-ENV Center</b>	Gender-Based Violence and Environment Linkages Center
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate partner violence
<b>IWT</b>	Illegal wildlife trade
<b>NRM</b>	Natural resource management
<b>RISE</b>	Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments
<b>SOGIESC</b>	Sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics
<b>UNHRC</b>	United Nations Human Rights Council
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WWF</b>	World Wildlife Fund

# Introduction

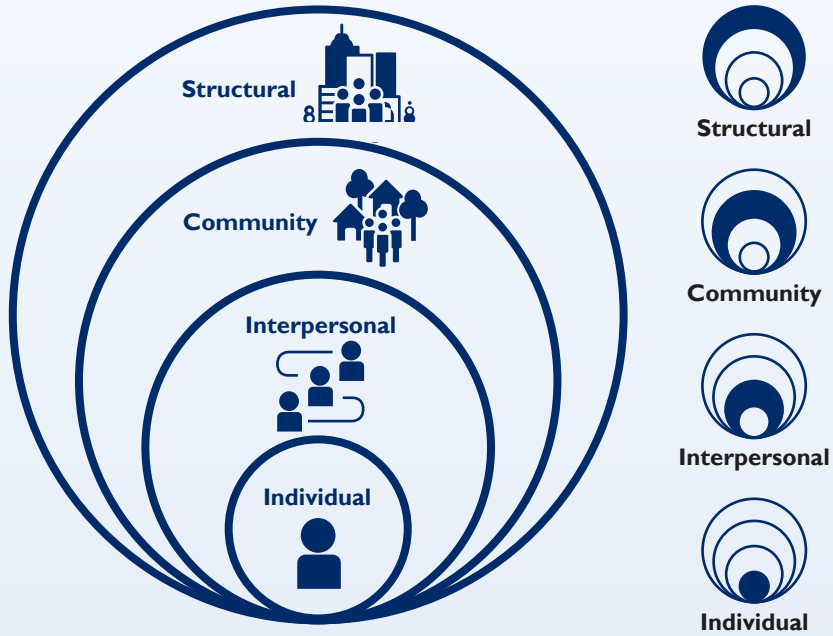
This document describes why USAID's environment and natural resource management (NRM) programs should address gender-based violence (GBV) and details specific strategies for doing so. Program examples are provided to illustrate how the strategies can be integrated into environment and NRM programs, and links to tools and resources are provided for additional information.

This document is part of the *Foundational Elements for Gender-Based Violence Programming in Development*, which include core principles, program elements (prevention, risk mitigation, response, enabling environment), and process elements. Ideally, readers will familiarize themselves with these sections of the *Foundational Elements* before reading this brief. At a minimum, readers should be familiar with the following sections:

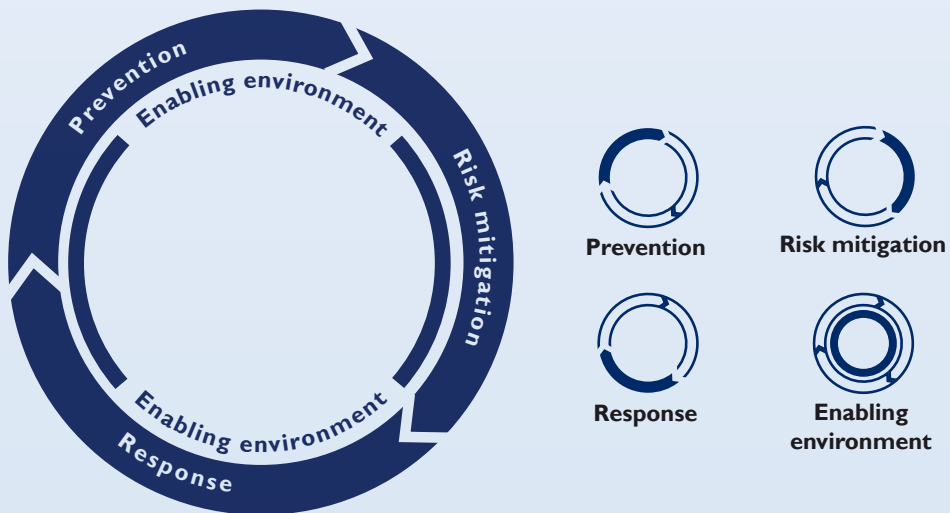
- Section 1.0. Introduction
- Section 3.2. Program Elements: Risk Mitigation
- Section 4.0. Process Elements:
  - Values, Organizational Culture, and Leadership (Program Example: A Framework for Safeguarding Program Participants)
  - Strategic Planning and Design (Gender Analysis and Referral Network Mapping)



The strategies described in this brief are organized by levels of the socio-ecological model: individual, interpersonal, community, and structural. Effective GBV interventions typically include strategies that address multiple levels of the socio-ecological model.



Each strategy is also labeled as prevention, risk mitigation, response, or enabling environment.



# Why the Environment and Natural Resource Management Sector Should Address GBV

Around the world, gender inequality plays a significant role in determining whether and how people can access, use, benefit from, and make decisions about land and natural resources. Social and gender norms shape roles and responsibilities, division of labor, and power dynamics in NRM (IUCN 2020a). As a result, women and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) are often at a disadvantage when accessing and benefitting from natural resources. GBV often serves to maintain, reinforce, and exploit gendered power imbalances and discriminatory systems and norms related to natural resource access, control, and benefits (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020, IUCN 2021a).

Women and girls disproportionately experience GBV because of gender inequality. In natural resource contexts, overlapping forms of discrimination—based on age, ethnicity, indigeneity, and sexual or gender identity or expression—put some people at a greater risk than others (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020). For example, Indigenous women, who often rely on biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as manage and protect them can face multiple overlapping forms of discrimination, exclusion, and risk, including to GBV, while having less access to justice and support services (UN General Assembly 2015).

Evidence from across sectors shows a range of ways in which GBV and environment issues are linked.

- **Exploiting gendered division of labor:** Women and girls are often primarily responsible for collecting and managing natural resources such as water, food, and biofuel for household consumption. While en route, they can be at risk of physical and sexual harassment, abuse, and assault, and even rape and murder (Sommer et al. 2015, Women’s Refugee Commission 2014). Rural, Indigenous, and displaced women face greater risks because of isolation, longer distances to resources, and overlapping forms of discrimination (UN General Assembly 2015). For example, in Chad, people in 42 percent of surveyed refugee households reported experiencing GBV during firewood collection (Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves 2016). Similarly, on the border between Honduras and Nicaragua, state officials have subjected Miskito Indigenous women to harassment, extortion, and rape as they cross between countries every day to work their land or gather medicinal plants (UN General Assembly 2015). When women are unable to secure access to resources for domestic use, they can be at risk of intimate partner violence (IPV).
- **Reinforcing inequitable land and tenure rights:** Land ownership is often necessary to obtain water and other natural resource rights, and to participate in and benefit from decision-making bodies and conservation schemes. Yet, multiple reports across regions indicate that women’s exclusion from these spaces and opportunities is sustained through IPV and domestic violence (Kaiser Hughes and Richardson 2015, USAID 2018) (see Section 3.5. Sector-Specific Program Elements: Land and Property Rights). Similarly, reports from fishing communities in Africa and India indicate that sexual and domestic violence is used to exert dominance and prevent women from challenging gender roles that relegate them to the least profitable fishing opportunities or forbid them from owning boats or fishing at sea in some regions (Ratner et al. 2015).
- **Extortion in exchange for resources:** Control and power imbalances can be exploited to coerce women into sex in exchange for

food, water, land rights, forest access, or fishing permits (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020). For example, evidence shows exploitative transactional sex-for-fish in small-scale inland fisheries in Eastern and Southern Africa; in Cameroon, women are coerced into sex to avoid harassment and fines by authorities monitoring licenses and permits (Lentisco and Lee 2015).

Climate change, extractive industries, and environmental crimes—which include illegal wildlife trade (IWT), logging, charcoal trade, mining, and illegal and unreported and unregulated fishing—further degrade natural resources and increase social stressors, resulting in increased risk of GBV (Castañeda Camey et al. 2021).

- Land degradation and biodiversity loss caused by environmental stressors can trigger economic insecurity and loss of livelihoods, leading to physical and sexual violence, child marriage, and sexual exploitation (Castañeda Camey et al. 2021) (see Section 3.5. Sector-Specific Program Elements: Climate Adaptation and Mitigation).
- Environmental crimes and extractive industries are also associated with higher rates of GBV, including: (1) physical and sexual assault and harassment to coerce local communities, and (2) sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, transactional sex, and child labor to further criminal enterprises (IUCN 2021a). For instance, there have been cases of poachers threatening or using rape to control communities and ensure compliance through fear and violence (Hübschle and Shering 2018). Similarly, sex trafficking, including of minors, has been reported in mining towns across regions, such as in Senegal (Guilbert 2017) and Peru (USAID 2014).
- Environmental criminals, as well as extractive industries, also pose serious threats to rangers and those who defend environmental human rights. Women rangers and women environmental defenders are at risk of sexual violence, threats of rape, and other acts of misogyny to silence them (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020, Barcia 2017, Seager 2021).

Environmental and NRM programming that does not consider gender norms and inequalities can unintentionally perpetuate or even exacerbate GBV. Projects dedicated to women's empowerment that alter power dynamics within a community (related to natural resource access, use, and control) could have negative consequences if gender and GBV are not sufficiently considered. For example, disregarding local communities' reliance on natural resources when establishing protected areas can lead to rangers and guards using GBV against women collecting forest products (Wan et al. 2011) or using GBV as a tool to get information on community poachers (Brooks and Hopkins 2016). The immediate and long-term effects of GBV can restrict survivors' involvement in economic and educational opportunities, including in the environment and NRM sector. The active or passive exclusion of survivors from environment and NRM often results in missed opportunities to include gender-differentiated knowledge, capacities, and priorities in achieving long-term and sustainable development (IUCN 2020c). Moreover, GBV can diminish previous efforts to conserve and protect natural resources (Conservation International 2020, IUCN 2020b). Addressing gender inequalities and GBV is a cross-sectoral responsibility as part of a rights-based approach to NRM and improving environment outcomes.

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# How Environment and Natural Resource Management Can Address GBV

USAID programming on the environment and NRM can address GBV by strengthening gender policies and GBV safeguards, enhancing implementing partners' capacity in survivor-centered and trauma-informed approaches, and partnering with GBV expert organizations. The following strategies can help environment and NRM practitioners to contribute to the enabling environment necessary to protect diverse people and ecosystems and reduce GBV.

## Strategy #1: Engage communities to transform attitudes, beliefs, norms, and behaviors on women's land and natural resource rights and masculinity



**Program elements:**  
prevention



**Levels of socio-ecological model:**  
individual, interpersonal, community

Given the powerful role gendered norms play in access to and control of natural resources, efforts to transform gender and social norms must be emphasized and prioritized in environment and NRM programming (see Section 3.1. Sector-Specific Program Elements: Prevention). In addition to empowering diverse women and girls, program implementers must engage men and boys in this process, because they are also affected by and uphold these norms, including the sanctioned use of GBV to prevent change.

Transformation of gender norms, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors for gender equality and GBV prevention should happen at the individual, interpersonal, and community levels, with complementary interventions. Environment and NRM practitioners can adapt evidence-based and participatory GBV interventions on social norms for their sector. For example, CARE's Social Analysis and Action methodology<sup>1</sup> was adapted for use in USAID's Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments (RISE) small-grant project in Kenya to transform gender norms in wildlife conservancies and promote gender equality and GBV prevention and response (USAID 2020). With support from GBV experts, practitioners can also develop new social norms interventions specific to environment and NRM interventions. For example, USAID funded the Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, which developed two training manuals on GBV and healthy masculinities tailored to the fisheries sector in the region. The training, which included separate sessions for men and women, focused on transforming gender norms through a process of individual learning and reflection. The training also promoted positive relationships and mitigated GBV risks at the family and interpersonal levels (IUCN and USAID 2022).

<sup>1</sup> The Social Analysis and Action methodology is a "facilitated process through which individuals and communities explore and challenge the social norms, beliefs and practices that shape their lives and are at the root of the development problems that CARE seeks to address" (CARE 2018).

Interventions with community leaders are also important, particularly in rural communities where land and natural resources are managed communally, such as in many Indigenous territories. Interventions can focus on engaging male community chiefs and elders to transform attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors; promote healthy masculinities; and engage male authorities as champions to promote gender equality and GBV prevention and response. Mobilizing and fostering dialogue with women leaders in the community through women’s organizations or women-led natural resource cooperatives also can help advocate for GBV prevention and response at the community level. Proven community mobilization approaches to prevent GBV, such as SASA!, have been used in USAID’s RISE projects to transform community attitudes toward women’s land ownership (USAID 2020). Transforming community attitudes and beliefs can be key to enhancing women’s access to natural resources and participation in decision-making bodies.

## **Strategy #2: Promote women’s economic empowerment in sustainable and diversified livelihoods for resilience building, and GBV prevention and risk mitigation**



**Program elements:**  
risk mitigation



**Levels of socio-ecological model:**  
individual

Securing communities’ access to water and sustainable energy sources, including by creating sustainable and diverse livelihoods, can help reduce GBV risks associated with collection and management of natural resources. For example, renewable resources, such as solar cookers or charcoal briquettes created from agricultural waste, reduce demand for wood and reduce GBV risks associated with scarcity and wood collection (Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves 2016). In addition, use of renewable resources helps promote climate change-mitigation goals by reducing deforestation and landscape degradation (Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves n.d.).

Securing access to renewable energy can also increase the time women can invest in other economic activities. Programming can promote women’s economic empowerment in sustainable sectors (e.g., renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure) and in the adoption of livelihoods that ensure sustainable use of natural resources and promote economic resiliency. Examples include beekeeping or cultivation, harvesting, and processing of indigenous and traditional medicinal plants and trees, among others. The diversification of livelihood options can help reduce tensions in households and mitigate the risk of GBV associated with resource scarcity. It is worth noting that women’s economic empowerment activities may not prevent GBV unless they also address associated social norms and power dynamics.



### Strategy #3: Empower and protect women environmental human rights defenders



**Program elements:**  
risk mitigation, response,  
enabling environment



**Levels of socio-ecological model:**  
individual, community, structural

Women have the right to participate in conservation and biodiversity efforts; however, they can face GBV from governments, corporations, and their own communities as they defend and uphold their rights—and the rights of their communities—in the context of the environment (Luna et al. 2021). The empowerment and protection of women environmental human rights defenders requires a multipronged approach. For example, promoting and building women’s capacity to engage in decision making about the environment and NRM can help mitigate risk of GBV. Additionally, it is important to raise awareness about and continue data collection on GBV perpetrated against women environmental human rights defenders, because this violence is often invisible. Environment and NRM programs can identify existing referral networks or set up new referral networks to support environmental human rights defenders who are survivors of GBV. Finally, programs can advocate for the adaptation of governance and enforcement structures to reduce the risk of all forms of violence against environmental human rights defenders, with specific provisions for GBV.

### Strategy #4: Conduct gender and GBV risk assessments of NRM in protected areas to identify potential GBV risks



**Program elements:**  
risk mitigation, enabling  
environment



**Levels of socio-ecological model:**  
community, structural

Gender analysis and GBV risk assessments are useful tools to identify and mitigate potential consequences of NRM programming in protected areas, such as perpetration of GBV by guards as a tool to prevent or restrict access to protected areas (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020, Seager 2021). These assessments should inform gender-responsive governance plans. The results of these assessments can also be used to advocate for budget allocations to address GBV in NRM interventions. Plans could include provisions to protect local communities’ livelihoods (e.g., by engaging them in the management of protected areas), sensitizing and training managers and guards of protected areas on GBV prevention, and establishing safeguarding and response protocols. These efforts are particularly important in protected areas that are militarized to combat illegal exploitation of resources, where the risk of violence and GBV perpetrated by environmental criminals and guards is even higher (Seager 2021). For more information on gender and GBV assessments, see Section 4.0. Process Elements.

Gender analyses, required by USAID (USAID 2021a), can help practitioners understand people’s experiences of how gender roles, norms, and inequality affect NRM, environmental conservation, and decision making. For example, understanding the gendered dimensions of

IWT would better inform conservation efforts and attempts to combat IWT<sup>2</sup> (Seager 2021, Agu et al. 2021). Gender analyses can also identify norms and drivers of violence in the local context, as well as the types and prevalence of GBV, who experiences it, and its effects. Gender analyses can help environment and NRM programs identify opportunities to prevent, mitigate, and respond to GBV with the aim of reducing GBV, promoting survivor healing, and advancing sustainable development and conservation goals.

## **Strategy #5: Promote collaboration, partnerships, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building initiatives among NRM practitioners and local GBV specialists**



**Program elements:**  
prevention, risk mitigation,  
response



**Levels of socio-ecological model:**  
community, structural

NRM practitioners are increasingly recognizing the importance of addressing social and gender considerations in programs. However, GBV prevention and response in environment and NRM contexts is still evolving. GBV specialists and environmental practitioners can benefit from collaborating, exchanging knowledge, and building each other's capacity to effectively prevent and respond to GBV in NRM initiatives (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020, Conservation International 2020). These partnerships can also advance GBV data collection to inform GBV risk mitigation, prevention, and response strategies. USAID's partnership with IUCN on Advancing Gender in the Environment (AGENT) runs the Gender-Based Violence and Environment Linkages Center (GBV-ENV Center), which addresses knowledge gaps; mobilizes learning, action, and collaborations among practitioners; and strengthens capacities to address GBV and environment linkages. Through this partnership, USAID and IUCN have influenced environmental organizations to take action. For example, USAID's RISE grants mechanism fosters such collaborations and has highlighted the benefits of strong partnerships in increasing knowledge and capacity for future programming (USAID 2020).

Developing referral lists of local GBV services and specialists in regions and countries can help NRM practitioners connect with GBV specialists during program design, implementation, and monitoring, and respond appropriately to reports of GBV in their programs (Conservation International 2020, IUCN 2021c) (see Section 4.0. Process Elements: Mapping Referral Services). Some environmental organizations, such as Conservation International, have developed a GBV referral list template to support project implementers (Conservation International 2020).

<sup>2</sup> World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has produced a report on the gendered roles in IWT that includes a guide on how to do a gender analysis and integrate gender in the IWT combat and prevention sector.

## Strategy #6: Collaborate with the private sector, and integrate gender and GBV considerations in analyses of natural resources value chains



**Program elements:**  
prevention, risk mitigation,  
response



**Levels of socio-ecological model:**  
community, structural

Partnering with the private sector to examine gender inequality and GBV risks throughout the value chain of relevant natural resources can contribute to GBV risk mitigation, prevention, and response in these sectors. This can support context-specific data collection on gender inequalities and GBV incidence and risks along the value chain. These types of data are not easily available and can be crucial for effective planning and designing of strategies to address GBV in the public and private sectors (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020). The private sector can also use this knowledge to adopt informed GBV prevention and response strategies to improve women's safety at work, increase productivity, and reduce turnover (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020). Examples of successful public-private partnerships addressing GBV at the workplace include the tea industry in Kenya (IDH 2017) or the fishing industry in the Solomon Islands (Funnell 2019, Krushelnytska 2015).

## Strategy #7: Promote and leverage policy frameworks for increased attention to and investment in rights-based, gender-responsive environment and NRM programming and practice



**Program elements:**  
enabling environment



**Levels of socio-ecological model:**  
structural

National and international human rights and environment policy frameworks can play a key role in creating an enabling environment to foster attention and investment in GBV programming in the environment sector. For example, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution to protect environmental human rights defenders (UNHRC 2019), which includes provisions to protect women environmental human rights defenders from GBV, can inform procurements to increase investment in GBV prevention and response. The post-2020 Gender Action Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) can also become a guiding framework (CBD 2022). The plan entails an objective on GBV prevention and response, including protecting women environmental human rights defenders and park rangers. Interventions can also focus on raising awareness about links between GBV and NRM, and on building governments' capacities to adopt and implement gender-responsive NRM policies and laws that integrate GBV provisions. Promoting inclusion of GBV in other multilateral environmental agreements' gender action plans (e.g., United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) to strengthen alignment between frameworks can also help increase efforts, partnerships, and investment to address biodiversity loss, climate change, and degradation crisis.

Globally, the U.S. government is addressing GBV and environment links in its policies, including *USAID Climate Strategy 2022–2030* (USAID 2022) and the *2016 U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV Globally* (U.S. State Department 2016).

# Program Examples

## Example #1: Integrated Land and Resource Governance: Women Community Scouts in Zambia

USAID/Zambia is working to transform gender norms related to the idea that only men should fill the roles of a wildlife officer or community scout in Zambia's game management areas. Wildlife law enforcement is one of few employment opportunities for young people in these rural communities (USAID Landlinks 2021c). Opening opportunities for young women to participate in this career field as community scouts—with the potential to advance to wildlife officers—can have a huge impact on women, their families, and their communities (Seager 2021). Livelihood opportunities protecting Zambia's game management areas allow communities to profit from ecotourism and conservation, providing an incentive to prevent environmental crimes, such as poaching. Holding these jobs also expands women's agency and positions of leadership and power, which in turn, reduces women's vulnerability to GBV, particularly GBV arising from income limitations (USAID Landlinks 2021c).

USAID supported Zambia's Department of National Parks and Wildlife in adapting their training programs for community scouts to create an enabling environment for women to be successful, while also maintaining fidelity to high standards for training success. A specific session was added on gender considerations and GBV in the context of women's participation in NRM (USAID Landlinks 2021c). The new session addresses various forms of gender inequality and GBV that women community scouts may face, such as social stigma or retribution for choosing this “men's work” over their gendered household duties; physical and sexual harassment and assault in the workplace; and risk of GBV in addition to other risks of violence faced by all community scouts in this dangerous line of work. In addition, awareness raising among the community on underlying gender inequality issues aims to prevent and mitigate GBV experienced by women wildlife officers.

## Example #2: RISE Challenge: Nuwas Forest in Peru

USAID's RISE Challenge supports organizations to innovatively adapt and implement approaches to address the underlying causes of GBV through environment and NRM initiatives such as forests, fisheries, and climate programming. Conservation International and PROMSEX received RISE funding to engage and support Indigenous women and men responsible for managing the Nuwas Forest in Peru to shift gender norms and address GBV to achieve sustainable forest and environmental conservation outcomes (USAID 2020).

The project trained 70 women on their legal rights and sexual violence prevention; provided capacity-building for project staff, partners, and the local Indigenous federation to respond appropriately to incidents of GBV; engaged men and boys in the community to explore concepts of masculinity and transform attitudes contributing to GBV; and advocated to the local government about the need for bringing GBV-support services closer to the community as a response and accountability mechanism (IUCN n.d., IUCN 2021b).

# Tools and Resources

- Castañeda CI, L Sabater, C Owren, and AE Boyer. 2021. *Gender-Based Violence and Environment Linkages: Summary for Policy Makers*. Wen J (editor). Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-002-En-Summ.pdf>.
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The goal of the Collective Action to Reduce Gender-Based Violence (CARE-GBV) activity is to strengthen USAID’s collective prevention and response, or “collective action” in gender-based violence (GBV) development programming across USAID. For more information about CARE-GBV, click [here](#).

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