



Nurturing the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' Women Environmental Defenders (WE-Defend)

PROJECT PROFILE 2022

The Samdhana Institute

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Project Description

In 2021, the Philippines was identified as the deadliest country in Asia and third in the world for environmental defenders, with women facing unique vulnerabilities and even graver threats. In the face of continued extractive human activities that have devastating environmental impacts, along with the persistent feminization of the burden of managing natural resources for a household's survival, WE-Defend (Nurturing the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' Women Environmental Defenders) will advance women's leadership through innovative and direct support that empowers and capacitates WEDs (Women Environmental Defenders). Through the support of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), The Asia Foundation through its partners including The Samdhana Institute will implement this 16-month project to Empower Women Environmental Defenders (WED) to participate across all levels of environmental governance meaningfully and safely.

Project Site/Area of Implementation

- 1 Cagayan de Oro City
- 2 Cotabato
- 3 Surigao
- 4 Agusan
- 5 Bukidnon
- 6 Misamis Occidental
- 7 Zamboanga
- 8 Calamianes in Palawan and Manila

Partners we work with

Tribe/ Ethnic Origin of the WEDs:

- Talaandig
- Higaonon
- Subanen
- Blaan
- Agusanon Manobo
- Menuvu Kirinteken
- Calamian Tagbanwa
- Bisaya
- Bukidnon
- Tboli – Blaan
- Dibabawan

Project period

11 February 2022 - 10 February 2023

Donor Partner

The Asia Foundation

Consortium Partner

Parabukas, Alternative Law Groups, Manila Observatory, Forest Foundation of the Philippines

WE-Defend will employ a two – pronged approach:

- First – support and advance traditional tools and support for security (including legal defense, psychosocial support, and dialogues with the security sector)
- Second – socialize environmental defense into a broader movement with a view towards depoliticizing the work of WEDs in the frontlines.

Objectives:

- Equip WEDs (Women Environmental Defenders) and civil society organizations (CSOs) with the necessary skills to conduct their work safely and effectively and influence policies without threats of violence.
- Advance women’s leadership and advocacy on local and national priorities related to natural resources and the environment.

Project components/ target outputs:

● Small Grants Program - Cohort and Fellowship Program

○ WE-D Cohort Program

- A micro grant for the WEDs to implement or initiate their own community projects

○ WE-D Fellowship Program

- Current Leaders

Five (5) Fellows who have ongoing engagement or involvement in environmental defense and have been working with the community for five years or less

- Emerging Leaders

Ten (10) community leaders with a least two (2) years of experience and will be provided a support for the Internship program to further develop their skills/ expertise

● Gender Audit

Samdhana will focus on the following by:

- Building a cohort of women environmental defenders and civil society organizations
- Conduct of Gender Audit of current environmental programs and cases
- Establish a fellowship program for the new generation of women environmental frontline defenders