COMBATING WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING LEARNING EXCHANGE

Bangkok, Thailand
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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID E3/FORESTRY AND BIODIVERSITY
Combating Wildlife Trafficking
COLLABORATIVE LEARNING GROUP

OPENING

Angela Hogg, the USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia Regional Environment Office Director, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for their attendance. Angela shared some personal anecdotes from her experience working for USAID in both Africa and Asia. She stressed the importance of the work USAID is doing in combating wildlife trafficking (CWT) and why learning and adapting will be critical to continue making progress.

Meredith Ferris (TRG) also welcomed the group and clarified the purpose and objectives of the learning exchange. The exchange provided opportunities for sharing and discussing CWT activities while focusing on two of the USAID CWT Learning Agenda's strategic approaches: 1) improving the practice of building capacity in law enforcement and prosecution, and 2) reducing consumer demand through behavior change. Objectives included:
- Learn and draw lessons from the Asia CWT portfolio;
- Foster a collaborative community of CWT program implementers;
- Share progress towards answering learning questions (both CWT Learning Agenda and activity-level), and identify ongoing or emergent gaps for these strategic approaches; and
- Identify and prioritize needs and action steps for future work

Tess Present (Environmental Incentives) provided an overview of the alignment between USAID's CWT learning agenda and the learning agendas of Asia activities. A handout can be found here.

The learning exchange had 40 attendees, which included 26 USAID staff and 14 staff of implementing partner teams from the USAID Wildlife Asia, BIJAK, Protect Wildlife, and Saving Species activities, as well as one representative from the Wildlife Conservation Society–Africa. Among the USAID staff, 11 were from Missions in Asia, nine from Missions in Africa, three from Latin America and the Caribbean, and three from the USAID Office of Forestry and Biodiversity (FAB).

LEARNING WALL

A learning wall was created for the CWT Learning Exchange to capture and synthesize insights throughout the two-day workshop. This visual space captured participants' photos, their reflections, and our summary notes from the various sessions on law enforcement capacity building, demand reduction, and forward-looking action planning. The use of the learning wall began on the first morning with participants posting meaningful photos from their activities, along with their profiles and the meaning of each photo. The wall was expanded throughout the learning exchange as participants added reflections and insights gathered through the knowledge-sharing sessions, and as facilitators added summary notes from the discussions.
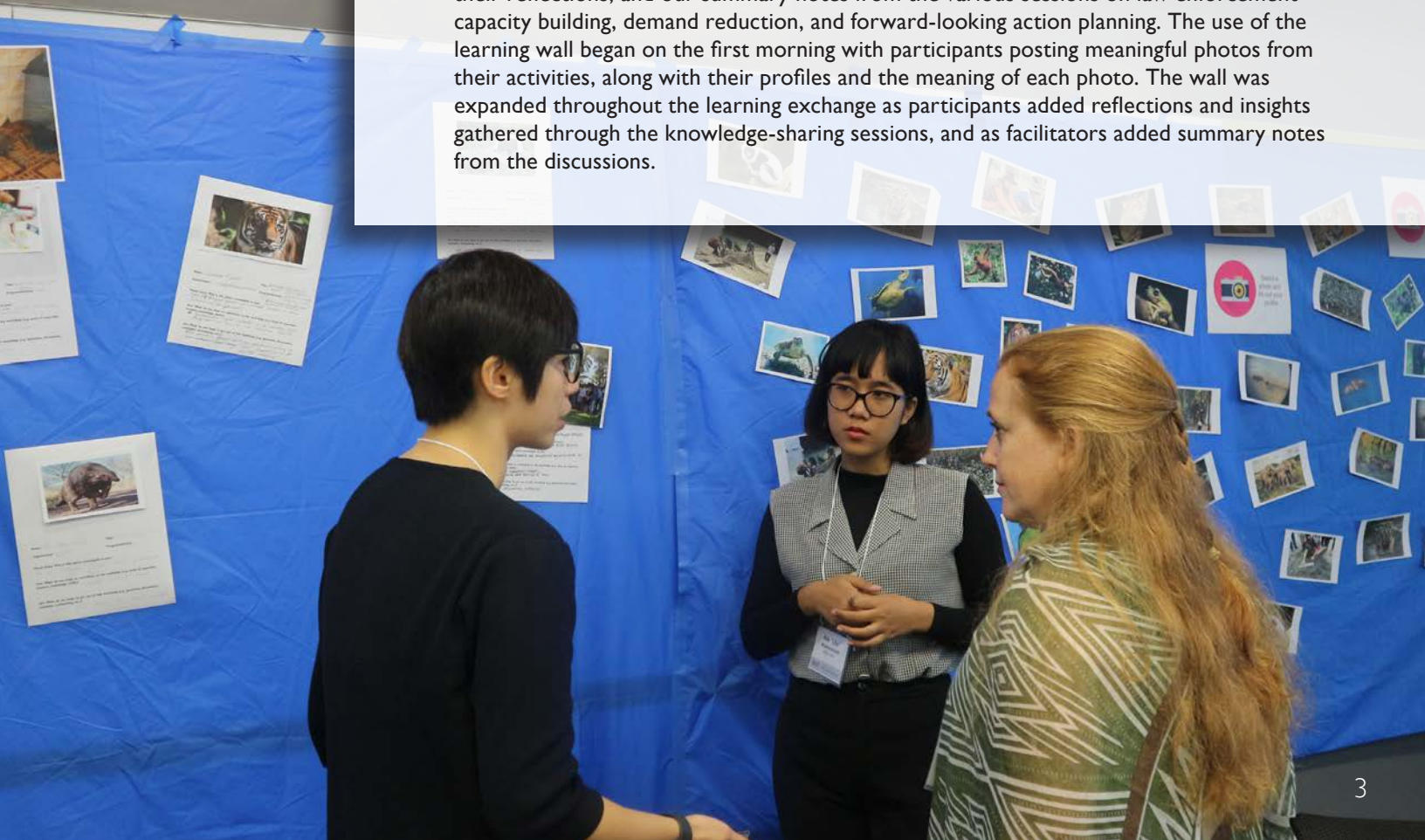
KNOWLEDGE-SHARING SESSION:
CAPACITY BUILDING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

This knowledge-sharing session captured insights on the current state of law enforcement capacity building. The session featured lightning talks and a panel discussion from implementing partners of two CWT programs in Asia and the CWT Advisor for the USAID/Kenya and East Africa Mission.

Becky Paz, COP, USAID Protect Wildlife spoke about her activity's adaptation to offer a specialized menu of capacity building opportunities for law enforcement in Palawan, Philippines, an island that is both a hotspot for wildlife poaching and a hub for illegal wildlife trade across the region.

Mikala Lauridsen, CWT Advisor, USAID/Kenya and East Africa discussed the importance of engaging with frontline communities on building enforcement capacity to combat wildlife poaching, using the Northern Rangelands Trust in Kenya as a model.

Sal Amato, Law Enforcement Team Lead, USAID Wildlife Asia spoke about Wildlife Asia's efforts to train law enforcement officers across multiple countries and government agencies with the Countering Transnational Organized Crime model.

Key Takeaways
- Unique law enforcement contexts require specialized law enforcement skill sets, and capacity building efforts should be tailored to provide these.
- By using a holistic model of partnering with local communities and national wildlife agencies to increase law enforcement capacity, activities can help communities achieve conservation, as well as peace and security objectives.
- While training law enforcement officials can build skills and enthusiasm for addressing CWT, there is still a lack of political will, which may only be generated through executive-level CWT leadership courses that target senior managers.
- Effective capacity building programs for law enforcement should be strategic and collaborative, address peace and security objectives, and consider law enforcement motivation and results.
- There is emerging evidence that increased capacity building leads to improved law enforcement but many questions remain regarding under what conditions this assumption is valid.

Recommendations to Apply Learning

An Action Planning session was held on Day 2, in which lessons learned from knowledge sharing on capacity building for law enforcement and demand reduction were translated into recommendations for how to improve implementation of these strategic approaches going forward. Further detail on the Action Planning session is provided below.

Law Enforcement Capacity Building to Achieve Lasting Impacts

1. Holistically consider the entire law enforcement chain (not just detection and arrest), target training efforts, and focus on coordination of efforts along the chain and among entities at different scales, in addition to building skills.
2. Address corruption along the enforcement chain, including by promoting systems for better transparency and accountability and by defining and promoting the role of investigative journalism.
3. Institutionalize training in law enforcement entities and engage senior personnel in organizational development.
4. In addition to increasing skill competencies, use trainings to promote the values and attitudes needed for good enforcement practice. Include training in how law enforcement personnel should engage with community members and other key actors involved in their enforcement efforts.
5. Strengthen linkages among enforcement efforts at all scales—jurisdictional, regional, international.
6. Strengthen appropriate community engagement and ensure communities understand their role in enforcement.

Adaptive Management of Law Enforcement Capacity Building Efforts

1. Refine and test assumptions of how and when capacity building leads to improved enforcement. Improve understanding of how best to measure effective law enforcement capacity building and monitor long-term performance of trainees. Consider what complementary strategic approaches are necessary.
2. Consider different modalities of building law enforcement capacity. Recognize the importance of coaching and mentoring, not only training.
3. Identify and address the risks of increasing enforcement capacity, including thorough development of appropriate safeguards.

KNOWLEDGE-SHARING SESSION:
EFFECTIVE DEMAND REDUCTION CAMPAIGNS

This knowledge-sharing session focused on the state of social and behavior change communication campaigns aiming to reduce demand for wildlife products across Asia. The session featured gallery walks of six demand reduction campaign posters across four USAID activities: **USAID Wildlife Asia, USAID BIJAK, USAID Saving Species, and USAID Protect Wildlife**. Presenters shared the formative research underpinning their campaigns, their behavior change targets, key audiences, and messaging platforms. The posters also identified learning questions and monitoring, evaluation, and learning approaches to test their campaigns' effectiveness.

The gallery walk was split into two parts. During the first part, **USAID Wildlife Asia** shared three campaigns focusing on changing Thailand's norms surrounding the use of ivory for cosmetic purposes, undermining the spiritual and medicinal value of tiger and ivory amulets in Thailand, and building awareness of China's Wildlife Protection Law.

In the second session, **USAID BIJAK** presented its campaign to reduce demand for songbirds, **USAID Protect Wildlife** shared its approach to curbing demand for blue-naped parrots as pets, and **USAID Saving Species** presented its progress towards formalizing its demand reduction campaigns. Demand Reduction Campaign posters can be found [here](#).

Participants completed a guiding questions handout during the gallery walk to help guide their thinking about what effective demand reduction looks like, appropriate metrics, and target audiences.

Key Takeaways
- The USAID behavior change campaigns are informed by impressive formative research studies and include a range of approaches in order to reach different target audiences.
- Segmentation of audiences is particularly important to target demand reduction efforts effectively. In some of the examples, we are working with very specific and/or small audiences that have a big impact on wildlife conservation.
- It is clear that USAID efforts in demand reduction have advanced significantly.
- We should look for ways to link demand reduction and capacity building for law enforcement efforts, perhaps by creating a target audience of law enforcement officials, where appropriate.
- As campaigns near midline assessments, it will be key to look for the effectiveness of positive versus negative messaging, the inclusion of USAID logos on campaign materials, and the quality of self-reported data in midline surveys.
- There is a desire to share lessons learned between demand reduction campaigns in Africa and Asia.

Recommendations to Apply Learning

USAID Processes and Procedures

1. Ensure adequate budgeting for sustained campaigns, explore co-financing with host governments, and assess the cost effectiveness of different approaches. Prioritize audiences for campaign targeting.
2. Assess the costs and benefits of USAID branding, and consider changing branding rules.

Effective Demand Reduction Campaign Design

1. Design holistic campaigns focused on long-term behavior change by addressing the psychological, social, cultural, and economic drivers of consumer behavior, leveraging other CWT interventions, and making clear the co-benefits for governments and communities in order to achieve sustained change.
2. When possible, take advantage of political economy assessment for more in-depth stakeholder mapping and to inform selection of demand messages and modalities.
3. Recognize the time needed to achieve the desired behavior change at the necessary scale, and build capacity for ownership and operation of campaigns by local partners.
4. Look beyond "traditional" audience segmentations to identify key audiences to achieve sustained cultural change.
5. Explore use of technology and multichannel approaches to increase dissemination and engagement of target audiences.
6. Think about addressing consumption of lesser known species or those with lesser value.

Adaptive Management of Demand Reduction Campaigns

1. Ensure ongoing monitoring and adaptive management of campaigns to continually refine messaging. Consider conducting peer reviews. Socialize formative research with other practitioners to identify best practices and lessons learned.
2. Be cognizant of unintended consequences of campaigns, which could include economic impacts and consumption displaced to other species.

STORIES OF INNOVATION AND CHANGE

Participants were invited to think of a story of innovation or change, big or small, which has helped to make an impact in their CWT work. Participants were then invited to interview one another to capture the stories so they could be retold. Next, participants were invited to form small groups and share each others' stories with one another, looking for commonalities in what they learned through the change and innovation process.

The stories in the room where a wide mix of small changes and innovations that led to greater efficiency and new ways of thinking, to more experimental and potentially disruptive changes in approaches to advance CWT.

Across groups, participants appreciated getting to hear and process their experiences, learn from one another, and gather new insights of approaches to apply in their own work. As an outcome of this session, the CWT Cross Mission Learning Program will follow up with individuals to hear more about their experience and to capture their insights.
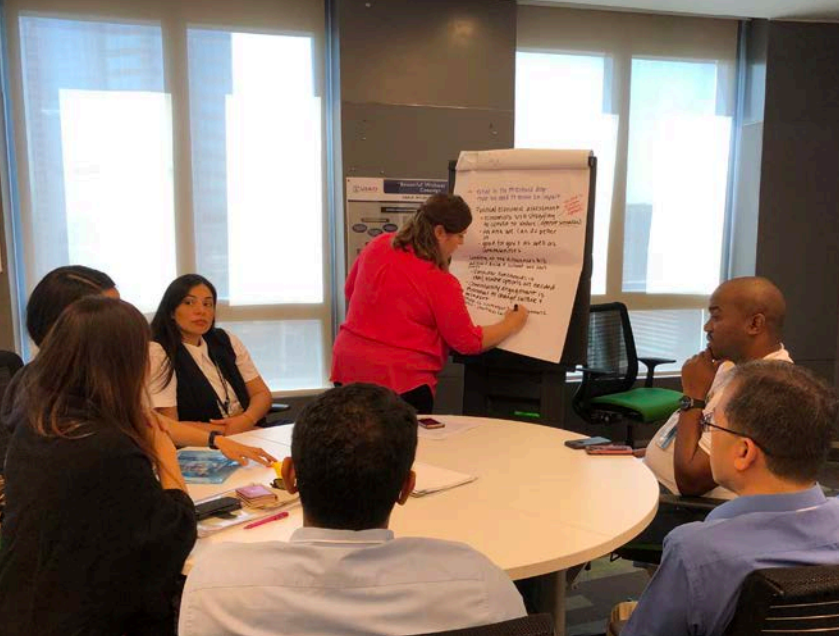
ACTION PLANNING

In the final session we held a World Cafe for participants to reflect and discuss key questions to inform what actions we can take moving forward. The questions and the themes that emerged are listed under the knowledge-sharing sessions above as well as below.

Are there other priority strategic approaches that require greater focus for implementation and learning?

1. Develop and refine laws and policies to support CWT efforts at all scales.
2. Increase anti-corruption efforts. Improve transparency and accountability.
3. Increase and better leverage private sector engagement, including with the banking, transportation, technology, media, and tourism industries. Increase connections between government and the private sector. Develop/identify effective and efficient tools and techniques for engaging the private sector.
4. Build political will. Undertake political economy assessments and other systems analyses to understand potential motives and barriers to desired behaviors and identify interventions. Better understand linkages to organized crime.
5. Develop viable alternative livelihood options that can achieve needed impact at scale.
6. Improve data, metrics, and analytics for CWT impact and planning.
7. Increase transnational collaboration and coordination. Increase sharing across donor, projects and organizations to synergize and/or reduce overlap and competition.
8. Enhance cross-fertilization across current CWT approaches (e.g., capacity building, social and behavior change communications, policy work, community and private sector engagement).
9. Increase engagement with communities, traditional structures, and civil society organizations to increase sustainability, efficiency, and capacity of CWT efforts at appropriate scales.
10. Broaden social inclusion. Identify and leverage stakeholder incentives. Understand differences in the roles, opportunities, and impacts of men and women in illegal wildlife trade and in efforts to combat it.
11. Explore alternative protein production.

Key Takeaways
- Translation from lessons learned to actionable recommendations requires adequate time for reflection.
- A learning agenda provides a valuable framework for organizing and focusing knowledge management activities and needs to be adapted over time as questions are answered and new gaps emerge.

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The CWT Learning Exchange slides can be found here.

For more information, visit the CWT Collaborative Learning Group webpage.