

INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF RIGHTS AND RESOURCES INITIATIVE: COALITION-BUILDING, STRATEGY AND LAND TENURE ADVOCACY

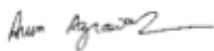
Final Report

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Client:

Rights & Resources Initiative

Established in 2005, the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) is a global coalition dedicated to promoting land tenure and policy reform for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, Afro-descendants and women. Through an institutional ethnography framework, this report analyzes the operations, successes, and challenges of RRI in order to synthesize strategies for tenure reform and document the perspectives of coalition members. As an influential organization in the field of land tenure, forest conservation, and environmental justice, understanding these factors will also inform members outside of the coalition as keys to success for strategies in coalitional land tenure advocacy.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Land Acknowledgement
- II. Introduction
- III. Literature Review
- IV. Research Methods
- V. Findings
 - A. Coalition Strategies
 - 1. *Roles of Partners and Collaborators*
 - 2. *Strategy Development as a Circular Process*
 - 3. *Challenges of Partners & Collaborators*
 - 4. *Data Collection*
 - 5. *Indigenous Rights and Climate Change Mitigation*
 - 6. *"Unlikely Allies"*
 - 7. *Engaging Multiple Scales*
 - 8. *Strategically Allocating Resources*
 - 9. *Holistic Approach to Land Tenure*
 - B. Tensions
 - C. Evolving Structure and Relational Dynamics of the Coalition
 - D. Suggestions
- VI. Conclusion

I. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that while we have been conducting this research and compiling stories from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, we have simultaneously been occupying the traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples. Native and Indigenous Peoples who have built centuries-long relationships with this land include the Anishinaabeg Nation, or the Ojibwe (Chippewa), the Odawa (Ottawa), and the Bodewadami (Potawatami) Peoples, the Wyandot, the Fox, and the Peoria. Given the nature of our research, this adds a unique dynamic in supporting Indigenous advocacy and work towards ensuring their land tenure rights while actively occupying the lands of other Indigenous Peoples. We want to bring recognition to the harms of the colonial past and present as well as the people who were here prior to settler-colonialism and still are here. We ask that those reading this take it as a reminder to be in learning and in supportive work with the local Native Peoples to where you live. If you are not aware of who they are, seek out their work and commit to supporting their reclamation efforts. This acknowledgment does not relieve us of the necessary work to help direct our society towards justice and reparations. We thank them and all other Indigenous, First Nation, Aboriginal and Native People across the world for their stewardship.

Thank you to our advisors Cristy Watkins, PhD and Arun Agrawal, PhD for their support, guidance and collaboration that has given us the opportunity to meet and receive stories from so many people. And the greatest thank you to all those who dedicated time and spoke to us from across the world, especially those who are in the midst of fighting for their land, identities and ways of living.

II. INTRODUCTION

In the push for collective forestland and resource rights for Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendent Peoples, local communities, and the women within them, the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) coalesces efforts between myriad organizations and groups through a global coalition. Established in 2005, the coalition has continued to grow its organizational network and focal countries. In order to understand the role of coalition members and document their feedback and concerns, RRI consulted students at the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability to conduct an institutional ethnography of the coalition.

Today, the coalition includes 21 Partner organizations, more than 150 rightsholder organizations and their allies who operate in three different regions including Africa, Asia and Latin

America. It also includes an advisory board and a secretariat organization. The Board is made up of 11 members whose positions range from researchers of land tenure, gender justice advocates, Indigenous rightsholders, policy and grant writers, lawyers, and other roles with members from across the globe. The secretariat consists of 31 staff members with diverse roles including communications specialists, tenure researchers, operations managers, and a leadership team that works on the larger vision and functioning of the coalition. While historically Partners mainly consisted of larger NGO organizations, both Partner and Collaborator organizations include local, national, and international NGOs and rightsholder organizations. All of these actors play a critical role in the coalition.

Our study documents and analyzes the experiences, insights and opinions of Partners, Collaborators, RRG staff and board members as they pertain to organizational functioning and the coalition's ability to achieve its collective goals. As the voices of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities grow louder within global discussions around land tenure rights and, more broadly, human rights, RRI has undoubtedly contributed to this amplification. Our study provides essential documentation and analysis of RRI's unique structure and function, and as such may offer insights to other NGOs in the coalitional land tenure field looking to strategically grow and advance their efficacy.

Through interviews, participant observation, and document analysis conducted between March 2021 to May 2022, this report synthesizes and highlights the perspectives and opinions of 30+ coalition members to address the following two research questions:

1. *What strategies do Partners and Collaborators utilize in order to effectively secure land tenure for Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, local communities and women within these communities?*
2. *How does the coalition support Partners and Collaborators in achieving their goals while influencing global narratives and actions around tenure rights?*

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Partnerships and collaboration are key building blocks for the work of NGOs. This collaboration can come in the form of alliances, networks, informal collaborations and coalitions. While a larger partnership can enhance the momentum for change, the number of partners or members is one of many determinants of a network's ability to leverage influence. Coalitions continue to be spaces where the 'ability to coalesce' remains central to a perceived ability to progress and succeed

as a unit.¹ However, within these spaces, power continues to influence an organization's internal workings and its external outcomes. When thinking about collaboration in the field of sustainable land use, lack of coordination has been reported as the dominant underlying barrier.² However, others argue that the largest barrier to sustainable land collaboration is the power wielded by the opposing political forces who have most to gain from privatized natural resource extraction.³

When thinking about global social change, there are certain aspects of how a non-profit leverages its worth that sets its governance and everyday functioning apart from for-profit institutions. Social capital plays a major role in this. While there are many definitions of social capital, this paper will use the definition put forth by Bourdieu and Wacquant:

“Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.”⁴

Thus social capital is the full extent of resources created through formal institutional and informal social means. Within a coalition, social capital is vital for the structural function of the coalition, the core ideals tying coalition members together, and the international influence members can utilize as a collective. These resources are recognized by non-profit organizations and their leaders for the value they bring. Social capital can help to recruit board members, increase organization donations, build partnerships and community relations, and help support the creation of a unified mission within the organization and employees,⁵ all of which are vital to enhancing organizational leverage. These forms of social capital are believed to be foundational to managing a successful non-profit coalition.

Scholarship put forward by King (2004) discuss ideas of the role of social capital in NGOs. King states,

“the origins and operations of nonprofit organizations are aligned with the core dimensions of social capital: networks, relationships and trust, and shared vision and norms. Nonprofit voluntary associations deal with numerous internal and external networks. Through these networks, they develop relationships and build trust. The driving

¹ Ravikumar, Ashwin and Anne Larson and Rodd Myers and Tim Trench. "Inter-sectoral and multilevel coordination alone do not reduce deforestation and advance environmental justice: Why bold contestation works when collaboration fails" in *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 36, no. 8 (2018): 1437-1457. DOI: 10.1177/2399654418794025

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Polity Press.

⁵ *Ibid.*

force behind nonprofit organizations is a shared vision and common mission. Without these core components of social capital, nonprofits cannot be effective in achieving their missions.”⁶

Although King discusses the importance of social capital within a single nonprofit, these relationships are magnified within the context of a coalition. This is especially the case in a coalition like RRI that has two main modes of outside nonprofit membership: partners who are more involved with the internal governance of RRI and collaborators who are more involved in the implementation of RRI activities and strategies. The complex ties of social capital impact both of these groups in different ways and the way that RRI runs itself through its own internal governance.

To acquire, build and employ social capital, leaders and organizations can use multiple strategies. These include developing and managing the executive board, fundraising, managing relationships with communities and partners, developing the organization’s strategic plans, advocating for the organization and its mission and managing day to day employee relations.⁷ However, all of these require a significant amount of time and energy. The way an organization chooses to focus their time greatly affects how their organization’s social capital is employed and utilized.

Ensuring that organizations are effective in their goals often requires an analysis of an organization’s internal structure. This kind of structural analysis can tell us how internal stakeholders (ie. leaders, managers, other staff) and other roles within the organization work together to exert different kinds of influence in order to achieve collective goals. Social capital is often utilized, especially within NGOs, as a central force that drives funders, fundraisers, workers, volunteers, and in the case of RRI, their Collaborators and Partners. The social capital uniting the coalition is influenced by and connected to the relational power created within RRG’s management and work.

IV. RESEARCH METHODS

In order to address our guiding research questions regarding coalitional governance and the strategies employed by RRI, we utilized an institutional ethnographic framework set out by Dorothy Smith and Janet Rankin. Grounded in feminist theory that aims to interrogate the hierarchial relationships between members of an institution as well as disrupt the hierarchial relations

⁶ King, Nancy. "Social Capital and Nonprofit Leaders" in *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 14 no. 4 (2004): 471-486.

⁷ Ibid.

between researchers and research participants, this approach was well suited to the goals of the project.⁸ This framework was specifically selected because of its deep alignment with the coalition goals and values of inclusivity and voice amplification. Through the interview process, the research team aimed to create spaces in which each coalition members' perspectives were heard, valued and represented.

Institutional ethnographies utilize a rich and evolving approach to interviewing to inquire into everyday life, "ruling relations", or, the "particular practices that activate a social world of things happening among people and organization work from afar."⁹ Ruling relations can be identified by interviewing and observing how social processes within an environment can have effects on those involved. Ruling relations can embody many forms including "bureaucracy, administration, management, professional organization and media."¹⁰ We utilized this institutional ethnographic framework to uncover the unspoken ruling relations within the RRI coalition.

The team relied on three main forms of data collection: interviews, participant observation, and historical document analysis. Following the iterative approach to interviewing laid out by Rankin¹¹ to create an institutional ethnography, the team first developed initial interview guides for Partners and Collaborators as well as members of RRG in the Summer of 2021. These two guides were tailored to each group to allow for a deeper analysis of the ways in which Partners and Collaborators view the governance of RRG, as well as how RRG views the governance of the coalition. Based on new knowledge developed in interviews, the guide was updated numerous times throughout the process to remove, alter and add key questions to better understand the experiences of coalition members. This unique adaptive method, while contrasting many traditional ethnographic styles that rely on the uniformity of questions for analysis, is a key component of institutional ethnography as findings from interviews allow for more specific targeting of the research questions and ruling relations. Furthermore, interviews were also done in a collaborative approach between the researcher and interviewee with questions of understanding and analysis carried out during the interviews.

Over the period of August 2021 to April 2022, the team conducted 35 interviews. Interviewees included: 8 members of RRG, three members of the board, 8 Partners, and 17 Collaborators. Two interviewees in the list fulfilled two roles. Members of RRG were jointly identified between the project point of contact at RRG and the research team. Based on lists of active Collaborator organizations provided by each RRG Regional Director, each Partner and active Collaborator organization was contacted at least once via email to request their participation. An open call to all members of the

⁸ Rankin, Janet. "Conducting Analysis in Institutional Ethnography : Guidance and Cautions." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16, no. 1 (2017): 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917734472>.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ DeVault, Marjorie and Liza McCoy. "Investigating Ruling Relations: Dynamics of Interviewing in Institutional Ethnography." *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft*, 2012, 381–95.

¹¹ Rankin, Janet. "Conducting Analysis in Institutional Ethnography: Guidance and Citations." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16, (2017): 1-11.

coalition was also sent through the RRG project point of contact. While non-uniform responsiveness may introduce sampling bias, the team attempted to include a wide range of experiences through the breadth of coalition members interviewed. The final interview sample included Partners and Collaborators from each of the three regions (Africa, Asia, and Latin America) as well as coalition members based in Europe. Furthermore, the sample included a diverse group of organizations, including larger international NGOs, regional and country-level NGOs, and rightsholder organizations. Interviews were informally coded for analysis.

Throughout the data collection process, the research team also conducted participant observation. The team virtually joined coalition meetings and events to observe interactions between coalition members and group dynamics. This research informed the research team's understanding of the organization and its diverse membership. Finally, the team also conducted an analysis of historical documents produced by RRI on an as-directed basis. These included donor reports, briefs, reports and external and internal evaluations. These documents were read in response to coalition members referencing and citing specific information from them. These documents were analyzed to understand key turning points for the organization, projects and strategies.

Limitations

Given the sensitive nature of the topics discussed, online formats made it difficult to engage in important relationship-building processes and in-person participatory observation. All interviews were held remotely and with remote interpreters when needed. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic communication and collaboration between the graduate team, faculty advisors, RRI affiliates, and interviewees were restricted to near-fully virtual processes and platforms, as well, which made coordination within the team more challenging.

The researchers' outreach processes of potential interviewees were also limited for a number of reasons. The research team could only conduct interviews with participants who responded to our emails. A number of interviews were scheduled or in the process of being scheduled when the interviewee either did not attend the scheduled interview or stopped responding to emails. Additionally, the research team was provided with a list of potential interviewees selected by RRG staff based on Partners and Collaborators who were considered to be 'active' within the last five and therefore would be able to offer the most valuable insight. Specific criteria as to what would constitute members as active enough were not formally made available. These events culminated in our sampling technique transitioning from a standardized one to an opportunistic one. This led to our sample of

interviewees being over-representative of RRG staff and collaborators with fewer Partners, especially rightsholders groups, participating in the interviews.

Within the limited number of interviewees, this difference was most stark between respondent rates between Partners and Collaborators. The research team reached out to approximately one-third of Collaborators in the coalition, 50% of which responded to requests for interviews. This was less than desired since Collaborators outnumber Partners and RRG staff by a large margin.

V. FINDINGS

In several interviews, Partners and Collaborators noted the significant advancements they have made in terms of furthering land tenure in their respective regions. For example, in Indonesia, 1,000 hectares of land were returned to Indigenous Peoples and in Latin America, one million hectares of land were returned to Indigenous Peoples. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, land ownership was ensured for 109 communities in 9 different provinces. In Colombia, 500 unresolved land tenure cases were documented to ensure state recognition of this backlog. Finally, in Kenya, a collaborator helped to pass the Community Land Act. The following sections will examine the strategies coalition members have used to achieve these results.

Role of Partners and Collaborators

One strength of the coalition is its ability to nimbly engage Partner and Collaborator organizations when opportunities arise for change. Members of the coalition have called this the coalition's ability to "strike when the iron is hot". Aligning well with this opportunity-oriented approach, this work is further supported by the funding mechanisms of RRI, such as the Strategic Response Mechanism, which allows for the coalition to deliver fast funding by removing administrative barriers for projects or work on the ground. While all members of the coalition are fundamental to its functioning and success, Partner and Collaborator organizations play unique roles.

One of the most important agreements between organizations in the coalition is RRI's five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU process provides an opportunity for Partners to reassess both the coalition's mission and values and their own organizational commitment to continuing in the coalition. The MOU process also allows for new Partners to be brought into the coalition, although new Partners can be added at any time as long as the Partners and Board members agree. While some of the initial Partners remain part of the Partner network of 21 organizations, the Partner network has expanded significantly from a handful of large, international NGOs to a diverse

network of international and national NGOs and rightsholder organizations. Many current partner organizations first joined the coalition as Collaborators.

While Partners must formally sign onto the MOU, there is not the same expectation for Collaborator organizations. This dynamic creates more fluidity and flexibility in the role and expectations around Collaborator organizations. Currently, RRI's network includes over 150 Collaborator organizations across the three regions of focus.

The issue of formality of participation and defining the coalitional boundaries at times has generated tension in the coalition. In the vision and current organization of the coalition which strives to be non-hierarchical, Collaborators and Partners are considered equally important members of the coalition, both playing critical roles in regional and international strategy development. However, when describing the dynamics of Partners and Collaborators, one RRG staff member described tensions around funding and decision-making. They explained that during the 2008 funding crisis, there was a period of high tension in the coalition in which partner organizations did not want to allow Collaborator organizations to have the same level of decision-making around funding. This dynamic was not how the coalition was designed, and the attempt to block Collaborator decision-making was not supported by RRG.

While today the coalition functions in such a way that all members of the coalition are given equal ownership in decisions around goals for the coalition, there are key differences in the roles of Partner and Collaborator organizations. Generally, Partner organizations are expected to participate more actively in the coalition. In order to strengthen collaboration, RRI has begun holding monthly Partner meetings in which partners can discuss coalition goals and unique projects/priorities. When determining regional strategy, Partner and Collaborator organizations both play a crucial role. This is especially true in that many of the Collaborator organizations are very closely connected to communities on the ground as rightsholder organizations. Their insight into local challenges and opportunities is critical.

Strategy Development as a Circular Process

Reflecting the coalitional goals of creating an anti-hierarchical structure, the interview process revealed a unique interplay of strategy development between coalition Partners and Collaborators at different spatial scales. This is reflected in RRI's planning process, which recognizes that those impacted most by issues of land tenure are people at the local level. Therefore, during planning meetings, individuals who represent a particular constituency or area of expertise discuss important focus areas for their respective countries. These discussions inform regional goals. Then regional level

goals are used to inform international level strategies. One interviewee describes the importance of this process by stating:

“The forest is in the ground, you know, in the villages. That is where the forests are. So you cannot decide on what to do for us, without asking those who are living in the forest as daily life. So that’s how it works, and this is the strength of RRI. The planning, the designing of the priorities is something which is highly participatory respecting all the regions’ needs and priorities. That’s it. I think if we have achieved everything we have achieved so far and we are expecting to achieve more, because we are planning together.”

However, the interaction between scales is not always a bottom-up process. One interviewee expressed that the opportunity to interact at the international level with Partners and Collaborators from various regions influenced the vision and strategies they choose to implement in their home country. Another interviewee explained that they found it valuable to educate local community members about international human rights frameworks because this made community members more aware of the rights that they could advocate for at the national level. This demonstrates that the process of developing strategies at all scales is a cyclical process. In other words, the experiences of people living and working at the local level shape international strategies that aim to change the international and national level landscapes. This creates opportunities to achieve land tenure at the local level. Those international efforts that synthesize multiple grassroots goals then also inspire the objectives and strategies that are implemented by organizations working at the local level.



Figure 1: This figure represents the cyclical and circular manner in which knowledge and strategies flow to inform one another among different spatial scales of the RRI coalition.

Data Collection

To overcome the multitude of challenges in tenure reform, coalition members have had to develop strategies that allow them to navigate existing systems, which can often be hostile towards Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples and local communities. One of the most consistently cited strategies used to achieve goals of land tenure has been to collect data both for the purpose of informing context gaps and strategy, as well as providing empirical evidence. The former is used to more fully understand local contexts and potential points of strategic engagement. The latter is used as leverage to provide empirical proof of claims when in negotiation with powerful entities, such as conservation organizations, governments and corporations. In some cases, these strategies can intersect. This data, while not directly collected by RRG, is one of the most commonly mentioned benefits of belonging to the coalition by collaborators.

Investigative data, or the results of research collected to provide a more cohesive image of local contexts, helps to inform coalition members' strategy development. This can then be shared as leverage to decision-makers in rightsholder demands. This was explained by a rightsholder organization when they shared,

"We have different strategies and I mentioned one, which is diagnostic and carrying out studies because understanding a situation in real-time is important for us. So making these studies is already a strategy because we have real elements to present to the decision-maker. With these advances, we can organize workshops and can effectively keep them informed of the situation on land... We worked with RRI and made the diagnosis of the situation and accompanied the community to do the different demands for the government."

Sometimes these results of data, investigative and empirical, work simultaneously. As alluded to in the above quote, it is not only the collection but also the communication and presentation of data collected by RRI coalition members that is equally important. This presentation then brings greater visibility to issues of rightsholders' land tenure. For example, one organization developed a data system that recorded information on communities that had not yet achieved land titles. The system included information such as where the communities were located, the ecosystems of this land, potential risks caused by climate change, landscape degradation, the amount of land communities were requesting to be returned, and more. Producing this database, containing both investigative data (community locations, ecosystems, landscape degradation and climate risks) and empirical data (land requests)

allowed the organization to bring greater visibility to the issue of rightsholders' land tenure. This, in turn, attracted donors and eventually led to policy change.

Empirical data is also used by RRI organizations as evidence of work that has and is being done by rightsholder organizations. This summarization and organization of Collaborator achievements to a platform with more visibility is one way coalition members' share land tenure securitization successes.

Empirical data is also used to quantify and calculate benefits for corporations engaged in carbon climate markets. For example, RRI has been supporting data collection projects that communicate to leaders of voluntary carbon market projects how much carbon is stored on rightsholders' lands. This amount of stored carbon is so significant and sought after by corporations engaged in carbon markets that if local communities refuse to participate in these markets because the corporations do not offer acceptable terms and conditions to the local people, then the proposed carbon market projects will also likely fail to meet their goals. Through extensive analysis conducted by RRI, research from the coalition also found that many areas are not currently capable of implementing a carbon market without potentially violating the rights of Indigenous and local communities¹². This is a way that data can be leveraged in land tenure negotiations with corporations.

Data as empirical evidence can also be useful in facilitating negotiations with government officials by way of the data empirically demonstrating an issue or claim. For example, one interviewee in Latin America described a project in which they documented several hundred land title cases that had been backlogged within the government administration. While this project has not yet led to all these cases being appropriately addressed, it did allow this organization to begin negotiations with the minister of their country to begin resolving the backlog. In this case, the data is acting as a translation tool between what local communities already know and what state entities are willing to listen to. This is one of many other examples that interviewees shared. Collecting data which showcases their roles and contributions in land-based relationships and stewardship has allowed them to inform specific legal and political documents, policies, or procedures which give communities more options in advocating for their land rights. This data acting as evidence is an essential tool to engaging across scales, a strategy that will be discussed in more depth later in the report.

Data can also be used to hold private interests accountable when they are actively inflicting harm on local people by bringing these actions to light and facilitating behavior change. This was demonstrated by an RRI funded project in China that highlighted problematic behavior by a corporation. After this research was published the corporation changed their practices because their actions reflected poorly on their companies image. In another case in Latin America, an interviewee

¹² Rights and Resources Initiative. (2021, June 2). *Status of Legal Recognition of Indigenous Peoples', Local Communities' and Afro-descendant Peoples' Rights to Carbon Stored in Tropical Lands and Forests*. Rights and Resources Initiative. Retrieved April 26, 2022, from <https://rightsandresources.org/publication/carbon-rights-brief/>.

explained how RRI supported a project to create a mapping tool of violations of rights of extractive industries. This work helped to connect the work of various organizations working on rights violations in several countries, creating a more impactful narrative when viewed together. Another collaborator in Africa shares:

"Our first innovation is to engage with them [governments and companies] and come to dialogue so we can come to a common goal. We also [use as a strategy] evidence-based results. When there is a problem, we want to come up with an empirical fight clearly stated so people can see that and be willing to support our innovation"

While research has served as an incredibly useful tool in advocating for land rights, it is important to note that the value of data further illuminates the hostile context that rightsholder member organizations have to work within to achieve their rights. Within existing social and political structures, Indigenous knowledge systems are not considered as valuable or valid as Western knowledge systems. Consequentially, communities are often put in a position where they are required to justify their knowledge and land management strategies even though the land that they inhabit is rightfully theirs. One interviewee explains:

"...the body of knowledge and data that the Rights and Resources Initiative has been compiling over the years, I believe is an extremely valuable contribution. I think that because I have a history of working directly with indigenous peoples...I don't need the data to tell me that they're doing the right [thing]...that they actually belong."

This interviewee goes on to further highlight this point by using a metaphor. They stated that asking Indigenous Peoples to legitimize their claims through data collection is like inviting someone over to your house for coffee and then that person asking you to produce the deed to your house to prove that you actually own it. Due to the fact that RRI is regarded as a producer of high-quality research, they may be in a position to shift the dominant narrative that communities need to legitimize their understanding of the world and ways of life to ensure access to resources that were stolen from them.

Indigenous Rights as Climate Change Mitigation

Often included in coalition members' strategies were mentions of climate change, biodiversity, carbon markets, and carbon rights. It became apparent that global recognition of the climate crisis is inherent

to the strategies coalition members are engaging with in order to secure land tenure for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. For example, one rightsholder Collaborator in Africa describes their collaborative strategies with RRI by saying:

"[RRI is] also concerned for people who suffer marginalization and neglect, especially customary people or Indigenous peoples as you may call it... And that vision fits in our own context... They [RRI] are also supporting what we call the REDD+ Initiative especially when it comes to carbon sales... RRI is also keen on climate change, which... is crossing-cutting in all of our programs. For instance... We are keen on climate-smart agriculture to be able to mitigate climate change issues... We're engaging with the national... document commitment to reducing climate change... So our goal and RRI's goal is similar and that is the reason why we said in a uniform relations."

This Collaborator clearly describes both RRI and their own organization's central focus as being on serving those who are disenfranchised by their state including both customary and Indigenous Peoples, in this instance. In the same breath, they also stress both their commitments and contributions to combatting climate change, including a route of global engagement through the REDD+ program. This exemplifies how the parallel missions of securing the well-being of customary and Indigenous Peoples remain at the core of both the rightsholder organization and the coalition, while simultaneously contributing significant efforts to engage with climate change efforts. The strategy of engaging within the climate crisis arena is used as a tool to gain leverage on global- and country-level efforts.

In other words, the advocacy for Indigenous land tenure and recognition is supported by the platform of climate change mitigation or resilience. This, in a way, seems to undermine the fact that this is a civil- and human- rights issue by keeping the prioritization centered around climate disaster/crisis. However, it is also, in itself, a strategy. The concept of NGOs often having to work within the existing political systems as a strategy in order to procure social change in increments is not an uncommon one. Current platforms with larger-scale audiences, or 'hot topics', can be used as a bridge to connect rationale for the broader audiences of 'hot topics' (i.e. climate change) to those of slighter popularity (i.e. land tenure for Indigenous Peoples). One Partner describes this connection between topics in the following quote:

"When RRI started to discuss tenure, it brought not only land but bringing all these different issues kind of along the process that was... not only land as the main resource, but looking at the broader resource systems. Of course, with a lot of focus on forests, basically because of REDD and climate change discussions on the international level, but I think

that brought a lot of changes in terms of the [land tenure] field. Positioning the discussion on tenure, more broadly."

However, this is not to undermine the intimate connections that Indigenous Peoples and local communities have with their land and the living beings that inhabit it nor the lengths and efforts they go through in protecting their kin. Land tenure and the health of ecosystems often equate directly to the well-being of communities, their livelihoods, their cultures, and their identities. One Partner from Africa states,

"... I am [part of the] Black community, I participate. I need a space to make Black community. That is why the Black community, the Black people, cannot be conceived if it does not have the territory. Yes, and that is why the strongest discussions are about that. How to guarantee the territory to future generations, to our renunciants? And that is why we have embarked, therefore, on at least having the legal security of territoriality."

Another Partner reiterates:

"For Democratic Republic of the Congo and Indigenous Peoples in DRC, land securitization is also the securitization of identity because they're very linked. When we secure the land, this isn't land we can find in urban areas. We find this land in all the forest spaces. We know forest plays a capital role in regulation of the climate. The vision corresponds to different stages and links between these elements."

Unlikely Allies

While some Partners and Collaborators do not wish to collaborate with potentially hostile parties, other Partners and Collaborators see collaboration with government officials and private interests as a key part of their strategy. More specifically, coalition members aim to identify important actors, start a dialogue, and then create frameworks for more sustainable and long-term communication. An example of this occurred in the African region when a Collaborator organization was facing threats from a coal mining operation that was supported by the national government. The organization was able to leverage connections with other local stakeholders to put pressure on the government and remind them of their obligation to represent the interests of local communities. Despite this conflict, the Collaborator does not view the government as an adversary and wants to

further collaborate with them to achieve land rights. In fact, they are currently working with government representatives to develop a legal framework to manage carbon resources within their country. They want to ensure that REDD+ programs that are established in their country are documenting their impacts on the community and providing direct benefits to community members. They explain:

“Certainly, we also want to engage [with key actors]. We don't see our government or companies as adversaries or enemies. Our first innovation is to engage with them and come to dialogue so we can come to a common goal.”

RRG has played a particularly important role in facilitating collaboration among unlikely allies by creating spaces to engage in dialogue where all the parties involved feel safe in expressing their perspectives through the use of Chatham house rules. One interviewee explained that RRG is able to get groups in conflict in the same room because they view conflict as an expression of common ground and shared interests. Another interviewee expressed that throughout these negotiations it is important to examine exactly why collaboration between two groups is viewed as unlikely and to examine the specific power structures in place that may need to be addressed before a solution can be reached.

However, negotiating with unsupportive entities is not always productive and may not be sustainable in the long run. For example, one interviewee explains:

“...the last thing that the [government] is doing is reversing resolutions of titles that I have already delivered... So [they] are reviewing it through, let's call it a lawsuit...because many hotel businessmen are interested in that territory and...it is more profitable for the [government] to receive taxes for, let us say, tourism, hotel business or such and such, than to guarantee the rights of the communities.”

This situation demonstrates that within systems that value the maintenance of power and profits over community well-being, land rights will always be vulnerable. If private interests discover lucrative resources and an administration comes into power that is sympathetic to business interests, then it is likely that existing land titles can be challenged or taken away. Additionally, corporate interests may violate rights even in the cases of government pushback. This creates a situation where Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples and local communities will always be fighting to secure access to resources that are needed to promote security, identity and well-being. For this reason, in addition to working within existing systems, RRI is also engaging in strategies that aim to generate more collective power for rightsholders and enact greater structural change that then makes land tenure more likely, equitable, and sustainable.

Engagement at Multiple Scales

Coalition members empower Indigenous communities, Afro-descendants and local people by engaging a diverse set of actors at multiple spatial scales. This is because the power to dictate land ownership and resource use is mediated through interactions between these scales. This is particularly apparent when advocating for women's land rights. One interviewee who works within the African region explained that land ownership is first determined at the family level. In a patriarchal social system, men are considered the heads of the household and therefore are the owners of the land. This creates a case in which the men are the individuals who can determine how resources are used. However, above the household or community level, national politics also impact land ownership because politicians have influence over laws that can validate or reject claims over who has control over land at the local level. Many of our interviewees recognize that engaging these different levels of influence and scaling up their efforts is an important strategy for achieving more equitable and just ways of managing natural resources.

Connections between scales are also significant because one of the main strategic benefits of belonging to the coalition is for organizations working at the local or national level to leverage the international resources available through coalition membership. This allows them to increase their bargaining power and scale up their efforts. As one interviewee states:

"[Networking] greatly enhances the work...that work at different scales, not only different organizations, but different scales. And I think that working with the coalition is what allows us to mobilize agendas that for us were very local, like a community fighting for a swamp, fighting for a river, in other words, a very local thing. And with the coalition, we have obviously connected with other processes in the world of communities that have the same problem of access to water, access to land. So, I think that scaling up the processes has been one of the great advantages. It empowers [us] to do advocacy processes."

Another interviewee explained that they believe that the overall vision of the coalition is to support Indigenous Peoples in addressing issues of social and economic marginalization by promoting higher levels of involvement at the international level and assisting Partners and Collaborators in increasing the impact of their efforts. They stated:

“The vision of the coalition is to support local communities and Indigenous Peoples in their struggles against poverty and marginalization by promoting greater commitment and decisive action at the global level to bring about reforms in policy, market laws and legal provisions to secure their rights to own, control and benefit from natural resources, particularly land and forests.”

In other words, local-level efforts are at the core of the work that RRI does, but in order to be successful, these efforts need to be recognized at the national, regional and international levels. Several other interviewees have cited RRI’s ability to bring issues of land tenure to the global stage through conferences, meetings and workshops as one of their major successes. While RRI operates within a larger network of organizations advocating for changes in land tenure, the coalition’s influence is clear. Today, we see broad changes in recognition, such as global leaders in the environmental field beginning to understand that securing land tenure for local communities is an essential strategy in being able to address issues regarding climate change and biodiversity loss. Politicians and companies are also starting to recognize that they need support from Indigenous communities to successfully carry out their projects because it will reflect poorly on them if it is revealed that they are disrespecting human rights. One interviewee elaborates:

“...a government who faces increasing pressure both from [the] international community, from the local communities themselves and also are keen on ensuring that more investors come to their countries, so if they want to ensure more investors come or want to make sure that their investments are safe and that they’re not infringing on human rights, because they also get bad press, then they more or less quickly learn that they need to collaborate.”

Partners and Collaborators have been taking advantage of this shifting global landscape by leveraging global resources that help them carry out their work in the face of significant challenges. For example, RRG has developed a network of donors and financial mechanisms that allows money to be distributed to rightsholder organizations and encourages momentum around working toward RRI’s mission. A vast majority of Collaborators have explained that even though RRI does not provide significant sums of money, the funding that comes from the international community is incredibly valuable in supporting their efforts. Other than monetary support, having access to a network of international actors gives members the opportunity to obtain important technical or legal support. For example, one Collaborator explained that connecting with lawyers from a British NGO helped them to successfully create a legal procedure for communities to apply for land tenure in their local context. Another Collaborator explained that belonging to the coalition has helped them to influence politicians and the media in their home country.

Strategic Resource Allocation

Funding and technical support are vital to Partners and Collaborators being able to achieve their goals, but resources within the field of land tenure are limited. Therefore, it is important for funds to be allocated to areas and projects that have the greatest potential to initiate change. Interviewees have referred to this strategy as the multiplier effect, which describes how a small monetary investment can be strategically utilized to generate the largest political impact. RRG, specifically, has developed a tool called the Opportunity Framework that helps potential donors identify which countries have the political momentum and capacity to institute land tenure reforms. Given that the recognition of land rights is ever vulnerable to changes in government administrations and political cycles, this strategy may help to ensure that progress is continuously being made despite the influence of hostile actors in some contexts.

A potential downside of this strategy is that in some cases it may overlook some organizations or communities that are in need of funding due to the political interests or values involved in determining which areas have more ‘potential’. For example, one interviewee explained that carbon storage as a strategy to mitigate climate change is an issue that many organizations and institutions are focused on. Therefore, donors are more likely to allocate funds to countries with a higher percentage of forest cover and neglect countries that have a lower percentage of forest cover. Funders may also be less likely to invest in groups that have been historically excluded from decision-making about natural resources. One interviewee states,

“A lot of interests that really guide the relation between funding agencies within a given country. And unfortunately, we also being women, we are already marginalized, we become more and more marginalized. Because women are not their priority, I think. They say [women are a priority], but they don't mean it.”

In other words, while there is more discourse regarding the importance of considering the topic of gender justice in relation to land rights, interviewees suggest that funders continue to be less willing to allocate money to organizations headed by women in part due to gender discrimination. To truly achieve sustainable systemic change the process of achieving land titles cannot be shaped by the values and needs of those currently in positions of power such as influential environmental organizations, wealthy donors and government officials with special interests. As RRI's cyclical strategy

development process reflects, the goal around the process of gaining land titles should be dictated by those most impacted by land dispossession.

Holistic Approach to Land Tenure

One way the coalition is shifting its strategic approach to better reflect the perspectives and needs of rightsholders is by addressing land tenure from a holistic point of view. As one interviewee explains, this differs from a siloed approach often used in the development sector. They state:

“...a development sector approach is very outcome focused and rigid. The traditional way of seeing forest is [that] forest and agriculture are separate. Well, not the most traditional. That is like agroforestry. But, colonial and post-colonial regimes tend to see, like the agricultural department does food and other land-based things.”

Engagement in the holistic approach by coalition members is demonstrated by the fact that they engage with a variety of topics related to land tenure such as policy and governance, environmental justice, economic security, food security, agricultural systems, education, gender justice, and more, rather than separating these issues. They also look to collaborate with groups and movements that do not focus on land tenure, but on other areas of human rights and community well-being. For example, in Asia, Partners and Collaborators bring together different communities such as fisher folks, peasants and urban workers, which has contributed to resiliency in the face of considerable threats. Another example is found in Indonesia in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic when solidarity between peasants and the urban labor movement was formed to increase food security. Peasants were producing an excess of food that could not be sold due to the global public health situation. Rather than allowing this food to be wasted, it was donated to individuals residing in urban areas that were out of work and struggling to support their communities. This expansion on what land tenure encompasses is clearly described by a Partner saying,

“What is changing now is increasing recognition that securing rights is part of a broader agenda for communities. It's a necessary, but insufficient, condition for the realization of their climate development and livelihood priorities. SO what's happening is, I guess, a broadening of that envelope and recognition that they also need other kinds of support, not just securing their land rights.”

One of the most prominent ways that members of the coalition engage in this holistic approach is by incorporating gender justice initiatives into their work. Rather than viewing gender issues as a separate topic many Partners and Collaborators understand that patriarchal systems impact the use of land and therefore impact livelihood outcomes for vulnerable community members. Many interviewees explained that even though women steward the environment and support their communities, they are often excluded from decision-making processes about natural resource management. For example, in some contexts, women are unable to inherit land, which prevents them from accessing and managing land in ways that they view as most appropriate. Not explicitly securing rights for women is a hindrance to achieving communal land tenure because if not all members of a community are able to access or make decisions about important resources then land rights are not truly communal. Therefore, some interviewees view gender justice as a strategy to achieving true collective land tenure that promotes security and resilience. One individual states:

“For me, the most interesting thing always comes back to our mission of governance of the commons and of collective resources. And in order to promote that mission, what we’re actually promoting is intergenerational, all-gender, land-based governance.”

In other words, communities are not monoliths and power dynamics can shape the ways that resources are distributed within communities. This means that examining internal power structures and advocating for vulnerable groups within communities has the potential to cultivate a more just vision of communal land management as compared to focusing solely on achieving land titles that in many cases are granted to those with the most power within a community. One individual explained that their approach to gender justice is even continuing to expand as they focus more on women’s intersectional identities that impact their relationships to land.

Overall, by connecting land tenure to other issues that impact livelihoods this holistic approach acknowledges that the final aim of rightsholders is not to receive a title or legal recognition but to utilize access to traditional lands as a way to exercise self-determination, improve community well-being and increase intergenerational resilience in the face of unpredictable political cycles and climatic changes.

Tensions

A few members of the coalition have expressed dissatisfaction with the governance of RRI and their roles as Partners and Collaborators that may be connected to the larger shift in the coalition’s

structure towards being more representative of rightsholders' perspectives. This has led to some Partners leaving the coalition or engaging less frequently in projects as part of RRI. As previously stated, when the coalition was first founded a majority of the Partner organizations operated at the international level and were not led by members of Indigenous, Afro-descendant or local communities. These Partners also led the strategic development processes and had more influence over the coalition's governance. Therefore, RRI's goals and objectives previously used to reflect the views of organizations operating at the international level. The coalition's structure and objectives have since shifted to more accurately build on the needs of rightsholders as can be seen through the use of a holistic approach to land tenure. As this occurs larger Partners at the international level feel an increased strain on their time and efforts, while receiving fewer benefits from the coalition. This is reflected by the fact that some interviewees believe that the coalition is developing too many new initiatives in a wide variety of areas, which requires Partners to contribute more unpaid labor to strategic planning processes. One individual states:

“And that has been another problem too because for a long time I was considering leaving the position because I just didn't have time for all those processes... in terms of how to reorganize themselves, how to do this and how to do an evaluation of this and revelation of that...which consumed a lot of resources... [for this] apparently never ending strategic process that [they] kind of keep on reinventing themselves...sort of repositioning all the time and demanding a lot from the members...to contribute.”

Even though they are dedicating increasing amounts of time to coalitional planning processes, some Partners, especially those working at the international level, feel that their perspectives are not genuinely being taken into account and RRG often makes the final decision. Therefore, some Partners feel that the benefits of the coalition are not equally distributed. They feel that RRG is benefitting from the coalition's success, but they are not receiving enough effective support as coalition members. These international Partners are contributing an increasing amount of unpaid time and effort to support RRI as a whole, but may be left out of important regional planning outcomes.

Another contributing factor to this tension may arise from the fact that while Partners are involved in decisions regarding the coalition's strategy, the board makes final determinations about the function of RRG. The board is composed of individuals not affiliated with member organizations or individuals that act independently of the Partner and Collaborator organizations they are a part of. In other words, the board is not meant to directly represent Partner and Collaborator organizations. One interviewee explained that this structure is intentional since having a board operating independent of the coalition ensures that decisions are not influenced by vested interests. Rather than looking to change this structure, board members have encouraged Partners and Collaborators to influence the

coalition's actions by participating in other processes, such as MOU negotiations. A representative from a member organization disagrees with this take and believes that the board is not appropriately representing their interests, which shows that this tension with RRI's larger governance exists within Partner organizations. It should be noted that this tension seen with Partner organizations was not articulated within RRI's Collaborator organizations. Most Collaborators wanted to be more involved with RRI's work and felt supported and appreciative of RRI's work.

Evolving Structure and Relational Dynamics of the Coalition

The importance of centering rightsholders has become more apparent in the field of land tenure. This is apparent by the shift in the makeup of those represented in positions of power within organizations advocating for land tenure over time. When first entering the field, many interviewees noted that individuals in leadership roles were most often wealthy, white men from organizations in the 'Global North' that operated at the international level, while Indigenous Peoples were working at the local level and directly advocating for rights on a local scale only. This dynamic has been mediated by existing political relationships. While this may still be the case, as individuals in power step down, more Indigenous Peoples, especially women, are filling high-level roles. This changing context of the land tenure field is reflected within the RRI coalition, as well.

Several interviewees expressed that when RRI was first founded, a majority of the Partners were organizations headed by individuals who were supporting land tenure efforts, but did not belong to Indigenous, Afro-descendant or local communities and were not directly impacted by issues of land dispossession. Due to the fact that Partners have the most influence over decision-making within the coalition, this meant that the communities most impacted by issues of land tenure were not the ones guiding the goals or strategies of RRI. This was further illustrated by the fact that the regional strategy development process was also led by Partners operating at the international level. This has since changed with the recognition that rightsholders are most impacted by issues of land dispossession and therefore have the greatest insight into the challenges communities face and what actions need to be taken to overcome those challenges. Now, rightsholder organizations make up a majority of the Partner organizations and guide the regional strategy building processes to reflect the needs of communities. Rightsholders groups overall are more active within the coalition, meaning Indigenous Peoples are having a greater impact on decision-making within RRI. This is reflected in the fact that interviewees from rightsholders organizations felt that they were included in defining joint strategies by attending RRI meetings and workshops at the regional and international levels. One Collaborator said,

"At the coalition level, which is good, their approach to facilitation and participation of everybody because we have different members at coalition level and everyone participates in the definition of strategies and shares their point of view and experiences by region. That is good. There's that space for dialogue and we all manage to arrive and make decisions based on consensus... So in every case, everyone has the opportunity to have the floor and share their ideas or data or opinions or observations."

However, as one interviewee notes, these groups do not equally participate in discussions regarding different priority areas. As might be expected, rightsholders seem to be more involved in priorities related to strategies for land rights advocacy, while partner organizations are more involved in priorities related to capacity building. This was demonstrated at one of the strategic planning meetings where attendees were able to choose a breakout room to participate in. A vast majority of rightsholder organizations chose to be involved in the discussion regarding climate and conservation engagements while a majority of ally organizations chose to be involved in the discussion regarding the path to scale initiative which focused on international funding efforts.

Another difference in types of involvement between Partners and Collaborators was apparent by the fact that a majority of Collaborators were not aware of the difference between RRI and RRG and had little to no knowledge of the leadership transition. The Partners and Collaborators were also not involved in the process of choosing a new leader for the coalition. The board, with the assistance of RRG and an independent consultant, led the search and interview process and made the final decision about who would be the new president. The board is now headed by and contains more individuals from Indigenous and local communities than ever before, but overall the board and RRG are still largely composed of individuals from ally organizations rather than rightsholder organizations. This means that there is potential for rightsholders to be more directly involved with this process. However, lack of participation in RRG governance may not be an indication that Indigenous Peoples are being excluded from important decision-making processes within the coalition. One interviewee expressed that the role of RRG should now be to largely focus on providing technical support to organizations working at the local level. In other words, RRG should be operating in the background as a support network for those directly advocating for rights and coalition governance operations should not be an additional workload added to rightsholder organizations. However, it is still important to have rightsholders represented in leadership positions within the coalition to influence the decision-making processes that affect them. Therefore, one interviewee expressed the desire to actively ensure that more Indigenous Peoples hold positions on the board and within RRG. They explain:

"Where we are now, the commitment to giving rightsholders a greater voice within the Organization has been the major breakthrough. And it's slowly but surely coming along"

and we're committed to following through...we've got more rightsholders into the coalition, we have greater representation on the board, we're talking about that issue and how to do it amongst the RRG staff as well.”

The leadership change is one example of the shift in the structure of the coalition. The original founders of RRI have held the most influential positions for over a decade before stepping down. This seniority made it difficult for newer RRG staff and members of the coalition to question their decision-making. With the new leader, Dr. Solange Bandiaky-Badji who “previously led RRI’s Africa and Gender Justice Programs,”¹³ there is an explicitly stated excitement about opportunities for change. Several representatives from rightsholder organizations expressed enthusiasm about an African woman leading an internationally recognized and respected institution. Another respondent stated that they felt that Bandiaky-Badji represented the individuals who make up the coalition and that this visibility would allow them to have a greater impact on international level politics. One way that this could be strengthened is through the coalition’s funding resources, which was cited by Collaborators as an important benefit of belonging to the coalition. Interviewees commented on the fact that significant sources of funding are concentrated at the international level and are managed by organizations such as the World Bank. However, in order to achieve goals in development and climate resilience, it is important that money from donors is given directly to rightsholders that are directly advocating for the more just and equitable distribution of land and resources. The new leader has an opportunity to usher this change through the Path to Scale Initiative developed by RRG.

Female members of the coalition were particularly excited by the transition to a new leader because some of them work within contexts where they are one of only a few women working in their organizations. This means that they often experience discrimination or difficulty expressing their perspective within a male dominated field. One interviewee said:

“And Solange is a woman right? That excited me more. I must say, to be honest, that really excited me. I think it's because I work in, you know, a toxic, male environment.”

By centering gender justice, creating opportunities for women to share their experiences and selecting Bandiaky-Badji to head the coalition, RRI is helping to foster a space where women who inhabit intersecting identities feel more seen and supported.

Suggestions from Interviewees

¹³ Rights and Resources Initiative. (2021, July 19). *Dr. Solange Bandiaky-Badji to serve as Next Coordinator of RRI and president of RRG. Rights + Resources*. Retrieved April 16, 2022, from <https://rightsandresources.org/press-room-dr-solange-bandiaky-badji/>

Throughout the interview process, interviewees discussed steps the coalition would take moving forward. One individual expressed the desire for RRI to build connections with rightsholders in the Global North because currently the coalition only operates in the Global South. This individual explained that this is the case because some members of the coalition believe that Indigenous communities within the Global North possess more privilege as compared to Indigenous communities in other parts of the world. While this may be the case in some respects, Indigenous Peoples in many contexts face similar issues such as threats of land grabs from invasive infrastructure projects and conservation initiatives. This is demonstrated by the case of the Dakota Access Pipeline, which was proposed to be constructed on land owned by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and posed threats to water bodies that provided drinking water to Indigenous communities.¹⁴ Expanding their network to other regions in the world may open greater opportunities to share knowledge, strategies and resources that would benefit the coalition as a whole.

Another interviewee indicated the desire for RRI to expand their work into other ecosystems as well. In Indonesia, coastal environments provide important resources to communities. However, people living along the coast are particularly vulnerable because they suffer from poverty at higher rates as compared to other areas. Some partners and collaborators are already beginning to work towards securing rights over water resources, especially in the Latin American context, but these projects are only in their initial stages and have the potential to be built upon. Overall, some members of the coalition are interested in expanding the scope of their work in multiple ways, which would support RRI's holistic approach to advocating for land tenure that focuses on the broad ways that access to land and water resources improves community livelihoods.

Several interviewees also talked about the importance of capacity building, which was referred to in different ways such as developing technical expertise and accessing funding. For example, one organization explained that they are trying to expand their gender justice initiatives and budgeting abilities. They feel that help in these areas would be a way that RRI could further support their efforts. Capacity building could also take the form of supporting communities after they have achieved land rights because as previously mentioned the establishment or recognition of rights is not the end goal for many organizations. Once communities have access to their traditional lands, they still need support in exercising the full extent of their rights and sovereignty. They also need to be able to effectively govern those lands in a way that promotes justice and ensures good livelihoods for all community members.

¹⁴ Hersher, R. (2017, February 22). *Key Moments In The Dakota Access Pipeline Fight*. NPR. Retrieved April 26, 2022, from <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/02/22/514988040/key-moments-in-the-dakota-access-pipeline-fight>

CONCLUSION

Since 2005, RRI has worked to elevate and raise the issues of land tenure rights on a global scale. Partners and Collaborators of RRI have helped to shape this ever-changing landscape through a variety of strategies. Many of these have been included in this report, however, it is not an all-encompassing list. As the land tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Descendant Peoples becomes increasingly recognized at a global scale, RRI will undoubtedly continue their work to foster financial, social, and international support for these groups.

It has been made clear through our discussions with coalition members that RRI's governance and operations, largely focused on supporting local rightsholders organizations, are informed by all roles of coalition members. The roles that each group takes helps to strengthen their local holds on rights and also strengthens the coalition as a whole. We hope that through our interviews we have been able to point out RRI's strengths and opportunities for growth as well as identify key strategies helping to advance tenure rights. As the movement for recognition of the land tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendent Peoples local communities continues to grow, it is clear that RRI will continue to adapt to support this critical work.