



RIGHTS AND RESOURCES INITIATIVE

1st Cross-Regional Gender Justice Workshop Key Take-Aways

Background

RRI has been promoting the formal recognition of communities' and women's tenure rights, raising the profile of key challenges related to indigenous and community women's status and rights and leadership roles in community lands and forests through research and analysis; creating opportunities for dialogue and advocacy to advance gender justice within reforms involving collective tenure and customary governance systems. Women's movements, often led by Indigenous, Afro-descendant, peasant, and rural women, have mobilized response efforts across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. There is a critical need to increase investment in supporting and connecting such movements, which are essential for strengthening communities' resilience and capacity to overcome social, economic and environmental shocks.

Through a series of 3 cross-regional virtual workshops in 2021, RRI aims to scale-up global efforts to secure Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and community women's property rights, voice, and leadership with respect to community lands and forests by leveraging their capacity to transform social, economic, and environmental agendas in support of inclusive and equitable development, sustainable land and resource governance, and accelerated climate actions. The following summary outlines the key thematic issues and working group discussions that occurred during the 1st cross-regional workshop on June 2nd, 2021

Keynote Speaker: Eileen Mairena (CADPI - Nicaragua)

The Participation of Indigenous Women and Local Communities in the UNFCC and CBD

- There is an urgent need for the full and active participation of women at all levels of drafting and implementing policies related to biological diversity. Women have always played an active role but now need to be more involved in the decision-making body for full, effective, and influential participation.
- Not all nation states recognize the needs of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This is a prerequisite for gender equality. For a natural area to be preserved and maintained, land rights for Indigenous and local communities must be legally recognized and respected. This is a cornerstone for sustainable biodiversity moving forward. In many instances, land or forest tenure is granted but sovereignty and control of resources stays with the State – this is something we need to keep working on changing.

- Key achievements so far: some progress has been made on recognizing the value of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' ancestral knowledge on conservation and biodiversity preservation. Indigenous Peoples and women have always been involved in defining and determining trends when it comes to linguistic diversity but more needs to be done for recognizing their contributions to securing land tenure. Women's participation has also increased but their power in decision-making still needs to be improved.
- Financial mechanisms need to be streamlined so that we can ensure funds reach local communities directly. Mechanisms should be introduced to safeguard traditional knowledge.
- In anticipation of UNFCCC, safeguards need to be introduced to secure human rights around the world. The full participation of Indigenous communities, and particularly Indigenous women, is required in decision-making spaces at the international level. No action should take place on Indigenous lands without the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and the women within these communities.
- The results of COP15 were unsatisfactory and virtually none of the targets that were set were met, even partially; the 'rulebook' of the Paris Agreement is still pending five years later. In terms of collective land and forest tenure rights, it is important to note that there is a drive and desire by Indigenous women to be active in these processes and decision-making spaces. As a Coalition, we must work together as a collective to push the agendas of these women forward.

Key Thematic Issues

- Structural system of violence and discrimination against women- at the policy level and cultural practices
- Political instability and COVID19 present compounded challenges in getting women and local groups together, to fully participate or realize their rights.
- Barriers imposed by criminalization and the lack of safety mechanism to support and defend women's rights
- Training for capacity building on issues such as technology, economic empowerment, land laws, leadership skills, political negotiation, and human rights.
- Sharing traditional knowledge (to Indigenous youth, those in urban areas and other women)
- Safeguarding the autonomy and self-determination rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants and local communities
- Supporting initiatives on women's economic empowerment through forest resources and women-led enterprises
- Preventing gender violence requires empowering local people - increasing confidence and agency to overcome patriarchal patterns

Opportunities for Advocacy

- Advocate for women-specific provisions on land and forestry reform, promote diversity of local economies and Indigenous perspectives and practices.
- Establish dialogues with traditional and religious leaders to promote women's land rights at the community level.
- Promote and share stories of women and youth leading the fight for land rights and gender justice.

- Increase the number of women in the Land Rights Movement.
- Introduce gender justice discussions at the community level.
- Support women's community forest enterprises to increase their decision-making and political power.
- Conduct leadership trainings for women working in land and resource management.
- Land tenure initiatives should proactively target women's land rights.
- Create regional and cross-regional communication strategies to raise awareness of gender justice.
- Establish community programs that better protect the rights of women and girls, including social services.
- Conduct studies summarizing a current "state of play" on the status of women's land rights to inform advocacy efforts at the local and national levels.
- Increase financial resources for capacity-building for rural women.
- Promote collective land and forest ownership (enables women to participate in decision-making.)

Working Group Discussions

1) *What strategies are your organizations or communities doing to build leadership and ensure women's effective participation and representation in decision-making spaces (at all levels)?*

- Act collectively to learn how to raise our voices in front of politicians and policy makers in such a way that we are consistency and meaningfully heard at all levels
- Encourage all member organizations to have their own gender policy at the local level
- Gender balance at secretariat and executive council
- Promote women's leadership stories
- Support our young population to learn from the political experiences of women, elders and regional leaders
- Promote in Indigenous organizations to have an integrated women's empowerment program
- Capacity building for women, to ensure that they know their rights and train women to negotiate within their communities and leadership skills
- Solidarity movements, create women's networks to strategize and organize collectively
- Community forestry as a way to ensure women have better access to land
 - Particularly quotas for leadership and management positions (at least 50%)
- Advocacy at local, provincial, and national levels to ensure Indigenous women's voices are heard
 - National: training on gender justice for relevant government ministries, work with deputies to support suggested gender justice reforms, modified and revised forest program to integrate gender, create national platform for women leaders, work with national and state commission for women with UN agencies and other ally networks that are more gender inclusive as there is resistance to women's leadership in other government sectors
 - Provincial and local: Target local and customary authorities to share benefits of women's tenure rights for communities and resources, sensitize them about women's work and benefits to women's tenure rights, organize women to attend political meetings
- Data collection and disaggregate for women (and then for types of women—indigenous, local)
 - Document women's sustainable practices, livelihoods, and knowledge
 - Publish information and have national-level workshop
 - Share women's knowledge through short films

2) *What are the strategies to confront the multiple forms of gender-based violence, criminalization, and land dispossession while defending territorial rights?*

- a) Economic empowerment through forest resources and enterprises
- b) Campaign mobilizing for the commitment of institutional non-violence
- c) Advocate for land certifications for women
- d) Advise on how to implement policies that are – women friendly, community friendly
- e) Conducting economic focused trainings – through microenterprises for example, and take advantage of these spaces for teaching women about their rights
- f) Enhance women’s leadership as spokespeople of these issues and opening spaces for women.
- g) Increasing participation of ethnic representatives to positions of power and to reach greater audiences
- h) Communication technology: Use community radio to increase awareness and as early warning mechanism.
- i) Empowering local people – increase confidence/agency to overcome patriarchal patters
- j) Creation of accessible and rapid funding opportunities to confront criminalization
- k) Research to understand local dynamics and practices of discrimination and gender-based violence
- l) Create spaces for dialogue with women to analyze structures of violence and discrimination – at the policy level and cultural practices

3) *How can we promote the recognition or visibility of women as stewards of collective territories, leaders in food sovereignty and in local economies?*

- a) Participatory research to make the position of the communities visible
- b) Establishing spaces for women to participate in economic planning
- c) Recognize the political role of women in the governance and management of the territory
- d) Encourage and support women in presenting their own interests in political spaces
- e) Highlight the focus of the workshop is to build relationships and each one can respond according to their own experiences
- f) Establishing the connection between climate change and land rights at national government levels, making use of momentum and showing opportunities
- g) Influencing the media to change start focusing more on gender balance
- h) Improve training opportunities as well as logistical support, generating local sources of incoming within the local perspectives
- i) Ensure public awareness and promote traditional knowledge as means to fight climate
- j) Give access to financial support for tools and small equipment (all activities, including fishing and foraging)

Conclusion and Next Steps

- Additional cross-country meetings would be beneficial as a space where to share and connect practices; if concrete action “on the ground” is working in one community, it may work in another. Our next cross-regional workshop is on July 29th, 2021,
- These sharing of experiences, building together, understanding common issues that need to be addressed at national and international levels on women’s tenure and participation rights will help inform RRI strategic actions in the coming years and where as a coalition we need to act together.

About the Rights and Resources Initiative

The Rights and Resources Initiative is a global Coalition of 21 Partners and more than 150 rightsholders organizations and their allies dedicated to advancing the forestland and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, local communities, and the women within these communities. Members capitalize on each other's strengths, expertise, and geographic reach to achieve solutions more effectively and efficiently. RRI leverages the power of its global Coalition to amplify the voices of local peoples and proactively engage governments, multilateral institutions, and private sector actors to adopt institutional and market reforms that support the realization of their rights and self-determined development. By advancing a strategic understanding of the global threats and opportunities resulting from insecure land and resource rights, RRI develops and promotes rights-based approaches to business and development and catalyzes effective solutions to scale rural tenure reform and enhance sustainable resource governance.

RRI is coordinated by the Rights and Resources Group, a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. For more information, please visit www.rightsandresources.org.

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