



20 years
IN SOLIDARITY
FOR CHANGE

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



A GLOBAL ROADMAP FOR 2025 AND BEYOND

Rights and Resources Initiative



"When [people] say we are the future, that is not true. We are the present, and we are building the future."

"It is possible to embrace our [ancestral] roots and at the same time live with passion.... I have seen young people who are very proud of their identities, who are embracing all aspects of their identity and culture from their territory. I have also seen young people fighting for their rights, their land, and defending their communities.... That made me even more proud of my roots.... [and] the community to which I belong...."

— **Anjatiana Radoharinina**, *Alliance malagasy de la jeunesse pour le climat, la biodiversité et la lutte contre la Désertification (AIKA), Madagascar*

Global Youth Forum, Bali, Indonesia, July 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) has long championed intergenerational work that includes young people's voices and inputs. Building on this foundation, RRI intentionally began to prioritize youth engagement in 2023, recognizing young people as key partners in justice, governance, and collective action. A recent landmark example of this commitment was the first-ever Global Youth Forum (GYF), commemorated as part of RRI's 20th Anniversary.

Held in Bali, Indonesia, from July 22 to 25, 2025, the GYF brought together 52 young leaders from Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, local communities, and their allied groups across 22 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The forum resulted in a roadmap that sets out RRI's strategic direction for nurturing youth leadership and strengthening their role across programs, advocacy, and resource mobilization. While its insights were inspired by the GYF, this roadmap is an independent framework: a forward-looking plan for embedding youth leadership within RRI's work and supporting youth-led initiatives globally. It is a co-created blueprint that channels the creativity, knowledge, and agency of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community youth leaders—together with the wisdom of elders—into concrete actions that advance rights, resilience, and justice.





BUILDING THE YOUTH ROADMAP

RRI's Global Youth Roadmap outlines a shared agenda for youth engagement that was forged through a process of sharing and learning, collective reflections, and critical thinking. It captures lessons about what works and what does not in supporting meaningful youth leadership and sets the stage for action in the coming years.

In Bali, youth from Asia, Africa, and Latin America examined challenges at the community and national levels and discussed opportunities for collective action. Grounded in local realities, these conversations produced seven initial themes that have informed this roadmap.

From these discussions, young leaders then identified five priority themes. For each theme, they agreed on the main challenges young people face and what actions would help to release the energies needed for greater engagement by youth.



PRIORITY THEMES AND INITIATIVES



The following five priority themes are the result of the consensus among Indigenous, local community, and Afro-descendant youth across three continents. For each of the priority themes, they identified the collective actions they see as appropriate responses to the main challenges they are experiencing.

Priority 1: Land and Human Rights

Securing territories and protecting culture are inseparable, and safeguarding land and human rights is key to sustainable stewardship. To address the weak recognition of customary rights, the displacement and criminalization of human rights and environmental defenders, their lack of legal knowledge and expertise, and poor coordination, young people will:

Strengthen their capacities on tenure reform and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) through training, workshops, and other approaches.

Undertake participatory mapping of their communities to support advocacy initiatives to secure their land rights.

Create a digital platform to document land and human rights violations so that information is readily available to support advocacy initiatives.

Priority 2: Climate Justice

Youth are on the frontlines of the climate crisis but remain excluded from decision-making, and their role in climate action and discourse remains unrecognized. Climate solutions must draw on their ancestral knowledge and creativity. To attain this, young people will:

Prepare a collective statement for COP30 with the GYF participants that highlights their key initiatives, challenges, and messages to the world.

Organize to have their voices raised at COP30 and other climate negotiations as Indigenous, local community, and Afro-descendant youth.

Organize regional and global climate workshops to build their confidence as well as deepen their understanding and awareness of climate discussions and processes to unify voices and strategies across regions.





Priority 3: Education and Indigenous Knowledge

Learning systems should validate and integrate ancestral wisdom, support language revitalization, and equip youth to shape contemporary society. Recognizing that there has been a rapid weakening of intergenerational learning and use of Indigenous languages and that curricula in formal educational systems do not honor the knowledge and cultures of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant Peoples, young people are determined to:

Advocate for the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' languages and knowledge systems in national and regional curricula.

Develop tools such as mother-tongue dictionaries, intergenerational learning maps, and establish community-based learning centers.

Launch a digital archive to serve as the repository of stories, traditions, and practices of Indigenous, local community, and Afro-descendant youth.

Identify, document, and support Indigenous enterprise models that highlight the value of local knowledge in sustainable livelihoods.

Priority 4: Youth Leadership

Young people must be equal partners in sharing policies and programs; building leadership capacity is essential for intergenerational solidarity and strong social movements. Youth feel disadvantaged by the tokenism with which many adults continue to have in relation to their interests and energies to engage. There also continues to be limited recognition of youth communities and organizations, and a scarcity of resources that are available to strengthen their organizations' capacities. In response, the youth are determined to:

Work toward the establishment of a global fellowship program that can support Indigenous, local community, and Afro-descendant youth leaders to go on intra- and cross-regional learning exchanges that will build both capacities and connections.

Organize initiatives to strengthen young people's capacities, including mentorships with willing elders, so that young people can be intentional about intergenerational leadership and approaches.

Focus on and emphasize the need to access critical decision-making spaces and to take initiative for youth economic empowerment.



Priority 5: Financing Youth Initiatives

Youth groups need direct, flexible, and transparent funding to act with accountability in relation to their organizations and communities. There continues to be limited direct and flexible funding for youth-led initiatives and organizations. Young people need support to effectively navigate the funding ecosystem, which they perceive as being dominated by intermediaries. At the same time, they also need support to increase their funds. Toward these ends, youth have committed to:

Organizing roundtable discussions where youth can showcase the full range of their work and priorities to current and potential donors.

Build experience by participating in grant-making mechanisms that may provide smaller but direct amounts of funding that clearly support youth-led initiatives and organizations.

Create a simplified, youth-friendly fundraising template that can help youth groups and organizations with less experience to secure funding for their work.

Propose that a youth advisory group be formed within the CLARIFI mechanism to strengthen youth leadership in program decision-making. CLARIFI is RRI's Indigenous-led funding mechanism for Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community organizations' own rights, climate, and conservation initiatives.





IMPLEMENTING THE ROADMAP

The Youth Roadmap will roll out across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, providing regions with the space to define priorities that best respond to their specific contexts. Through regional dialogues, Global Youth Forum outcomes will be shared and adapted to grassroots realities in each region. This will ensure youth ownership of the process and, at the same time, gradually establish and strengthen RRI's Global Youth Network.

STEP 1:

TAKE THE GLOBAL YOUTH ROADMAP TO RRI'S FOCUS REGIONS



As a first step in implementing its Global Youth Roadmap, RRI commits to extending its coalition-wide conversations and consultations with youth at the regional level in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These conversations are intended to bring more young people into the discussions, so that the Global Youth Roadmap can be best aligned with regional and grassroots realities.

To ensure that the spirit of the GYF continues, each RRI region will establish a Regional Youth Advisory Group comprised of representatives from Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant Peoples. These Youth Advisors would also include participants from the original GYF to ensure both continuity and context.

STEP 2:

ORGANIZE REGIONAL YOUTH MEETINGS



With support and advice from the Youth Advisors, RRI's regional programs will organize regional youth meetings. RRI's role is to support at every stage: facilitating logistics, building capacity, securing resources, and connecting regional outputs to the global agenda, while ensuring that youth are in the lead. Regional meetings will strengthen connections, collaborations, and solidarity between and among youth groups and organizations, intergenerational exchange, and lay the foundation for coordinated global advocacy by the RRI Youth Network.

The outcomes of the regional meetings are a critical step in the journey toward a Global Youth Network. They create a circular flow of youth voices, rooted in local realities, feeding into the realization of RRI's Global Youth Roadmap, and returning to communities for localized action.

In the coming year, the priority will be to convene regional meetings where GYF agreements are shared, adapted, and contextualized for regional contexts and grassroots actions.



ENDORSED BY

This Global Youth Roadmap was co-created and endorsed by the following youth organizations and networks, representing young Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community leaders from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.



1. Action pour le développement communautaire
2. Afro-Ecuadorian Social and Cultural Development Foundation
3. Alianza Mesoamericana de Pueblos y Bosques (AMPB)
4. Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN)
5. Alliance malagasy de la jeunesse pour le climat, la biodiversité et la lutte contre la Désertification (AIKA)
6. Alliance nationale d'appui et de promotion des Aires et territoires du patrimoine autochtone et communautaire (ANAPAC)
7. Articulação das Comunidades Negras Rurais Quilombolas (CONAQ)
8. Asia Indigenous Youth Platform (AIYP)
9. Asia Young Indigenous Peoples Network (AYIPN)
10. Asociación de Comunidades Forestales del Petén (ACOFOP)
11. Asociación de Mujeres Afrodescendientes del Norte del Cauca (ASOM)
12. Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana (AIDESEP)
13. Association des femmes autochtones Pygmées
14. Association des femmes peuples autochtones du Tchad
15. Barisan Pemuda Adat Nusantara (BPAN)
16. Barisan Pemuda Adat Nusantara (BPAN Bali)
17. Center for Environmental Information and Sustainable Development (CIEDD)
18. Community Land Action Now! (CLAN!)
19. Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana (CONFENIAE)
20. Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas (CAOI)
21. Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN)
22. Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC)
23. Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund (IPAS)
24. International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA)
25. Kaum Muda Tanah Air (KATA)
26. Kenya Indigenous Youth Network
27. Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (REPALEAC)

- 28.** Organisation congolaise des écologistes et Amis de la nature (OCEAN)
- 29.** Organización de Desarrollo Étnico Comunitario (ODECO)
- 30.** Organización de Pueblos Indígenas Amazónicos de Colombia (OPIAC)
- 31.** Organización Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas Andinas y Amazónicas del Perú (ONAMIAP)
- 32.** Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC)
- 33.** Pour un monde meilleur (P2M)
- 34.** Proceso de Comunidades Negras (PCN)
- 35.** Red Afros of the Dominican Republic
- 36.** Red Mexicana de Organizaciones Campesinas Forestales (Red MOCAF)
- 37.** Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC)
- 38.** Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI)
- 39.** Save My Future (SAMFU)
- 40.** Siklab Philippine Indigenous Youth Network
- 41.** Support Center for the Advancement of Women and Girls (CEPF)
- 42.** Sustainable Development Institute (SDI)
- 43.** There is No Earth B
- 44.** Union pour le développement des minorités Ekonda (UDME)
- 45.** União das Mulheres Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira (UMIAB)
- 46.** Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP)
- 47.** Youth Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (YFIN)





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