Secure Land Rights: The Key To Building A Better, Safer World.

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

Rural Development Institute
Secure land rights change lives.

In 2009, RDI published One Billion Rising, a compilation of more than 40 years of knowledge, lessons learned, and sustainable solutions regarding the power of land rights to help alleviate global poverty.

Throughout this annual report, you will find examples of wisdom found within One Billion Rising, which is dedicated to the more than one billion people living on less than $1.40 per day.

RDI is headquartered in Seattle, with offices around the world. In India, RDI has established a national office and four regional offices in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, and West Bengal. Offices are also in Beijing, China, as well as the Legal Aid Center in Vladimir, Russia.

Worldwide, RDI employs more than 50 people, and in 2009 had a budget of $4.3 million.

Reducing poverty by securing land rights can be affordable. With a “micro-plot” as small as one-tenth of an acre, a poor, landless family in India can grow all their vegetables, nearly all their fruit, and still have space for livestock or a home business. Plus, they can earn $200 cash from surplus crops – about as much as an agricultural worker makes in a year. _Chapter 4_
Global Food Security Starts With Secure Land Rights.

Consider China
Chinese farmers earn an average of $1.30 a day – barely enough to feed their children.

Without secure rights to the land they till, farmers have little incentive to invest in the land, keeping them reliant on short-term cash crops and leading many to migrate to cities for better wages.

As history has shown, secure long-term land rights can be key to the foundation of sustainable economic growth and social stability. Look no further than to neighboring Taiwan for proof.

If China’s new land laws are supported by education and careful implementation at the local level, these laws can benefit 800 million poor farmers with stronger, more secure rights, giving them incentive to invest in the land, increasing agricultural production and helping to alleviate food shortages.

Imagine what an increase in income for 800 million people would do for the global economy.
Women without assets are vulnerable to violence. In India, a recent study found that 49% of women who did not have secure property rights experienced long-term physical violence, and 84% experienced long-term psychological violence. Of the women who owned both land and property, 7% reported physical violence and 16% reported psychological violence. So women without land and property were seven times more likely to experience physical violence. Chapter 5
When people – even the world’s poorest – can work land with confidence that their families and communities will receive the benefits, they can rise from extreme poverty permanently. This is established fact, based on over 40 years of research and program experience.

Secure land rights are also a building block for prosperous and peaceful societies. Countries that offer both broad-based and secure property rights are proven to grow faster and be less conflicted.

RDI is now in a strong position to step up our efforts to help millions of people by expanding our programs and by working to build support within the international development community for land rights strategies.

As we have built our foundation for this next chapter of RDI’s work, we have been guided by the leadership and counsel of Jim Pigott, our remarkable board chair who will be passing the gavel on in early 2010 after nine productive years of board guidance. Jim has encouraged RDI to dream big. Given RDI’s past success on reforms that have positively impacted over 100 million families, and given the remaining need for reforms to benefit millions more, dreaming big made sense.

Today, we are confident that by working with governments in China, India, Africa, and elsewhere, we can help developing country governments with reforms that will provide opportunity for 20 million people to move out of extreme poverty and play a part in building prosperous and peaceful societies. Our recently enacted Five Year Strategic Plan, which includes a strong focus on women’s land rights, is designed to do exactly this. It is being propelled forward by the recent three-year, $9 million grant from the Omidyar Network (ON). This generous gift is an affirmation of the value of the 40 years of work and accomplishment by the entire RDI team. The ON grant is also an opportunity for leveraging your support, as $2.5 million of that grant is subject to raising an equivalent matching amount.

While the opportunities are unprecedented, the challenges are sobering. RDI’s work has been immensely successful, but it is always complex and difficult. The organization is changing, expanding, and building new capabilities to operate across an increased range of contexts.

We are ready to help many more people lead better lives, and we will always deeply appreciate the support of all of you who make this possible.

Tim Hanstad
President and CEO
Global poverty is overwhelmingly rural. More than half of the world’s population lives in extreme poverty, surviving on $2 a day or less, and of those, more than 75 percent live in rural areas and rely on agriculture for their sustenance. Most do not have secure rights to land, their most valuable asset. Land defines their access to shelter, income, education, healthcare, plus economic and nutritional security.

**Using the Rule of Law**

Secure land rights are a key foundation for economic, political and social stability. RDI promotes the rule of law by partnering with governments, donors and local non-governmental organizations to help design and implement sustainable and replicable solutions to poverty. Different political and cultural settings, as well as the diverse needs of landless families, demand tailored approaches and solutions. RDI researches, designs, advocates, and helps implement legal policies and programs that support fair and democratic development.

Global experience has shown that secure land rights provide a foundation for improved livelihoods and living conditions. Studies show that land rights facilitate multiple benefits that lead to a safer, more just world.

**Systemic Change**

Secure land rights are not a complete cure for poverty, but they provide one of the best first steps. Providing secure land rights is highly leveraged, feasible and cost-effective. It offers systemic change, not just short-term relief.

Secure land rights can serve as a catalyst, helping to turn the vicious cycle of poverty into a virtuous cycle of prosperity. Working in over 45 countries, RDI has helped secure land rights for more than 100 million families.

**Benefits of Secure Land Rights**

**Benefits to person:**

- Source of shelter
- Source of nutrition and health
- Source of income
- Status, inclusion and empowerment
- Facilitates investment, productivity and stewardship
- Access to credit
- Opportunities for education
- Wealth building

**Benefits to society:**

- Increased food production
- Household stability
- Social stability
- Reduced urban migration
- Stronger economic growth
- Environmental stewardship
- Regional and national stability

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**Widows are often denied land inheritance due to “property grabbing.” This is where the in-laws of the deceased take over the home and land of the widow by means of threats, humiliation or physical violence. This is an even greater problem in societies where it is inappropriate for a woman to return to her family upon the death of her spouse. In one study in Uganda, out of 204 widows, 29% said that property was taken from them at the time of the husband’s death. Chapter 4**
In Kyrgyzstan, RDI continues to assist those along the Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan border manage conflict along neighboring pasture lands.
India contains the largest concentration of rural poor people and the largest number of landless households on the planet. The grim statistics are connected: while India faces significant and entrenched problems stemming from an inadequate system of education and the persistence of caste distinctions, landlessness is a better predictor of poverty than either illiteracy or membership in the lower castes. In large measure, land access determines a rural family’s status, their livelihood options and their prospects for the future. Chapter 6
INDIA

RDI’s ongoing work in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha and most recently West Bengal, all confirm that “micro-plots” of land as small as one-tenth of an acre can provide a foundation for extremely poor people to build a sustainable livelihood and better economic future. Land ownership is a proven pathway out of poverty. In India, RDI is also focusing on improving women’s land rights, providing land-related legal aid for the rural poor, and improving land access and productivity through leasing. To meet the enormous need, RDI has established a national office and four regional offices in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, and West Bengal.

WOMEN AND LAND

Women are responsible for 60-80 percent of the food production for the developing world, yet they own less than 2 percent of the world’s land. RDI works to strengthen women’s access and secure rights to land. Giving women more power to control assets reduces their socio-economic burden and improves their status, health, and security.

To make rights real for women and girls, RDI critically advocates the need to address customary and family law and social practice. To deepen RDI’s women and land work and to support and broaden diverse international women and land initiatives, the organization has launched the world’s first Global Center for Women’s Land Rights.

CHINA

Since 1987, RDI’s close partnership with China’s government has placed it on the front lines of what promises to be the most extensive land rights initiative in history. As a direct result of land rights reforms over the last 25 years, the number of Chinese living in poverty fell by 400 million people – reducing world poverty by more than 70 percent. To help ensure that the rights enshrined in new land laws become “real,” RDI has opened the Guangxi Legal Aid and Education Center for Rural Farmers’ Land Rights in partnership with the Guangxi University Law School. The Center trains “barefoot lawyers” to support farmers and help mediate and prevent conflicts before they lead to social unrest. As a pilot, RDI aims to develop both a model and set of best practices to bring the initiative to scale – an endeavor that would reduce poverty and social conflict while building the rule of law.

AFRICA

In Africa, RDI is helping war-torn countries such as Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda move forward to develop strong legal and policy frameworks to resolve land disputes, reduce poverty through land access, and create a foundation for economic growth. RDI is working to clarify and strengthen land tenure rights, particularly for women to help tackle the cross cutting issues of poverty, land conflict and disputes, HIV/AIDS, conservation, and unrestrained urban migration.

FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS

RDI’s strategic objectives in the region focus on the transfer of farmland from state ownership to private ownership, developing legal systems supportive of private land rights, and providing legal advice and representation to new land owners to help them use and defend their rights to land. Today, RDI continues to monitor land rights legal aid provided by the Vladimir Center for Land Reform in Russia. RDI is also in partnership with USAID’s Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation to ameliorate Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan border conflicts through community management of land and land dispute resolution.

GLOBAL ADVISOR

With over 40 years of experience in over 45 countries, RDI has advised numerous governments and provides assistance on land law and policy to clients including The World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), US Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and others. RDI is also developing property rights and resource governance tools – including interactive media – to help inform foundations, international donors and key decision makers of the current and most pressing land tenure related issues.
Global Center for Women’s Land Rights Opens

Women’s rights to land are at the strategic center of our work to help the poorest. In many countries, women do as much as 80% of the farming, yet only 2% of the world’s land is owned by women. Women’s access to land is directly linked to child nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and domestic violence.

Currently, there are not enough people in the world focused on improving women’s legal rights to land, and those who are working on the issue are often isolated and unable to access and share resources with one another.

To address these challenges and unite the global community around this issue, RDI launched the Global Center for Women’s Land Rights. The Global Center will be the world’s first training and resource center specifically focused on women’s land rights. Based in Seattle, the Global Center will unite and catalyze the global community around this issue to develop a community of practice where we can share resources, strategies and interventions with one another and collaborate on shared solutions.

Global Center for Women’s Land Rights opens

RDI works with governments, NGOs and other local partners to strengthen women’s access and rights to land. However, laws and policies are not enough. RDI works closely with communities to address customary, religious and family law, which are often contradictory. RDI also helps local communities to gain legal literacy so they understand their rights. With legal empowerment, women can seize the opportunities to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

MAKING RIGHTS “REAL” FOR WOMEN

When women have secure property rights, family nutrition improves, women are less likely to contract and spread HIV/AIDS, domestic violence decreases, children are more likely to be educated, and women have better access to micro-credit, improving family income.

FACTS TO CONSIDER

- When you invest in women’s land rights, you are not just investing in women – the ripple effects spread to her children, family, village and region. The long-term outcomes include improvements in social, economic and political stability.
- Without secure rights, women are discouraged from investing time and resources in sustainable farming practices. When women have secure land rights, they become better environmental stewards.

Women in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh hold their pattas (land titles) thanks to a land purchase program RDI helped to design.

When women have secure property rights, family nutrition improves, women are less likely to contract and spread HIV/AIDS, domestic violence decreases, children are more likely to be educated, and women have better access to micro-credit, improving family income.

GLOBAL CENTER FOR WOMEN’S LAND RIGHTS

Global Center for Women’s Land Rights opens

Women in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh hold their pattas (land titles) thanks to a land purchase program RDI helped to design.
When women own land, we all prosper.

A Rwandan widow and mother of eight, Belta proudly shows off the deed to her land. The document is so precious that she keeps it rolled up in her skirt and carries it everywhere she goes.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, as in the rest of the developing world, women like Belta rely on the land for their livelihood.

Land is their source of shelter, food, income, and security. Yet while women produce 80% of Africa’s food, women in most countries do not have secure land rights.

When women have secure rights to land, their families are less vulnerable to hunger, homelessness, and HIV/AIDS. Secure land rights provide women and girls with improved status, nutrition, income, health, access to credit and educational opportunities, with ripple effects that extend to future generations.

Support RDI’s work to strengthen women’s land rights, and help us create sustainable solutions to poverty and hunger.

Women make up 51 percent of the world’s population and produce 60-80 percent of the developing world’s agricultural products, yet they own less than 2 percent of the world’s titled land.

Belta, a Rwandan widow, holds her land title.

Photo © Deborah Espinosa
Cao Fengping and his wife have spent decades farming by hand in Tangzhuang Village. They have always yearned for security.

Every three to five years, Cao and his wife would experience the government’s periodic “land readjustments” amongst the other villagers. They never knew where their new land would be, how far it would take them to walk to it, or what shape the land would be in. Cao’s family could not invest in irrigation or fertilizer to improve soil quality and production yields.

For more than 20 years, RDI has been working with the Chinese government and others to help farmers, like Cao Fengping, through laws such as China’s newly-adopted Property Law. With this law, farmers like Cao will have real “property rights” for the first time in China’s modern history – rights that are long-term, sustainable, and generational.

Since Cao and his wife received secure, 30-year land rights, he has invested in his land, digging three wells, planting a vegetable garden, switching to organic fertilizer and building an organic fertilizer tank for his garden.

Cao is now able to grow turnips, which sell extremely well. “The supply of my turnips are far less than the demand!” says Cao. Today, Cao harvests 5,000 kilos of turnips each year. During non-turnip seasons, he grows other species of vegetables to sell in local vegetable markets.

“You have to spend a lot of time and money to nurture the soil before getting into the business,” he said, “but if the land were reallocated to someone else, your investments would be gone like water.”

Today, Cao makes 20,000 yuan (about $2,900) yearly from vegetable farming, and he and his wife and children now feel secure.

RDI started its work in China in 1987, a few years after China de-collectivized its agriculture. Over the past 20 years, RDI, with its research partners, has conducted farmer interviews in over 20 provinces and four nationwide household surveys, in cooperation with Renmin University. The findings obtained through such field research have greatly enhanced RDI’s knowledge about farmers’ security on the land, which constitutes the primary means of livelihood for approximately 800 million Chinese. This accumulating body of rural observations has since been used as the basis for briefings and recommendations to senior policy makers in Beijing. Chapter 7
There are more landless poor in India than anywhere else on the planet.

**The Good News Is**
that with a micro-plot of land as little as a tenth of an acre, families can grow enough food to improve their nutrition and earn cash for their health and education.

Secure land rights are the key.

State governments provide the opportunity to own a piece of land and the legal documentation that gives poor families the security they need to invest in their future and leave poverty behind.

It only takes a little land to make a big difference.
Highlights Of The Year

FOUR NEW OFFICES IN INDIA
Thanks to generous support, RDI expanded its efforts in India. Joining RDI’s office in Karnataka, a new national office was established in Hyderabad and three new regional offices were opened in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. These new offices will expand RDI’s efforts assist more landless women and their families.

LEASING IN ANDHRA PRADESH
Using the results of studies in three villages, RDI helped draft a law to enable women to lease agricultural land. The government is now working to enact the law. Previously, laws in Andhra Pradesh controlling tenancy failed to serve their purpose; almost 100% of tenancy in the state is informal. RDI is helping the government test the new law through a pilot program before assisting with statewide implementation.

ANDHRA PRADESH LEGAL AID
RDI’s support of a government legal aid program in Andhra Pradesh continues to help the beneficiaries of previous land reforms realize their rights. Designed by RDI, this program trains paralegals and surveyors to work with self-help groups of women in rural villages. In six years, the program has resolved 288,000 land issues covering 362,000 acres.

ADVOCACY IN CHINA
RDI’s advocacy work in China led to a land tenure policy breakthrough in late 2008 and early 2009. The government has signaled a willingness to extend current farmer’s land tenure rights beyond the 30-year term, giving farmers truly secure, long-term land rights. The bulk of RDI’s policy work is advising the central government on the benefits of improved tenure security through long-term land rights.

NATIONWIDE SURVEY IN CHINA
This fall, RDI released the results of a nationwide survey showing the significant progress in economic development through land reform, and the resulting growing sense of security for the country’s 200 million farm families, who are increasingly investing in land and benefitting from market transfers. The survey was published by the National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR). It is the fourth in a series of research projects being conducted by RDI and its partners to assess the progress of land rights reforms throughout rural China.

BAREFOOT LAWYERS IN CHINA
Thanks to an award from The World Bank, RDI launched its “Barefoot Lawyers” Legal Aid and Education Center in Guangxi, China. More than 40 million Chinese farmers have lost their land due to compulsory takings by the government, and the majority received little or no compensation. The Center is the first of its kind, and is training young lawyers to provide legal aid for both rural farmers and local officials.

OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, RDI WILL:
• Expand existing programs and presence in India, China and Sub-Saharan Africa.
• Grow its newly launched Global Center for Women’s Land Rights.
• Hire experts in advocacy, communications and development for its headquarters and experienced local leaders for its regional offices.
• Amplify on-the-ground efforts in emerging markets to advance land property rights, furthering RDI’s powerful approach to economic empowerment.

This has been a year of unprecedented growth for RDI, beginning with the adoption and early implementation of a Five Year Strategic Plan to impact an additional 20 million rural poor families by 2013.

The plan is ambitious but achievable. The plan’s priorities and related investments will strengthen RDI and increase its ability to accelerate positive impact in individual lives and societies through its partnerships. The plan anticipates growth from $4.5 million in financial year 2009 to $11.7 million by financial year 2013, for a total of $45 million in costs during the five-year period. RDI anticipates growing from a team of 38 employees to 94, based largely in regional offices.

Fundraising is well underway, including a 3-year, $9 million grant from the Omidyar Network, and a 3-year, $2.1 million grant from the River Star Foundation. Both have significant matching requirements that will leverage gifts from new donors.

Over the next few years, RDI will:
• Expand existing programs and presence in India, China and Sub-Saharan Africa.
• Grow its newly launched Global Center for Women’s Land Rights.
• Hire experts in advocacy, communications and development for its headquarters and experienced local leaders for its regional offices.
• Amplify on-the-ground efforts in emerging markets to advance land property rights, furthering RDI’s powerful approach to economic empowerment.
In celebration of International Women’s Day, a sold-out crowd of more than 500 people gathered for RDI’s Third Annual Women & Land Luncheon. The event raised awareness and support for women’s rights to land and property.

**Awards & Honors**

RDI was honored to receive the 2009 Evergreen Award for innovative public and private partnerships with its “micro-land ownership” program in India. In addition, RDI won a Telly Award for its video “Land is Hope,” out of 14,000 entries from 30 countries around the world. RDI was also chosen for the Razoo 100 (the top 100 nonprofits in the world), and was a finalist in a Sundance competition for documentaries on social entrepreneurship. Most significantly, RDI was chosen out of 1,700 entries around the world for the prestigious Development Marketplace competition at The World Bank, a highly competitive challenge to fund the best solutions to poverty throughout the world.

**PBS Documentary**

“Land of Our Own,” a documentary about RDI’s work to help poor families in rural areas to get secure rights to land, aired on 45 PBS stations around the country. Independent filmmaker Bob Gliner spent several months filming RDI’s work in Rwanda, China and India.

**Research on Girl’s Inheritance Rights**

Thanks to the Nike Foundation, RDI completed a study on inheritance practices for girls in Uganda, China, and India. Following this, RDI received a research grant from the World Justice Project to expand the body of knowledge about the rights of women and girls to inherit land in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka and provide recommendations that can be taken up by in-country organizations and institutions.

**Talking with Global Leaders About Land**

This year, we aimed to increase global understanding of the power of land rights to address issues such as poverty, nutrition, women’s empowerment and stability. RDI advocated many of these issues at these events:

- The World Economic Forum (Davos, Switzerland)
- The Schwab Social Entrepreneur Summit (Zurich, Switzerland)
- The Clinton Global Initiative (New York, NY)
- United Nations Division for Sustainable Development (United Nations, NY)
- Global Philanthropy Forum (Washington, DC)
- Global Justice Forum (Vienna, Austria)
- Pacific Rim Policy Exchange (Singapore)
- Vital Voices Leadership Conference (Italy)
- International Land Coalition Conference (Nepal)

**Notable Publications**


Public information campaigns can play an important role in addressing some cultural barriers to the effective use of micro-plots. Many families are not aware, for example, that vegetables and fruits are nutritious. In Bangladesh, researchers found that dark green leafy vegetables are widely believed to be bad for young children, while a study of Philippine urban home gardeners found that mothers generally had no knowledge of vitamins and iron in foods until informed by community health workers. The good news is that there is evidence that poor families who receive health information respond by planting more fruits and vegetables, including dark green leafy vegetables. *Chapter 7*
RDI's operating revenue was $4.3 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009.

RDI's operating expenses were $4.2 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009.

For full details of RDI’s audited financials, please visit the “About RDI” section of www.rdiland.org.

**FUNCTIONAL ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES**
For the Year Ended June 30, 2009

**STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION**
June 30, 2009 and 2008

**ASSETS**
Current Assets
- Cash and cash equivalents $830,109 $2,230,562
- Investments 1,944,445 -
- Pledges receivable 407,347 832,000
- Grants, contracts, and other receivables 384,801 312,163
- Prepaid expenses 130,249 93,066
  - Total current assets 3,696,951 3,467,791
Long-term Pledges Receivable 541,097 877,138
Long-term Investments 2,440,555 3,142,520
Property and Equipment, at cost, less accumulated depreciation 8,168 -
  - Total assets $6,686,771 $7,487,449

**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**
Current Liabilities
- Accounts payable $154,131 $153,931
- Accrued expenses 134,627 135,806
  - Total current liabilities 288,758 289,737
Net Assets
- Unrestricted 1,021,649 868,850
- Temporarily restricted 5,376,364 6,328,862
  - Total net assets 6,398,013 7,197,712
- Total liabilities and net assets $6,686,771 $7,487,449
Thank You

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President, Pigott Enterprises
Board of Directors, PACCAR
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RDI Founder and Chairman Emeritus
David C. Barclay
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Capital Group Companies
Douglas P. Beighle
Boeing Chief Administrative Officer (Retired)
William (Bill) Clapp
Co-Founder, Global Partnerships
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Former Executive VP, Energy Foundation
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Principal, William T. Robinson PLLC
Jill Ruckelshaus
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Washington State Supreme Court
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Pilot Project Field Coordinator

Dr. Ashok Kumar Sircar
Senior Manager

Samrat Sarka
Livelihoods Coordinator

Supriya Chattapodhay
Communications Officer
RDI is a non-profit organization that partners with governments in developing countries to create laws that provide secure land rights to the world’s poorest families. For more than 40 years, RDI has worked as a catalyst to help produce market-friendly land laws and policy reforms. To date, RDI has partnered with governments on reforms that have helped more than 100 million families secure a piece of land to call their own.