If there are security concerns, the Coalition Secretariat connects the community with the Defenders in Development Security Working Group, which can help provide a coordinated and comprehensive response to address issues such as intimidation, surveillance and physical attacks in specific development contexts.

The Coalition Secretariat can help those who request support by:
- discussing and helping them identify their needs
- connecting them with collaborators that can help identify protection strategies
- assisting them to apply for complementing financial and technical security support
- responding to new needs as the security situation evolves

However, many communities lack opportunities to connect to these groups and access these resources.

The Coalition for Human Rights in Development initiated the Community Engagement Partnerships to:
- support community-led struggles
- connect communities with our members and partners around the world
- strengthen the collective capacities of our movements

How the partnerships work

1. We listen to the community that requests a partnership, and try to understand what their goals, needs and priorities are.

2. A coordinator works with the community to make sure the linkages made are helpful, and conducts additional matchmaking as the communities’ needs evolve. The partnership may include a small grant or a connection to external funders.

3. The community partners share their experience and lessons learned with the Coalition to strengthen collective learning and work.

https://rightsindevelopment.org/our-work/community-engagement/
In 2016, a group of oil companies began acquiring land in Uganda for oil exploration and development, to feed a pipeline project which would stretch to the coast in Tanzania. The project is expected to affect over 5000 households, including indigenous peoples, small farmers and pastoralists. But the communities were not consulted.

The Association for Rural Development (ARD)*, together with other civil society groups, began working with affected communities to: • get access to information about the development plans • advocate for their land rights and fair compensation • create a platform for dialogue between communities, district leaders and companies.

* the name of the organization was changed for security reasons.

The Community Engagement Partnership (CEP)

The Community Engagement Partnership (CEP) offers for compensation in the form of land for land and the government and companies beginning to engage with local communities.

Thanks to the Community Engagement Partnership, ARD could counterbalance the collaboration between governments and oil companies on the project, by offering an opportunity for communities and civil society organizations to develop a coordinated response. This resulted in:

- offers for compensation in the form of land for land
- the government and companies beginning to engage with local communities
- reduction in overt intimidation against local communities and human rights defenders.

The Community Engagement Partnership (CEP) started collaborating with ARD to identify and help engage investors and interested financiers of the project.

The security situation improved and project construction was put on hold.

When communities raise their voices against a development project, they are seen as anti-development, and once you stand up to support these communities you are seen as going against government efforts. This leads to threats, arrests, intimidation. Some people began feeling afraid, and out of fear accepted inadequate compensation.

It is crucial to listen to frontline communities and be responsive to their evolving needs. Resources closest to the community are the most effective and efficient means of delivering support. There are also benefits from linking local efforts with larger regional and international campaigns and organizations.

In 2019, a group of oil companies began acquiring land in Uganda for oil exploration and development, to feed a pipeline project which would stretch to the coast in Tanzania.

ARD secured a grant from Front Line Defenders to improve their office security; a grant from another organization was used to temporarily relocate the Director.

The Lifeline Fund for Embattled CSOs provided a short-term grant to enhance digital security practices.

Communities and ARD connected with international groups working on the pipeline, to collaborate on advocacy and show they were not alone.

The security situation improved and project construction was put on hold.

The CEP Working Group continues working with ARD to accompany communities as the project progresses and their needs shift.

Late 2018

ARD leaders started receiving threats and being harassed. Several times local government officials blocked ARD staff from supporting the affected communities in negotiations.

It is important to proactively anticipate risks and put together a holistic protection strategy, to help prevent and respond to threats and attacks. If the situation escalates, urgent requests from frontline communities and groups require rapid response coordination among supporting organizations.

Case study
Partnering with communities affected by oil extraction projects

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