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Rural Development Institute wins 2009 Evergreen Award
Nonprofit community recognizes RDI for its use of innovative cross-sector partnerships to implement "micro-land ownership" program in India

SEATTLE – The Rural Development Institute (RDI), an international non-profit working to secure land rights for the world's rural poor, has received the 2009 Evergreen Award for its success in helping to alleviate poverty through innovative public and private partnerships in its "micro-land ownership" program in India, which has resulted in secure land rights for more than 85,000 of the nation's poorest people, many of them women.

"We are truly honored to receive this recognition from our peers," Tim Hanstad, CEO of the Seattle-based organization said of the Evergreen Award, presented annually by Executive Alliance, a nonprofit membership organization serving the Puget Sound region. The award recognizes nonprofit organizations for their model leadership in the nonprofit sector and contributions to communities through pioneering programs.

"RDI's collaborative successes are illustrative of the kind of innovative and unified approaches nonprofits in our community and around the globe will need to take in order to survive and grow through this recession," said Melany Brown, executive director of Executive Alliance.

"RDI's successes over the years, especially in India, are related to our approach of forming respectful collaborations with state and federal governments, international development organizations, private sector partners, as well as nonprofits and foundations that share a common interest in fighting global poverty and fostering self-sufficiency," Hanstad said.

RDI developed close working partnerships with the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal and Orissa to develop, implement and monitor its micro-land ownership projects. RDI has worked with these governments to help India's poorest citizens obtain secure rights to "micro-plots" of land that allow them to build shelter, grow food for nutrition, create income and wealth, improve their status, get access to micro-credit and empower women and girls.

In addition to collaborating with governments, RDI partners with APCO Worldwide, a global communications consultancy that is helping RDI raise international understanding of the direct link between secure land rights and poverty alleviation. Through this collaborative awareness building effort, RDI has been able to raise its visibility and connect with key government officials, policy leaders, philanthropists and nonprofit foundations, all of whom share its fundamental message of fair and equal land rights for all.

"While RDI can help develop and promote empirically-based recommendations for a secure land rights framework, only governments can enact the legislation necessary to implement them,"

added Hanstad. “In India, collaborations in the public sector with governments and policy experts, and private-sector partners like APCO Worldwide have enabled RDI to position itself as a primary resource for state governments seeking land tenure reform. Our success is rooted in this unified approach to raising international awareness about the positive role of land ownership in alleviating poverty, and we are pleased that others in the nonprofit sector are taking note of the value of such partnerships.”

RDI accepted the 2009 Evergreen Award at the 15th annual Washington State Nonprofit Conference on April 2, the largest nonprofit gathering in the state, where more than 600 nonprofit leaders convened to recognize those organizations that are building capacity through strategic, ground-breaking partnerships across the public, for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

To learn more about RDI, visit www.rdiland.org

To learn more about APCO Worldwide, visit www.apcoworldwide.com

To learn more about Executive Alliance, www.exec-alliance.org

About the Rural Development Institute (RDI)

Over the past 40 years, RDI has worked in more than 45 countries, helping more than 400 million people attain secure land rights. With offices in China, India, Indonesia and Rwanda, RDI is engaged in a number of projects with global leaders, governments and NGOs, including efforts to secure women’s property rights and an ambitious “micro-land ownership” program in India.

RDI has been nominated for multiple awards for its innovative work, including the Hilton Humanitarian Prize, the World Food Prize and the Nobel Prize. In addition, Roy Prosterman, RDI’s founder and chairman emeritus, won the 2002 Schwab Social Entrepreneur award, the 2003 Gleitsman International Award, and the inaugural Henry R. Kravis Award for nonprofit leadership in 2006.