



Session 1 Recap: Community Ownership in Practice

Kicking off the JustRE Community of Practice: What it will take to scale community ownership of large-scale renewables

Our first Community of Practice session brought together practitioners across the Global South to move community ownership from concepts to implementation. We heard a clear call for: practical tools and shared language for “people-centred business models,” legally solid FPIC processes, enabling regulations and finance, and sustained capacity-building with communities and developers alike.

Why this space – and why now

Opening the session, Juan Pablo Cárdenas, Coordinator of the JustRE Alliance, set the tone: **the world needs utility-scale renewables at speed, but social opposition, rooted in weak engagement models, keeps slowing projects.** The Alliance is building a Global South platform to share what actually works, across contexts, to embed social excellence in large-scale renewable energy **so that projects are faster, fairer, and more widely accepted.**

This Community of Practice will meet monthly to exchange hands-on lessons, compare models, and co-develop tools that make community ownership implementable at scale, not just admirable in theory.

Key contributions from our guest partners



Neil Walker

Forum for the Future / Responsible Energy Initiative (REI)

- **From principles to practice: REI introduced a pragmatic taxonomy of people-centred business models**—with community ownership as one family among several (others include skills & livelihoods, public services & local infrastructure, and environmental & cultural stewardship).
- **Mechanisms that matter:** For community ownership and revenue sharing, they highlighted practical levers such as **preferential tariffs, community bonds, recurring payments, inclusive investments, and shared ownership** (e.g., equity stakes and land-lease agreements).
- **A shared language & scoring approach:** REI is prototyping a compliance → pioneer scale to compare how projects embed these mechanisms, helping developers, financiers, and civil society align on ambition, evidence, and gaps.
- **What’s next with JustRE:** A **technical white paper, an industry brief on enabling conditions, and a Global South case-study collection**—explicitly designed to be non-extractive and useful to project communities.



Bukelwa Nzimande and Caroline Avan

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC)

- **Shared Prosperity with Indigenous Peoples:** Drawing on work with Indigenous Peoples Rights International, BHRRC underscored **three non-negotiables**:
 - **Shared prosperity** (fair value and benefit distribution).
 - **Human rights due diligence** (with board-level ownership).
 - **Fair, good-faith negotiation grounded in FPIC** (free, prior, and informed consent).
- **No one-size-fits-all:** Co-ownership can improve outcomes but carries real social and financial risks if communities lack access to capital, technical expertise, and impartial advice. Capacity-building and time for communities to assess risks/returns are essential.
- **Enabling environment: Governments should recognise Indigenous rights**, ensure basic services (so benefits aren’t coercive substitutes), and create regulatory and financial instruments (PPA design, concessional finance, guarantees) that make co-ownership feasible.

- **Developers and financiers:** Adopt clear policies on Indigenous rights and benefit-sharing; structure binding agreements co-created with communities; and require evidence of FPIC and equitable sharing as a condition for investment.

What we heard from participants



FPIC in practice (Mexico)

Participants asked for practical FPIC checklists when a community approaches as the proponent. BHRRC noted there are strong Indigenous-led FPIC protocols and guides; the group also shared experiences where authorities have treated community-led projects differently. **Bottom line: FPIC remains context-specific and legal obligations vary, however processes must be rigorous, inclusive, and documented.**



Growing Global South momentum

Organizations from Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia are exploring community equity and shared-prosperity models, eager to connect data, case studies, and tools across regions.



Capacity is the keystone

Repeated themes included the need for community governance and financial literacy, developer capability to co-design fair agreements, and neutral facilitation to balance asymmetries of information and power.

Four key takeaways



Define the model, then the mechanism

“Community ownership” is an umbrella—be explicit about how value will be shared (equity, leases, bonds, tariffs, recurring payments) and who holds decision rights.



Start FPIC early and treat it as ongoing

Map all rights-holders (including women and youth), budget for community-led consultation, and allow time for independent advice and internal deliberation.



Plan for capacity on both sides

Projects succeed when communities have governance and financial capabilities and developers have the skills and mandate to co-create fair deals.



Align the finance

Bring financiers in early to structure fit-for-purpose instruments (concessional tranches, guarantees, revenue-backed community bonds) that de-risk participation without over-leveraging communities.

What's next from the JustRE Community of Practice

We'll convene monthly deep dives focused on “how-to” implementation, including:



Community capacity and governance for investment readiness.



Financing mechanisms for community equity in utility-scale projects.



Case studies, including Canada's Indigenous equity models and South Africa's community trusts in the RE auction program.



FPIC best practices for fair, long-term partnerships.



We're also building a **shared bank of case studies, templates, and checklists.**
If you have a project to feature or a tool to share, we'd love to include it.

