BUILDING BRIDGES WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

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HONOR PLEDGE

On my honor as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.

Julianna Marsh

DISCLAIMER

The author conducted this study as part of the program of professional education at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, University of Virginia. This paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of the course requirements for the Master of Public Policy degree. The judgments and conclusions are solely those of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Batten School, by the University of Virginia, or by any other agency.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For centuries, Indigenous communities have been subjected to religiously motivated violence. Despite recent global efforts aimed at addressing religiously motivated violence, Indigenous communities struggle to be included in these endeavors.

Throughout history and to the modern day, Indigenous communities across all regions of the world confront the reality of religiously motivated violence (RMV). From hate speech growing into mass genocide, Indigenous people bring a firsthand understanding of the consequences that RMV can bring upon the well-being of societies. Their perspectives hold influence in combatting RMV, yet they have faced challenges in both initial engagements and maintaining involvement in the work.

The problem of addressing religiously motivated violence requires collaboration among diverse stakeholders, each with their own unique solutions. The United Religions Initiative has been at the forefront of uniting these stakeholders into a multilateral coalition dedicated to collectively eradicating religious violence through the United Nations. With this, URI is conscious of the importance of integrating indigenous voices in their efforts for violence prevention, yet they have faced challenges in achieving this inclusion.

This document serves as a comprehensive review of a year's work I have conducted, studying the imperative task of integrating Indigenous communities into initiatives aimed at ending religiously motivated violence. The document unfolds with an encompassing background section, followed by evidence-based research on solutions that have been done to include Indigenous voices in violence initiatives and non-violence initiatives. By examining the silent struggles faced by indigenous communities, light is shed on the profound impact that their voices can have in shaping effective and inclusive strategies for addressing religious violence. Then, I will be proposing three alternatives for the United Religions Initiative to pursue in integrating Indigenous voices in their programs. My three proposed alternatives are Regional Representative Bodies, United Nation Partnerships, and Increasing Indigenous Representation. All of these alternatives are proposed within a 10-year time frame. These alternatives will be evaluated based on the five criteria points of inclusivity, social feasibility, sustainability, non-material cost, and material costs. Finding that the Increasing Indigenous Representation alternative ranks the best on 3 out of 5 criteria points, I will recommend that Increasing Indigenous Staff in URI is the best course of action for URI to adopt. Lastly, to ensure the success of the alternative's application, a plan for how URI should move forward in implementing the recommendation is given.

ACRONYMS

URI - United Religions Initiative

RMV- Religiously Motivated Violence

UN - United Nations

CC - Cooperation Circles

ECOSOC - United Nations Economic and Social Council

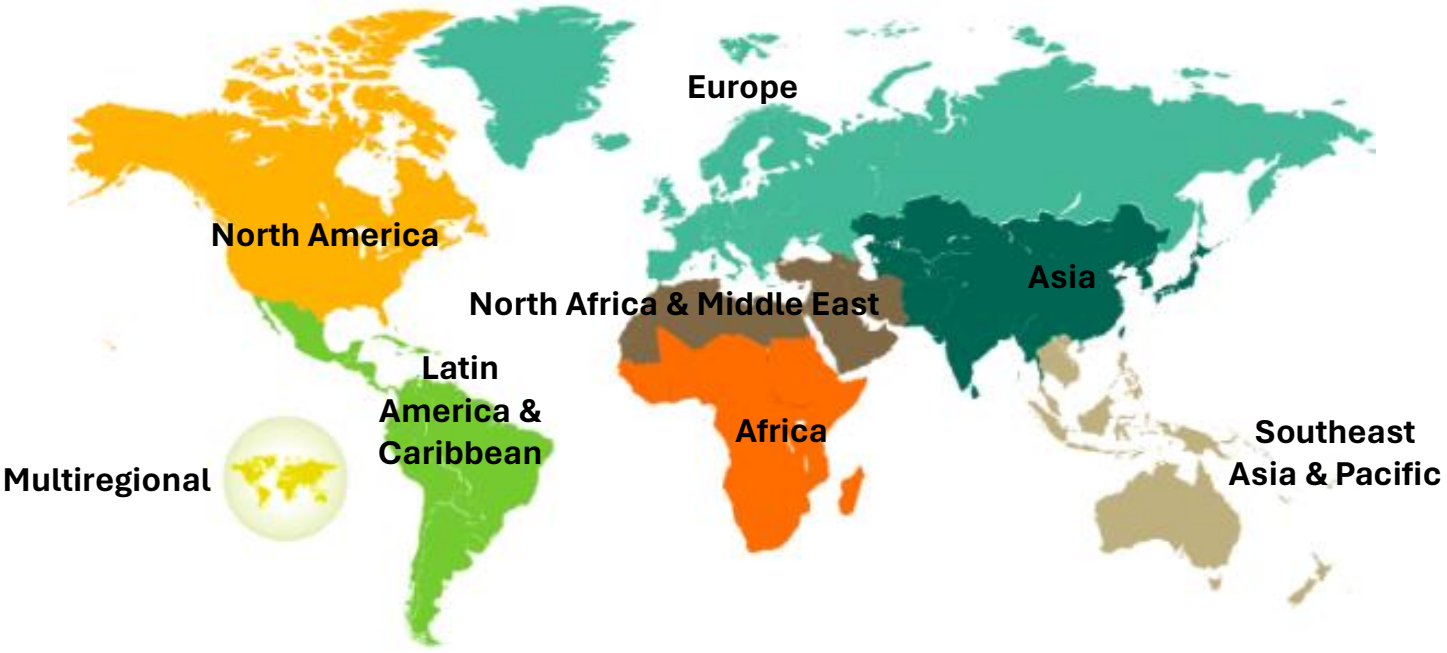
CLIENT OVERVIEW

The United Religions Initiative (URI) is a global nonprofit organization that takes a grassroots approach to encourage cooperation between different religious and cultural groups. Their mission is to "promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence, and to create cultures of peace, justice, and healing for the earth and all living beings" (About, n.d).

In 1995, founder and President Emeritus William Swing had the vision of a global interfaith organization after being invited to host an interfaith service at the 50th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter (History and Charter, n.d), the document that established the procedures of the UN and its member states (United Nations, 2021). Swing's visions inspired thousands of people to unite and create an organization founded on a collective vision of the world that they aspired to inhabit (History and Charter, n.d), Established in 2000, the United Religions Initiative (URI) was founded, taking inspiration from the United Nations title.

Today, URI works in 8 global regions with thousands of people supporting the mission of URI through cooperation circles or being an individual member. Figure 1 highlights each region. In addition, URI partners with like-minded organizations, UN agencies, and holds a non-governmental organization (NGO) consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (Global Partners, n.d).

Figure 1 – URI Regional Map



United Nations Relationship

Since 2000, URI has been recognized as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (United Nations | URI, n.d.) In addition, URI has partnered and established memoranda of understanding (MOU) agreements[1] with various UN agencies including but not limited to the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, UNESCO Chair for Peace and Intercultural Understanding, and United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) (Global Partners, n.d.). Today, URI actively builds connections within the UN, and cooperation circles actively participate in United Nation initiatives and activism projects (URI and the United Nations, n.d.).

Cooperation Circles

URI has an expanding network of global grassroots partnerships called Cooperation Circles (CCs) which are self-organizing groups of individuals that take action in their local community to cultivate peace, justice, and healing (link). These groups must consist of at least seven members with at least 3 different religions. CCs specialize in "action areas" that define the nature of their work. There are a total of 14 action areas that include Indigenous Peoples, education, interfaith dialogue, women, youth, and poverty alleviation. Today URI has 1,168 cooperation circles located across the globe.

Indigenous People Cooperation Circles

CCs with the action area of "Indigenous Peoples" collaborate with Indigenous people to exchange knowledge, wisdoms, and values. These efforts enrich and strengthen responses to environmental concerns, intercultural dialogue, and religiously motivated violence (link). Today, 200 CCs focus on Indigenous people and their communities. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of Indigenous action CCs across URI's region, highlighting the extensive global network they form.

Figure 2- Number of Indigenous Action CCs Per URI Region

Region	Number of Indigenous CCs
Africa	37
Asia	69
Europe	2
Latin America and the Caribbean	36
Middle East and North Africa	16
Multiregional	23
North America	8
Southeast Asia and the Pacific	9
Total:	**200**

With this, it is crucial to recognize that while a CC may have an Indigenous People action area, it doesn't always indicate the presence of Indigenous members in the CCs. While this is most often

[1] MOUs are a document that provides a framework for cooperation and collaboration between parties on a non-legal binding basis (link)

not the case, there are instances where CCs do not Indigenous members and instead partner with the local Indigenous community on projects. Furthermore, it's important to note that not all Indigenous individuals within URI are affiliated with a CC, some participate as individual members.

BACKGROUND

Differentiating Religiously Motivated Violence

Religiously motivated violence is often interconnected with and influenced by other forms of violence as it often overlaps with broader social, political, and economic contexts. Within Indigenous communities, a complex interplay exists between ethnic and religious violence, each presenting distinct challenges. Ethnic violence, stemming from tensions among distinct ethnic groups, may materialize as conflicts over resources, land, or historical grievances. In contrast, religiously motivated violence specifically singles out individuals or groups based on their faith, encompassing acts that jeopardize or inflict harm due to religious beliefs. The crucial distinction lies in the motivation, as religiously motivated violence directly targets individuals based on their spiritual affiliations. Henceforth, it is important to understand the specific context and motivations behind violent actions to address and prevent both religious and general forms of violence.

Religiously motivated violence has a multilayered nature, as it operates on a spectrum with various levels of intensity, as illustrated in Figure 3. This graph portrays five distinct levels of religious violence, each encapsulating sub-types of violence. On the first level, we have hated speech which is characterized by gossip and negative remarks that foster an in-group vs out-group mentality – "us vs them." On the second level, discrimination manifests as individuals and institutions that act against a particular group of people. On the third level, disinformation involves the intentional alteration of information and facts to mislead narratives against a targeted community. On the fourth level, the destruction of property displays the act of destroying property identified with religious meaning which includes land, sacred sites, worship centers, holy texts, and other physical materials. On the most extreme level, ethnic cleansing involves the expulsion and mass killing of a group to eradicate their presence. Recognizing hate speech and discrimination as early warning signs, it becomes evident that these actions can escalate, leading to more severe forms of violence

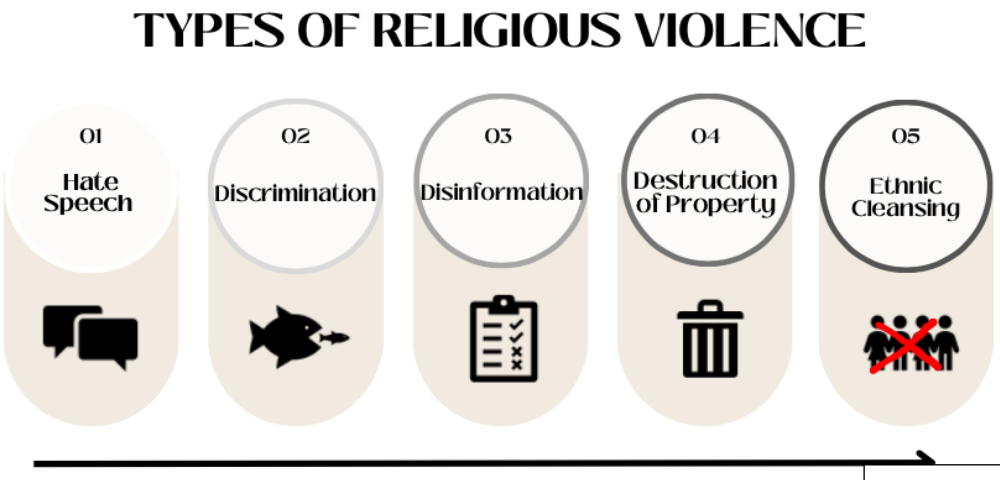


Figure 3

History of Problem

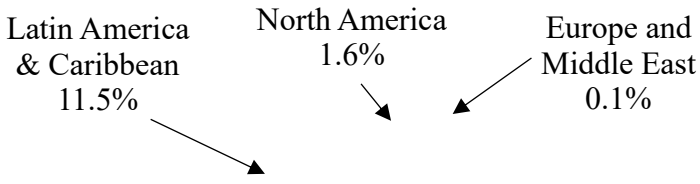
The history of the exclusion of indigenous participation is deeply rooted in a legacy of colonization, discrimination, and dehumanization. Colonization, characterized by the forceful imposition of foreign rule, led to the dispossession of indigenous lands, erasure of cultural practices, and profound disruption of traditional ways of life (Keating, 2020). This period was marked by systematic injustices, including forced assimilation and cultural suppression that has impacted Indigenous people through generations (Garcia-Olp, 2018). Discrimination and dehumanization persisted as indigenous communities faced marginalization, often justified by prejudiced beliefs and policies (Amherst & Nelson, 2011). Although over time, there has been a gradual but uneven shift towards the growing acceptance of indigenous communities. Efforts to recognize and respect indigenous rights, cultures, and contributions have gained momentum, driven by advocacy, legal reforms, and a broader societal acknowledgment of historical injustices. Despite these positive developments, challenges persist, reflecting the enduring impact of a history marked by colonization and discrimination.

Comparative Scale and Scope of the Problem

Throughout history and to the modern day, indigenous communities across various regions of the world confront the disturbing reality of religious violence, a shared challenge that manifests differently in each unique cultural context. In regions like South Asia, indigenous groups such as the Rohingya in Myanmar face persecution driven by religious differences, leading to displacement and human rights abuses (Driss, n.d.). In the Americas, some Native American communities grapple with the historical trauma of forced assimilation (Brown, 2013), where religious practices were suppressed in the name of colonization (Brown, 2013). In Africa, the Maasai and other indigenous groups contend with tensions arising from religious conversions and encroachments on their traditional territories (Colchester, 1994). Despite the diversity of their cultural and spiritual practices, these communities share the common experience of navigating the intersection of religious dynamics and violence, challenging their autonomy, cultural integrity, and overall well-being. Addressing the specific manifestations of religious violence within each region requires a nuanced and context-specific approach that acknowledges and respects the distinct identities of indigenous communities while promoting broader efforts to foster understanding, tolerance, and the protection of their fundamental rights.

Indigenous Population in the World (2022)

Share of Indigenous Peoples by Region (ILO, 2019)



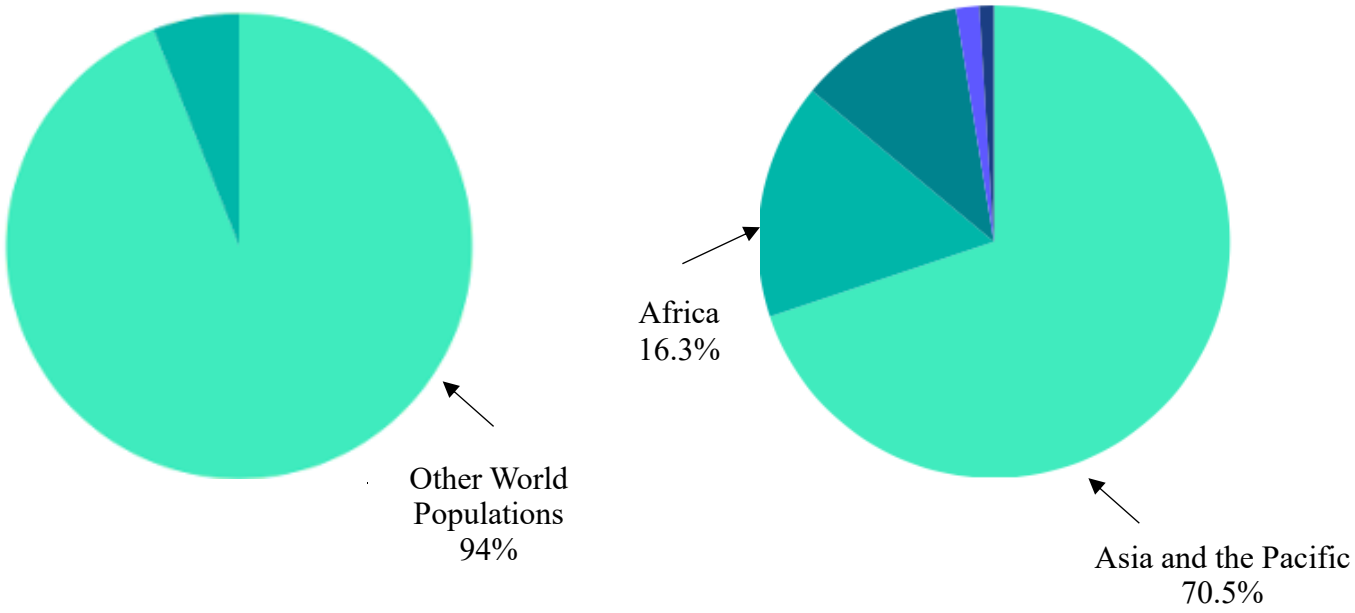


Figure 4 & 5

Why Does the Problem of RMV and the Exclusion of Indigenous Communities Still Exist?

The persistence of the problem of religious motivated violence among Indigenous communities is attributed to various contributing factors, including power imbalances, religious identity, trust, and communication.

Power Imbalances. Indigenous people often find themselves in a minority status, leading to unequal representation in decision-making processes. Historical injustices, coupled with a lack of representation in primary government institutions, have created policies that fail to address the concerns of indigenous communities, exacerbating their exclusion from efforts to combat religious violence. Moreover, indigenous groups, already disadvantaged due to historical injustices, face socio-economic challenges that limit their access to resources, hindering their active participation in initiatives aimed at countering religious violence and advocating for their rights (United Nations, 2015; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2022; OHCHR, n.d.). Another significant factor is the insufficient consultation processes within societies, which frequently exclude indigenous communities. This exclusion impacts the ability of modern societies to consider and integrate indigenous perspectives, potentially resulting in religious violence interventions that do not align with the priorities and values of indigenous communities, thereby diminishing their effectiveness (Oliver, 2023; United Nations, 2022, 2023). Addressing these structural and systemic issues is crucial for fostering inclusivity and ensuring the effectiveness of interventions against religious violence among indigenous populations.

Religious Identity. The second contributing factor to the problem is indigenous communities' religious identity. The issue of religious identity among indigenous people adds a layer of complexity, as they are often not officially recognized as a religious group but rather categorized

as spiritual (Bauer, 2007). cite). This distinction creates tension, as it may lead to their unique belief systems and practices being overlooked or misunderstood. The failure to acknowledge indigenous communities as distinct belief entities can contribute to their marginalization and hinder efforts to address religious violence effectively (Minorities and indigenous peoples, n.d.; Gorur & Gregory, 2021). Recognizing and respecting the diverse spiritual and religious expressions within indigenous cultures is essential for fostering understanding and inclusivity in interventions aimed at mitigating religious violence.

Trust. The issue of trust emerges as a significant contributing factor to the persistence of problems between indigenous and non-indigenous communities. The track record of broken laws and inadequate enforcement has created a climate of mistrust. Institutional bias, particularly within religious or government structures, further exacerbates this trust, leading to practices that marginalize or sideline indigenous voices. Rebuilding trust between indigenous and non-indigenous communities is crucial for fostering effective communication, understanding, and cooperation in developing solutions to combat religious violence.

Communication. The presence of language barriers stands as a significant barrier to effective communication between indigenous communities and mainstream institutions. When language differences exist, communication challenges arise, hindering the meaningful exchange of ideas. Currently, out of the world's 6,700 languages, indigenous peoples speak more than 4,000 of the world's languages (*Indigenous Affairs*, 2016). The absence of sufficient translators exacerbates this issue, limiting the ability of indigenous voices to be fully comprehended. This communication gap, in turn, contributes to the failure to incorporate their invaluable insights into strategies aimed at preventing religious violence. Addressing language barriers is crucial for fostering inclusive dialogue and ensuring that the diverse perspectives of indigenous communities are integral to the development of effective prevention measures

Consequences of the Problem

The exclusion of indigenous voices in religious motivated violence prevention efforts can have several significant consequences including:

- *Continued Marginalization.* The exclusion of indigenous voices perpetuates a cycle of marginalization, reinforcing historical patterns of exclusion (Williams, 2000). This cycle sends a message that indigenous perspectives are not valued, contributing to a sense of alienation and mistrust between indigenous communities and those leading prevention efforts.

- *Missed Early Warning Sign.* Indigenous communities often possess unique insights into their social dynamics and potential sources of conflict. Excluding their voices may mean missing early warning signs of religious tension or violence, hindering the work of taking preventative measures to stop violence from increasing and evolving.

- *Cultural Insensitivity.* Failure to include indigenous voices may result in culturally insensitive strategies (Dutta, 2007) or unaware of the significance of religious and spiritual practices within indigenous cultures (Coates, 2006). This can lead to unintentional disrespect and further strain relationships between communities.

- *Inequality in Decision-Making Processes.* The absence of indigenous voices in decision-making processes reinforces existing power imbalances (Black & McBean, 2016). It denies these communities the right to actively participate in shaping policies that directly impact them, perpetuating a history of marginalization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When analyzing evidence on potential solutions to the problem, there are two different categories of evidence: methods for including indigenous communities in religious violence initiatives and for the inclusion of indigenous communities in non-religious violence initiatives. Religious violence initiatives are efforts dedicated to monitoring, preventing, and resolving violence based on religious beliefs. On the other hand, non-religious violence initiatives encompass endeavors that necessitate the involvement of indigenous voices for policy, social, and economic issues.

Methods in Including Indigenous Communities in Violence Prevention Initiatives

In this section, we will examine methods employed by organizations that have incorporated indigenous voices in addressing religious violence. Specifically, two primary methods are community-led initiatives and trauma-informed approaches. Community-led initiatives are strategies created by regional, and local communities to form and implement violence prevention initiatives based on their situation. Trauma-informed approaches are initiatives to include indigenous voices in violent prevention by addressing historical trauma, engaging in cross-cultural dialogue, and storytelling.

The United Religions Initiative (URI) has implemented a community-led initiative to actively involve indigenous voices in violence prevention efforts through its cooperation circles (CCs). CCs are self-organized groups of people of various faiths, located around the world, that work in specific action areas to create cultures of peace, justice, and healing (Cooperation Circles, n.d.). Crucial action areas for our analysis include CCs dedicated to working with indigenous people and peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Currently, there are 200 URI CCs engaged in the action area of indigenous people with 129 out of these 194 CCs dedicated to peacebuilding and conflict transformation with indigenous communities (Cooperation Circles, n.d.). Each CC serves a distinctive role in their region by reporting on indigenous issues and leading projects that promote peace, justice, and healing, supported by URI. As CCs work with their action area, they employ a course of actions (ex. programs, projects, events, policy advocacy, cross-cultural activities, etc.) in their community that create a positive impact of change (Global Impact, (n.d.).The success of CCs has been found in the nature and scale of impact they generate within their community.

On the other hand, trauma-informed approaches intentionally address historical trauma by encouraging open and respectful communication through storytelling and cross-cultural dialogue between indigenous and non-indigenous communities (Quigley, 2023; Quayle & Sonn, 2019). Often, this approach usually also includes providing support services that address the impacts of historical injustices through therapeutic services (Oldani & Prosen, 2021). For example, the Healing Foundation is an Australian organization that partners with national tribal communities to address ongoing trauma caused by racial policies, that indirectly include religious aspects, by offering community groups, therapy, and activities for healing needs (The Healing Foundation, 2023). Based on this work, trauma-informed approaches make cultural understanding more achievable (Tujague & Ryan, 2021) which feeds into the creation of more compassion and less violence in a community. Similar to community-led initiatives, measurements of success with the trauma-informed approach don't have a universal standard measure (Menschner & Maul, 2016). Rather, its success is shown by the impact or change created in a community by the approach that can be represented by the organization's measurement of its success. Overall, sharing

experiences and perspectives can help bridge gaps and build connections between communities which is why a trauma-informed approach is often utilized by violence prevention efforts.

Methods in Including Indigenous Communities in Non-Violence Initiatives

Beyond the realm of religious violence, various fields have actively sought to incorporate indigenous voices in their initiatives. Indigenous communities have also fought for their representation and perspectives to be heard in government assemblies and policy fields. Specifically, this section will analyze the United Nations' involvement in indigenous communities and how indigenous communities have been involved with environmental policy.

United Nations

As URI holds consultative status with the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (Global Partners, n.d.), it is crucial to evaluate the UN's approach to incorporating indigenous voices. Most notably, the establishment of indigenous departments, and the involvement of indigenous people in the 2030 Sustainable Agenda.

With the establishment of the UN in 1945 (United Nations, 2023), indigenous people didn't start being represented in the assemblies until 1982 with the establishment of the now Expert Mechanisms on the Rights of Indigenous People which advises the Human Rights Council on the rights of indigenous people's issues. In 1982, the working group was positioned at the 'lowest level of the hierarchy' in the UN Human Rights body, yet it emerged as a pivotal force in promoting the acknowledgment of indigenous rights within the UN (Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations, 2015). Through their advocacy efforts, the Indigenous community successfully secured their representation with five experts in the Human Rights Council in 2007, establishing the official Indigenous presence within the United Nations (Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations, 2015). Since then, indigenous representation has evolved with the establishment of two more indigenous bodies. Established in July 2000, The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFILL) advises the Economic and Social Council on issues related to indigenous economic and social development issues (Establishment of a UN Permanent Forum, n.d.). In 2001, the Commission on Human Rights appointed its first Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People to implement international standards concerning the rights of Indigenous people and voicing the communities' concerns (OHCHR Special Rapporteur, n.d.). These new departments added 17 indigenous representatives to the UN (Current UNPFILL Members, 2023; OHCHR, n.d). The establishment of these departments and positions developed indigenous representation in the United Nations, from zero to 17 indigenous people or experts in the field (Current experts, n.d.; Current UNPFILL Members, n.d.; OHCHR Francisco, n.d.).

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is a universal policy agenda to achieve 17 sustainable development goals, promising to "leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first" (United Nations, 2015). With this agenda still in process, we can assess the engagement of indigenous people by observing the extent of their participation inclusion in the process. From the start of the global consultation process for the 2030 Agenda, indigenous communities participated in consultation by developing concerns founded on human rights, equality, and environmental sustainability (The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues n.d.; Indigenous Peoples and the 2030 Agenda, n.d.). It was essential for indigenous people to

establish an active role because the agenda is viewed as an improvement compared to a former development goal agenda where indigenous people were 'largely invisible' (Briefing Note, n.d.). After three years of global negotiations, the UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda and there have been follow-up conferences every year to review the progression of SDGs (High-Level, n.d.). In multiple reports, indigenous people have been 'very present' at the conference hosting handfuls of events and engaging in dialogue to ensure indigenous voices, priorities, and concerns were raised (High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development n.d.; United Nations, 2015; Weber 2017). The final resolution of the 2030 Agenda refers to indigenous people six times (United Nations, 2015), compared to the previous Millennium Development Goals resolution that doesn't explicitly address their communities at all (Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 2000). The inclusion of indigenous communities in the 2030 final resolution signifies an intentional recognition and inclusion of indigenous people by the UN body.
This speaks to efforts by non-indigenous people committing to the inclusivity of indigenous people and addressing the unique challenges faced in their communities.

Environmental Policy

Indigenous communities play a crucial role in shaping and influencing environmental policies because many indigenous people have strong connections to their traditional lands and a deep understanding of sustainable resource management. On a global scale, indigenous representatives actively engage in international forums, dialogue, and climate negotiations within alliance organizations such as the Global Forest Coalition and the International Land Coalition. Through these macro-organizations, numerous indigenous participate through their distinct indigenous organizations including non-profits and businesses. Similarly, at the national level, indigenous communities engage with environmental policy through local non-profits. However, broadly speaking national governments can maintain closer relationships with indigenous communities resulting in more specific projects. For instance, communities participate in the review and development of environmental impact assessments (White, 2007), and are consulted more extensively in the formulation of biodiversity, and natural resource management strategies (NEPAL, 2002; Dawson 2021). Measuring the engagement of indigenous communities in environmental policy involves assessing various indicators that reflect the extent to which and quality of their involvement. Common measures include representation in decision-making bodies (Black, & McBean 2016), participation in consultations (Boyd & Lorefice 2018), and the formation of partnerships or collaboration projects (Bharadwaj, 2020).

Overall, in this evidence review, it becomes evident that indigenous perspectives are essential, not only in religious violence resolutions but also in various policy fields that have made efforts to incorporate the voices of indigenous communities. However, existing solutions for including Indigenous communities in initiatives reveal noticeable limitations.These include unclear measurements of progress or success, the isolation of groups without platforms for collaboration, gaps in agendas, a lack of interpersonal connections, and limited insight into the workings of the system, particularly the UN body.

EVALUTIVE CRITERIA

To effectively address integrating indigenous perspectives in preventing religious motivated violence, URI must prioritize the values of inclusivity, social feasibility, sustainability, non-material costs, and material costs.

Inclusivity

As a global grassroots interfaith network, URI naturally holds a value of inclusivity as they work to bridge religious and cultural differences for the good of communities (*Introduction to URI*, n.d.). Inclusivity is defined as a proactive approach in creating an environment where all individuals, regardless of their background, feel valued, respected, and have equal opportunities to contribute (Desa, 2009; Wormington, 2023; Nakintu, 2021). Holding inclusivity as a criteria point is essential to measuring the success of the alternatives as all groups, especially indigenous communities, should experience feelings of belonging, recognition, involvement, and legitimacy (*Social Inclusion*, n.d.).

Inclusivity will be assessed based on the composition of the environment, considering the proportion of Indigenous versus non-Indigenous individuals, and will include any implications regarding trust or mistrust between them. With that said, the measurement of inclusivity does not account for how individuals personally feel within the environment or whether they feel valued by others. Given URI's mission, we can only hope that individuals do feel comfortable and valued. Yet unfortunately the nature of relationships depends on the individuals involved which can't be fully predicted in advance.

This assessment will be categorized on a scale of high to low, with high indicating the highest level of inclusive and low indicating the lowest level of inclusivity.

Social Feasibility

In general, feasibility refers to the practice that something can be achieved (link). Social feasibility can be thought of as how something can be achieved based on if people accept the situation and how they interact in a system.(link cite). Through time, indigenous communities have not been included in religious violence prevention endeavors. Therefore, the success of integrating indigenous voices in URI's programs includes the strength of relationships built between indigenous and non-indigenous groups. This includes level of trust (Hwang, 2017), ability to work together, cultural awareness, and effective leadership (*Report of the Workshop on Social Feasibility,* n.d.).

Social feasibility will be assessed based on the practicality of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. This assessment will be categorized on a scale of high to low, with high indicating the most feasible and low indicating the least feasible.

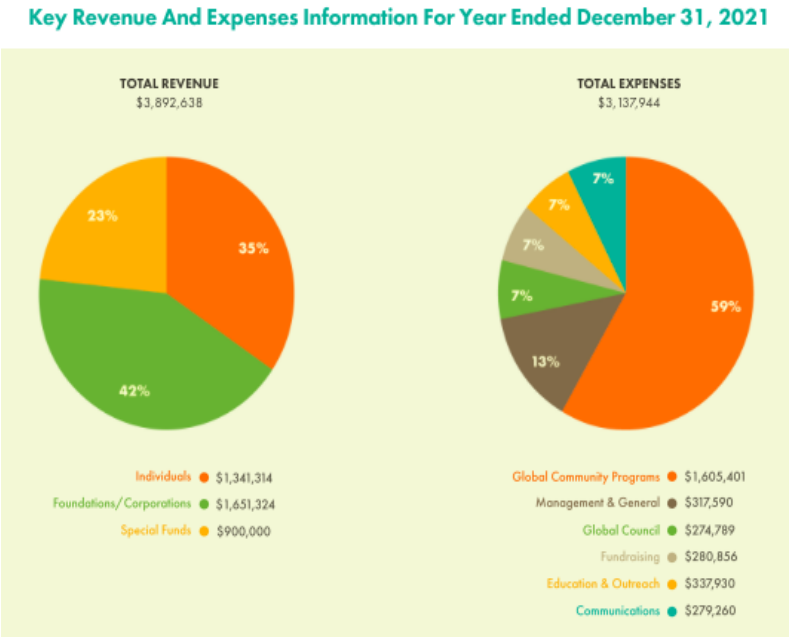
Sustainability

Sustainability holds importance for URI as it aims to uphold enduring relationships. Given the foundational role Indigenous people played in establishing URI, it is imperative that the work and relationships they foster endure over time.

Sustainability will be assessed based on the likelihood of continuing beyond the 10-year mark. This assessment will consider the stability of existing institutions and the strength of relationships both currently and as projected within the 10-year plan. This assessment will be categorized on a scale of high to low, with high indicating the most sustainable and low indicating the least sustainable.

Cost

Cost is inherent in every action taken. Whether it involves purchasing goods or investing time and energy, every endeavor comes with associated costs. For URI, it is crucial to consider cost as a criterion point to measure not only the monetary expenses associated with their travel and activities but also the sacrifices individuals will make in support of URI's work.



citation- Figure 6

The most recent financial statements, dated December 2021, indicates that URI's overall revenue is just under 4 million (cite). In 2021, just about $3,200,000 was allocated across six program services: Global Community Programs, Management & General, Global Council, Fundraising, Education and Outreach, and Communications. Among these services, the Global Community Program has the biggest spending budget, proven in end-of-year financial documents for both 2021 and 2022 (link). With this said, there seems to be no clear budget actually established for each program service, or it is not available. Rather, the money is allocated overtime to programs based on their needs. Depending on the type of material good needing to be purchased, the money would be allocated to one of the six programs services.

Cost will be assessed in two different ways, material costs and non-material costs, yet both will be evaluated on a scale of high to low, with high indicating the most costly and low indicating the least costly.

Material Costs encompasses monetary expenditures including the salaries paid to URI staff, travel costs, subscriptions, conference materials, food, grants, and any other resources. Due to limited access, not all of these materials can be quantified with numerical value according to URI's expenditures; however, appropriate estimates will be provided within each alternative.

Non-Material Costs encompasses the investment of time and the efforts of relationship building. Time investment includes the consideration of general work hours, traveling, and

correspondence. Similarly, efforts of relationship building involve participating in gatherings or events, in many cases outside of regular office hours. (transition?) These investments reflect a commitment to nurturing connections for meaningful relationships within and beyond professional settings.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: Regional Representative Bodies

From the establishment of URI in 2000, Indigenous people have played a key role in URIs founding, functionalities, and executing its mission. Today, URI has a network of 200 cooperation circles (CCs) that work within the action area of Indigenous people with the involvement of other indigenous people in CCs that work in other action areas. Efforts to integrate Indigenous perspectives into URI's work presents a valuable opportunity to engage with the existing community of indigenous people who are already members, participants in CCs, and contributors to the URI mission.

This alterative proposes creating Indigenous representative bodies across the 8 regions of URI to share their perspectives with URI executive staff. The purpose of these bodies is to set up a structured mechanism for Indigenous people already involved with URI to network, organize, share insights, and collectively determine their engagement with URI, in alignment with URI missions. With membership of the body being unlimited, or determined by the bodies themselves, each body would nominate two representatives to convey the regions perspectives on issues to URI executive staff members during quarterly meetings.

Within a proposed 10-year timeframe, this process starts with outreach efforts to individual members and CCs, through email communications and messaging, to gauge interest. Email communications can be completed via the URI CC search that allows you to email the CC from the website. Email and messaging communications can also be completed by contacting Maria Crespo – Director of Member Support - to share personal primary and secondary contact information of specific CC leaders. Another available option is to send out a mass email to CCs with an interest form. Once an interest is gauged, individual and group zoom meetings should be scheduled to establish connections, discuss the collaboration, and set a course of action to gather Indigenous people in the designated region. Within the first year of engagement, there should planning for in person meetings and social events[2] in each region, between URI staffers and the regional Indigenous people, to deepen relationships and foster face-to-face dialogue. Given URI planning and budgeting, this in person trip would probably be scheduled the following year. Ideally, the second year should be spent visiting all the regions. These meeting serve as crucial milestones for building relationships, trust, and understanding among all groups. Between the years three and six, official Indigenous bodies and representatives should be established in each region. Indigenous bodies in each region are recommended to meet on a monthly basis, but it should ultimately be in the hands of the body to self-organize. By or within year 6, it is recommended that the Indigenous body nominate two representatives. The two representatives nominated will be tasked to meet regularly with Executive Director Jerry White and other URI staff members to ensure ongoing communication and collaboration on all projects with indigenous involvement. It is suggested that in person meetings occur once or twice a year, supplemented by quarterly zoom meetings. By year eight, a major global conference of all Indigenous people in the URI network should take place.[3] This conference would serve as a

[2] Examples: Cultural events, community tours, prayer gatherings, meals, and sight-seeing.
[3] Recommendations for the conference: Given the amount of people, attendees would have to be responsible for covering their own travel expenses. With that said, URI must keep the conference affordable for Indigenous groups,

pivotal platform for fostering extensive network opportunities and catalyzing global collective action with URIs mission. This conference would serve as more than just a gathering; it would symbolize URI's deep commitment and dedication to its Indigenous community. By year 10, this initiative envisions a sustained momentum where Indigenous voices are seamlessly integrated, actively participating, and prominently heard at all levels within URI. This momentum would be propelled by the concerted efforts of URI to support Indigenous communities and the commitment and trust from the Indigenous people through meaningful, authentic engagement and collaboration. As a result, Indigenous perspectives are not only integrated but actively incorporated in URI's decision-making processes.

Figure 7 - Alternative 1 Timeline

Year	Tasks
Year 1	- Gauge Interest Among Indigenous Members - Form Relationships ; Host Introductory Meetings - Set a course to gather Indigenous people in a region together - Plan for a Region Visit
Year 2	- URI Executive Staff travel to regions - Focus on Fostering Relationships in each Region
Year 3	- Regional Indigenous Bodies Self-Organize - Maintain Communication with URI Exec Staff
Year 4	- Regional Indigenous Bodies Self-Organize
Year 5	- Regional Indigenous Bodies Self-Organize and Prepare to Nominate 2 Representatives
Year 6	- Regional Indigenous Bodies Self-Organize and Nominate 2 Representatives - Initial Meetings with URI Staff and Regional Representatives; zoom and Plan in Person - Quarterly zoom meetings are planned ahead - Start to Plan Global Conference
Year 7	- Plan Global Conference - Quarterly meetings between Regional Representatives and URI staff - Regional Indigenous Bodies Self-Organize
Year 8	- Indigenous-URI Global Conference - In person meeting with URI Staff and Regional Representatives (suggested at Conference) - Regional Indigenous Bodies Self-Organize
Year 9	- Regional Indigenous Bodies Self-Organize - Quarterly meetings between Regional Representatives and URI staff
Year 10	- Regional Indigenous Bodies Self-Organize

and provide all materials and food. Having some grants available for those who needing help with travel expenses is recommended and would be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis until there is no more grant money left.

	- Quarterly meetings between Regional Representatives and URI staff - In person meeting with URI Staff and Regional Representatives - Sustain meeting schedules and dynamics, be open to schedules and operations changing overtime – dependent upon the work being done- but keep same principals/values/foundations

Inclusivity.

This alternative is rated **medium-high** on inclusivity. The environment of this alternative revolves around URI's CCs that already uphold the organizations mission, which fosters unity and higher inclusivity. Regarding the proportion of Indigenous individual's vs non-Indigenous individuals, there is a notable increase in Indigenous representation with the establishment of regional Indigenous bodies and a balanced proportion in the meetings between URI's Executive Committee and Indigenous representatives. In these meetings there are 9 executive staff members compared to at least 8 Indigenous individuals, ranging to at most 16 Indigenous individuals if all regions elect two representatives. The implications of mistrust in this alterative includes tensions between URI's Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, which may manifest as concerns or worries. However, given the established goal and the foundational involvement of Indigenous people, there is a high likelihood that these tensions can be overcome.

Social Feasibility.

This alternative is ranked **medium-high** on social feasibility. The level of trust between Indigenous and non-Indigenous group is at least at a medium level, and there is high potential for trust to grow stronger, given that they are all URI members. With this, there is a high likelihood of the two communities collaborating effectively as the share a mutual goal. In terms of cultural awareness, this alterative is rated as medium because URI staff members need to invest in enhancing their understanding of various Indigenous cultures, values, and traditions. With a mutual commitment to URI's mission and a passion for listening, being heard, and building community, all these characteristics point to the ability for leaders to be effective.

Sustainability.

This alterative is assessed as **medium** in terms of sustainability. This alterative requires implementing systematic changes with URI that require a substantial investment, followed by ongoing efforts to maintain relationships and support for Indigenous bodies.

Maintaining this type of investment past a 10-year plan poses concerns, especially over a period of around 20 years, as staff turnover and the passing of individuals will occur. While there is potential for success and continuation, it's acknowledged that it could demand a significant and continuous effort. Thus, the outcome of sustainable could vary and the level of engagement required could become too much in the long run. The engagement needed for this alterative may be too much in the long run, yet the format for implementation to this alternative can be more suitable for shorter term projects.

Cost.

- *Material Costs.* This alternative is ranked **medium-high** in terms of material costs. The necessity of a team traveling to each of the 8 regions incurs significant material costs considering the average international ticket price stands at $1,300 (reference, 2nd). Given the logistics and relationship building involved, the trips would ideally require at least two people to go, estimating an average expenditure of $20,800. This cost is not including hotel accommodations, transportation, and food. Another cost to consider is the salaries for the elected representatives, most likely being paid part-time. The entails adding at least 8 salaries, potentially up to 16 new salaries, from the management and general program service. Finally, URI would need to allocate grant amounts for each Indigenous body to cover expenses such as food and meeting materials. It is believed that each URI region is awarded annual grants of around $25,000 (regional coordinator interview), breaking down to around $2,000 a month for all their functions. Therefore, it is recommended to give each Indigenous body $1,000 per quarter, resulting in each Indigenous body receiving an annual $4,000 to budget food, meeting materials, and travel for its members. For URI this would total $16,000 per year.

- *Non-Material Costs.* In terms of non-material costs, this alterative has a **medium-high** range of cost. The formation of the Indigenous bodies demands significant investment of time from URI staff, involving extensive relationship-building efforts. This includes traveling to each region, organizing meetings, participating in gatherings, and hosting dialogue exchange events and conferences. Given the substantial time commitment involved, pursing this initiative should be a top priority for URI. Once the groups are established and fully functioning, the investment of time required from URI staff would decrease. Relationships would be better established, allowing for more flexibility of meeting times, resulting in a reduced cost compared to the formation process. However, there would still be investment required for maintain these relationships overtime.

Alternative 2: United Nation Partnerships

Alterative 2 proposes that URI establishes a formal relationship with the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP). The expert mechanism is a subsidiary of the Human Rights Council advising them on the rights of Indigenous peoples. With this, it supports member states in exacting laws, policies, and programs to support the rights and protection of indigenous communities. As URI holds consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social

Council (ECOSOC) and other UN agencies, this should be a viable path forward to forming a relationship with indigenous communities globally.

There are three main pathways to connect with EMRIP - through mandate holders, UN indigenous people's forum, and in collaboration with other UN agencies. Mandate holders are individuals who serve in their personal capacity to report and advise on human right issues with indigenous communities. NGOs are able to directly contact EMRIP mandate holders which gives URI the ability to connect and work on establishing consultative connection. Furthermore, URI can connect with the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFLL) as they provide platforms for dialogue and cooperation between indigenous communities, UN agencies, member states, and NGOs. Lastly, URI could collaborate with other UN agencies that support EMRIP's work including the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Development Programme (UNDP), and UN Indigenous Peoples Partnership (UNIPP).

Given URI's existing memorandum of understanding with many UN agencies, pursuing these pathways appear to be both practical and sustainable. By strategically leveraging connections and opportunities for engagement, URI could connect with EMRIP and advance networks with indigenous groups.

Inclusivity.

This alternative is rated **medium** on inclusivity. The premise of this alternative centers on URI seeking the attention of the United Nations Indigenous Bodies and aiming to establish a productive relationship with them. While URI holds ECOSOC status grants its recognition within the UN system, it doesn't automatically ensure partnerships. To draw a comparison, it is like a local non-profit in the United States trying to collaborate with its county's Congress representative, a task that can be both challenging and uncertain (Larissa comment - reference). The relationship between URI and the UN mirrors this dynamic. Despite this though, URI shares a similar mission to these UN Indigenous Bodies which can foster an environment for collaboration and mutual interest. Although, the extent to which they can effectively collaborate remains uncertain. The proportion of Indigenous vs non-Indigenous groups holds significance within these Indigenous UN bodies, as all representatives are Indigenous. Currently, URI's representation primarily consists of non-Indigenous groups. This disproportion presents a challenge for URI staff, who may feel self-conscious about speaking for Indigenous issues despite not being Indigenous themselves. While UN Indigenous bodies engage with various stakeholders, their preference for partnerships often lean towards groups with Indigenous people. Finally, the implication regarding trust falls into a middle ground. While both groups are involved in the UN system and share similar missions, URI lack existing relationships and thus must actively work to earn the trust of UN Indigenous bodies.

Social Feasibility.

This alternative is ranked **medium** on social feasibility. The level of trust between groups will need to be established as they work together. While there is already a foundational level of trust established with all parties being part of the UN system and URI having ECOSOC status, the extent of trust in a work relationship remains uncertain. Initially, the ability to work together somewhat relies on URI depending on the UN Indigenous bodies. Subsequently, a relationship

can develop if the agency expresses interest in collaboration with URI. However, the outcome of this collaboration also remains uncertain, also considering that URI currently lacks Indigenous staff. In terms of cultural awareness, there must be a significant investment by URI staff members to enhance their understand of various Indigenous cultures and traditions. Similarly, the UN Indigenous groups will need to become culturally aware of how URI functions with their community partners, community circles (CCs).

Sustainability.

This alternative is assessed as **low-medium** in terms of sustainability, although there is a sense of optimism. Maintaining a consistent relationship with the UN bodies beyond a 10-year plan, especially over a period exceeding 20 years, raises concerns based on staff turnover in both URI and the UN. We have already witnessed this issue as URI used to be engaged with the Permanent Forum. Due to staff turnover and the effects of covid-19 in 2020, the relationship grew apart (URI Staff Interviews, former URI UN representative interview. The outcome of sustainability is predicted to vary based on personal relationships, the nature of collaborative projects, and the presence of any formal establishment of relationships between the organizations, such as a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

Cost.

- *Material Costs.* This alternative is ranked **medium** in terms of material costs primarily because not all material expense can currently be accounted for. The initial costs associated with establishing connections with these agencies are primarily non-material. However, if the partnership progresses over time, URI will need to allocate funds for travel expenses, salaries for URI representatives, and any necessary material items.

- *Non-Material Costs.* In terms of non-material costs, this alterative has a **medium-high** range of cost. Initiating a partnership with the UN Indigenous Department requires navigating the expected administrative tasks, including email correspondence, paperwork, and scheduling meetings that often arranged for dates further into the future. Building a partnership also demands a significant investment in proactive relationship building. Although meetings with UN representatives may be infrequent, they carry substantial weight in initial impressed and perceived quality of work, which can determine the bodies willingness to collaborate. Consequently, while the time investment may be expectedly moderate, it can escalate to a high level due to URI's investment to communication and preparation.

Alternative 3: Increase Indigenous Representation

This alternative proposes recruiting, appointing, and employing Indigenous individuals across all levels of the URI Support Team hierarchy laid out in a 10-year timeframe. However, this alternative should not be views as a one-time endeavor, rather as an ongoing commitment to maintaining diversity and ensuring representation of different groups within URIs administration. These new positions consist of a quota in the Global Council, hiring part time regional support staff, and recruiting new employees in all other URI Support Teams by catering job opportunities to URI Indigenous communities. After providing a comprehensive overview of URIs organizational structure, the recommendation for each team will be assessed and outlined.

Upon analyzing the online biographies of all URI staff members, it was found that only one individual openly identifies as Indigenous. Considering the fact that current URI staff members do work closely with Indigenous communities, the absence of Indigenous representation presents a significant cause for concern as URI prides itself on its commitment to embracing and collaborating with Indigenous peoples. In the Preamble it states, "We, people of diverse religions, spiritual expressions and Indigenous traditions throughout the world, herby establish the United Religions Initiative to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice, and healing for Earth and all living beings" (https://www.uri.org/PPP).

Figure 8_ - URI Organizational Structure

There is a solid foundation of Indigenous collaboration within URI which has demonstrated Indigenous engagement. However, in recent times this engagement has significantly diminished on administrative levels. Relying solely on historical justifications has proven to be insufficient and today there needs to be proactive changes in each URI Support Team. Figure 8 shows the URI organizational structure, also known as URI Support Teams, from a top-down approach. Appendix I contains full descriptions of each URI Support Team.

The person who openly identify as Indigenous is part of the Global Council of Trustees, URIs primary governing body, elected by regional CCs or appointed by URI at-large, serving voluntarily for a four-year term. While the current presence of Indigenous individuals at URI's primary governing body is positive, the term limit raises concerns regarding sustained Indigenous representation. Within the URI handbook and trustee election processes, it is recommended to implement a guideline to include at least appoint one at-large Indigenous individual to the trustee board if cooperation circles elect at least one other Indigenous representative. In cases where no Indigenous representative is elected by regional CCs, at least two at-large Indigenous individuals should be appointed. This rule would ensure the presence of Indigenous voices at URI's primary governing board, whether they are elected by regional CCs or not.

At-large trustee is selected through a nomination committee which assess the needs to appoint, review, and approve nominations (pdf handbook). At the end of each election, the nomination committee determines if there are needs or gaps that need to be represented on the Global Council (source). The current Indigenous trustees is an at-large appointees (link), and is assumed that they were appointed based on the realization of a gap in Indigenous representation, alongside the individuals merits, experience, and historic involvement with URI or related efforts (pdf cite). While the considerations of a gap are taken into place, it is recommended for the

nomination committee to add another consideration point of needing to have Indigenous representation among the trustees. As this is added, the nomination committee will invite current and former trustees, URI Staff, the Senior Advisory Council, and cooperation circles to submit nominations by a specified deadline (pdf handbook). Then, the nomination committee will review applications, and forwards its recommendations to the Global Council for approval (pdf handbook). Individuals approved by the Global Council will join the Council as At-Large trustees for a specified length of time. At-large trustees are not mandated to serve a four-year term; however, it is recommended to strive to find individuals to serve all four years for the purpose of fostering long-term relationship building.

Figure _ Global Council Trustee Election Cycles

Year	Election Cycle
Year 1 – 2024	- Trustee Elections for Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East/North Africa, Multiregional, and North America - At-Large Appointee process for 1 or 2 Indigenous individuals if not voted in by CCs Assess
Year 2 - 2025	
Year 3 – 2026	- Trustee Elections for Africa, Asia, Europe, and Southeast Asia/Pacific - Evaluate At-large Indigenous trustee representation.
Year 4 - 2027	
Year 5- 2028	- Trustee Elections for Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East/North Africa, Multiregional, and North America - At-Large Appointee process for 1 or 2 Indigenous individuals if not voted in by CCs Assess
Year 6 - 2029	
Year 7 -2030	- Trustee Elections for Africa, Asia, Europe, and Southeast Asia/Pacific - Evaluate At-large Indigenous trustee representation.
Year 8 - 2031	
Year 9 – 2032	- Trustee Elections for Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East/North Africa, Multiregional, and North America - At-Large Appointee process for 1 or 2 Indigenous individuals if not voted in by CCs Assess
Year 10 - 2033	

The Global Council Executive Committee is a subset of the Global Council. currently consisting of nine members and is responsible for all URI governance oversight (*Global Council Executive Committee*. (n.d). Two ways to integrate Indigenous people in this team is to either hire a new Indigenous director to be on the committee or have an at-large appointed Indigenous representative be on the council. If the at-large representative stayed for a four-year term, it would be more feasible to request them to serve on the executive committee. If

not though, URI can recruit applications and recommendations on a job position among the URI Indigenous community.

The Senior Advisory Council is a group of URI supporters with organizational wisdom who are voluntary consulted to provide guidance to URI's leadership (link). However, currently there is Indigenous representation on the board highlighting a gap in URI's diversity (link). To address this gap, it is essential to reconnect with Indigenous elders who played influential roles or held administrative positions previously in URI. This can be achieved by reaching out to current URI elders on the advisory council, leveraging existing contacts, reaching out to other individuals who were involved at URIs founding, and conducting research on URI's database on Indigenous involvement. By actively seeking out and adding Indigenous elders to the Senior Advisory Council, URIs can enrich its decision-making processes and can reaffirm its commitment to Indigenous engagement.

The Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing URI's finances (link) and The Foundation Investment Committee advises the Board of Directors to overseeing investment performance and usage of funds (link).While online bios may occasionally include notes on one's identity, individuals in these support team are hired and work based solely on their merits and experience in finance. Limited information was available about this team, so assuming a proactive approach, it is recommended to recruit and hire Indigenous individuals with expertise in finance. Doing so not only contributes to the diversification of URI's workforce but also helps mitigate any potential biases that may exist among non-Indigenous staff members. Recruiting and hiring Indigenous people can be done through targeted job recruitment to cooperation circles, leveraging regional network outreach, seeking advice and recommendations on potential candidates, and posting job opportunities online. By intentionally incorporating a diverse team, URI can foster a more inclusive and equitable workplace environment, enriching its organizational culture.

The Global Programs Team and Regional Staff is part of the Global Support Office that works directly with regional staff to assist with the needs of CCs (*Global Programs Team and Regional Staff*, n.d.). Regional Staff are the anchor of URI connections with the network of CCs around the world (link). They function as supporters and connectors within the CC network and bolsters the work of CCs in their region (interview with Regional Coordinator). Out of the eight URI regions, five regions have only one coordinator. In contrast, the remaining three regions have three to five coordinators (link). Managing all these tasks across an entire region can be challenging and overwhelming for one person and a small group of people (Regional coordinator interview). To assist in the workload, providing additional support to regional staff would be immensely beneficial. Therefore, it is recommended to have regional associate(s) tasked with supporting the Indigenous CC network and CCs focusing on Indigenous action areas. These associates can be brought on board on a part-time basis, reliving regional staff of some of the day-to-day administrative and social responsibility such as facilitating connections between groups, addressing Cooperation Circle needs, and bolstering the work with Indigenous initiatives. These associates would report directly to the regional coordinators, ensuring coordination and collaboration within the whole region. Recruiting Indigenous people to fill these positions, should involve the consultation of regional Indigenous action CCs. This would include advertising the opportunities to CCs, seeking recommendations from regional staff, setting an application deadline that accommodates more remote communities, and conducting interviews to evaluate what the individual can contribute to the role. This approach allows regional coordinators to focus more on high-level coordination, while the associates handle the operational aspects of supporting Indigenous work within the region. In addition, it is anticipated that this could foster stronger relationships between Indigenous communities and URI, as the associate(s) would cultivate a more personal connection with the communities – something that the regional coordinators may not be able to fully achieve given their broad range of tasks.

> *"Regional staff members are instrumental in helping CCs connect with one another regionally and globally for information exchange, inspiration, and collaboration."*
>
> - *URI People/Support Teams Page*

The Global Program Team comprises 11 employees tasked with coordinating, directing, and supporting cooperation circles across various regions and action areas. Yet currently none of these employees are Indigenous. While the current team members possess the necessary skills to engage with Indigenous peoples, their non-Indigenous identities have hindered their effectiveness and raised trust issues within Indigenous communities (Karen, Larissa, Tahil). Uri staffers recognize the importance of having individuals with Indigenous identity lead their efforts. Hiring an Indigenous director would not only improve communication and facilitate conversations more effectively, (Interviews with URI Staff), but also enhance URI,s creditability and trustworthiness with Indigenous communities. Therefore, the inclusion of Indigenous directors within the Global programs Team would ultimately advance URI's mission of integrating and collaborating with Indigenous communities.

URI's Global Support Office is the is core team that supports the cooperation circle network and is responsible for the overall implementation of communication, fundraising, networking, and finances for the URI regions (Global Support Office, n.d). The Global Programs Team consists of 22 employees, many of whom are also members of other Support Teams, especially from the Global Programs Team or the Executive Committee. Similarly, none of these staffers are Indigenous. Whether to hire more Indigenous people to be on the Global Support Staff or have the individual(s) on the Global Support Team also become part of the Global Support Office, it is crucial for URI to prioritize the presence and involvement of Indigenous people in leadership positions.

Inclusivity.

This alternative is ranked **medium-high** on inclusivity. The environment of this alterative appears to be promising, as URI would recruit and hire Indigenous people who already align with and support the URI mission. However, while URI staff are welcoming of Indigenous individuals, there may be a mixture of excitement and hesitation among the Indigenous people themselves. Yet it's predicated that this hesitation will be overcome based on the foundations of URI and the mission URI holds to strengthen its collaboration with Indigenous communities, assuming that URI demonstrates their commitment. The current proportion of indigenous vs nonindigenous people in URI is unbalanced with more non-Indigenous people. However, a key aspect of this alternative is to achieve proportionality. While the interview process would be conducted by non-Indigenous individuals, input on hiring decision can be received from the regional Indigenous communities. Once individuals are hired, the proportion is expected to level out. Given that this process is based on application with formal interviews and recruitment procedures, trust will naturally be legitimatized. There are no strong implications of mistrust as those who are more hesitate probably won't apply. Indigenous people in the URI network who are genuinely interested will apply, and their concerns will be addressed contributing to a positive dynamic of trust.

Social Feasibility.

This alternative is ranked **medium-high** on social feasibility. The level of trust between Indigenous and non-Indigenous group is established is established on positive terms, although historical factors do lead to some trust concerns among Indigenous people. As URI strengthens its Indigenous roots and the jobs become interconnected through URIs network, trust is expected to grow. As a result, cultural awareness will grow. Together, the ability for these two groups to work together will be established on positive grounds and is anticipated to grow.

Sustainability.

This alternative is ranked **medium-high** in terms of sustainability. As URI establishes these positions with their organization, especially as these roles closely align with the core foundations of the organization, they will become essential components of the URI structure. To a degree, URI's finances also impact sustainability, as changes over time can influence the income available to pay salaries. While there is currently no anticipated decrease in funding, it's important to consider this for the future, especially when seeking to hire new employees. Beyond

the 10-year outline, it is predicted for this alternative to be sustained for the foreseeable future of URI.

Cost.

- *Material Costs.* This alternative is ranked **medium-high** range in term of material costs. The primary material cost is the salaries of the new staff members on all support teams expect for the Global Council and Senior Advisory Board. All Global Council Trustees serve on a volunteer basis (URI handbook cite) and senior advisors contribute their own time, support, connections, and finances to URI (URI handbook cite). New staff hired on the Executive Committee, Global Programs Team, Global Support Office, and finance departments would need to be paid on a full-time payroll. New supporting regional staff would most likely need to be paid on a part-time basis. Unfortunately, what URI pays for full time and part time staffers has not been made available. However, on end-of-year financial documents, the full amount spent on salaries in 2022 was just under $1,500,000 and 2021 just under $1,300,000 (link/cite). Given this information, it would be a higher cost for URI to increase their staff.

  Through the implementation of this alternative, travel expenses are relatively low, as the majority of communication and meetings are expected to be conducted via zoom or over the phone. Individuals in each region would be responsible for local travel to collaborate in person as needed. Finally, material costs are also relatively low for this alternative.

- *Non-Material Costs.* In terms of non-material costs, this alterative has a **medium-high** range of cost. Recruiting for this alternative would demand a significant amount of time to work through the various stages of the recruitment process such as drafting job descriptions, advertising positions, reaching the Indigenous communities to advertise, reach out to recommended candidates, review applications, schedule interviews, and consider who to hire. The investment of relationship building within these alternative focuses on URI staffers within each support team fostering work relationships and the new hires cultivating relationships with URI Indigenous communities. As new hires gradually integrate into URI, relationship building will continue to evolve naturally through day-to-day interactions, collaboration with colleagues, and active engagement with Indigenous communities. This relationship building will start/be central to the new hires training and adjustment to the job. Yet as new hires integrate into URI, relationship building will occur naturally as they adjust to the work environment, collaborate with colleagues, and engage with Indigenous communities. Overall, the investments of time and relationships associated with this alternative can fluctuate from a medium to high level across the stages of implementation, integration, and longevity.

RECOMMENDATION

This outcome matrix summarizes the merits of each alternative proposed according to each criteria point. Overall, Increasing Indigenous Staff is shown to have the most promising action plan for URI to integrate Indigenous voices into their violence prevention programs. While Regional Representative Bodies ranks the same on inclusivity and social feasibility, Increasing Indigenous Staff ranks the best on sustainability, resulting in it ranking best on three out of five criteria points.

This proactive alternative not only aligns with URI's commitment to diversify and inclusivity but also acknowledges the invaluable perspectives that Indigenous people bring to the organization. By actively promoting Indigenous representation within its organizational structure, URI can better fulfill its mission of promoting cultivating interfaith and intercultural cooperation to cultivate peace, justice, and healing (link).

	Inclusivity	Social Feasibility	Sustainability	Non - Material Cost[4]	Material Cost
Regional Representative Bodies	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium	Medium-High	High
United Nations Partnerships	Medium	Medium	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Medium
☆ Increase Indigenous Representation	Medium-High	Medium-High	Med-High	Medium-High	Medium-High

[4] Noticing that all non-material costs are ranked medium to high, this is attributed to the nature of investing time and commitment to building relationships, which requires significant dedication in all alternatives.

IMPLEMENTATION

Overall, it is anticipated that all stakeholders within URI will generally support the recommendation, although they may hold reservations or concerns about how to approach its implementation. To address these hesitations and ensure commitment from all stakeholders, a three-step approach is outlined for URI to employ.

Centering URI Mission.

It is essential to center the message of URI's mission captured in URI's Preamble: "We, people of diverse religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions throughout the world, hereby establish the United Religions Initiative to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings" (*URI Preamble, Purpose, and Principles*, n.d.). In all approaches, this mission statement must serve as a starting point and the ultimate goal. By ensuring that the actions resonate with the core values and objectives of URI, a collective commitment can be fostered to the shared mission.

Authentic Engagement.

As a grassroots initiative, forming authentic relationships with community members is paramount for URI. To foster authentic engagement, URI can implement various strategies such as supporting self-governance and self-representation, establishing a trust structure, and capitalizing the word "Indigenous." Indigenous people highly value the principles of self-governance and self-representation, rooted from cultural traditions and political authority (cite cite). URI must ensure that they are working in a collaborative relationship with Indigenous people, having there be a two-ways to the relationship. With this, URI must prioritize building and maintain with Indigenous communities, even those who are already committed to URI principles. With the foundations of URI, it was agreed upon to capitalize the word "Earth" because Indigenous people believe Earth needs to be treated with that honor (Monica Willard interview). In the same way, URI should be capitalizing the word "Indigenous" in all their works as the word is referring to a racial and ethnic groups (Smith, Linda – 2021chapter 7 "Articulating an Indigenous research agenda", link link).

Fosters Collective Support.

Through centering URI's mission and building authentic engagement, an inclusive environment will be cultivated. However, creating an environment also requires a concrete effort towards fostering collaboration among all stakeholders. This collaboration approach entails actively involving diverse voices, perspectives, and expertise in decision-making processes. It involves creating spaces for difficult conversations, having platforms for open dialogue, and developing

mutual understanding and empathy (cite). While URI already provides many of these spaces (cite), it is crucial to leverage them further and creating additional avenues for Indigenous people.

CONCLUSION

The persistence of religiously motivated violence challenges the universal principle that no individual should endure any type of violence based on their religious beliefs. The source of this granted freedom may vary, whether it is perceived as a divine entitlement, stated by international bodies like the United Nations, enshrined in specific government constitutions that serve as a model or inspiration, such as the United States Constitution. Regardless of its origin, the principle remains universal: everyone should be able to hold and practice their religious beliefs without the fear of violence or persecution. The United Religions Initiative is a leading organization that champions this principle in addressing religiously motivated violence.

Through the collaboration of all societal groups to address religiously motivated violence, societies can create an environment that upholds the principles of tolerance, diversity, and the unrestricted exercise of individual rights, thereby fostering a more inclusive and harmonious coexistence of various beliefs.

URI PREAMBLE

We, people of diverse religions, spiritual expressions, and indigenous traditions throughout the world, hereby establish the United Religions Initiative to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

We respect the uniqueness of each tradition, and differences of practice or belief.

We value voices that respect others and believe that sharing our values and wisdom can lead us to act for the good of all.

We believe that our religious, spiritual lives, rather than dividing us, guide us to build community and respect for one another.

Therefore, as interdependent people rooted in our traditions, we now unite for the benefit of our Earth community.

We unite to build cultures of peace and justice.

We unite to heal and protect the Earth.

We unite to build safe places for conflict resolution, healing, and reconciliation.

We unite to support freedom of religion and spiritual expression, and the rights of all individuals and peoples as set forth in international law.

We unite in responsible cooperative action to bring the wisdom and values of our religions, spiritual expressions, and indigenous traditions to bear on the economic, environmental, political, and social challenges facing our Earth community.

We unite to provide a global opportunity for participation by all people, especially by those whose voices are not often heard.

We unite to celebrate the joy of blessings and the light of wisdom in both movement and stillness.

We unite to use our combined resources only for nonviolent, compassionate action, to awaken to our deepest truths, and to manifest love and justice among all life in our Earth community.

(CITATION)- https://www.uri.org/PPP

APPENDIX I – URI's Organizational Structure

1. The Global Council serves as URI's primary governing body, consisting of 24 elected trustees from each of the 8 URI global regions, three trustees each. Elections are held every four years, with half of the regions (4 of 8) holding elections every two years. These trustees are responsible for oversee URI operations and finances, as well as supporting the company's long-term sustainability and growth (*Global Council of Trustees*, n.d. ; add uri handbook).

2. The Global Executive Committee is also a URI primary governing body, that is a subset of the Global Council members which is responsible for governance functions including finances, human resources, fundraising, nominations, and strategic planning. (*Global Council Executive Committee*. (n.d ; add uri handbook).

3. The Senior Advisory Council is a group of major URI supported that have relevant organizational wisdom and partner with the Global Council and Executive Committee to provide guidance in URI leadership (*Senior Advisory Council*. (n.d.).

4. The Board of Directors oversees URI investments, endowment investment performances, and usage of funds by URI (link).

5. The URI Foundation Investment Committee is also responsible for oversight of URI's investment but also advises the Board of Directors on changes to URI investments (link).

6. The Global Programs Team, Regional Staff, The Global Programs Teams is part of the global support office that works directly with regional staff to assist with the needs of CCs (*Global Programs Team and Regional Staff*, n.d.). Regional Staff are the anchor of URI connections with the network of CCs around the world (link). In addition, they collaborate with the regional trustees to support and address the needs of current CCs, and to assist in establishing new CCs (link).

7. URI's Global Support Office is the is core team that supports the cooperation circle network and is responsible for the overall implementation of communication, fundraising, networking, and finances for the URI regions (Global Support Office, n.d).

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