

## SALIAGUA: A STORY OF ECOLOGICAL INJUSTICE

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### What Is It?

Interactive activity – in the form of a play – that outlines the social, political, economic, and ecological impacts of oil extraction in a country in the Global South.

This exercise serves as an introductory tool to talk about the interrelationship between race, poverty and the environment in a global context.

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### Why Do it?

- Help participants integrate an 'ecological lens' into their existing political work.
  - Get participants to see the inter-related nature of social, economic, and ecological injustice.
  - Highlight the intensifying nature of the ecological crisis our planet is facing and how this crisis severely impact poor communities, indigenous communities, and displaced communities.
  - Highlight the importance of resisting these impacts and the importance of building a movement for ecological justice anchored around the needs and vision of poor people, indigenous people, and communities of color.
  - Understand how globalization, industrialism and capitalism are driving ecological destruction on a global level.
  - Connect participants' personal experiences with ecological destruction to the broader economic forces causing it.
  - Provide a contrast between the ecological balance found in many indigenous communities and the social/ecological degradation imposed once big corporations start mining resources from indigenous land.
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**Time** 1 hour

## Materials Needed

- Photocopied scripts for each of the 10 characters in the play + the narrator (11 copies)
- Simple props for the 10 characters in the play. Possible examples:
  1. Villager: *Abuela Aguaslimpias*  
(PROP – Fishing net and Basket of vegetables)
  2. Water: *Corrientes River* (PROP: Fish cardboard cutout)
  3. Indigenous person: *Chief Strongheart*. (PROP – Bow & Arrow)
  4. Trees/Forest: *Lacundún Forest*. (PROP – Tree cardboard cutout)
  5. Landowner: *Dr. Dinero* (PROP – Tie, Blazer & Cell Phone)
  6. President of Saliagua: *El Presidente* (PROP – Sash)
  7. MegaBank Banker (PROP – Top Hat with \$\$ signs + Timer)
  8. Oil Company Executive: *Chevron CEO*  
(PROP – huge Chevron logo pinned to chest)
  9. Migrant Worker: *Miguel Migrante*  
(PROP – Hard Hat & Bottle of Alcohol)
  10. Agribusiness Company Executive: *Carphill CEO*  
(PROP – Tie, Blazer & GMO Corn Sign)
- Additional Props:
  - a. Fish Cardboard cut-out for *Abuela Aguaslimpias*
  - b. Big cardboard \$2 billion check
  - c. Sign that says 1 YEAR LATER
  - d. Poisoned Fish Cardboard cut-out for *Abuela Aguaslimpias*
  - e. Toxic Icon for the *Corrientes River*
  - f. Cut Tree icon for the *Lacundún Forest*
  - g. Sign that says 10 YEARS LATER
  - h. Beer bottle for *MIGUEL MIGRANTE*
  - i. Sign that says 12 YEARS LATER
  - j. Big cardboard \$4 billion check
  - k. Sign that says THE END
- Butcher paper with *Training Goals* on it (see below)
- Butcher Paper & Markers to scribe participants' reactions to the play, with the *Debrief Questions* written up on them in advance.

## Directions

1. Prior to the play, you should create a 'stage' area with 10 chairs on 'stage' for the characters. The characters' props and their script should be placed on their respective chairs.
2. Begin the training by telling your audience that you are about to enact a play that will last about 20 – 30 minutes. Quickly review the *Training Goals* of the play with your audience:
  - To see the interrelated nature of social, economic, and ecological injustice.
  - To highlight the intensifying nature of the ecological crisis our planet is facing and how this crisis severely impact poor communities, indigenous communities, and marginalized communities.
  - To understand the importance of resisting these impacts and the importance of building a movement for ecological justice anchored around the needs and vision of poor people, indigenous people, and communities of color.
3. Ask for 10 volunteers to be characters in the play. (You may want to choose and prep some volunteers ahead of time for the bigger roles, like *Abuela Aguaslimpias*.)
4. You (the lead trainer) will be the narrator. You read all of the *Narrator* parts
5. When the Script is finished, break participants into small groups and have them discuss the Debrief Questions for 20 minutes:
  - Do you know of anyone who has lived an experience like the one described in the play? Family members? Friends?
  - How is the situation in the play connected to our lives here in the U.S.?
  - Do similar situations and dynamics play out here in the U.S?
  - How should our organizations be responding to the eco-crisis described in the play? How is it relevant to the work our organization does?
6. If time permits, have a reporter from each small group briefly summarize what each group talked about. (Feel free to conduct some or all of the debrief questions in the big group if that feels more appropriate.)

## ACT I – The Set-Up

**Script**

**Narrator:** *Welcome to all! This is the story of a fictitious country called Saliagua - a country in the Global South, also known as the 3rd World. The events we are about to witness are the story of what's happened and what is still happening to many, many places - all over the world. It's the story of a specific community - a group of people - who've lived on their land for a long, long time. And it is the story of the river, the forest, and the animals who've lived alongside them.*

*So I need 10 volunteers to play the characters in this story...(10 Volunteers recruited from audience and come up on stage)*

*Great, thank you for volunteering, come on up and sit in these 10 chairs. Please put on the props on your chair – they represent your character for the next 30 minutes. I'll introduce each of you to the audience as the story develops...*

*Are you all ready?  
Let's get started!*

*So this is a community called Aguaslimpias, a small village in Saliagua along a river that runs through a lush, rainforest. This is an elder, one of the residents of Aguaslimpias:*

**Abuela Aguaslimpias:** *We are subsistence farmers – [Holds up basket*

*with corn, tomatoes, squash, etc.] We grow, eat and also sell this corn, squash and tomato at the local markets. Our land is rich and fertile. We are also fishing people [holds up fish]. It is a gift from the river, the Corrientes River. We love living here.*

*Introduce the river...*

**Corrientes River:** *I am a powerful tributary that births in the highlands of the Lacandún forest. I run all the way east to the Atlantic Ocean. I am proud to be the home of many trout, bass, catfish and other fish. My currents are strong and my waters are crystal clear. The kids around here learn to explore me at a very early age...*

**Narrator:** *Across the river are indigenous communities who maintain their traditional way of life, hunting and fishing. They have been there for thousands of years. Like the villagers, they have strong ties to the river, as well as to the Lacundún forest within which they live.*

*Introduce Indigenous person.*

**Chief Strongheart:** *We have been practicing our land-based ways for many, many generations. We depend on traditional healers and doctors when we get sick. The success of our crops and fishing fluctuate annually based on the weather and seasons. Our health*

depends on the river's health and well-being. (Chief Strongheart walks over to the Corrientes River and puts his arm around the River.)

In this community we share our resources and live communally. Some years are tough, others are bountiful. Overall, we are happy – we control our own destiny. We have lived under the care and watch of the Lacundún Forest forever, she takes care of us.

*Introduce Character #4 – Lacundún Forest.*

**Lacundún Forest:** My name is Selva Lacundún - Lacundún Forest My earth is rich and fertile and covered in amazing plant life. I am teeming with animals – jaguar, monkeys, wild boar, tons of fish. There are 50+ languages spoken by the original peoples that live within my ecosystem. There are more species living here than anywhere else on the continent. The rivers born here in my headwaters provide life to peoples thousands of miles from here...

**Narrator:** *Folks in both Aguaslimpias and the Lacundún forest (point to villager and indigenous person) would be considered poor by city standards, as they have no schools, hospitals or fancy infrastructure. But they have basically everything they need and have practiced self-governance for a long time.*

*Not far away from the Aguaslimpias village- about 300 miles- is the capital of the country, Progreso. A large and growing city. The city has high unemployment, but as people are pushed off the land in the country to make way for the production of cash-value goods, from textile manufacturing to tropical export cash crops, more people move to the cities, where work draws them in.*

*This is Dr. Dinero, one of the biggest landowners, in Saliagua:*

**Dr. Dinero:** I come from a powerful, land-owning family that has been growing coffee for many generations in Saliagua.

**Narrator:** *How did you get your land?*

**Dr. Dinero:** Over the years we have gradually acquired more and more. Our family has been friends with the ruling government. We have recently tried to help the peasants by loaning them the money to plant their harvests, but when there is a bad harvest and they can't pay, we have to take their land to get our money back. I take their fields and plant coffee, because I can make lots of money growing it for Starbucks and McDonald's up in the U.S.!

**Narrator:** *Do you own any land around the Lacundún forest?*

**Dr. Dinero:** Not yet. There are no good roads up there. It takes 13 hours to get from the capital to Aguaslimpias! But someday...I heard the land up there is very fertile!

**Narrator:** *This is the president of Saliagua, El Presidente! (Gesture towards El Presidente). He has big plans for the country.*

**Presidente:** I am the president of Saliagua. I'm seeking re-election next year. "Progress for All" is my campaign slogan. We promise affordable electricity to the whole country. I just need to find the money to make it happen...

**Narrator:** And how do you plan to make that happen?

**Presidente:** I just returned from taking my family to Disneyworld up in Miami – it was my daughter's 5 year old birthday! While in the U.S. I made this great new friend. He's got a lot of cash and wants to help our country. (Gestures & winks at MegaBank Banker)

**MegaBank Banker:** I am MegaBank, a private, commercial, U.S., bank.

**Abuela Aguaslimpias:** (pointing to MegaBanker) These people are new to our country. Before we never saw Bank of America, Citicorp, or MegaBank. I have no idea what they are doing here.

**Narrator:** What are you doing here in Saliagua?

**MegaBank Banker:** We are interested in loaning and investing money in Third World countries. They are "emerging economies." This is where we can really make money.

**Narrator:** *And what is that timer for?*

**MegaBank Banker:** We have a timer because, for banks, "Time is Money." We need to know when to collect interest payments.

**El Presidente:** Fantastic! In partnership with MegaBank, I will bring wealth and prosperity to our great country! In fact, I have a new plan I would like to announce right here: We have just discovered vast oil reserves in the western part of the country, by the Lacandún forest!

*(MegaBank and Dr. Dinero applaud.)*

**El Presidente:** The loans from MegaBank will help us build the roads and infrastructure needed to get to that area of the country. By extracting and selling that oil we will become a wealthy country! I intend to sell blocks of land off for exploration, and, if sufficient oil is discovered, the private companies will have the right to exploit the oil. These companies will pay handsome royalties to the government. This will help us bring cheap electricity to all! And we will pay for new schools, new hospitals and create new jobs.

**MegaBank Banker:** Dear Presidente, have I got the perfect business partner for you! My golfing buddy at the country club in Houston is Dick Tarbucks, the CEO of Chevron, one of the biggest oil companies in the world. Here, take a \$2 billion dollar loan so that you can start building roads into Aguaslimpias.

*(Banker takes out cell phone, calls Chevron CEO and invites him to Saliagua. Banker then passes a big cardboard \$\$\$ check to El Presidente)*

*(Chevron CEO enters stage right)*

**Chevron CEO:** Presidente! What a pleasure to meet you! I hear you've discovered oil! Well, well, well...I can offer \$200 billion to invest in your country. We will bring jobs, technology and progress to your people. When do we start, tomorrow?

**El Presidente:** How about today? Dr. Dinero, besides owning a lot of farmland, you also own the main asphalt company in the country, correct?

**Dr. Dinero:** Absolutely.

**El Presidente:** Here's a government contract for you to build the road up to Aguaslimpias

*(El Presidente gives Dr. Dinero the big cardboard \$\$\$ check just received from MegaBanker)*

**El Presidente:** Can you have the road done in 6 months?

**Dr. Dinero:** Consider it done....

**Chevron CEO:** Phenomenal!

**Abuela Aguaslimpias:** I don't know about this, things are moving a bit too fast...

*(End of Act I)*

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**ACT II – 1 YEAR LATER**

*(Narrator holds up a sign that says 1 YEAR LATER)*

**Narrator:** *So 1 year has passed since oil exploration was begun up in the Lacandún forest. Mr. Presidente, how are things going?*

**El Presidente:** They couldn't be better. Chevron found a huge oil field right by the village of Aguaslimpias; it cuts right across the river. It's the biggest oil find of our country's history! We're building a pipeline to move it to the sea. The dollar signs are crossing before my eyes...!

**Narrator:** *Abuela, how are things looking up in the village?*

**Abuela Aguaslimpias:** Well look for yourself... [She points to her surroundings...] The trees in the village have been cut down. The lands are dry and dusty. They are filled with Coca-Cola cans, plastic bottles and Styrofoam plates. As we lose our land, some of the younger members of the village are establishing new plots on the indigenous people's land. The Corrientes River, once wide and generous, is now merely a stream. [She shows empty basket with only one poisoned fish].

**Corrientes River:** That's because of all the dynamite they are throwing into my river to open oil pits! Not to mention all those nasty chemicals! And I'm filling up with silt! Dying fish is no coincidence. If you want this village's name to remain Aguaslimpias – Clearwaters – then please stop what they are doing to me...

*(Narrator pastes a toxic icon on the Corrientes River character)*

**Chief Strongheart:** Conflicts have developed between the villagers of Aguaslimpias and my people. As their land is destroyed, they are coming in and seizing our land. And as the

Chevron people discover new oil in the heart of the forest, the government has set up a military outpost right by our community. We are no longer allowed to hunt in the area richest in wild boar!

**Abuela Aguaslimpias:** For a moment we got excited because the Chevron workers started paying good money for our produce and livestock, but I've noticed that some of our villagers can no longer afford basic food since the prices have gone up at our market. New workers from the capital want food, sex, entertainment, and drugs, and they have the money to pay for it. As our villagers can no longer grow or buy all the food they need, I've noticed some of the young women and children going out to sell themselves at night... It's terrible!

**Chief Strongheart:** I am very worried to. The introduction of new people is destroying our livelihoods and culture, and bringing disease. I'm also concerned about the new construction. We've always harvested wood very carefully from the Lacandún forest – we know that our health is dependent on her health. But now big machines are cutting trees down by the hundreds! Where are all our fellow creatures – the monkeys, the jaguar, the birds – who call this place home supposed to go? And what will we eat when they are gone?

*(Narrator pastes a cut tree icon on the Lacandún Forest character)*

**Narrator:** *Anybody else want to tell me how things are going for them?*

**Dr. Dinero:** Things are fantastic! My business is exploding! Now that we built the road, I am

finding new land to purchase for my coffee plantations! A lot of the villagers seem willing to sell their land at cheap prices! (Winks at Abuela Aguaslimpias) I also took some of the money the government gave us for the Asphalt contract and I invested it in a new company – a wood export company! There are exotic woods in the Lacundún forest that fetch incredible prices in the U.S. and Europe. Our company just shipped 2 tons of exotic lumber to Mel Gibson, who is building a new mansion in Malibu!

**MegaBank Banker:** I'm doing great as well. El Presidente just asked me for another loan – to

build the oil pipeline from the forest all the way to the ocean. He also wants to build a dam at the headwaters of the Corrientes River to provide more electricity to the big cities. So I'll be preparing him a 3rd loan soon...

**Chefron CEO:** What can I say? With the price of oil going up every month, I'm a happy man! I'm so glad we invested here in Saliagua! Oops! I have to go. I have to run to an election fundraiser for El Presidente back in Progreso...

(End of Act II)

### ACT III – 10 YEARS LATER

*(Narrator holds up a sign that says 10 YEARS LATER)*

**Narrator:** *So 10 years have passed since oil exploration was begun up in the Lacandún forest. The place has changed a bunch. Let find out how...*

**Chief Strongheart:** Our population has shrunk considerably. Much of the land we've lived on has been seized. Diseases brought in by the newcomers sickened and killed many of our people. As we lost our capacity to support ourselves, our young people started migrating to the city, others discovered alcohol. We are losing our language – some of our children no longer know our native language. I am worried that what happened to other native people deeper in the forest will happen to us – that we will disappear as a distinct peoples...

**Lacundún Forest:** I am under serious, serious stress. I lost 30% of myself in 10 years. That's 1/3 of my ecosystem gone in a decade! What was once lush forest teeming with animals and native peoples quickly became coffee fields and oil pits... All of my original inhabitants – insects,

birds, mammals, humans – are struggling to survive.

**Dr. Dinero:** Oh, come now it's not that bad! Once I entered the logging business I realized that I could make money while helping the forest regenerate. My banker friend here said I could receive a 'Green Development' loan to plant new trees, which helps the environment! (Point to MegaBanker) I'm planting a bunch of teak and eucalyptus trees in previously cut down areas. I've planted over 5,000 new trees! I help the forest and then I get certified as a 'green business' back in the U.S.! Everybody wins...

**Lacundún Forest:** Teak & eucalyptus trees are not native to this area. Furthermore, they are super invasive species - they suck all the nutrients from the soil and choke out the remaining native plants and trees. In turn, insects and animals lose even more of their food sources. Your 'green development' plan is not helping at all. It's throwing things even more off balance...

Look, past oil and gold exploration has already caused the extinction of 30 indigenous languages spoken here. This round of oil extraction will knock out more languages and native people. Indigenous peoples carry the ancestral knowledge of this ecosystem – how to take care of me properly.

**Abuela Aguaslimpias:** Our village has become a full-blown town – people from other areas still come looking for work, even though it's hard to come by. Now there is electricity. There are schools, but they are not very good. Kids now work instead of play – mostly selling goods on the street. Our original villagers can no longer subsist and grow their own food. Our land has been completely poisoned by all the toxic development of the oil fields, and the oil spills...

**Corrientes River:** Most of this toxic waste is poured directly into me! I am now completely poisoned. My lovely fish are all gone. I run dark and murky 24 hours a day. 3 years ago Chevron had a massive oil spill...for days thousands of gallons of petroleum spilled into me. I still have that gunk stuck to my riverbed. I feel horrible – it pains me to see the village children still swimming in me. I love them but they shouldn't be visiting me anymore...

**Abuela Aguaslimpias:** Our original community has changed too. As we lost our capacity to subsist, many of our younger adults have migrated to the city. My grandson Alberto moved to Progreso five years ago. He works as a security guard at a Burger King in one of the wealthy neighborhoods. He dislikes it but at least he is able to send us a little bit of money. The extra cash comes in handy, as we now have to buy expensive produce trucked in from other parts of the country since our soil is poisoned or has been converted to coffee fields. And working in the coffee fields, we don't make enough to survive...

**Corrientes River:** After 10 years, the oil is now harder to get – so they pump harder and use bigger tractors. They need more water for this – so they are draining me more than ever before. For the first time, the people around here are experiencing water shortages. In the dry season, I sometimes look like a creek rather than a mighty river. This was never the case before...

*(Introduce new character Miguel Migrante – migrant worker)*

**Miguel Migrante:** I moved to Aguaslimpias 2 years ago looking for work. I lived in Progreso for 15 years before that. But I'm originally from a small village on the other side of the Lacandun forest, in the Sierra Alta Mountain range. I came here looking for work because I had a hard time making ends meet in the city. Since I had done some work in construction before, I figured I could get a job working machinery here. That way I could send some money back to Progreso to support my grandkids.

But I also came because I missed life in the countryside. I miss my hometown – it was beautiful when I was a child. I played in the river and the forest all day. But 25 years ago, they began digging for gold right by our village. The village isn't even there anymore – it was destroyed. The mercury from the gold mining poisoned the area. So I came to Aguaslimpias hoping to find some of that rural tranquility and beauty, but I'm afraid I came too late. I console myself at night with my only constant friend – I call her 'mi botellita' - 'my dear little bottle'...

*(Miguel Migrante takes a swig from a bottle of alcohol)*

**Chief Strongheart:** One of the hopeful changes, however, has been the fact that the original villagers and my people began organizing together. After some of our initial conflicts over land,

we realized that we were not enemies. We realized that the oil company – Chevron – was responsible for the negative changes in our community. So we began meeting and making demands. We sent some delegates to a conference in the city, where we learned that the gas flares the oil company was running – 100 foot high gas flares that were in operation 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, were illegal. These flares caused much of the asthma, cancer and acid rain in our communities. We organized a campaign against the flares, and recruited allies in the city and had some strikes and eventually forced the company to stop the flares.

**Abuela Aguaslimpias:** That victory built more unity between villagers and indigenous people. Together, we have built a local organization called ‘Tierra es Vida’ = “Land is Life”, and we have joined a national network called the ‘Movimiento Sin Tierra’ = the Landless Peoples Movement, to coordinate our struggles for dignity on a national scale. Recently, the chief and I went to an international conference on people’s movements. There we talked about indigenous sovereignty, and land struggles and climate

change. We met good people from the Northern countries too, people who pledged to support our struggle here by convincing Americans to consume less oil and change their consumption habits, putting less pressure on communities like ours. That was encouraging.

**Narrator:** *Presidente, are there any final thoughts you have after 10 years of oil extraction?*

**El Presidente:** I have to say that the Chief and Abuela make some good points. The oil extraction produced a lot of wealth, but most of it didn’t even stay in the country. And most of the loans he gave me (points to MegaBanker) had high interest rates, so the country is now in debt, even though we are an oil producing country! I have grandkids too, and I don’t want them to live in a world completely ruined by climate change...so I think we may have to rethink this whole oil business. We need some alternatives...

**Narrator:** *Okay, thank you. We are now ready for the last Act...*

#### ACT IV- 12 YEARS LATER

*(Narrator holds up a sign that says 12 YEARS LATER)*

**Chief Strongheart:** We have a great success story to share with all of you! Since we last saw you, Chevron discovered new oil reserves in the depth of the Lacandun forest. An area that still has no roads and is ecologically in good shape. They wanted to drill in there too. But our organization, “Tierra es Vida” has grown and it spearheaded an international alliance to prevent this

exploration and we won! Our government denied Chevron new drilling rights...

**Abuela Aguaslimpias:** That’s right! International NGO’s supported us, the Landless Peoples Movement supported us, civic organizations in the capital supported us. The Chief and I even went on a speaking tour in the U.S. and

got 50 municipalities there to pass resolutions supporting us. Some Americans & European allies even organized a boycott of Chevron! Now we are suing Chevron and demanding that they pay for the damages and clean-up of our community for the harm committed this last decade... We are on the move!

**El Presidente:** Wow, given that oil drilling has become more controversial, I'm trying to figure out what kind of development we should focus on now...

**MegaBank Banker:** I have a great alternative for you! As the international community is looking for alternatives to fossil fuels, there is an excellent "Green Development" business opportunity! People in the U.S. and Europe still need gasoline for their cars and scientists have figured out how to make gasoline out of palm oil from palm trees! You already have the roads and infrastructure up by Aguaslimpias – take out the coffee fields and vegetable fields and plant palm trees in their place! You can make billions selling 'biofuels' to Northern countries! I can give you a \$5 billion dollar loan to get you started...

**El Presidente:** Really? That sounds promising.

**MegaBank Banker:** Plus, I've got another perfect business partner for you! He's also my golfing buddy. This is Chad Corndollars, the CEO of Carphill, one of the biggest agribusiness companies in the world. (Gesture towards Carphill CEO) He will lease all of this land, and extract, transport and sell the palm oil for you. They are the experts in this emerging 'biofuels' market.

**Dr. Dinero:** This sounds fantastic. A new market for a new product! I know Americans love their cars...if we end up producing the 'new fuel' for them, we will become rich. I can't wait to start working with you Mr. Corndollars. I will happily lease my land to you!

**MegaBank Banker:** It's settled then! Here is your first loan. \$4 billion for you Mr. Presidente, \$1 billion for you Dr. Dinero...

*(Hands each of them another big \$\$\$ loan prop)*

**El Presidente:** (In a booming voice) Dear citizens of Saliagua, I would like to announce a new and exciting development plan that will bring wealth to our country...

**Abuela Aguaslimpias:** WAIT A MINUTE! Food prices around the world are going up! Poor people everywhere are hurting. Some of that is caused by drought related with climate change, but some of it is being caused by what you are suggesting – taking land that was used to grow food and converting it into 'agrofuels' for cars. That won't help us, it will hurt us!

**Corrientes River:** I also have something to say. This guy (points to Mr. MegaBanker) had the original idea of inviting Chevron here in the first place. He put up the money for it. Thanks to you I'm now polluted. You helped kill all of my fish; starve the animals that depend on me; choked me with roads; tarred my riverbed with oil. You expect me to trust your opinion? What you are suggesting will drain the little water I have left to grow a single type of tree to make a new oil for a new kind of car to feed the same old polluted system in the U.S. that is causing global warming... and I'll die in the process.

**Lacundún Forest:** That's right! Along with Chevron, the MegaBanker and his friends like Dr. Dinero are responsible for the damage done to me. You've cut me down, you've robbed me of original languages spoken here – those that hold my deepest knowledge; you've depleted me of the animals & insects that kept me strong and vibrant; many of my medicinal plants are now gone. You destroyed many of my original peoples. If you start making loads of money from

this 'palm oil' - these so-called 'biofuels' - what's going to stop you from chopping down the rest of this beautiful ecosystem so that you can plant even more palm trees for your personal profit? I also say NO to this shortsighted idea...

**Chief Strongheart:** We see through this ruse! We will not fall for it! Our alliance will not allow this new plan to go forward. The international networks we are part of – networks of farmers, peasants and indigenous people like “Via Campesina”, are already resisting these attempts around the world. We believe in community control over our own development; we believe in healthy and safe communities; we believe in clean water, land, and air; we believe the land belongs to those who work it and respect her. We are the true stewards of this place; we've known how to care for her correctly for thousands of years. Our cultures tell that we shall leave this place in better

shape than when we got here. It is our responsibility to our grandchildren, to the animals that feed us, to the forest that gives us lodging, and the waters that give us life...

**Abuela Aguaslimpias:** We stand united in this struggle. If we can't grow our own food, if can't meet our own needs and maintain our diverse cultures and languages, we are not truly free. We believe in local living democracies. No amount of imposed development – electricity, schools, money –will convince us otherwise. We are now organized - our struggle will prevail. Our children and our ecosystem demand it. Our dignity and that of the land around us are one and the same. Land and freedom!

*(Narrator holds up a sign that says THE END.  
Invites all actors to bow...)*

### Debrief Questions for small group discussion

- Do you know of anyone who has lived an experience like the one described in the play? Family members? Friends?
- How is the situation in the play connected to our lives here in the U.S.?
- Do similar situations and dynamics play out here in the U.S.?
- How should our organizations be responding to the eco-crisis described in the play? How is it relevant to the work our organization does?