

REDD



A Collection of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies

Pur Project, Peru | Purus REDD Project, Brazil | Guaraqueçaba Climate Action Project, Brazil | The Monte Pascoal REDD project, Brazil | Suruí Forest Carbon Project, Brazil | SocioBosque Programme, Ecuador | REDD on the Bribri territory, Costa Rica | Noel Kempff Climate Action Project, Bolivia | Scolel'Te forest carbon project, Chiapas, Mexico | FACE carbon project Mount Elgon, Uganda | Bukaleba Forest Reserve, Uganda | Kikonda carbon tree plantation project, Uganda | New Forests Company carbon tree plantations, Uganda | N'hambita Community Carbon Project, Mozambique | Evictions of Sengwer Peoples in the Cherangany Hills, Kenya | The Kasigau Corridor REDD projects, Kenya | CI & Walt Disney REDD project, DR of Congo | Kariba Redd+ Project, Zimbabwe | UN-REDD programme in Cross River province, Nigeria | WWF & Air France Holistic Conservation Programme for Forests, Madagascar | Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership, Indonesia | Ulu Masen, Aceh, Indonesia | The Harapan forest restoration project, Indonesia | Oddar Meanchey, Cambodia



Cover illustration: Location of REDD projects (yellow) and of principal project proponents, investors and buyers of REDD project credits (red).

REDD: A Collection of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies

Text: Jutta Kill

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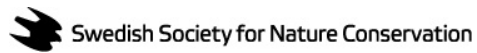
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Why this publication?

23 years have passed since the United Nations Earth Summit adopted the Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, and 18 years have gone by since most industrialised countries agreed to moderate emission reductions when they signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Yet, emissions caused by burning oil, coal and natural gas have continued to rise, including in those industrialised countries that share the main responsibility for the increase in atmospheric emissions since coal and oil began to fuel the 'industrial revolution'.

In December 2015 in Paris, France, at the annual UN climate summit, governments are expected to adopt the next big international climate agreement. The role of forests in this future agreement has been a controversial topic of debate since the proposal for "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation" (REDD) was first discussed at the 2007 UN climate meeting in Bali, Indonesia. Hundreds of millions of euros have been spent since 2007 in parallel to the UN talks on REDD. International agencies like the World Bank and governments in favour of forests linked to a carbon trading mechanism have organised meetings and funded programs to promote their version of REDD, consultants have been preparing methodologies for REDD projects, carbon companies and conservation NGOs implement REDD pilot initiatives and model projects, and another set of consultants has begun certifying those projects and the methodologies they use.

Key aspects that have marked the discussion over REDD include:

- Despite many years of debate about REDD, the controversies over how to integrate forests into an international climate regime remain the same as in 2007. In fact, they remain pretty much the same as they were in 1997 when governments – for good reasons - decided not to include forests into the Kyoto Protocol's carbon trading mechanisms;¹
- All those years, a big part of negotiating time has been spent on how to make forests fit into a financing regime – a carbon market of sorts - with very little time and no progress made on how governments envisage to actually tackle the underlying causes of forest loss or respect and strengthen the rights of forest peoples;
- Forest peoples – indigenous peoples and traditional communities whose way of life has protected and maintained forests against outside pressure of destruction – have been much talked about in the negotiations but their voices, analysis of what actually causes deforestation and experiences of how to protect and restore forests have had at best a marginal presence in these international climate meetings. Yet, the proposals debated and the REDD pilot programmes and projects already underway substantially affect this way of life – not least because the REDD debate continues to be characterized by the false analysis that vilifies shifting cultivation and agroforestry as a major driver of deforestation. This report exposes how that false analysis is already jeopardizing ways of life that have protected forests against outside pressure;
- REDD has shifted the climate debates at the UN and beyond away from the main driver of the climate crisis: burning of fossil fuels and the need for system change, including drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, first and foremost in industrialized countries.

REDD will remain a 'hot topic' ahead of the decisive UN climate meeting in Paris, France, in December 2015. In this context, the World Rainforest Movement considered it important to compile the documented experience of what has happened when the REDD project salesmen (and sometimes, saleswomen) of often-cited model REDD projects arrive in the forest.

REDD: A Collection of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies presents summaries of reports from 24 REDD² projects or programmes with a common characteristic: they all show a number of structural characteristics that undermine forest peoples' rights, or fail to address deforestation. As offset projects, they all fail to address the climate crisis because by definition, offset projects do not reduce overall emissions: Emission reductions claimed in one place justify extra emissions elsewhere. What is needed, however, are overall reductions – and steep ones, in particular in industrialized countries. Offsets by definition cannot help achieve that goal, they are a distraction.

The collection is based on already existing documentation, and the compilation is far from complete. An expanded *Collection of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies* exposing REDD projects that have weakened or caused harm to forest communities' way of life could also include:

- the 1989 Applied Energy Service Inc. and CARE/Guatemala Agroforestry Project, the first forest project funded explicitly to offset greenhouse gas emissions³;
- the Juma Sustainable Development Reserve Project in the Brazilian state of Amazonas⁴;
- the Russas and Valparaíso REDD projects in Acre, Brazil⁵;
- the Walt Disney and Conservation International REDD project in Peru⁶;
- the Profafor tree planting project in Ecuador⁷;
- the Ibi Bateke tree planting project in the Democratic Republic of Congo⁸;
- the Mai N'dombe REDD project in the Democratic Republic of Congo⁹;
- the Kibale forest carbon project in Uganda¹⁰;
- the Makira Forest REDD project in Madagascar¹¹;
- the Climate Care forest conservation and biodigester project in Ranthambore, India¹²;
- etc.

They are all known to have caused harm and given rise to grievances from communities in the project area. One aspect that makes documenting the realities of REDD projects difficult, however, is that they are often located in remote, hard to reach places where access to and contact with those critical of the project is easy to control by project proponents.

Yet, even the selection of experiences presented in this *Collection of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies* shows that in many cases, communities were never asked in the first place whether they consented to the forest carbon project. In many cases, the information provided to communities has also been biased or incomplete. Where REDD project plans were presented to communities, many promises of benefits and employment were made by project proponents if the community agreed to the proposed REDD activity. What the villagers got in return for the promises, however, was mainly harassment, restrictions on the land use that provides their livelihood and blame for being responsible for deforestation and causing climate change. In very few of the examples, communities had been informed that the 'product' these projects generate, carbon credits, would be sold to polluters in industrialized countries, and that the buyers include some of the largest corporations whose business is built on fossil fuel extraction – and thus destruction of the territories of indigenous peoples elsewhere. Small-scale peasant farming, in particular where it involves shifting cultivation, is vilified in the large majority of REDD projects as cause of deforestation while the major real drivers of deforestation – extraction of oil, coal, mining, infrastructure, large-scale dams, industrial logging and international trade in agricultural commodities – remain unmentioned or unaddressed in REDD initiatives.

Experience also shows that implementation of REDD on the ground has overwhelmingly failed to secure peoples' rights to their lands. Even where land title might be recognized on paper,

implementation of REDD projects - especially those that generate carbon credits - is likely to lead to forest peoples effectively losing the very control over their territories that a title document might initially grant. Tradable REDD credits are a form of property title. Those who own the credit do not need to own the land nor the trees on the land, but they do own the right to decide how that land will be used. They also usually have the contractual right to monitor what is happening on the land and request access to the territory at any time they choose for as long as they own the carbon credit.

Finally, it is worth noting that many of the REDD projects presented in this *Collection of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies* have been 'independently certified' - by consultancies paid by REDD project promoters - with 'silver' or 'gold' distinctions awarded to them for supposedly providing outstanding social benefits. Contrary to the illusion built with such certification logos, as well as glossy brochures and fancy videos, however, the REDD experiences documented here highlight some of the many risks of REDD for forest peoples.

Neither the certification reports nor the case studies reviewed for this collection provide adequate information about the particular impact of REDD on women. Some contain sections discussing some gender aspects of REDD. However, in none of the documented examples, gender aspects or the impact of REDD on women were the focus of investigation, and most contain very little information specifically on how REDD affects women. In many regions where REDD projects take place women depend on access to forests in particular for providing for their families.

The logic of offsetting that characterizes the majority of REDD projects is not unique to REDD. Offsetting has gained momentum as a tool in the context of the 'Green Economy' - because offsetting allows the continuation of an economic model built on destruction of 'nature' under the pretence that damage caused has been compensated. Having realized the potential of this tool in facilitating expansion of corporate activities, mining companies like Rio Tinto and Newmont, food processing and bio-technology corporations like Monsanto and Bunge, international agencies like the World Bank and FAO, and conservation NGOs like Conservation International and The Nature Conservancy are pushing the use of offsetting in new contexts.¹³ 'Landscape REDD', 'climate-smart agriculture', 'biodiversity offsets', 'forest restoration credits', 'community development credits'¹⁴ have all been proposed as ways to allow the continuation of corporate destruction.¹⁵

The calls on governments and international agencies to stop supporting the expansion of 'offsetting' initiatives, in particular its most advanced model, REDD, have been many. They continue to fall on deaf ears. Nonetheless, these calls must be repeated because when governments talk of 'scaling up REDD' or 'introducing climate smart agriculture' the consequence will be more experiences like those compiled in *REDD: A Collection of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies*.

1 - "We don't want this conservation area, we want land titles first": Pur Project, Peru

Who's behind the project?

Pur Projet is a French organisation launched in 2008 by Tristan Lecomte, a key promoter of 'responsible entrepreneurship' in France. Pur Projet offers corporations like construction company Vinci or energy utility GDF Suez the opportunity to offset their carbon emission by financing Pur Projet activities. Fundación Amazonía Viva, an NGO established on initiative of Pur Projet, is the local partner in the project.

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

Pur Projet claims that the project in Peru *"is entirely developed and managed by the communities and their democratic organization who alone define their vision, their objective and activities,"* and that *"Pur Projet has no interest, no right, neither over their land, nor their production."*¹⁶

The project has been certified by the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standard (CCB) standard, receiving a CCB Gold Level distinction for being particularly "beneficial to local communities".

What has been happening in reality?

In November 2013, Friends of the Earth (FoE) France visited the Pur Projet project area in the Martín Sagrado conservation concession in Peru. None of the communities they visited considered themselves as initiators of the carbon project. One community member told FoE France that *"There are 11 Shawi communities, some hold land titles and some don't... That we have no land titles is unfair because, as indigenous peoples, we have always taken care of this land, which nourishes us, provides us with game to hunt and medicinal plants with which to treat and heal ourselves. We don't want this conservation area, we want land titles first, then we will talk about projects."*¹⁷

The regional government granted the conservation concession to a cocoa cooperative, ACOPAGRO, but the associated carbon rights have been transferred entirely to Pur Projet. The FoE France report found that local communities had been neither consulted nor sufficiently informed about the establishment of the conservation concession and the associated carbon rights arrangements. The project is also based on complex contract arrangements: When a tree is planted or a plot of forest is formally protected, a land owner signs a carbon contract with the local farmers' cooperatives. Then, Pur Projet signs an exclusive 80-year transfer contract with the cooperatives for the carbon rights and resells the carbon rights to polluting companies seeking to 'offset' their greenhouse gas emissions. Communities have no information about profit generated by carbon credit sales, nor are they aware of the motivations or identity of the carbon credit end users.

Hundreds of migrants, who had to abandon their land in regions where mining made the land unfit for growing crops, are affected by the Pur Projet activities.¹⁸ Because their property rights to the land they have settled on were never officially recognised, they were never formally consulted on the Pur Projet. Thus, they could not assert their opposition to the control of the REDD project over the local area's forests on which they now depend for part of their livelihood. Pinocchio Awards 2014 explains how *"Pur Projet has [...] set aside a budget of €150,000 for "legal assistance (lawyers) to get court decision on migrant invasion in the conservation area".*¹⁹

Find out more about this project:

- Les Amis de la Terre (2014): Carbon vs. Food. A Case Study of the 'Fair Forest Carbon Compensation' Projects of the French Company, Pur Projet, in the Region of San Martín, Peru. http://www.amisdelaterre.org/IMG/pdf/brochure_perou_les_amis_de_la_terre_uk_web.pdf
- Les Amis de la Terre summary of responses to Pur Project reactions to the report and video by Amis de la Terre (2014): <http://www.amisdelaterre.org/purprojet> (FR only).
- Pinocchio awards Nominations 2014: No need to reduce your emissions, Pur Projet will get you off the hook! <http://prix-pinocchio.org/en/nomines.php>

2 - Blaming small-scale farmers as “deforestation agents”: Purus REDD Project, Acre, Brazil

Who's behind the Purus project?

Moura & Rosa Empreendimentos Imobiliários LTDA; CarbonCo LLC. and Freitas International Group LLC. are named as partners in the Purus REDD project. Moura & Rosa is a Brazilian company primarily responsible for the on-the-ground management of the REDD project. The other two firms, based in the USA, are responsible for initial financing and the marketing of the credits. London-based broker The Carbon Neutral Company, formerly known as 'Future Forests', facilitated a carbon credit sale in 2013 to CA Technologies, a U.S.-based IT company.²⁰ CA Technologies used them to offset emissions associated with CA World 2013, a conference hosted by the company in a Las Vegas casino and resort.²¹ In 2014, the FIFA World Cup Carbon Offsetting Programme bought offset credits from the project. FIFA states that the *"portfolio of low-carbon projects in Brazil was carefully selected together with non-profit carbon management programme BP Target Neutral"*.²²

This REDD project has been certified by the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standard (CCB). The project has a CCB Gold Level distinction for being particularly “beneficial to local communities”.

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

Project documents present the Purus REDD project as aimed at reducing deforestation pressure on 34,702 hectares of land in the municipality of Manoel Urbano, some 200 km from Rio Branco, the capital of Acre. *"The Purus Project mitigates deforestation through numerous locally-run activities including agricultural extension training, patrols of potential deforestation sites, through the planned building of better houses and by installing solar photovoltaic panels for local communities"*, Carbonfund.org stated in 2014.²³

The project documents claim that without the REDD project, *"continued unplanned frontier deforestation - forest clearing for subsistence agriculture and cattle ranching"* would have increased deforestation in the area. They also claim that in the absence of the REDD project Moura & Rosa **could** convert part of the forest to cattle pastures, in *"full compliance"* with Brazilian legislation.

In relation to unresolved questions of land tenure and use rights, the VCS certification report of 20 October 2014 explains that families living on land adjacent to the project area have been growing crops or raising animals for over ten years, and thus, have the right to title to this land. The report

states that: *"The project proponent believes that once the details of ownership are worked through with the [...] family and title is received the clearing of the project lands will cease."*²⁴

What has been happening in reality?

The Purus REDD project involves restrictions on shifting cultivation practises and agro-forestry activities on which the traditional land users in the area depend. They are rubber tapper families who also practise small-scale agriculture, largely for subsistence. It is in part through restriction of these activities that the project aims to generate carbon credits for sale. A 2013 report for the World Rainforest Movement notes that *"This so-called pressure on the forest – resulting from subsistence agriculture and small-scale livestock grazing, viewed by the project proponents as unsustainable practices – is the reason for which the 18 families living in the project area (roughly 100 people) are classified as "deforestation agents". [...] the construction of this narrative of culpability is essential to grant legitimacy to a conservation project whose creation could only be justified by the existence of an actual threat to the forest."*²⁵

The project documents lack a detailed description of the history of land occupation in the project areas. Such historical information would show that the families affected by the REDD initiatives have lived in the area for more than 70, 60 or 40 years (they have settled in the area at different points in time), and do thus have the right, under Brazilian legislation, to be made owners of the land because they have occupied and used the land for at least the minimum time required by law. Such a historical description would also show that communities in all three locations have undertaken numerous initiatives to obtain tenure security, including for land now part of the REDD project. Communities have requested dedication of their territories as 'Extractivist Reserve' or Conservation Unit (Unidade de Conservação – UC).²⁶

The perversion of Free Prior Informed Consent

"I asked if the document was detrimental to me. He [the representative of Moura & Rosa] said that it wasn't, that I could sign it. It was just insurance for us, that we were going to benefit", a resident in the Purus REDD project area explained. Those who sign the Memorandum of Understanding, however, sign a document recognizing the company as owner of the lands in the Purus REDD project area. This document could thus be used as evidence against the occupants if they were to seek legal recognition of their ownership through uninterrupted use of the land at some point. After the CCB certification audit team declared the document unsuitable (*"It is not appropriate to ask people to sign a document that they cannot read"*²⁷), Moura & Rosa hired a consultant to re-visit the communities, encouraging community members to verbally express their desire to join the project instead of requesting they sign a document. With the adoption of this adjustment, the audit team judged the project eligible for a CCB "Gold Level" certificate.

The project proponents claim that they recognize the existence of unresolved land disputes in the project area. However, they state that they will recognize for each family the right to only an area of 100 hectares (a size considered 'small' in this part of the Amazon).²⁸ Project proponents go as far as to claim that without the REDD project, the local community would not have *"secure and legal title to land"*. They thus suggest that local residents living in the REDD project area will be the main

beneficiaries of the project because they would no longer face the risk of being evicted from the land. In return, they would have to be willing to limit their traditional forest farming practise.²⁹

Forests play an important role in the traditional land use practise, and families have traditionally occupied areas larger than the 100 hectares the REDD project is willing to recognize as land to which occupants have legitimate rights. Therefore, the proposal that includes restrictions on the traditional land and forest use practices of the communities and only regularizes 100 hectares does not fulfil their rights. Furthermore, the restrictions that the REDD project attempts to impose have already given rise to a conflict that has yet to be resolved between the occupants of the land and the owners of Moura & Rosa. For the communities depending on the land and forest formerly used for extraction of rubber, the REDD project represents a continuation of the process of expropriation and expulsion of rubber tapper and traditional forest communities – a process, "*which Chico Mendes opposed throughout his entire life*".³⁰

Find out more about this project:

- Verena Glass (2013): Projetos de carbono no Acre ameaçam direito à terra. <http://reporterbrasil.org.br/2013/12/projetos-de-carbono-no-acre-ameacam-direito-a-terra/>
- Centro de Memória das Lutas e Movimentos Sociais da Amazônia (2013): Observations on a private REDD project in the state of Acre, Brasil. http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Observations_on_a_private_REDD_project_in_Acre.pdf
- Cristiane Fastino and Fabrina Furtado (2014): Economia verde, povos da floresta e territórios: violações de direitos no estado do Acre. Relatório de Missão de Investigação e Incidência. <http://www.plataformadh.org.br/category/relatorias/meio-ambiente/>

3 - "Suffering here to help them over there": Guaraqueçaba Climate Action Project, Paraná, Brazil

Who's behind the project?

Between 2000 and 2002, US-based conservation NGO The Nature Conservancy (TNC) set up a deal with three of the world's biggest greenhouse gas polluters: General Motors (GM), Chevron and American Electric Power (AEP) to provide USD 18 million TNC would invest in forests and generate credits to offset their emissions. The Society for Wildlife Research and Environmental Education (SPVS), a Brazilian NGO, bought land to set up three private reserves covering a total of 20,235 hectares in the coastal Atlantic forest region of Paraná. SPVS is responsible for on-the-ground implementation of the forest carbon project in these reserves, while TNC's role included the management of funds, preparation of carbon measurements and marketing of carbon credits. Presented internationally as a model³¹ by TNC in the early days of the REDD debate, current TNC material makes no more mention of the project – or lessons learned from the experience.

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

Miguel Calmon, TNC's former forest carbon director in Latin America, says the following about the project's objectives on the TNC website. "*The Guaraqueçaba Climate Action Project proves that what's good for nature is also good for people. [...] It was very important to the Conservancy to ensure that local*

people had a stake in keeping the forests around Guaraqueçaba standing. Everyone has to make a living somehow — so if you can't farm or ranch, how can your family earn money? That's why we and our partners have involved so many community members in income-generating, sustainable enterprises.”³²

Information from a 'Preliminary Project Plan' dated 10 April 2000 and related to the GM reserve explains that “[a] primary goal of the project is to generate as much as 2 million tons of carbon benefits that [...] will ultimately be accepted, credited, and available to GM to meet its emission-reductions targets.”³³ The land bought with the money from the three corporations had been degraded from buffalo grazing and was to be restored as part of the carbon project. The carbon absorbed and saved in the vegetation as a result of this restoration provided the carbon credits.

The companies don't actually own the 'restored forest', or even the carbon in the trees; what they own is the right to market the carbon credits they received in return for their investment that allowed TNC and SPVS to purchase the land. The three companies had the right to either use the carbon credits for their own marketing or trade on possible future forest carbon markets.

What has been happening in reality?

According to TNC, “Buffalo ranching, introduced when a road penetrated the region in the 1970's, has caused extensive forest clearing for pastures. Unsustainable extractive activities such as logging, heart-of-palm gathering, over fishing, and hunting were eroding the resource base of Guaraqueçaba's rich forests.” But if a serious historic analysis of the drivers of deforestation would have been undertaken, it would have shown how fiscal incentives in the 1970's led to the large-scale deforestation as a result of logging, palm heart processing and buffalo ranching incentivised through these fiscal measures. The fiscal incentives attracted influential ranchers from outside the region who began to register and take possession of large tracts of land, in many cases through *grilagem*, the illegal registration and appropriation of land. Many areas thus appropriated were part of the communal territories of Caiçara communities.³⁴ To give up their lands, these communities were often threatened by hired killers; even buffalo herds were used to force access to their properties. Most families living in the Caiçara communities had only customary rights over the land, but no registered legal property documentation – in part because they lacked the political and administrative connections that many of the new land owners had who acquired large tracts of land from the 1970s.

TNC fails to distinguish this centuries-old traditional Caiçara use of forest gardens and gathering of heart-of-palm, vines and other forest products from the large-scale destruction of forest that goes back to the 1970s land grab in the region, stimulated by fiscal incentives from the state government at the time. The consequences of this inability or unwillingness by the project owners to fully analyse the history of deforestation are devastating for communities. Harassment of people when they enter the forests to gather food, wood, or vines are taking their toll. When arrests and the harassment by the *Força Verde* - the 'Green Police' who patrol the protected areas in the region – became ever more frequent, many started to move away from the place that was their home for generations. “Directly or indirectly, it was through these conservation projects that the population came here and created a ring of poverty around our city causing a really big social problem here,” the mayor of the nearby town Antonina explains.³⁵

TNC stands for both The Nature Conservancy and Transnational Corporations – to the community at Guaraqueçaba they are one and the same. Two villagers sum up the situation:

“It's a game that only has economic aims. It favours big businesses and NGOs. They don't care about the environment, they care about profit, the NGOs as much as the businesses; through carbon credits, they keep polluting, they keep earning more. And it's the community that pays the price for all of this.”³⁶

“One day a group went out, looking for vines in an area belonging to our community. In our territory. So we were chopping down vines and some SPVS employees passed by. In their area they have some police that are called park rangers and they shot over us – they didn’t get anybody. SPVS doesn’t want us here. They don’t want human beings in the forest. The land isn’t even theirs, it’s ours.”³⁷

Find out more about this project:

- REDD-Monitor (2012): Community voices on The Nature Conservancy’s Guaraqueçaba Climate Action Project: “We’re suffering here to help them over there”. <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2012/06/07/community-voices-on-the-nature-conservancys-guaraquecaba-climate-action-project-were-suffering-here-to-help-them-over-there/>
- FERN (2012): Suffering here to help them over there. 12-minute video. www.fern.org/sufferinghere
- Winfridus Overbeek (2009): Green Economy in Brazil, the privatization of the Atlantic Forest. http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Green_Economy_in_Brazil_the_privatization_of_the_Atlantic_Forest.pdf
- WRM (2012): Disputed Territory. 38-minute film about communities organizing to present their vision of forest restoration. <http://wrm.org.uy/videos/disputed-territory-the-green-economy-versus-community-based-economies/>
- Jutta Kill (2014): REDD in Brazil. Forgotten failures with consequences that still affect communities. <http://br.boell.org/pt-br/publicacoes>

4 – Local groups "cut out of the budget": Monte Pascoal REDD project, Bahia, Brazil³⁸

Who's behind the project?

In parallel to local initiatives that resulted in the creation of the marine Extractive Reserve of Corumbau in 2000, international conservation groups began promoting ecological corridors in the Atlantic Rainforest, an idea originally proposed by the Brazilian Ministry of Environment and the World Bank. Conservation International (CI) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the latter already part of the Guaraqueçaba Climate Action Project at that time, provided funding for the initiative. TNC proposed to include a ca. 1,000 hectare carbon offset component into the 24,000 hectare conservation initiative. Financial contributions were also received from tree plantation companies Veracel and Aracruz, facilitated by the regional group IBIO, which has close links to Veracel.³⁹ The Brazilian Development Bank BNDES has been funding a restoration project in the same region, and involving the NGO Natureza Bela which was also partner in the carbon offset components of the conservation project in 2014. Whether this funding is related to restoration that will generate carbon credits for sale, is unknown.⁴⁰

Carbon contracts were signed with Kraft Foods, a Corporate Partner of CI, and cosmetics company Natura. However, the project has been facing difficulties since 2012 in locating sufficient land for restoration to fulfil the carbon sales indicated in the Natura contract. The current status of the project is unknown.

In 2010, the Monte Pascoal – Pau- Brasil Initiative was the first project in Brazil to be awarded the 'Climate, Community & Biodiversity' certificate. Although many articles suggest that the whole Monte Pascoal forest restoration project is CCB certified, in reality, the certification relates only to the 17 hectares that were planted in connection with the carbon contracts signed with Kraft Foods.⁴¹ In January 2015, the certification was listed as expired on the CCB website.⁴² The status of the project is unclear.

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

The objectives of the project are described in a project document that was submitted for certification under the CCB standard. This project document focuses on the 17 hectares of restoration work undertaken as part of the contract with Kraft Foods. But the document suggests that additional areas like the 250 hectares included in the carbon contract with Natura would be managed with the same goal and that additional contracts would be signed to enable the restoration of 1,000 hectares through carbon offset finance.

The document states that *"The main purpose of the project activity is to restore the environmental integrity of the area"* and lists five specific goals including *"provide valuable technical skills, work, and income to the local communities"*, *"increase the quality and stabilize the flow of the waters in the Caraíva River through the restoration and protection of springs and riparian zones"* and *"reduce soil erosion."* According to the document, *"a local cooperative will carry out the restoration activities, including planting and maintenance"* and *"[n]ew work opportunities will be created by the project for local community members, who will be paid for their labor inputs. [...] All socio-economic monitoring activities will be conducted by members of local community associations."*

What has been happening in reality?

The status of project implementation as of January 2015 is unclear. The CCB certification has expired and websites previously advertising the project do not provide updates on its status.

The project started to face difficulties in finding enough landowners willing to make their land available for restoration after changes to the Brazilian forest legislation came into force in 2012. Previously, TNC and CI had argued that because many land owners were violating the legal obligation to restore, protect and register the forest as called for by law, carbon offset projects would provide an 'incentive' to increase carbon storage in forests, and pay the land owners to restore the land. Many have criticised this argument as a perverse incentive: Instead of making those who violate the law pay, they are paid an 'incentive' to obey the law. The only property owner still showing interest in 2013 in providing land for the project was the pulp and paper company Veracel. The company already has involvement with the project, a brochure described as 'case study' on the website of the 'New Generations Plantation Project' is titled *"Veracel Celulose. Forest restoration, carbon storage and income generation: Monte Pascoal – Pau Brasil Ecological Corridor"*. But the company's plantations had also caused much deforestation in the region. During the 1990s for example, Veracel saw its activities suspended because of the company's involvement in deforestation.⁴³ Consequently, there was opposition to including lands used by Veracel: *"Veracel has social and environmental commitments with the territory that have to be met because they are gaining a lot of money from the territory. The company has legal obligations to restore."*

Whether the missing areas to be restored under the Natura Cosméticos carbon contract were ever found is unknown. But the project's problems go beyond having run out of land to fulfil the obligations of a carbon offset contract, and the risk of the carbon being released long after the conservation organisations have move on. *"The buyer of the carbon credits is Natura; they make shampoo*

and stuff and earn a lot of money, they are only interested in the certificate. If 30 years from now things didn't go as planned, if there was no monitoring, Natura may come and enquire 'where are these trees planted for us?' And the name of ANAC is there, we are here, but IBIO is in Rio de Janeiro," the president of a local organisation noted in 2012.

When problems arose in project implementation, community interests were the first to be discarded. The local associations ANAC and ASBENC felt booted out, commenting that their only remaining contribution to the project is their name and signature in project documentation. *"The activities to be carried out by ANAC and ASBENC were cut out of the budget, they were overseeing and monitoring the planting; that was one of the activities of the two associations but it didn't happen,"* their representatives stated in 2012.

Promises made to the local communities regarding employment and other benefits from the carbon offset project were either never met or lasted only a few years. The shortcomings revealed by the Monte Pascoal forest offset project are systemic to REDD offset projects: The project provides few, and mainly temporary benefits to the communities whose real needs remain unaddressed.

Find out more about this project:

- WRM (2013): The Monte Pascoal-Pau Brasil ecological corridor carbon, community and biodiversity initiative: another carbon offset failure www.wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/the-monte-pascoal%E2%80%90pau-brasil-ecological-corridor-carbon-community-and-biodiversity-initiative-another-carbon-offset-failure/

- Jutta Kill (2014): REDD in Brazil - Two case studies on early forest carbon offset projects. <http://br.boell.org/pt-br/2014/12/08/redd-brazil-two-case-studies-early-forest-carbon-offset-projects>

- Renata Bessi & Santiago Navarro (2014): Brasil: REDD sigue la ruta del colonialismo en tierras de los guerreros Pataxó. <http://upsidedownworld.org/main/en-espatopmenu-81/5118-brasil-redd-sigue-la-ruta-del-colonialismo-en-tierras-de-los-guerreros-pataxo>

5 - “What are projects for that destroy life?”: Suruí Forest Carbon Project, Mato Grosso & Rondônia, Brazil

Who's behind the project?

The Suruí Forest Carbon Project is located in the Sete de Setembro Indigenous Territory in Brazil's Rondônia and Mato Grosso states. Project documents name the Metareilá Association of the Suruí as main project proponent of the Suruí Forest Carbon Project.⁴⁴ Internationally and in the marketing material of the project, the Metareilá Association is the most visible of the institutions representing the Paiter Suruí. The Brazilian groups Kanindé, ACTBrazil, IDESAM and FUNBIO and the US-based Forest Trends are also involved in the project. In 2009, these groups signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Metareilá Association, detailing their roles in the REDD project. Five additional Paiter associations are mentioned with roles for supporting cultural, educational and economic aspects of project implementation (Gãbgir Association, Kabaney Association, Garah Pameh Association, Pamaur Association, Yabner Gãbgir Forestry Institute).

The Surui Forest Carbon Project was certified according to CCB and VCS standards in 2012.⁴⁵

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

The September 2014 implementation report states that during its 30 year lifetime, the project aims to "reduce projected deforestation by at least 90% and to prevent at least 12,217.8 hectares of tropical forests from being cleared by 2038".⁴⁶ Average deforestation between 2000 and 2009 was calculated at ca. 160 hectares per year. In relation to the causes of deforestation, the project document submitted for certification⁴⁷ states that "the evidence is conclusive that the Surui are the agents of deforestation in their territory". "[T]imber companies act as drivers by generating revenue for the Suruí. The Surui have used this timber revenue to finance the establishment of agriculture fields, pastures, and coffee plantations, in addition to facilitating the acquisition of property and an array of goods." The documents explain that logging provided an important income for some families but that not all families were equally dependent on logging to secure a basic cash income. 3,416.6 hectares have been deforested within the Paiter territory since 2000, "of which 2,252.5 are in use (for subsistence agriculture, in areas leased, coffee crops and pastures)." As part of the REDD project, 'environmental agents' from the communities will join state enforcement agencies to control that community members will not open new logging sites "while upholding agreements with timber companies for selective logging in their territory since the mid-1980s."

The aim of the project is to use the revenue from carbon sales and additional public and philanthropic funding to create alternative income generating possibilities that can replace the revenue from logging and improve health and education facilities in the communities. The Suruí Fund was set up to oversee financial management of the Suruí Forest Carbon Project.

What has been happening in reality?

The Surui Forest Carbon Project in Brazil is often held up as a successful indigenous-led REDD project.⁴⁸ It is linked to a "Life Plan" that had been developed with involvement from all the four clans of the Paiter Suruí, and the REDD project was presented by an association from within the communities. Initially, many of the Paiter Suruí supported the REDD project.⁴⁹ And project documents included mediation procedures to address any conflicts should they arise.

An interview in the Special Issue "Nature for Sale" of the journal *Porantim* in 2014 with Henrique Suruí, however, shows that conflicts have arisen in the course of project implementation, and they remain unresolved.⁵⁰ The Association Metareilá, in charge of managing the REDD project, disputed the statements made in the interview. In December 2014, leaders of the Paiter Suruí requested that the Federal Public Ministry in Rondônia investigate the project.⁵¹ Like Henrique Suruí in his interview with *Porantim*, their Note of Clarification calls for the REDD project to be terminated.

In the interview, Henrique Suruí explains how the project had caused division among his people, and that people had been deceived through false promises of a better life and financial resources as compensation for forest protection.

The Note of Clarification states that promises of improving the lives of the Paiter "proved false and illusory, which left some indigenous people in an extremely difficult situation, and even facing hunger"; the creation of associations, necessary for participation in the project, generated big divisions; division of responsibilities for specific areas between the associations was not adhered to and instead, departments were created within the Association Metareilá. This diminished the involvement and autonomy of other clan associations within the Suruí Fund. The document also mentions that payments had not been made as agreed to; that one of the associations which has been critical

towards the project since 2010 had received no funds at all; and that associations which had questioned project implementation had suffered retaliation and repercussions.

In the document, the leaders also expose the fact that an independent audit has taken place [the CCB or VCS certification audits, presumably], but that the audit team had visited only four communities chosen by the managers of the project, out of a total of 25, *“interviewing indigenous people chosen in advance to talk about the benefits of the project.”*

The reality that has caught up with one of the most successful REDD projects worldwide points to contradictions that are inherent to REDD offsets. For communities that have been protecting the forest they depend on, REDD is *“a bit of a Catch-22: REDD financing typically flows on the premise of saving forests from imminent destruction, and it is difficult for communities with very low historical deforestation rates to prove the threat.”*⁵² Or to claim that large volumes of emissions have been avoided through the REDD project. But: The bigger the threat, the larger the volume of carbon credits the project can sell. Perhaps that is why those who prepared the carbon calculations for the Surui Forest Carbon Project assumed a quadrupling of the deforestation rate over the course of the REDD project, compared to 'historical' deforestation rates of ca. 160 hectares per year from 2000 - 2009. And, as in many communities, not all were equally dependent on the cash income from logging to meet subsistence needs. Yet, the project documents give no indication that this differentiated dependence on income from logging was considered. e.g. in case planned alternative income streams would not be providing the expected revenue.

Find out more about this project:

- Porantim (2014): “What are projects for that destroy life?” Interview with Henrique Suruí about the Paiter-Suruí REDD project, Brazil. <http://www.cimi.org.br/site/pt-br/?system=news&action=read&id=7900>
- Patricia Bonhila (2015): Lideranças Paiter Suruí pedem extinção de projeto de carbono com a Natura. http://cimi.org.br/site/pt-br/?system=news&conteudo_id=7948&action=read
- REDD-Monitor (2015): Leaders of the Paiter Suruí ask that the carbon project with Natura be terminated. www.redd-monitor.org/2015/01/13/leaders-of-the-paiter-surui-ask-that-the-carbon-project-with-natura-be-terminated/

6 - Sometimes part of REDD, sometimes not: Socio Bosque Programme, Ecuador

Who's behind the programme?

In 2008, the Ecuadorian Government established the Socio Bosque programme. The Socio Bosque was set up with both climate change mitigation and the conservation of forests and its 'ecosystem services' as explicit objectives. The programme has also become part of the country's national REDD+ strategy. By decree, the Programme Socio Bosque became The National Incentive Programme Socio Bosque on 19 December 2013.

Until March 2014, the programme has been funded through government funds. In 2011, the German development bank KfW provided EUR 10 million, including for implementation of the programme.

On 26 March 2014, the programme entered into a 5-year agreement with car manufacturer GM OBB del Ecuador. The agreement was signed at GM offices in Ecuador, with Conservation International listed as one of the groups present at the event. GM committed to contribute USD 230.000 annually for 5 years as part of its new project "Chevrolet Sail Carbono Neutro". With the payment, GM claims that the emissions will be compensated from the first 40.000 km driven with each car sold of this most popular car model in Ecuador.⁵³

What do the promoters say they are doing?

The aim of Ecuador's Socio Bosque programme is to offer regular monetary payments to land users in return for their maintaining forest cover. This can include activities of maintaining forest, reforestation or restoring vegetation. The programme enters into agreements for conservation, establishing tree plantations, "production" and marketing of biodiversity and valuation of environmental services with private and communal (including indigenous) landholders. In the conservation agreements that involve tree planting, the landholders commit to submitting a plan on how the conservation payments are to be spent.

By 2014, the programme had signed 2,748 agreements with individuals and with communities, covering almost 1.5 million hectares. It has made cumulative payments of nearly USD 25 million at that time.

What has been happening in reality?

A 2012 briefing describing the Socio Bosque Programme as a success,⁵⁴ notes that one "major constraint to the programme is a lack of titled lands", that "another important lesson for Socio Bosque, as well as for REDD+, is that monitoring is turning out to be more costly and onerous than anticipated" and that "the long-term success of the Socio Bosque programme still needs to be proven."

An article from 2014 looks in more detail at the political motivations and context of the programme. There, the programme is described as follows: *"It seems to function well for individual properties or for communities that deforest because of other options and because of the strong demand from the timber industry, especially along the Ecuadorian coast. It might also be effective for the conservation of ecosystems in the short-term. Also, the money received by communities that have historically been excluded, has driven local projects, but it has also been a source of disputes and has reproduced patterns of oppression. The outcome seems to be related to the level of social organization and ability to control those in leadership positions."*

*But in the long run, Socio Bosque becomes a tool for national land use planning and structuring land use of the population for capitalist production. For example, in order to participate in the incentive programme, the communities must, among other requirements, produce detailed maps of their territories and must report compliance with investment and management plans. The programme could also represent a limitation on the territorial autonomy of indigenous peoples and nationalities who are the main recipients of the incentive: 88% of the areas enrolled in the program belong to indigenous communities. In those places, communities must accept a single type of territorial administration, where local practices in the use and production of nature are classified as destructive, where their knowledge is replaced by that of the expert and where reliance on community management is replaced by dependence on the welfare state. The impact on territorial autonomy may also affect one of the most notable features of the indigenous territories in Ecuador: the ability to resist unwanted activities in their territories, especially in the Amazon, where 80% of the land registered in Socio Bosque is located. That is also where government plans for [mineral] extraction are concentrated, and so are processes of local resistance to such activities. Thus, Socio Bosque could have a demobilizing effect on these processes of resistance, paving the way for capitalist development advanced by the current government."*⁵⁵

Find out more about this programme:

- Acción Ecológica (2012): Documento de posición sobre Socio Bosque.

<http://redmanglar.org/sitio/images/documentos/sociobosqueecuador.pdf>

- Melissa Moreano Venegas (2012): Socio Bosque y el capitalismo verde. In: Coffey, G. (ed.). 2012. Pensando la coyuntura. Los cuadernos de La línea de fuego.

<http://lalineadefuego.info/2012/09/04/socio-bosque-y-el-capitalismo-verde-por-melissa-moreano-venegasi/>

7 - "They lie when they say REDD+ is good": REDD project on Bribri territory in Costa Rica

Who's behind the programme?

Costa Rica is one of five countries that submitted a proposal to the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility's Carbon Fund.⁵⁶ The Carbon Fund would provide finance for activities Costa Rica has outlined in its proposal on how to reduce emissions from forest loss. Costa Rica would calculate how many emissions have not been released from deforestation as a result of the World Bank money and how much carbon has been captured in trees planted or not cut as part of the programme. The country would receive USD 5 per tonne of CO₂ that has been shown to have been saved. In return for financing these activities in Costa Rica, the members of the Carbon Fund will receive REDD carbon credits that they can either use to offset part of their own emissions, or sell – or not count towards emissions targets but use for marketing REDD as a market-based policy approach.

FONAFIFO is a government institution in Costa Rica established through a 1997 law that aims to reduce forest loss through a payment for environmental services (PES) mechanism. The PES programme is the main forerunner for REDD in Costa Rica, and consequently, FONAFIFO is also responsible for the planning and implementation of REDD activities like those presented to the World Bank. Since 2010, it has been promoting additional forest conservation and tree planting activities that build on the PES scheme. The proposal to the World Bank explains that these new activities since 2010 could be generating carbon credits for inclusion in proposal presented to the World Bank Carbon Fund. Proyecto Bosque Vivo - Territorio Indígena Bribri is one such activity.⁵⁷

What do those promoting the activity say they are doing?

The government of Costa Rica hopes that with the implementation of REDD activities they will be able to maintain at least 600,000 hectares under the existing PES programme, add another 750,000 hectares of forest, and restore forest cover in 12 percent of the national territory that is currently dedicated to other uses. One of the areas that FONAFIFO has identified is in the territory of the Bribri, in the southwest of the country. *"FONAFIFO has identified areas inside the indigenous territory that are part of the PES programme."*

Six PES projects exist, in the category of Forest Protection, which add up to a total of 3,308 hectares. In addition, the total of hectares in each category of land use was determined, and the potential area on which the programme PES-Forest Protection could be implemented inside the Indigenous territory Bribri de

Talamanca was identified. The data indicates that 60.9 percent of the area in the indigenous reserve has the potential to enter the PES programme in the category Forest Protection."⁵⁸ The Bribri territory is among the most densely forested in the country. The FONAFIFO document does not say whether the Bribri asked for this assessment to be carried out, whether they had given consent to their territory being considered as part of the PES-Forest Protection programme that would generate carbon credits for the World Bank Carbon Fund, or how they had been involved in discussions and decisions about the proposed inclusion of their territories into the PES – REDD programme.

What has been happening in reality?

In international meetings about climate change and forests, Costa Rica's REDD proposal to the World Bank Carbon Fund is often described as a positive example for wide consultation with and support from civil society. The document presented to the Carbon Fund includes a detailed description of the consultation processes, workshops and meetings carried out to elaborate the REDD proposal presented to the Fund.

This perception of wide and effective consultation is contrasted by the perception and experience many Bribri, indigenous peoples whose territories are in the southwest of Costa Rica, have expressed. In August 2014, around 300 Bribri came together to underline their resistance to REDD activities on their territories. A meeting report describes how residents told representatives of the Ministry of Environment Energy and Oceans (MINAE) in unison: *"Enough is enough, we do not want REDD + in our territory"*. Among the objections was the concern that REDD will limit everyday community use of the forest.⁵⁹ Members of the Alto Durigna community are alarmed by FONAFIFO's intentions to apply REDD on some 1000 hectares of forest within their territory because some of *"the forests in this area are not merely forests, they are sacred sites for our peoples."*

Another aspect of REDD that is rarely mentioned, is the impact programmes like REDD and the PES initiative in Costa Rica have already had on community cohesion, in particular in indigenous communities. Rojas et al. (see below) write that *"The PES scheme generates conflicts inside communities, above all in indigenous communities where collective land use dominates because PES creates property title over functions of nature which in turn leads to a competition for access to economic resources this then offers. This impact also affects the cultural level because the use of forests in these communities has always been free, collective and outside the commercial sphere because nature is not a commodity."*

Another document (Caravana Climática 2014a, below) notes that in relation to REDD and consultation with indigenous peoples in Costa Rica *"there is a small indigenous sector, in the South Caribbean region that has been engaged with the national REDD strategy since 2008, and thanks to that involvement, the government says it is a participatory process. The communities we visited are concerned that this sector has created consultation processes, but they have not been developed with the prior, free and informed consent nor involvement of all the indigenous communities in the country."* And a document prepared for the World Bank equally notes that *"in Talamanca, the REDD mechanism appears to be implemented by indigenous officers involved with the state institutions without the free, prior and informed consultation of the communities."*⁶⁰

What this example on the conflicts over REDD in the Bribri territory in Costa Rica shows is that neither REDD nor the PES policies on which it is based are rooted in truly free, prior and informed consultation, let alone consent. Communities have not been given the opportunity to deliberate as a whole what to make of these proposals. And neither seem those who presented the REDD offer pause to listen to how the Bribri, whose territory is among the most densely forested to this day in the country, have been able to maintain the forest and their relationship with it, and whether they are in need of a conservation policy that has been designed elsewhere.

"If the interests of local communities and indigenous groups are truly at the heart of this, the solution should be to advocate comprehensive public policies that promote community control over their territories. This should be done by reinforcing initiatives already in place, such as community governance of the forest and its biodiversity, thus safeguarding the conditions for them to truly exercise their historic and collective rights of autonomy and control over their lands and territory according to their worldview," Rojas et al. conclude in their publication.

Find out more about this project:

- Talamanca dice No REDD+ Estas selvas no tienen precio. (2014): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEIIIGxm_ohk&feature=youtu.be and https://www.facebook.com/pages/No-REDD-Costa-Rica/426389784174454?sk=timeline&ref=page_internal
- Caravana Climática (2014a): REDD+ y la decisión Bribri a permanecer como pueblo. Audio about the process of REDD in Costa Rica. caravanaclimatica.org/redd-y-la-decision-bribri-a-permanecer-como-pueblo/
- Caravana Climática (2014b): Costa Rica: La máscara verde. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=km9CGbfQyfo&feature=youtu.be>
- Radio Mundo Real (2014): Comunidades indígenas costarricenses denuncian proceso de imposición de REDD+ en el país. <http://radiomundoreal.fm/7679-no-sera-tan-facil?lang=es>
- Coecoceiba (2012): REDD and the Indigenous Peoples of Costa Rica. [wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/redd-and-the-indigenous-peoples-of-costa-rica/](http://www.wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/redd-and-the-indigenous-peoples-of-costa-rica/)
- Isaac Rojas, Mariana Porras, Henry Picado (2013): REDD en Costa Rica: un paso más en la mercantilización de los bosques. In: Biodiversidad, sustento y culturas. Pg 57ff. http://www.wrm.org.uy/es/files/2015/02/Economia_Verde_El_Asalto_Final.pdf

8 - Claiming emissions reductions that never occurred? Noel Kempff Climate Action Project, Bolivia

Who's behind the project?

The Nature Conservancy and its Bolivian partner Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN) created the Noel Kempff forest carbon project in 1996. With USD 1.6 million of USD 9.6 million from three energy corporations – American Electric Power (AEP), BP-Amoco (BP) and PacifiCorp – they bought the logging rights from (local) logging companies on some 750,000 hectares of government-owned rainforest in Bolivia. In an agreement with the US corporations, the Bolivian government committed to protect 650,000 hectares of this forest for 30 years. In return, the 3 corporations would receive 'avoided deforestation' offset credits they could use for marketing and carbon trading purposes.

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

Information on the TNC website mentions several benefits to the communities. These include legal assistance to native communities to help them acquire title to 360,000 hectares of traditional lands; improved access to health, sanitation and education services and the hiring of community members

as park guards and carbon monitoring technicians. With regards to generating carbon credits, TNC expected the project "to prevent up to 5.8 million tons of CO₂ emissions over 30 years."⁶¹

The project was set up before the certification standards for REDD existed. But already back then, certification was important: "In 2005, Noel Kempff Climate Action Project was the first forest carbon emissions reduction project to be verified by a third party based on international standards adapted from the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism", TNC write on their website.⁶²

What has been happening in reality?

In 2009, Greenpeace issued a report, *Carbon Scam: Noel Kempff Climate Action Project and the Push for Sub-national Forest Offsets* (see below). The report showed how the project's assumptions about what would have happened without the REDD project - the storytelling about the future that would have been without the carbon saving activity - were not credible. As a result of assumptions that had the effect of inflating the volume of carbon expected to be saved by the project, the corporate investors "may have claimed millions of tonnes of CO₂ emissions reductions that never occurred". Between 1997 and 2004, AEP, Pacificorp, and BP reported about 7.4 million tons of carbon offsets from the Noel Kempff project to the US Department of Energy - considerably more than the amount TNC had been expecting over the 30 year lifetime of the project: 5.8 million tons.

In addition, the assumption that industrial logging in the concession area would have continued as before 1996 is highly questionable. One year before the Noel Kempff Climate Action Project was officially established, the Bolivian government adopted a new forestry law. The new law changed the economics of timber harvesting across the country in a way that reduced the forest under concession in Bolivia by about 75%. Much of the concession area bought with money from the three corporations might also have been affected by this new law, and may no longer have been used for industrial timber extraction even without the REDD project.⁶³

TNC and the corporate funders of the project also assumed that only 15% of the logging activities for which they had bought the concession rights, would be continued somewhere else.⁶⁴ In other words, they assumed there was a 15% risk of 'leakage', in the jargon of the REDD technicians. Analysing the methods used to calculate this number, Greenpeace found that others had estimated and projected 'leakage' from the project to be as high as 42-60%.⁶⁵ "Leakage to the north, east, and southeast of the project appears not to have been monitored or accounted for, even though the impacts to the atmosphere would be identical to leakage occurring in the limited areas where it is monitored", Greenpeace conclude in their 2009 report.

Greenpeace also scrutinized TNC's claims about working to provide benefits for local communities. One villager told Greenpeace about a herd of cows the project provided in an attempt to set up "alternative livelihoods" for the community. Unfortunately, the cows were European breeds, unable to survive in Bolivia. "They all died in the end," the villager said. "The cows were so expensive that a whole herd of local breeds could have been bought for the price of a single one."⁶⁶

Find out more about this project:

- Greenpeace (2009): Carbon Scam: Noel Kempff Climate Action Project and the Push for Sub-national Forest Offsets. <http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/Global/usa/report/2010/1/carbon-scam-noel-kempff-clima.pdf>
- REDD-Monitor (2009): Carbon scam: the Noel Kempff project in Bolivia. <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2009/10/22/carbon-scam-the-noel-kempff-project-in-bolivia/>

9 - From food sovereignty to reliance on speculative timber markets: Scolel'Te forest carbon project, Chiapas, Mexico

Who's behind the project?

Established in 1996, Scolel Té is one of the earliest examples of carbon forest offset projects. It originated from a six-month feasibility study financed by the UK's DFID and carried out by Mexican and British researchers in collaboration with indigenous coffee farmers from the northern highlands of the state of Chiapas. The farmers were attracted to the project as a means of diversifying land use in the face of collapsed coffee prices.

The Mexican NGO AMBIO manages the on-the-ground activities of the Scolel' Te forest carbon offset project, while the project bank account and data on the carbon credits are managed by a trust fund, Fondo Bioclimatico. The trust fund includes the carbon brokerage company Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management, farmers organisations and a local research institute.⁶⁷

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

The Scolel'Te 2010 annual report describes the initiative as a "*community carbon management scheme*" that engages in "*carbon service generating activities*" including reforestation, agroforestry, forest conservation and restoration. The report notes that since the project began it has covered a total area of 9,645 ha; involves 2,437 participating producers; and has sold a total of 432,166 tonnes of CO₂ Plan Vivo Certificates. Richard Tipper from ECCM also says that "*An important by-product of the project has been the level of training and empowerment [of local farmers] produced by exposure to the ideas associated with trading in environmental services.*"⁶⁸

In contrast to most other REDD and forest carbon offset projects, the Scolel Té carbon forest offset project's 2010 annual report includes detailed information about the carbon sales and revenues: "*In 2010, 23,357 Plan Vivo Certificates were sold. Some buyers include: ZeroMission, Reforestamos Mexico, Save the Planet, HSBC, Proactive Strategy, PEMEX, Bunge and FMCN, [...] resulting in direct payments to 13 communities.*"⁶⁹ The project has also sold carbon credits to a foundation created by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile, the non-profit federation of motoring organisations and the governing body of world motor sport.

The Scolel Té carbon forestry project has been verified by the US-based Rainforest Alliance to be in conformance with Plan Vivo Monitoring Protocols, April 2007 – 2008 and May 2008- 2009.⁷⁰

What has been happening in reality?

Unlike in most other forest carbon offset projects, campesinos participated in the early planning of the carbon project. Although a few communities receive carbon payments for forest conservation (avoided deforestation), the main focus of the project is the planting of trees on privately managed land – afforestation and reforestation in the language of the UNFCCC. Because carbon payments support farmers for only five years (until trees are expected to grow without additional intensive maintenance), the main financial benefit of the project is from the expected future revenue from timber sales. Timber harvesting is thus the main financial incentive for participation, and farmers commit to maintaining tree plantations for four 25-year rotations for a total of 100 years.

It appears that local communities were initially involved to some extent in deciding the kinds of activities the project would offer to campesinos interested to become involved. Their involvement in the analysis of the drivers of deforestation in the region is less clear. The Scolel'Te project documents stress the role of "population growth" and small-scale farming in forest loss without mentioning the underlying causes of deforestation."⁷¹

The 2012 '*Outsourcing Hot Air*' report by Greenpeace (see below) notes that "*Scolec Te's focus on afforestation and reforestation activities led some local community members to change their land use patterns from 5 to 7-year shifting cultivation cycles (which provided them security and subsistence) to four 25-year rotations of commercial tree plantations (which were speculative and at the mercy of market forces). In addition to potentially worsening people's social circumstances, one analysis showed that the carbon benefits in forest carbon project areas may be negative when compared to fallow areas in traditional community managed forests. Adding to the direct impacts, it appears that attempts by the government of Chiapas to establish a REDD+ pilot project have, in some instances, led to an intensification of local conflicts over land. The establishment of "environmental police" – meant to enforce conservation efforts in the project area – appears to have created fears within bordering communities that they will be driven off their land because they lack official land titles. Although the government claims that the communities wishing to stay will be allowed to do so, the Governor of Chiapas, Juan Sabines, stated that: "Of 179 'irregular' settlements within the jungle's protected area, most have been removed and only 11 remain."*"⁷²

Find out more about this project:

- Greenpeace (2012): Outsourcing Hot Air. The push for sub-national REDD offsets in California's carbon market from Mexico and beyond.
<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/Global/international/publications/forests/2012/REDD/OutsourcingHotAir.pdf>
- Tracey Osborne (2011): Carbon forestry and agrarian change: access and land control in a Mexican rainforest. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38:859-883.
- Tracey Osborne (2013): Fixing Carbon, Losing ground: Payments for environmental services and land (in)security in Mexico. *Human Geography* Volume 6, Number 1, 2013.

10 - “We just want our land back”: FACE carbon project Mount Elgon, Uganda

Who's behind the project?

In 1994, the Dutch FACE Foundation (Forests Absorbing Carbondioxide Emissions), now called Face the Future, signed an agreement with the Ugandan authorities to plant trees on 25,000 hectares inside Mount Elgon National Park in Uganda. FACE Foundation was set up by the Dutch Electricity Generating Board. On-the-ground management is carried out by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the agency responsible for managing Uganda's national parks. Different companies have marketed carbon credits from the project. They include another Dutch company, GreenSeat, as well as 'Future Forests', a UK-based company now called 'The Carbon Neutral Company'. The FACE Foundation is also involved in a controversial offset project in Ecuador (FACE-PROFAFOR)⁷³.

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

The UWA-FACE project involves planting a two to three kilometre-wide strip of trees just inside the 211 kilometre boundary of Mount Elgon National Park in Uganda. FACE's information material claims that the project has improved income and standards of living among local communities; that the project has provided jobs, and that the project has given out seedlings to farmers which they plant on their farms.

The project is certified under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) scheme as well managed.

What has been happening in reality?

The FACE Foundation - UWA carbon forestry became unmarketable for many years after well-documented stories of conflicts with and human rights abuses towards local villagers who questioned FACE's ownership of the land emerged. The names of companies involved in the highly conflictive project became tainted; both FACE Foundation and Future Forests have changed names since (see above). The project was the outcome of an alliance between international aid agencies and the Ugandan government to "*conserve and use sustainably the delicate mountain ecosystem.*" The project began regardless of ongoing land disputes between UWA, the Benet peoples (whose territories were inside the park) and local villagers living adjacent to the park and whose fields had been encroached on by park expansion.

The UWA Management Plan for the Park states that the demand for more agricultural land in the park is "*incompatible with the conservation of Park values as required under the UWA Statute*", and that 'law enforcement' will continue in the Park and the carbon offset project area. "*Law enforcement involves UWA rangers in military style operations, including patrols, raids, arrests, imprisonments, seizure of cattle, destruction of houses and crops and use of state-sanctioned violence. Rangers have rifles and shoot at poachers. Several people have been killed. If they need military support, UWA staff can call in the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF),*" Chris Lang and Timothy Byakola write in their 2006 report on the project.

The report '*Virtual Nature, Violent Accumulation: A Critical Political Ecology of Carbon Market Failure at Mt. Elgon, Uganda*' concluded that "*the uncompensated dispossession of thousands of local residents was necessary for the project's implementation. Indeed, these expropriations constitute one of the largest and bloodiest evictions for environmental protection in Uganda's post-colonial history, effectively subsidizing the UWA-FACE project's participation in global ecosystem service markets.*"

Lang and Byakola also raise the dilemma that all carbon offsets, including the FACE-UWA project, face in predicting what would have happened without the carbon offset project: "*The FACE Foundation's carbon is supposed to be stored for 99 years in trees planted in Mount Elgon National Park. A look back over 99 years of Uganda's and Mount Elgon's sometimes turbulent history shows how difficult it would have been 99 years ago to predict whether 25,000 hectares of trees planted back then would still be there today. If it's impossible looking back in time, why should we assume that trees planted today will still be there in the future? Yet that is precisely what the FACE Foundation is asking us to believe.*"

Find out more about this project:

- Connor Cavanagh & Tor A. Benjaminsen (2014): Virtual nature, violent accumulation: The 'spectacular failure' of carbon offsetting at a Ugandan National Park. *Geoforum* 2014, Vol. 56, September 2014.

- Zembla (2008): CO₂ Alibi. 35-minute video about the FACE-UWA carbon offset project.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVEGvA_Vfhs
- Chris Lang & Timothy Byakola (2006): A funny place to store carbon: UWA-FACE Foundation's tree planting project in Mount Elgon National Park, Uganda. Report for the World Rainforest Movement. <http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/a-funny-place-to-store-carbon-uwa-face-foundations-tree-planting-project-in-mount-elgon-national-park-uganda/>
- Linda Norgrove & David Hulme (2005): Confronting conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda", Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester.
www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/idpm/staff/documents/ParkingResistanceandresistingtheparknovember2005.pdf

11 - "*We were evicted without discussion*": Bukaleba Forest Reserve, Uganda

Who's behind the project?

Green Resources, a Norwegian-registered plantation company with 41,000 hectares of plantations in Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda runs the Bukaleba Forest Reserve carbon tree plantation project. Green Resources was established in 1995. Earlier, the company was known under the name Tree Farms. Green Resources is a privately owned Norwegian company, with Mads Asprem as largest shareholder (30% of shares) and Verbena Investment Holdings holding 10%. Before setting up Green Resources, Asprem was head of the global forest products and paper research team at Merrill Lynch (now Bank of America) and earlier he had worked in a similar position at US Bank Morgan Stanley. Green Resources claims to be "*Africa's leading forestation company*" and its plantations are used for timber and generate carbon credits.

The Green Resources carbon tree plantation project in Tanzania has also caused controversy and conflicts between the company and communities affected by the plantations.⁷⁴

The Swedish Energy Agency has bought carbon contracts between 2012 and 2032 valued at USD 4 million from the Kachung plantation.⁷⁵

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

In 1996, Green Resources obtained a 50-year permit from Uganda's National Forestry Authority for plantations in the Bukaleba Forest Reserve in eastern Uganda, and the Kachung Forest Reserve in northern Uganda, covering a total of 11,864 hectares. While the land is part of a government-owned forest reserve, villagers had access to grow food, collect resources and graze animals.

In April 2011, the Bukaleba plantations were certified under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification system. In 2012, the Bukaleba plantation was also validated and verified under the Verified Carbon Standard. The Kachung plantation is a Clean Development Mechanism project and was validated under the Climate Community and Biodiversity Standard in 2011.

What has been happening in reality?

Oakland Institute recently published *'The Darker Side of Green. Plantation Forestry and Carbon Violence in Uganda'*, a report about the communities' experiences with the Green Resources tree plantations project at the Bukaleba Forest Reserve. The findings echo those the Norwegian NGO Norwatch reported in 2000 about the Tree Farms (as Green Resources was called then) carbon tree plantations project in Tanzania.⁷⁶ Evictions of villagers at the hands of government employees, military and police on land now licensed to Green Resources began before Green Resources arrived in Bukaleba. But the evictions did not stop when Green Resources arrived. Recent evictions are *"directly linked to expansion of the company's plantation activities"*, reports the Oakland Institute. Villagers say that company employees destroyed their homes to make way for plantations.

Their tree plantations also affect several sites of cultural significance that are located within the area of land licensed to Green Resources. In late 2013, Green Resources posted "burial ground" signs in Bukaleba but access remains denied to villagers for some cultural sites. *"There are (now) no places to pray to our gods"*, one man said.

The Oakland Institute report notes that Green Resources has committed to provide 10% of profits to community projects and that the company has provided some health, education and alternative income projects for villagers. But villagers point out that these are not addressing their most important needs – the loss of (access to) land. *"What is the use of medicine if we have no land to grow food and no schools to ensure there is a future for our children?"* one woman interviewed by researchers of Oakland Institute asked.

"The real benefits accrue to those acquiring the land – the plantation forestry company and their investors who are all seeking a return on capital. In interviews with 152 local villagers, environmental workers, company staff and journalists, it was found that up to 8000 subsistence farmers had been evicted from their land, with some subjected to physical violence by unknown security forces. Some villagers who tried to maintain a connection with their land reported being imprisoned through trespass laws", Dr. Carol Richards, one of the co-authors of the Oakland Institute report explains.⁷⁷

Find out more about this project:

- The Oakland Institute (2014): *The Darker Side of Green. Plantation Forestry and Carbon Violence in Uganda. The Case of Green Resources' Forestry-Based Carbon Markets.*

http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/Report_DarkerSideofGreen_hirez.pdf

- REDD-Monitor (2014): *More on Green Resources' plantations in Uganda: Response from Oakland Institute to Mads Asprem.* www.redd-monitor.org/2014/11/13/more-on-green-resources-plantations-in-uganda-response-from-oakland-institute-to-mads-asprem/

- Norwatch (2000): *Carbon Upsets -Norwegian 'Carbon Plantations' in Tanzania.*

<http://www.framtiden.no/english/other/new-report-on-norwegian-carbon-plantations-in-tanzania-carbon-upsets.html>

12 - "Charcoal burners and cattle keepers have to find new jobs or other land": Kikonda carbon tree plantation project, Uganda

Who's behind the project?

In 2001, the German private company global-woods international AG signed a 49-year lease agreement to set up a commercial tree plantation in the Kikonda Forest Reserve project in western Uganda. The project covers 12,182 ha of government land. It describes itself as a commercial timber plantation which also generates carbon credits. The project pre-dates the introduction of the term REDD but its owners regularly market the carbon credits in the context of the REDD debate.

The Kikonda Forest Reserve was certified as a climate mitigation project by the CarbonFix standard, which in 2014 became part of the Gold Standard. In 2009, the project was also certified by the CCB standard but its certificate is listed as expired on the CCB website.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the tree plantation management is also certified under the Forest Stewardship Council standards.

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

Information on the benefits to communities that have used the forest reserve are sparse in project documents, such as the April 2009 project document for CCB certification.⁷⁹ It mainly make reference to creation of employment. One section of the document explains that in addition to *"the direct impact coming from the project activities, the project supports schools within the region to enhance one of the most needed instruments of society - education. Overall, the project's activities lead to continuous [sic] and long-term positive impacts on the communities surrounding the forest reserve."*

The section 'Land loss for local people' of notes that *"As the reserve was not commercially used until 2002, cattle keepers and charcoal burners were used to letting their cattle graze in the [forest reserve] and to make charcoal without any large legal restrictions. With the enforcement of the demarcation of the [forest reserve], illegal activities are steadily diminishing while charcoal burners and cattle keepers have to find new jobs or other land to continue their practices."* The chapter on 'current land use and land tenure at the project site' explains that *"Currently, security guards employed by the project management patrol the area of the forest reserve constantly to stop illegal activities. These patrols also constantly remind the people of the area that the Forest Reserve may only be used for tree growing."*

Nel notes that the company did have plans for community benefits and tree planting activities in the 'buffer zones' and on registered community lands. There was to be a collaboration with 300 community members, including individual households and institutions such as the church and school, through a group called the Kikonda Community Forestry Association (KiCoFa). But only 4% of community members hold registered land titles and the initiative was apparently discontinued in 2009.

What has been happening in reality?

Initially, global-woods had estimated that about 12,540 people live in the 20 villages within 5km of the Kikonda Forest Reserve, including three villages with about 1500 inhabitants that are completely surrounded by the reserve. A 'socio-economic baseline survey' carried out belatedly by the company in 2011, however, suggests that the number of people living in close proximity to the forest reserve is closer to 50,000 and that *"Originally, it was assumed that there were 20 communities and*

*the aim was to include all of these. During the survey, we became aware of more communities within the area and in total 44 communities were recorded."*⁸⁰

Communities have voiced complaints about a high level of conflict with the project from the very beginning, in particular in relation to fines, arbitrary arrests of people, confiscation of cattle entering the reserve, being denied access to water tanks that were constructed for use by the communities, widespread corruption among forest rangers, etc. Peskett et al. write in their 2010 report that *"One of the most negative impacts (and an ongoing problem) has been the loss of (illegal) access to reserve land. [...] These problems are compounded by strict support of law enforcement by [company] security which takes offenders to the local police station for prosecution (usually involving large fines)."*⁸¹

With regard to employment, Nel reports that the company *"predominantly employs migrant labourers under poor conditions in the field (Interview, Kikonda October 2012). Migrant contract workers from various parts of the country, including Arua, Mbale, Mityana (there were no local workers in the group I met) highlighted that the contracts are temporary on tender to middlemen who employ the migrants for 200 000 per month (around 78 USD), depending on outputs (GW contract worker, Interview, Kikonda, October 2012). There have also allegedly been incidences of rape of local women by these workers and forest rangers (CDI 2012)."*⁸²

The project has faced conflict with communities from the beginning, in particular in relation to the displacement of 'encroachers' and prohibiting long-established cattle grazing since 2000. Nel reports that sometimes grazing seems to have been allowed for a fee while at other times people were fined up to 1 million shillings (400 USD). The company is said to have moved away since 2009 from its aggressive enforcement against agricultural use of the land that makes up the tree plantation concession because of the ongoing conflict. *"[T]he aim is not to encourage encroachment activities; the minimum expectation is not to hamper the expansion program,"* a company employee is cited in Nel (2014). Conflicts are, however, reported to continue over use of the land now under lease to global-woods AG for timber production and generation of carbon credits.

Find out more about this project:

- Adrian Nel (2014): Sequestering market environmentalism: Geographies of Carbon Forestry and Unevenness in Uganda. (Thesis, Doctor of Philosophy), University of Otago, New Zealand.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10523/5070>

- SSNC (2012): REDD Plus or REDD "Light"? Biodiversity, communities and forest carbon certification. www.naturskyddsforeningen.se/sites/default/files/dokument-media/REDD%20Plus%20or%20REDD%20Light.pdf

13 - "I lost my land. It's like I'm not a human being": New Forests Company carbon tree plantations, Uganda

Who's behind the project?

The New Forests Company (NFC) is a UK-registered company operating tree plantations in Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Rwanda. Investment funds like Agri-Vie Agribusiness Fund (in which the World Bank's International Finance Corporation, IFC, also holds shares) have

invested in the company and an undated company presentation lists international bank HSBC as a shareholder in NFC-Uganda. The European Investment Bank provided EUR 5 million in 2008.^{83,84}

In Uganda, NFC was granted a license by the Ugandan National Forestry Authority in 2005 to establish tree plantations on 20,000 hectares of land. The land is in three different locations, where the company set up pine and eucalyptus plantations. The business focus is on timber production but marketing material also mentions the sale of carbon credits from one of the plantations.

The tree plantations have been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

In an undated company presentation about the project, New Forest Company carbon manager Phoebe Sullivan writes on a slide titled "Corporate Governance Approach" that "*NFC is committed to generating VERs [carbon credits sold on the voluntary carbon market] with verifiable social and environmental co-benefits – ensuring delivery of charismatic credits.*" The investment focus is described as being on timber production, "*while carbon revenues can rationalize the sizeable upfront capital required to establish a large-scale plantation.*"⁸⁵ Return-on-investment projections are stated as 20–25%.

What has been happening in reality?

The claims to "*ensuring delivery of charismatic credits*" came apart when Oxfam published a report in 2011 (see below) that documented widespread conflict and violence when villagers were evicted from the land that had been included in the tree plantation license. The Ugandan National Forestry Authority began to evict the former residents shortly after the agreement with the New Forests Company in 2005, claiming that the residents were 'illegal encroachers'. Oxfam reports that up to twenty thousand people were evicted from their homes and land to make way for NFC plantations. "*I remember my land, three acres of coffee, many trees – mangoes and avocados. I had five acres of banana. I was given awards as a model farmer. I had cows for milk, ten beehives, two beautiful permanent houses. My land gave me everything from my living to my children's education. People used to call me Omataka – someone who owns land. Now that is no more. I am one of the poorest now*", the Oxfam report cites one farmer speaking about his experience.

The Oxfam report states that "*the people evicted from the land are desperate, having been driven into poverty and landlessness. In some instances they say they were subjected to violence and their property, crops, and livestock destroyed. They say they were not properly consulted, have been offered no adequate compensation, and have received no alternative land.*" The evictions took place even though there had been a (selective) presidential ban against evictions standing since 2006. Nel writes in his PhD thesis (see below) that "*it certainly required connections of political patronage to sanction the evictions*".

On behalf of people living around the Mubende plantations, four affected community representatives, Oxfam and the Uganda Land Alliance submitted a complaint to the office of the ombudsman (CAO), which handles complaints from communities affected by investments made by the IFC. The CAO opened a mediation process between New Forests Company and the communities after it received the complaint in December 2011. In July 2013, NFC and community representatives signed an agreement which includes a commitment by the company to contribute funds into a community-run cooperative. Oxfam reports on its website that the coop "*recently purchased 500 acres of land in Mubende district for the purposes of resettlement and agricultural activities.*"⁸⁶

The auditing company SGS, a Forest Stewardship Council- accredited certifier, concluded there had been no breaches of the FSC standard (the plantations had been certified as 'well-managed' and in accordance with FSC standards), and that no further investigation was necessary. In January 2015, Oxfam commented on the findings carried out by SGS, *"the same certification body whose original assessment of the eviction process we believe to have been flawed"*. Oxfam challenges the SGS findings, noting that *"SGS relies heavily on its own assessment that the evicted individuals were 'illegal occupants' and therefore have no right to residency. However, the communities believe they did have rights and brought cases before the Ugandan court which asserted these rights. [...] SGS acknowledges no one has been paid any compensation, making the report's conclusions all the more difficult to understand, as the FSC standard requires the provision of compensation to local people for losses or damages, including to their livelihoods."*

Find out more about this project:

- REDD Monitor (2011): Ugandan farmers kicked off their land for New Forests Company's carbon project. <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2011/09/23/ugandan-farmers-kicked-off-their-land-for-new-forests-companys-carbon-project/>
- Matt Grainger & Kate Geary (2011): The New Forests Company and its Uganda plantations. 'I lost my land. It's like I'm not a human being.' <http://www.redd-monitor.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/cs-new-forest-company-uganda-plantations-220911-en.pdf>
- Adrian Nel (2014): Sequestering market environmentalism: Geographies of Carbon Forestry and Unevenness in Uganda. PhD Thesis, University of Otago, New Zealand. www.ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/handle/10523/5070

14 - "What have we gained? Not much": N'hambita Community Carbon Project, Mozambique

Who's behind the project?

In 2002, the N'hambita Community Carbon Project (now part of the Sofala Community Carbon Project) was started by Envirotrade, a company registered originally in Mauritius and set up by UK businessman Robin Birley and Philip Powell, ex-senator in South Africa. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report notes that Powell – no longer involved in Envirotrade – had links to a paramilitary unit that was involved in destabilising South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994.

Envirotrade's project in Mozambique is adjacent to the Gorongosa National Park. Between 2003 and 2008, the European Commission awarded a EUR 1.5 million grant to Envirotrade, Edinburgh University and the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management (see also Scolel'Te project) to set up the N'hambita project as a pilot forest carbon project. Envirotrade's financial records show that in addition to the EU grant, carbon sales raised USD 1.3 million and Envirotrade itself invested USD 2.1 million. Carbon credits from the project were sold among others to Arla Foods, the largest producer of dairy products in Scandinavia, MAN Group and Live Earth.⁸⁷

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

The aims of the project included conserving a community-owned forest, introducing agroforestry and other new farming practices to improve crop yields, and establishing community enterprises. It also aimed to demonstrate the effectiveness of forest carbon trading schemes, and show how to design and implement such projects. Local people were contracted to plant and care for trees on their land, and communities were also tasked with protecting and patrolling a 10,000 ha forest area. Project manager Envirotrade expected to generate carbon credits from agro-forestry activities of the farmers and protection of the adjacent community forest.⁸⁸

The project's carbon credits are certified by the Plan Vivo Foundation and the project has received the CCB standard's 'triple gold' certificate.

What has been happening in reality?

A 2013 report from FERN and Friends of the Earth France (see below) found a notable lack of rigour with the CCB certification assessment, with many project faults having been overlooked.

A 2012 article by La Via Campesina highlights the problems for farmers involved with Envirotrade's project: villagers in N'hambita are in effect paid for seven years to plant and conserve trees, but sign a contract to do so for 99 years. *"It is the farmer's obligation to continue to care for the plants which they own, even after the seven year period covered by this contract"*, states a clause in the contract. Perhaps even more controversially Envirotrade sells the 99 years of carbon credits up front, in some case even before the trees are planted. António Serra from Envirotrade in Mozambique told La Via Campesina that, *"If a farmer passes away during the contract period, the contract, all the rights contained therein but also all the obligations, are transferred to their legitimate/legal heirs."*

When Via Campesina examined a farmer's contract they found that he would be paid USD 128 over seven years for planting trees in an area of 0.22 ha. At these kinds of rates the farmer would need to have access to a much greater area of land and would have to plant many more trees to alleviate poverty. The payments to farmers are also conditional upon 85% of the seedlings surviving. It has proved difficult to fulfil this obligation, meaning that some farmers' payments were reduced. It also seems that some participants were paid nothing for three or four years. Because many villagers involved in the programme reduced or stopped farming in order to tend the trees, these reduced payments made their already difficult situation a lot worse and securing food has become much more difficult. Farmers say there have been some benefits from the projects (in terms of fruit trees, some income, health centres and transport in case of illness) but the delays and reductions in payments have caused many conflicts. In addition, the wealthier members of the communities who had access to land to grow the trees on benefitted the most from the project.

The FERN / FoE France report 'Carbon Discredited' observes that Envirotrade cannot calculate the emissions actually avoided because of the failure to establish a baseline for how much carbon was stored in the community forests that were part of the project. This makes it impossible to verify claimed carbon savings. These problems had already been identified in a May 2008 report by ODI and Winrock International for the European Commission. That report found "poor reporting", and commented that *"the area of greatest concern is the whole carbon aspect of the project"*. The FERN/FoE France report concludes that the project *"has failed to deliver most of its climate change, development, financial and learning objectives"*.

"The name N'hambita has travelled around the world. But what is there to see here? What have we gained? Not much. The families that already had many machambas [areas of land to grow food] made a lot of money,

but for the rest of the population the benefits are small. Some don't even care about the trees any more. The payment is too small."⁸⁹

Find out more about this project:

- La Via Campesina Africa (2012): Carbon trading and REDD+ in Mozambique: farmers 'grow' carbon for the benefit of polluters. http://www.grain.org/bulletin_board/entries/4531-carbon-trading-and-redd-in-mozambique-farmers-grow-carbon-for-the-benefit-of-polluters#sdfootnote2anc
- FERN and Friends of the Earth France (2013): Carbon Discredited: Why the EU should steer clear of forest carbon offsets. <http://www.fern.org/nhambita>
- REDD-Monitor (2012): Envirotrade's carbon trading project in Mozambique: "The N'hambita experiment has failed". www.redd-monitor.org/2012/07/11/envirotrades-carbon-trading-project-in-mozambique-the-nhambita-experiment-has-failed/
- Mark Olden & Michael Gillard (2010): Carbon credit documentary should not have been shown, BBC admits. <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2010/apr/11/bbc-envirotrade-robin-birley-mozambique>

15 - *Preparing for REDD?* Evictions of Sengwer Peoples in the Cherangany Hills, Kenya

Who's behind the activities?

The World Bank has been funding the Kenya Forest Service through its Natural Resource Management Programme (NRMP) with the Kenyan government. Launched in 2007, the programme has involved funding for projects in the Cherangany Hills, including "financing REDD+ readiness activities."

What do the parties involved say they are doing?

According to the Financing Agreement between the World Bank Bank and the Government of Kenya, the programme was originally supposed to enhance, "*institutional capacity to manage water and forest resources, reduce the incidence and severity of water shocks such as drought, floods and water shortage in river catchments and improve the livelihoods of communities participating in the co-management of water and forest resources.*" An Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) was developed because Ogiek and Sengwer Peoples live in the areas included in the programme. The IPPF was "*to ensure that they would not be adversely affected by the Project and measures would be developed to mitigate potential impacts.*" The programme was revised in 2011. The revision simplified the programme's objectives, reallocated funds and formalized the fact that the Cherangany Hills were part of the programme.⁹⁰

What has been happening in reality?

Some 13,500 Sengwer live in the Cherangany Hills in Kenya's Northern Rift Valley. Many of the Sengwer communities have resisted attempts at forced evictions and displacements since in early 1980s. Since 2007 when an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework for NRMP was adopted by both the Government of Kenya and the World Bank, forced evictions of the Sengwer have commenced again. Under the NRMP, the border of the Cherangany forest reserves was moved and

as a result, Sengwer families found themselves living inside the forest reserve and subject to eviction. They were not consulted about the border changes. Over 1000 homes have been burned as Sengwer families have been forced to flee their homes, driven out by military police on the orders of the Kenya Forest Service.

"It is no coincidence that the evictions began again in 2007, the very same the year that the World Bank's Natural Resource Management Project started," the No REDD in Africa network noted in a 12 March 2014 letter. Initially, the World Bank denied any link between the evictions and World Bank financing of the NRMP. "[Kenya Forest Service] and people in Government eye the potential REDD money they believe they may be able to gain if they have removed the indigenous communities from their lands, despite international and national law", the Forest Peoples Programme wrote in an article about the forced evictions. A 12 March 2014 letter from the No REDD in Africa network equally notes the obvious connection: "The head of conservation at the Kenya Forest Service, Mr. Solomon Mibei, is on record stating that "REDD+ mechanism is a future option. [...]. At the moment, the KFS is conducting workshops with communities living around the Cherangany Hills which includes Embobut forest and the Kakamega forest to educate them on carbon financing. [...]. We take great exception to the press statement issued by the World Bank in which it attempts to distance itself from the forced relocation of the Sengwer People. The cause and effect is perfectly clear; the Bank in its highly controversial role as both carbon credit financier and broker is aiding and abetting the forced relocation of an entire Indigenous Peoples through its Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) which includes REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), in the Cherangany Hills."

Find out more about this project:

- REDD-Monitor (2014): Evictions of Sengwer indigenous people: World Bank violates safeguards in Kenya. <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2014/09/30/evictions-of-sengwer-indigenous-people-world-bank-violates-safeguards-in-kenya/> and World Bank project failed to protect Sengwer indigenous rights. Bank now promises to help "find a lasting, peaceful resolution to this long unfinished business of land rights in Kenya" <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2014/10/06/world-bank-project-failed-to-protect-sengwer-indigenous-rights-bank-now-promises-to-help-find-a-lasting-peaceful-resolution-to-this-long-unfinished-business-of-land-rights-in-kenya/>
- Forest Peoples Programme (2014): Kenyan Government's forced evictions threaten cultural survival of the Sengwer. <http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/rights-land-natural-resources/news/2014/02/kenyan-government-s-forced-evictions-threaten-cult>
- Dean Puckett (2014): Conservation vs Communities - The Plight of the Sengwer. <http://deaddeanfilms.tumblr.com/post/89247316043/conservation-vs-communities-the-plight-of-the>
- No REDD in Africa (2014): Forced Relocation of Sengwer People proves urgency of canceling REDD. <http://no-redd-africa.org/index.php/declarations/97-forced-relocation-of-sengwer-people-proves-urgency-of-canceling-redd>

16 - Not so "similar conditions and drivers of deforestation" in the reference area: The Kasigau Corridor REDD projects in Kenya

Who's behind the project?

Wildlife Works Carbon, a US-based private company initiated the Kasigau Corridor REDD project. The company describes itself as *"the world's leading REDD+ project development and management company with an effective approach to applying innovative market based solutions to the conservation of biodiversity"*. Wildlife Works also operates an online fashion shop that markets clothes – including a branded Puma collection – that are produced in its own factory on the project site in Kenya. In 2013, Wildlife Works became the full owner of another REDD project, the Mai Ndombe REDD project in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Initially, Ecosystem Restoration Associates Inc. (ERA), and Wildlife Works had been joint venture partners in the Mai Ndombe REDD project.⁹¹

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

The Kasigau Corridor REDD Project is located in Southeastern Kenya, and covers a land area of just under 200,000 hectares. The project area is a corridor of land between two national parks. The project has been implemented in two phases. In 2000, Wildlife Works bought – for less than 15 euros a hectare, according to *'Les chasseurs de carbone'* – the ca. 32,000 hectares Runkinga Ranch, a former cattle ranch and turned it into a privately owned wildlife sanctuary. This later became Phase I of the Kasigau Corridor REDD project. For Kasigau Corridor REDD Phase II, Wildlife Works signed conservation easements with (and acquired the carbon rights from) ranch owners of 13 community cattle ranches with a combined area of 167,000 hectares. The ranches are for the most part owned by members of adjacent communities in the form of group ranches, community trust lands. In a few cases, they are owned privately. In exchange for agreeing to manage the ranches in accordance with the REDD project objectives, the landowners receive one third of the revenues generated through the sale of carbon credits. This Phase II accounts for 90 percent of the expected emissions reductions of the REDD project.

Both Kasigau Corridor REDD project phases have been certified by both VCS and CCB and were awarded the CCB Gold level certificate. In 2011 Kasigau became the first REDD Project ever to be issued VCS certified carbon credits. Three projects owned by Wildlife Works were among the four REDD projects worldwide that made up 96% of REDD carbon credits issued in 2012: the Kenyan Kasigau Corridor project (Phases I and II), the Mai Ndombe REDD Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (the fourth was the Alto Mayo Project in Peru).⁹²

What has been happening in reality?

In 2009, journalist Naomie Biserbe visited the Kasigau Corridor REDD project area. Her article *'Chasseurs de Carbone'* talks about her conversation with a villager who faced eviction from the land that became part of Phase II of the Kasigau Corridor project and for which he held shares. But these had not been registered because he had not been informed about the meetings at which the negotiations with Wildlife Works had taken place. *"It was a nice scam"*, he told Bisserbe.

With regards to the textile shop, Bisserbe writes that at the time, 18 people were employed at the Wildlife Works textile factory, producing t-shirts made from cotton imported from India. And for export of the products, Wildlife Works was exempted from taxes, Bisserbe writes.

In 2013, a report for the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), investigated the project in relation to the VCS and CCB certification standards. With regard to Phase II of the Kasigau

Corridor REDD project, the SSNC report notes that *"the calculation of emission reductions build on an assessment of the amount of emissions that would be most likely to have occurred if the project had not been implemented. This is, inevitably, a speculative exercise. In the case of Kasigau Phase II, the [assumption] is that almost all of the above- and below-ground forest biomass and 55 percent of the soil carbon in the Phase II project area would be lost due to the expansion of slash-and-burn agriculture."* The reference for this assumption is a comparison with an area that borders the REDD project. Deforestation rates in that reference area have been extrapolated into the future and the result suggests that more than 90 percent of the reference area will be deforested within 30 years from the project start date. The problem? The reference area is radically different from the Kasigau REDD project area in several respects. *"Most obviously, at least 100,000 people live in the reference area, while the population in the project area is close to zero,"* the SSNC report notes. The reference area also includes land that has been designated for some agricultural use, while the REDD project area is entirely made up of cattle ranches. Despite these obvious flaws in the assumption that deforestation will proceed in the same way in both areas despite their obvious socio-economic differences, the VCS certification audit concluded that the reference area has *"similar conditions and drivers of deforestation"* compared with the REDD project area, that the reference area has been appropriately defined, and that the calculations meet the requirements outlined in the VCS methodology.

Find out more about this project:

- SSNC (2013): REDD Plus or REDD "Light"? Biodiversity, communities and forest carbon certification. www.naturskyddsforeningen.se/sites/default/files/dokument-media/REDD%20Plus%20or%20REDD%20Light.pdf

- Noémie Bisserbe (2011): Les chasseurs de carbone. XXI No. 16, Automne 2011. http://www.revue21.fr/tous_les_numeros/#n-16_les-chasseurs-de-carbone

17 - "It is our forest and other people are managing it in our place": Conservation International and Walt Disney REDD project, DRC

Who's behind the project?

In 2009, Conservation International (CI) announced "a landmark agreement" with the Walt Disney Company *"to fund large-scale projects in the DRC to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+)." Disney Company contributed USD 4 million to the REDD project in DRC and in Peru; the company's net income in 2010 was USD 7.59 billion. The project is managed in partnership with the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International (DFGFI) and the Union of Associations for Gorilla Conservation and Development in Eastern DRC, a federation of local associations that work for conservation and community development in the region.*

In 2013, CI presented the Disney Company with its 'Global Conservation Leadership Award'. The carbon broker In 2010, the Carbon Neutral Company commented that while *"its investment will eventually help Disney source the high-quality carbon credits it needs to meet its target of becoming carbon neutral, these projects also represent significant progress towards Disney's other environmental goals, including reducing the company's impact on ecosystems and water."*⁹³

Early CI project brochures speak of the intention to seek certification of the REDD project but no information could be found in December 2014 on REDD certification standard or CI websites.

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

The CI – Walt Disney Company REDD project seeks to protect two so-called 'community reserves', the Tayna and Kisimba-Ikobo reserves in DRC's eastern province of Kivu North. A CI brochure about the project claims that although *"the project is still in its early stages, local communities are already benefiting from its support for medical clinics, primary schools, conservation planning meetings, REDD+ workshops, and salaries for park rangers and staff. As the project progresses, CI aims to improve access to clean water, microcredit and opportunities in the tourism industry."*⁹⁴

A Disney Conservation Report notes that *"Disney funds will support local communities in their efforts to manage the forest within the project areas — which in turn provides a source of income to local villagers and improves their livelihoods. These efforts will decrease carbon emissions by helping to reduce logging and slash-and-burn agriculture. The funds will also be used to complete project design, conduct forest carbon analysis studies and finance the verification of emissions avoided through these projects."*⁹⁵

What has been happening in reality?

The Tayna 'Community Reserve', initially created in 1998 with participation of local traditional leaders, covers 90,000 hectares. In 2006, this 'community reserve' was recognized by the state and transformed into a nature reserve, called the Tayna Nature Reserve (RNT). Management was transferred to a "community" organization called RGT (Tayna Gorilla Reserve). Communities in the immediate vicinity gained access to electrical power via a small hydroelectric plant; a nature conservation university was set up healthcare and education infrastructure, among others, improved.

The 137,000 hectares Kisimba-Ikobo Primate Reserve is the second reserve included in the REDD project. This area, like the Tayna reserve, was officially designated as a nature reserve by ministerial decree in 2006. In contrast to the Tayna reserve, however, a significant number of traditional leaders, and women and men in the communities in and around the area that was decreed a nature reserve opposed the creation of the Kisimba-Ikobo reserve, with opposition going back to at least 2003. The declaration of the area as a nature reserve in particular exacerbated ongoing conflicts, because it further restricted the communities' rights to the use of the forest. In 2011, the communities of Kisimba and Ikobo were still calling for the nature reserve to be replaced by a community forest designation that would enable communities to exercise control over the area they depend on. The organization RECOPRIBA was established to manage the reserve, which added to ongoing conflicts about the reserve and restrictions on community use of the forest.

Although the REDD project agreement between Disney and CI was signed in 2009, a 2011 WRM report about the project notes that the Project Design Document for the REDD project was still being formulated at the time of the WRM visit. The report for WRM notes that in the Kisimba-Ikobo reserve portion of the REDD project, support is *"at best, only partial. Part of the community is opposed to the REDD project because it merely reinforces the creation of a "community" reserve which, in fact, has stripped these communities of their rights over their ancestral lands and forests."*

When asked about REDD during the WRM field visit in 2011, one community member said *"We were informed about the REDD project and they told us that there are going to be a huge amount of benefits for us. They told us not to attack the forest anymore, but to protect it, the same way we protect the gorillas. (...) They told us that trees produce carbon, which is important for the atmosphere. Everyone is going to be well off and our lives are going to change. They told us the project is going to last 20 years, and it started three years ago and we still haven't seen anything. So we can see that the benefits are taking a long time to reach us and people are starting to get discouraged. But we keep on hoping, because they have filled us with hope."*

Comments like these demonstrate the serious lack of information available locally on the project. Moreover, local actors had no knowledge of the contract signed between CI and Disney, much less the project budget. The WRM report cites one resident commenting that *“CI and DFGFI have kept a lot of information to themselves.”*

Promotional material announcing the 'landmark agreement' and plans for the REDD project were numerous. However, since 2012, no new information about the progress of implementation of the project appears to have been made publically available.

Find out more about this project:

- World Rainforest Movement (2011): The Conservation International REDD pilot project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – a very different kind of Walt Disney production.
<http://wrn.org.uy/books-and-briefings/democratic-republic-of-congo-conservation-international-redd-pilot-project-a-different-kind-of-disney-production/>
- REDD Monitor article summarising the WRM report and additional links in the comment section.
<http://www.redd-monitor.org/2011/09/02/a-very-different-kind-of-walt-disney-production-conservation-international-redd-project-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo/>

18 - "We do not understand what REDD+ is all about": Kariba Redd+ Project, Zimbabwe

Who's behind the project?

"The project is community-based and implements activities in conjunction with the local population", the Kariba REDD+ Project Design Document notes on page 3 of its 90+ pages. The difference between 'community-based' and 'community-owned' is revealed only on page 41: *"Carbon Green Investments Guernsey (CGI) is the project proponent. CGI is a Guernsey-based company established to facilitate REDD projects in Zimbabwe. CGI is the project's central entity involved in project management, development, implementation and operation—both from a technical and a financial perspective."* Zimbabwean consulting agency 'Black Crystal Consulting' and 'Environment Africa', *"an NGO working in Southern Africa, which contributes its expertise and experience to the community engagement side of the project"* are listed as additional partners. The Swiss company South Pole Carbon Asset Management Ltd. markets the project on its website.⁹⁶

The Kariba REDD+ project was certified to CCB standard and had 2.8 million credits issued following a CCB verification audit in July 2014.

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

In 2012, South Pole director Christian Dannecker described the project in a newspaper article as follows: *"What we did is offer support to local communities and a local private investor to sort out how much deforestation is occurring and why."* He explained that activities such as planting trees for firewood were planned. *"The difference in biomass [before and after these activities] will be converted into carbon*

*credits," he said, adding that the project was "expected to run until 2040, and the value of the carbon credits could be hundreds of millions of dollars."*⁹⁷

The project documentation identified the main drivers of deforestation as *"conversion of forests to agricultural land (cropland) and conversion to grassland, be it for the sake of creating pastures or by deforestation caused by over-harvesting wood products for fuel wood collection for domestic purposes, brick production or tobacco drying."* The document explains that the project aims to tackle the 'main drivers' of deforestation through providing *"access to technology and investment in rural subsistence farming"*. *"Where tobacco cultivation is a major driver of deforestation", the document states, "the project will promote the use of alternative high-value crops such as garlic and chili. This will reduce the demand for wood used in the tobacco curing process."* The documents however, say nothing about whether and how rural farmers will have access to markets for these *"alternative high-value crops"*. Community gardens are expected to *"further increase agricultural production"*, and in some locations within the project area the Kariba REDD+ Project *"will pioneer the beekeeping project activity with the communities"* - in the expectation that these pioneer beekeeping projects can serve as 'reference' for other locations in the project area.

The project documents state that the project *"will not include restriction of access and therefore does not limit the local communities' ability to use the land for their cultural needs, [...]. In terms of fundamental needs, the project will follow an incentive-based approach to reduce the use of forest resources, [...]. This implies a) that reduced benefits from not using forest resources are being (over) compensated for and b) forest resources are still available for use by locals. By way of example, one major source of deforestation is conversion to agriculture. This is often necessary due to poor agricultural techniques but results in low outputs from existing plots. With its activities to improve the local agriculture, the project aims to reduce the necessity of shifting agriculture by making the harvest more sustainable on a single plot."*

With regards to the duration of expected benefits to participating communities, the project proponent write that because *"project activities are designed to be self-sustainable over the long run, the project impacts are expected to last longer than 100 years. Nevertheless, the financial architecture of the Kariba REDD+ Project includes 20% of the net revenues being transferred to a Community and Project Sustainability Fund. [...] this fund will ensure that the basic funding can be continued for at least a total of 100 years."*

What has been happening in reality?

While the project documents claim that authorities in participating communities were engaged early on, not all communities appear to share this perception. One Zimbabwe newspaper article writes of temperatures *"boiling in Binga, a 20 percent shareholder in the Kariba REDD+ project. The community is bitter over unfilled promises, lack of buy in and accuses Carbon Green Africa of lying,"* the article states (see below). A local councillor is quoted, saying *"We have not seen anything really tangible, financially or otherwise (from CGA). We do not understand what REDD+ is all about."*

"They (CGA) plan for farmers while in Harare without coming onto the ground to ask us what it is we require," the councillor is cited. *"We asked that they supply a fence for the nutritional garden, but that has not happened. We only received some seed and two bags of (chemical) fertiliser. Farmers have used their own money to buy fuel for the water pump, and Carbon Green Africa has failed to reimburse that money. [...]. I think farmers can buy seed, but cannot buy fence. Without the fence, the other option is to cut down trees to construct a border."*

Out of 1,800 households (about 4,000 people) in his area, the councillor says that *"only 20 farmers have benefited from CGA's input supply."* Representatives from other communities are cited saying the

percentage is higher in their communities, and that residents are pleased with the support they received from the project.

Newspaper articles also suggest that for the time being, the "*hundreds of millions of dollars*" remain largely 'potential' value: The project still seems to be seeking buyers for a significant portion of the credits it has already been issued. The article mentions that since 2009, the project has provided USD 750,000 to fund various community ventures including "*bee keeping and 'conservation farming', but also repairs to public infrastructure.*"⁹⁸ Other articles put the contribution at USD 650,000.

Similarities to the N'hambita project in Mozambique (example 14) are striking, not only in relation to the financial situation but also to the approach of focussing on 'small scale business start-ups' that project developers from elsewhere thought would be needed in the area and that they hope will sustain themselves once up and running. In the case of the N'hambita project, many such business ideas, including bee keeping and a carpentry shop were tried. They fell apart once an EU grant and private investor money dried up and carbon credit sales proved insufficient to provide the promised income.

According to the project documentation, contracts have been signed between representatives of the districts in the project area and CGI. Referring to these contracts, the document explains that the 'benefit sharing agreement' "*specifies that 30% of the **gross** revenue go to CGI, 30% of the **net** revenues go to the land owner (RDCs) and 10% of the **net** revenues go to the leaseholders if any exists and they are engaging in the project activities. Further, 20% of the **net** revenue is used to create the Community and Project Sustainability Fund, which is established to create extra benefits to the local communities.*" [emphasis added] Anecdotal information on the financial situation of REDD projects suggests that often, there has been little **net** revenue left once project, overhead and other costs have been deducted.

Find out more about this project:

- The Herald (2014): Zimbabwe: Outcry Over Kariba Redd+ Project as NGO Seeks to Tighten Governance, Accountability. 27 October 2014. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201410270741.html>
- Kariba REDD+ Project CCBS Project design document (PDD).
https://s3.amazonaws.com/CCBA/Projects/Kariba_REDD%2B_Project/120208_Kariba+REDD+CCBA.pdf

19 - "*I and my people have suffered for five years now*": UN-REDD programme in Cross River province, Nigeria

Who's behind the programme?

In 2010, the Federal Government of Nigeria became a partner country in an intergovernmental initiative called UN-REDD. Launched in 2008, UN-REDD is the "*United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) in developing countries.*" Through UN-REDD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provide finance and advise on REDD to tropical forest countries in the global South and 'inform' the UN climate negotiations about their experience with REDD.

Within Nigeria, Cross River State, in southeastern Nigeria, was chosen as the first location for *"intense institutional, strategy-building and demonstration activities"* in the context of the UN-REDD programme. UN-REDD lists the Ministry of Environment as its partner for these demonstration activities, for which UN-REDD provided a budget of USD 4 million between 2012 and 2014. At the federal level, the National REDD+ Secretariat is named as the lead agency and for activities in Cross River State, the Forestry Commission of Cross River State is identified as lead agency. The reasons given for the choice of Cross River State as pilot location include *"its political leadership and manifest engagement in forest conservation, its efforts to bringing the REDD+ mechanism in Nigeria, and its major potential for GHG emissions reduction from the forest sector in view that it hosts over 50% of the country's high tropical forests."*

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

"REDD+ readiness demonstrated in Cross River State" is one of the outcomes envisaged by the programme.

What has been happening in reality?

"Forest communities in Cross River State, southeast Nigeria, are losing rights and livelihoods as their forests are being locked down by the government which seeks increased revenues through a United Nations backed 'carbon trading' scheme that promises to pay cash for projects that claim to preserve forests to alleviate global climate change," reads the first sentence of the report 'Seeing REDD. Communities, Forests and Carbon Trading in Nigeria', which documents the perception within a number of communities inside the forests chosen as demonstration areas in the UN-REDD programme.

"I and my people have suffered for five years now since government stopped us from entering our forest because REDD is coming and till now I have not received anything from them," Chief Owai Obio Arong of Iko Esa Community is quoted in 'Seeing REDD'. The report *"exposes some of the costs borne by the forest communities in the process of implementing REDD by the government of Cross River State, where a task force embedded within the Forestry Commission has been established with the mandate to enforce a moratorium on forest activities as part of the implementation process. With neither adequate consultation nor alternative livelihoods options for communities, the task force has been harassing community members that have depended on the forests for generations. Movement and trade of products deemed to have been derived from the forests are confiscated. At Nwanga Ekoi in Akpabuyo Local Government Area (LGA) for instance, the task force routinely seizes agricultural products like kola nuts and fruits meant for the market on account that they are derived from forests earmarked for REDD . The harvesting of Afang leaves, a local vegetable consumed in West and Central Africa, is now banned in affected forests. The hunting for bush meat, a main source of protein in the communities, as well as the tapping of palm wine from the raffia palm and associated brewing of kaikai, a local beverage, have been stopped.[...] Local nutrition and livelihoods are seriously threatened. The criminalization of food gathering activities from the forests and related economic activities have promoted an underground market, which have in turn driven up the price of basic products."* The report describes how *"the move towards REDD has been made without any clear community development programme that addresses livelihoods and income generation alternatives for forest dependent communities. The moratorium in Cross River state has meant a complete ban on wood cutting in all forests, including those not delineated as reserves by the state or federal government. It has essentially meant that those forests which were considered to be in the preserve of communities have also become reserved."* The report concludes that *"[m]any of the communities located at designated REDD+ sites have an interest in preserving their forests, irrespective of REDD. These communities have consistently made this point to government officials and to international organisations. With the failure of government to curb the destruction of the forests, some of the communities established local conservation initiatives. However, their idea of conservation is guided by the principle of 'sustainable forest management' where the forest cover is protected while still providing for communities that*

depend on it for their sustenance. Rather than build on the community focused approaches to forest management, REDD portends exacerbation of colonial era state arbitrariness with the government of Cross Rivers State not seeking the prior consent of forest dependent communities, before embarking on REDD. Ironically, the obtaining of prior and informed consent of communities is a requirement of REDD."

Find out more about this project:

- Social Development Integrated Centre (2014): Seeing REDD. Communities, Forests and Carbon Trading in Nigeria. <http://www.rosalux.sn/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/SEEING-REDD-ready-1-version-new.pdf>

-UN-REDD (2011): National Programme Submission Form – Nigeria. UNREDD/PB7/2011/7. <http://www.un-redd.org/AboutUNREDD/Programme/NationalProgrammes/Nigeria/tabid/992/Default.aspx>

20 - "There is no compensation, only penalties to pay": WWF & Air France Holistic Conservation Programme for Forests Madagascar

Who's behind the project?

The 'Holistic Conservation Programme for Forests' (HCPF) in Madagascar is run by WWF Madagascar. It is the largest of four REDD pilot projects in Madagascar, covering 380,000 hectares of moist forest and 125,000 hectares of dry, spiny forest. The first phase of HCPF from October 2008 – December 2012 was funded by a EUR 5 million contribution from Air France. GoodPlanet acts as the liaison between Air France and WWF Madagascar and is responsible for methodological and scientific aspects of the project. It receives support from several French research organisations. With the beginning of the project's second phase in 2012, the GoodPlanet Foundation passed management of the field operations to the association Etc Terra. Funding for this second phase came from the French Development Agency and the French Global Environment Facility, while Air France may also provide an additional EUR 1 million. Generating carbon credits is one of the objectives of the second phase.⁹⁹

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

According to the project developers, their objectives are to encourage and support local communities in the conservation of biodiversity; to improve human development by promoting alternative activities; and to improve scientific knowledge on forest carbon assessment.¹⁰⁰ As part of the first phase of the project, a new protected area has also been created in the south of Madagascar.

"We have achieved or exceeded all our targets", the Basta! & Friends of the Earth France report (see citation below) cites Pierre Caussade, former Environment and Sustainable Development Director for Air France. "This project was developed partly to help local communities better manage their livelihoods and improve their living conditions. But there was also a scientific aspect, consistent with our concerns about climate change. We estimate that the programme will enable us to reduce emissions caused by deforestation by 35 billion tons of CO2."

What has been happening in reality?

In 2010, Air France issued an unequivocal statement that the project was by no means a carbon offset programme. Two and a half years later, Air France acknowledges that the project will generate carbon credits - but insists that it will not make any profit from the programme. And Air France claims that all the money will go to local communities. A report and video by FoE France (see citation below) show that this is also not true. The implementation of the HCPF limits access to forest areas for the local population and risks displacing people who see their means of subsistence jeopardized. Forests and land are no longer natural areas that can provide a local livelihood but are turned into stocks of carbon that must be protected for Air France to be able to offer 'carbon neutral' flights to its clients. To keep an eye on what has been declared prohibited land use, a forest police has been set up to track down villagers who clear patches of forest so they can grow food to feed themselves. Anybody caught in the act risks a heavy fine. If the individual is unable to pay, they risk being sent to prison. And patrols on the ground are supplemented with aeroplanes that fly above the villages to keep a better eye on villager's land use.

The surveillance activities show that one of the main aims of the HCPF project is to stop communities from practising *hatsake*, or *shifting cultivation*: *"There is a risk of prison if I don't want to pay. We're frightened so we don't touch the forest there. Not even to feed our children. It's really hard: where can we get 800,000 ariary [national currency] if we are caught clearing land?"* a villager asked the Basta! and FoE France researchers.

Xavier Vincke, WWF project manager for aerial surveillance explains the project's perspective on *hatsake*, or 'slash-and-burn' agriculture: *"Sacrificing a forest in order to cultivate the land for one agricultural season is like dismantling a bridge to build a house. You might improve your quality of life slightly but you cause great harm both to your fellow man and to yourself."* The villagers request that promises be kept: *"We protect our environment but we don't get anything back. We have had nothing in exchange"* another villager explained to the Basta! and FoE France researchers. *"We are asking the WWF to show us which areas are protected and which are not, that is, where we can get firewood and wood to build our houses in order to provide for our families. But above all, these things must be discussed with all the villagers."*

"The WWF [Madagascar] has taken our forest without providing us with compensation or remuneration" another villager added. *"Neither the information nor the money reaches us here, everything stays with the WWF [Madagascar]. There is no compensation, only penalties to pay,"* another villager added.

Find out more about this project:

- REDD-Monitor (2013): WWF's REDD project in Madagascar: "There is no compensation, only penalties to pay". <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2013/12/12/wwfs-redd-project-in-madagascar-there-is-no-compensation-only-penalties-to-pay/>
- Basta! & Amis de la Terre (2013): "REDD+ in Madagascar: You Can't See the Wood for the Carbon". http://www.amisdelaterre.org/IMG/pdf/rap_madagascar_en.pdf
- Basta!: Avec Air France, compenser les émissions carbone des riches peut nuire gravement à la santé des pauvres (article: <http://www.bastamag.net/Avec-Air-France-compenser-les>; video in French; <http://vimeo.com/69531685> and video in English; <http://vimeo.com/79770272>)

21 - "*So it is a total failure, in other words*": Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership (KFCP), Indonesia

Who's behind the project?

The Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership (KFCP) was launched in 2007 as a bilateral forests and climate agreement between the Governments of Indonesia and Australia. The project was jointly administered by AusAID and the Australian Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE) and also involved several NGOs including Wetlands International, Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation, CARE and WWF. The Australian government pledged AUS\$ 47 million to the KFCP. The World Bank was supposed to act as a financial intermediary for AUS\$ 8.4 million of this allocation, with the task of "*providing performance based payments to beneficiaries.*"¹⁰¹

What did the project promoters say they were doing?

Launched as a REDD 'demonstration' project, the KFPC aimed to protect 70,000 hectares of peat forests, re-flood 200,000 hectares of drained peatland, and plant 100 million trees over a 30-year period in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The project area was located in a small section of the peat swamp forest that had been drained in the 1990s for the mega-rice project initiated by Indonesia's former dictator Suharto.

The KFCP 'Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet' available on the World Bank website also demonstrates the role of the KFCP in preparing a future forest carbon offset market. The document states that payments for activities related to the project will initially be "*Input-based: immediate remuneration or other direct benefits linked to adopting and implementing interventions, such as building check weirs, planting trees, or eliminating fire use on peat soils*", and eventually move to "performance based" payments which will be "*commensurate with greenhouse gas emissions reductions, initially as a proxy for a future forest carbon market but possibly later based on tradable credits in a real carbon market.*"¹⁰²

What has happened in reality?

Problems started to emerge soon after the KFCP project started in 2007. In particular, it generated confusion and conflict amongst the local communities who were supposed to be its beneficiaries. Around 9,000 people, most of whom are Ngaju Dayak peoples, reside in the area, in 12-15 villages along the Kapuas River.

Journalist Anett Keller explains the context and how villagers perceived the REDD initiative that was marketed as a model in her 30 November 2011 and 25 August 2013 articles¹⁰³ in the German newspaper die taz: "*famous politicians have visited the province and smiled into the television cameras with great optimism about REDD (...), [but] the villagers paint a different picture. The project was planned without them. Important information was withheld from them. The result is that only 50,000 trees were planted. Even fewer actually grew in the area selected for tree planting. The blocking of the drainage canals also failed in many places because of the resistance of local residents. For years the drainage canals have been the way villagers travel to their rubber trees.*"

One very specific further conflict had arisen with respect to tree planting and land tenure. The 2011 Friends of the Earth Australia report 'in the redd' explains that "*in the Dayak Ngayu culture the very act of planting trees secures individual land tenure rights over that area. KFCP tree planting activities can thus be interpreted as a foreign assertion of ownership rights over community land. Community members have*

expressed their dissatisfaction that they have not received written confirmation from the KFCP that tree planting does not confer such rights."

In an Australian Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee hearing on 21 May 2012 about the government's climate action, Senator Christine Milne enquired about the KFCP activities: *"I come to the Kalimantan project. It really is quite a serious issue here because this project has been a total failure compared with what was claimed for it and what has actually happened. The facts sheet said that the initial work was to avoid deforestation of 50,000 hectares and rehabilitate an additional 50,000 hectares of degraded peatland. As I said, the answer you gave me showed you spent about one-third of the \$100 million and replanted just under 1,000 hectares. So it is a total failure, in other words."*¹⁰⁴

Erik Olbrei, co-author of the discussion paper '*A very real and practical contribution: Lessons from the Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership*', commented on a 4 June 2012 article on REDD-Monitor about the KFCP programme that *"Australian government officials attributed the lack of progress on KFCP to land tenure issues, and concluded that land tenure will be a major stumbling block for future implementation of REDD. What is noticeably absent from Australian thinking on REDD in Indonesia is an appreciation of the part played by corruption, illegal logging, poor rule of law, and the oil palm, timber, and paper/pulp industries in undermining REDD. The fact is that REDD cannot succeed if these issues are not addressed. There is nothing new about any of this: the lessons from many years of failed forest sector reform efforts in Indonesia are well-known and largely applicable to REDD, and yet they do not seem to inform Australia's REDD program for Indonesia."*¹⁰⁵

In June 2013, amidst growing international criticism, the KFCP project was quietly cancelled: *"KFCP will not extend in its current form"*, the KFCP website stated. *"Walking away from a AUS\$47 million dollar investment without accounting for how the money was spent and what the outcomes are is unacceptable in any situation,"* commented Friends of the Earth Australia's coordinator for climate justice following the announcement to scrap the model programme.¹⁰⁶

Find out more about this project:

- Friends of the Earth International (2011): in the redd. australia's carbon offset project in central kalimantan. www.criticalcollective.org/wp-content/uploads/REDD-report-2.pdf
- REDD-Monitor (2012): "This project has been a total failure," says Australian Senator Christine Milne about the Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership. <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2012/06/04/this-project-has-been-a-total-failure-says-australian-senator-christine-milne-about-the-kalimantan-forests-and-climate-partnership/>
- Erik Olbrei and Stephen Howes (2012): A Very Real and Practical Contribution? - Lessons from the Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership. Development Policy Centre Discussion Paper No. 16. http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2041832

22 - “The Story of REDD is just a lie”: Ulu Masen, Aceh

Who's behind the project?

Australia-based carbon brokerage firm Carbon Conservation Ltd., conservation NGO Fauna and Flora International (FFI) and Irwandi Yusuf, then-governor of the Provincial Government of Aceh, were the three initial partners in Ulu Masen REDD project. In 2011, Carbon Conservation sold 50% of its shares to Canadian mining company East Asia Minerals Corporation. Through three Jakarta-based mining companies partly owned by East Asia Minerals, the corporation holds mining exploration permits inside the forests of Ulu Masen. “*Through the acquisition of a 50% equity interest in CC, the Company will develop a ‘green’ mining project which will use carbon and biodiversity offsets and the latest in environmentally friendly mining practices,*”¹⁰⁷ East Asia Minerals said about their purchase of Carbon Conservation shares.

In 2008, Merrill Lynch (now Bank of America) signed a pre-purchase agreement for carbon credits from the Ulu Masen REDD project and promised to invest USD 9 million over four years.¹⁰⁸

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

The Ulu Masen project covers an area of 770,000 hectares in Aceh province in the north of Sumatra, Indonesia. “*This project will develop and test carbon finance mechanisms to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contribute to sustainable economic and social development and conserve biodiversity over the next 30 years. The project will use land use planning and reclassification, increased monitoring and law enforcement, reforestation, restoration, and sustainable community logging on 750,000 ha of forest in the Ulu Masen Ecosystem*”, the REDD project design document says. The project aims to generate 3.3 million carbon credits a year to finance conservation and development projects for local communities.

In 2008, Ulu Masen became the first REDD project to be certified under the CCB standards. In 2013, five years later, it became the first REDD project to lose its CCB certificate.

What has been happening in reality?

Between 2010 and 2014, Chris Lang wrote a series of articles¹⁰⁹ on REDD-Monitor about the Ulu Masen REDD project. The articles are based on interviews with villagers in the project area and groups involved in the project. The following paragraph highlights some of the findings.

“We have been told very little about REDD. FFI has been here to discuss with us, but mostly in the context of protecting the forests and rivers for our downstream neighbours. We are wondering whether FFI staff themselves understand REDD because information is far from clear. What we want is very simple – do not treat us as children in our own territory. We are the most important stakeholder in the REDD project – why do you have information that we do not have, and how can that be so when the REDD project is about our lives, not yours? That is our question to FFI,” a village leader told one of the researchers who visited the area to write about the REDD project. In another article of the series, Chris Lang cites the head of another village: “*The village is inside Ulu Masen. [...]. What is the process of REDD? We’ve heard that carbon has been sold. Where’s the money? We’ve heard rumours that the map produced with support from FFI wasn’t accepted by the government because there are community areas inside it. Community members were involved in the mapping but don’t know what the follow up is.*”

When the Ulu Masen project promoters brought potential investors to Aceh, they took them to a the Watershed Forum, a group that was part of an Environmental Services Programme. They were not part of the Ulu Masen REDD project. The REDD-Monitor posts also cite a report from 2008 by

a group called Development Alternatives. Their report included a list of issues that the Ulu Masen REDD project proponents had not (publicly) addressed. For example, many and critically important land rights questions remain unresolved and activities with communities have only been described or defined in general terms. Development Alternatives published the report three months after Rainforest Alliance's SmartWood had certified the Ulu Masen project as complying to the CCBA standard. *"Five years later, none of these questions have been satisfactorily answered"*, Chris Lang concludes in his REDD-Monitor articles.

Find out more about this project:

- REDD-Monitor (2013): Indigenous leader speaks out on Ulu Masen: *"We've never seen anything from REDD. It's like the wind. We can't see it, can't touch it"*. <http://climate-connections.org/tag/ulu-masen-redd-project/> and <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2012/06/12/the-story-of-redd-is-just-a-lie-says-ulu-masen-villager/>
- REDD-Monitor (2010): Interviews about Ulu Masen, Indonesia: A REDD-labelled Protected Area. <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2010/01/20/interviews-about-ulu-masen-indonesia-a-redd-labelled-protected-area/>

23 – The Harapan forest restoration project, Indonesia

Who's behind the project?

The project known as the "Harapan Rainforest Project" (HRF) resulted from the first concession that was issued by the Forest Department in Indonesia as an 'Ecosystem Restoration Concession'. The license consists of two parts, the first issued in 2008 and the second in 2010. It is valid for up to 100 years and is held by a non-profit company specifically created for this purpose, PT REKI. The NGOs Burung Indonesia, Bird Life International and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds are partners in the consortium running the project. The German government's International Climate Initiative provided a EUR 7,5 million grant between October 2009 and December 2013. In 2010, Singapore Airlines provided USD 3 million. Danish development agency DANIDA has supported the project since 2011.

The concession covers nearly 100,000 hectares of land in Jambi and South Sumatra provinces on Sumatra. In recent information about the project, little mention is made of carbon markets or REDD though earlier information material and articles made regular reference to REDD and carbon markets as a potential source of funding, and the project has featured in presentations about REDD.^{110,111} Singapore Airline also mentions the donation in the context of the airline's commitment to reducing emissions and aiming to achieve the pledge through "cost-effective market-based measures at a global level", which is how carbon offsets are often described. *"REKI tries to dissociate itself from REDD+ to avoid REDD+- offset related controversies and attempts to display the project as biodiversity project instead of a climate change project. This is demonstrated by the new project homepage which neither refers to REDD+ nor carbon sequestration. Nevertheless, the main donors DANIDA and ICI still list carbon sequestration or REDD+ as objectives of the Harapan project on their web pages,"* Hein and Faust write (see below).

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

The project partners cite restoration of previously logged forests as the principal objective of the Harapan Rainforest Project. As activities they list establishing nurseries, restoration planting, patrolling of the restoration concession area to prevent "new encroachment", and setting up alternative income opportunities, in particular for the more than 200 indigenous Batin Sembilan families who live on the land now part of the Harapan Rainforest restoration concession. One document notes that there *"are six villages (total population 15,074) that interact with HRF whether it is through gathering non-timber forest products or being dependent on it for their water resources. Furthermore, the HRF plays an important role in contributing to the local economy through employment of local people, procurement of services (catering, planting, community tree nurseries, building construction) and provision of health and education to local communities. HRF employs approximately 100 people from local communities."*¹¹²

DANIDA states that its funding to the Harapan Rainforest Project aims *"to contribute to a significant CO₂ net emission reduction from Indonesia's forests while co-benefits (biodiversity, livelihoods) are stabilised. The immediate objective will be to ensure that Harapan Rainforest is managed sustainably and serves as a model for ecosystem restoration and REDD in Indonesia and elsewhere."* The activities mentioned are *"forest conservation and restoration; community development; policy support, capacity building and knowledge management; research and monitoring."*

What has been happening in reality?

The land use history in and around the Harapan Rainforest restoration project is complex. One article on the conflicts between different land users in the Harapan Rainforest project area explains that *"[t]he roots of this conflict in Harapan Rainforest have a strong relationship with central and local government policy. These policies still prioritize the companies as managers of the production forest creating land tenure inequalities [...]. This can be demonstrated by the fact that 99% of production forests are under company management and less than 1% are under community management until 2011. In Jambi and the area surrounding the Harapan Rainforest, most of the forest and the land have been leased to oil palm and industrial plantation companies."*¹¹³

The project claims to have negotiated conservation agreements with most of the Batin Sembilan villages and says it dedicated 5% of the concession as a "livelihood zone". The agreements are said to allow the use of a parcel of land and collection of non-timber forest products within the project area, in accordance with guidelines developed by PT REKI (e.g. no oil palm cultivation and no shifting cultivation). It is unclear whether grievances have been resolved that were expressed by members of the Batin Sembilan living in the Harapan Rainforest Project in a letter in April 2013 to Germany's International Climate Initiative. The letter requests that PT REKI *"prioritize conflict resolution efforts"* and avoid *"intimidating and insulting language and communication"*.

Conflicts are ongoing with families who have settled in the area during the Indonesian Government's transmigration scheme between 1984 and 1997, as well as more recently. More than 14,000 families are estimated to have (been) settled in the region during the transmigration scheme, and some 25% of the concession are estimated to be in use by peasants who arrived in the region since 1994. In 2008, La Via Campesina and the Indonesian Farmers Union SPI reported that the Harapan Rainforest Project was causing conflicts. SPI reports the case of one villager who lived in an area of the project where *"during the eighties, the development of industrial forest exploitations (for timber, paper...) stole the forest areas from indigenous people. Private companies logged forests to exhaustion. When their concession from the government had expired, the companies went away, leaving behind a devastated area. Peasants and indigenous people reclaimed it to produce food such as rice, beans and fruits."*

1500 families organised in the Indonesian Peasant's Union (SPI) occupied an areas as wide as 101.365 hectares, where they tilled the land, they built their houses, and created their territories and communities. [...] When PT Reiki took control over the area, peasants and indigenous people where kicked out of their land, they were intimidated, arrested and interrogated. They were forced to sign a letter where they agree to leave the area and to never come back again. Some peasants were sent to jail and then released," SPI wrote in 2008.

Find out more about this project:

- REDD-Monitor (2013): Harapan Rainforest Project: A response from Germany's International Climate Initiative. <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2013/06/17/harapan-rainforest-project-a-response-from-germanys-international-climate-initiative/> and collection of REDD Monitor articles on the Harapan Rainforest Project: <http://www.redd-monitor.org/?s=Harapan>
- La Via Campesina International (2008): Small farmers victims of forest carbon trading. <http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/actions-and-events-mainmenu-26/-climate-change-and-agrofuels-mainmenu-75/629-small-farmers-victims-of-forest-carbon-trading>
- Jonas Hein & Heiko Faust (2014): Conservation, REDD+ and the struggle for land in Jambi, Indonesia. Pacific Geographies No. 41. <http://www.die-gdi.de/en/others-publications/article/conservation-redd-and-the-struggle-for-land-in-jambi-indonesia/>

24 - "The military is settling in there and cutting down the forest": Oddar Meanchey, Cambodia

Who's behind the project?

The project was initiated by Terra Global Capital, a private investment firm set up in 2006 and based in the USA and Pact, an international NGO. Start-up funding was provided by DANIDA, NZAid and DFID. Additional funding support came from the Clinton Foundation, United Nations Development Programme and Japan International Cooperation Agency. In 2011, the U.S. Government agency Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) provided USD 900,000 in political risk insurance for Terra Global Capital. OPIC's support for Terra Global Capital is the world's first political risk insurance coverage for a REDD project. OPIC later also provided USD 40 million in financing for Terra Bella, a private equity firm linked to Terra Global Capital. Terra Bella were hoping to raise USD 100 million for similar projects in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia.

The project is jointly implemented by Cambodia's Forestry Administration, Terra Global Capital, Pact and Children's Development Association. It aims to generate *"a 30-year revenue flow that will be used to pay for conserving 64,318 hectares of forests by selling forest carbon credits in an international carbon market."*

What do the project promoters say they are doing?

According to Oddar Meanchey REDD+ project documents, the project is expected to sequester 7.1 million tonnes of CO₂ over 30 years, *"demonstrating how developing countries can generate income from carbon markets and positively impact climate change"*. According to a 2009 government document related to the project, revenue from carbon credit sales would be used to *"improve forest quality, benefit*

local communities and conduct further studies for new REDD projects." Project documentation also notes that at least 50 percent of *net* revenues would support communities' activities like *"improving farming practices, employing patrols and planting more trees."*¹¹⁴

In 2013, the Oddar Meanchey REDD+ was certified by the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and received 'triple gold accreditation' from the Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) certification standard.

What has been happening in reality?

A September 2013 article in The Cambodia Daily sums up the reality of the Oddar Meanchey REDD+ project: *"Cambodia's only U.N.-backed carbon trading scheme is still nowhere near making any money for communities and logging in the area continues to threaten the very forests supposed to generate tens of millions of dollars over the next 30 years"*.¹¹⁵ Illegal logging continues to threaten the community forests the project was meant to protect. *"The military is settling in there and cutting down the forest,"* a representative of one community in Oddar Meanchey explained to researchers.

A June 2014 article on REDD-Monitor notes that the Cambodian military had been clearing forest in the area of the Thai border for several years, and that this included forests inside the Oddar Meanchey REDD+ project area. The article also notes that at the time of writing, no carbon credits had been sold from the project, which put project partners in a difficult position: Funding, including to pay for protection of the community forests, was supposed to come from the sale of carbon credits. Initially, Pact had been paying community forest members to patrol the forest areas, but in 2013 forest patrols were stopped because the 'start-up' money had run out.

Find out more about this project:

- REDD-Monitor (2014): Military clearing of community forests in Oddar Meanchey, Cambodia.

<http://www.redd-monitor.org/2014/06/13/military-clearing-of-community-forests-in-oddar-meanchey-cambodia-photos/#more-15259> and <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2014/01/27/some-questions-about-the-oddar-meanchey-redd-project-in-cambodia/>

- Focus on the Global South, Pacific Environment & FERN (2012): Precedent-Setting Insurance for REDD Project in Cambodia Raises Concerns. "US Agency protects the investor, but will it protect the forest?" <http://focusweb.org/sites/www.focusweb.org/files/OPIC%20Risk%20Insurance%20REDD%20Cambodia.pdf>

The World Bank's role in jump-starting a carbon market for REDD

On the sidelines of the UN's climate meeting in 2007 in Bali, Indonesia – the meeting that adopted REDD as a new attempt to integrating forests into a future international climate agreement – the World Bank launched the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). The governments of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, UK, USA, the European Commission as well as French Development Bank CDC Climat, British Petroleum Technology Ventures Inc. (BP) and conservation NGO The Nature Conservancy (TNC) are paying members to the FCPF's Carbon Fund.¹¹⁶ Germany, Norway and The Nature Conservancy in particular have also made significant investments into REDD and forest carbon initiatives elsewhere.

The long-term objective of the Facility has been clear from the start. A World Bank statement released at the FCPF launch in 2007 includes the following statement: *"The Facility's ultimate goal is to jump-start a forest carbon market that tips the economic balance in favor of conserving forests."*¹¹⁷ And the FCPF website explains that: *"The FCPF Carbon Fund will provide performance-based payments to about five countries that have made significant progress in their REDD+ readiness endeavors. Such performance-based payments will play an essential part in valuing forests more while they are standing than when they are cut"*.¹¹⁸

Because the FCPF charter includes a closing date for the facility of 31 December 2020, the FCPF's focus appears to be on putting in place REDD programmes that will deliver carbon credits to the governments, CDC Climat and the two private entities BP and TNC that have invested in the Carbon Fund and expect carbon credits in return for their investment.

In the rush to show progress towards a REDD carbon market and produce carbon credits for the fund investors despite the collapse of carbon prices on carbon markets, the FCPF and three of the countries that have been accepted into the FCPF Carbon Fund – Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Nepal – have agreed on prices at or below USD 5 per REDD credit (worth 1 tonne of CO₂e). But how can a price of USD 5 per tonne CO₂e contribute to *"valuing forests more while they are standing than when they are cut"*? Most estimates put 'opportunity costs' – the revenue foregone if the forest is not used as was planned without REDD activity – for all commercial activities in forests **except for** shifting cultivation far above the proposed carbon payments of USD 5 per tonne of CO₂. Even within the flawed logic of REDD, a price of USD 5 would thus fail to tackle the real problems of deforestation: large-scale agriculture, plantations or timber extraction all generate more than USD 5 per tonne of CO₂. In other words, FCPF will **not** *"value forests more standing than cut"* for anything other than forests used for subsistence farming. In the DRC documentation submitted to the Carbon Fund, for example, stopping 'unplanned deforestation' (this also includes reducing local 'illegal logging' and charcoal production) accounts for about 90% of the expected emissions reductions.¹¹⁹ *"In the Congo Basin, a hectare of secondary forest, worth perhaps a one-off payment of USD 60 for avoided carbon emissions, would more or less equate to the most productive annual 'new planting' area in a rotational farming system supporting a family of perhaps 7-10 people."*¹²⁰

Find out more about the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and its Carbon Fund:

- REDD Monitor (2014): Gangster Squad, the FCPF and the Carbon Fund <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2014/09/19/gangster-squad-the-fcpf-and-the-carbon-fund/>

- FERN & FPP (2014): Implement in haste, repent at leisure. <http://www.fern.org/implementinhaste>

Why conflicts, contradictions, lies and restrictions to community rights are inevitable in REDD

This report exposes REDD projects that have caused conflict and harm to forest communities; are caught in contradictions and restrict traditional use of forests without consent of the customary forest users in one way or another. The collection is far from complete, and includes only some documented REDD initiatives. Many more examples exist where perceptions and experiences of forest peoples and forest-dependent communities are in sharp contrast to the stories of local communities rejoicing to participate in the REDD project that are told by REDD proponents.

REDD blames deforestation on shifting cultivation and small-scale peasant farming

The examples presented in this report put the spotlight on a disturbing trend in REDD – blaming deforestation on villagers practicing shifting cultivation and small-scale peasant farming. But the assumption that 'slash-and-burn' agriculture is the main driver of deforestation' is false¹²¹, and has been shown to be false many times. Shifting cultivation plays a central role in the social fabric and is often enshrined in the legal or customary fabric of ascertaining forest use rights. Those who put the blame for deforestation on small-scale agriculture regularly overlook these complexities.

REDD misses the big picture of destruction

Those perpetuating the myth of shifting cultivation as a key driver of deforestation blame small-scale farming at the same time as they remain largely silent over the real drivers of forest loss – and climate change. A recent Forest Trends report highlighted the extent of large-scale, often illegal deforestation as a key driver of forest loss. The report noted that *"nearly half (49%) of all recent tropical deforestation is the result of illegal clearing for commercial agriculture."*¹²² The report also says that *"half of this illegal destruction was driven by overseas demand for agricultural commodities including palm oil, beef, soy, and wood products. In addition to devastating impacts on forest-dependent people and biodiversity, the illegal conversion of tropical forests for commercial agriculture is estimated to produce 1.47 gigatonnes of carbon each year—equivalent to 25% of the EU's annual fossil fuel-based emissions."* REDD will by definition of a market-based mechanism not address those 50% of the illegal deforestation.

But REDD will also fail to stop most legal but destructive deforestation that is linked to large-scale monocultures of soya and oil palm expanding ever further into forests. The profits from this large-scale destruction are orders of magnitude above the average of USD 5 per tonne of CO₂ for REDD credits traded on the voluntary market and REDD 'performance payment' deals. The German government's REDD Early Movers as well as the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility Carbon Fund have fixed prices for REDD credits at USD 5 per tonne of CO₂.

The Central Kalimantan-based NGO Yayasan Petak Danum Kalimantan Tengah and 11 other groups made the point that the now cancelled Kalimantan Forest Climate Partnership was missing the big picture of destruction: *"the KFCP project with a 120,000 ha [...] project area pales in comparison with the 15.1 million ha of the total area in central Kalimantan, at least 83 per cent of which will be converted or destroyed through either oil palm, monoculture pulp plantations or mining permits issued by the relevant authorities. [...] Emissions from such a huge area will drastically overwhelm the insignificant and small reduction from the KFCP site, assuming that KFCP will eventually lead to emission reduction, which is an unrealistically optimistic assertion."*¹²³

REDD fuels conflict in and among communities

Another recurring feature of REDD initiatives is that when they arrive in communities, they risk fuelling conflicts over access to land; provoking violence against community members; generating conflict within communities over a project motivated by a cause from the outside: industrialised countries' unwillingness to live up to their historic responsibility to drastically reduce and phase out fossil fuel use. Or consumers' unwillingness to accept that there is a large cost to the consumerist lifestyle that is paid by others and that cannot be remedied by certified 'green consumption'. Instead, through implementing REDD projects thousands of kilometres away from the actual cause of climate change – the burning of fossil fuel in industrialized economies – those least responsible for climate change, most dependent on the land and with little lobby in the halls of power are targeted with projects forcing them to reduce the meagre emissions (temporarily) caused for producing food to feed their families. Meanwhile, the underlying causes of deforestation and those who are behind this large-scale deforestation – and climate change – can continue their destruction, pretending action is taken and damage is offset.

Another disturbing effect of REDD on communities arises from many projects relying on community members to patrol and report to REDD project proponents on violations of REDD project rules, in particular opening of new forest gardens or other activities that are considered to cause deforestation and thus prohibited by REDD project rules. REDD proponents count the employment of community members as 'environmental agents', "agente fiscal" in some REDD projects in Brazil, as a social benefit of their REDD activity. *"There is something [...] troubling about conservation policy that seeks to undermine local social cohesion by asking people to report other members of their community, or even their relatives, for environmental 'crimes' defined largely by outsiders,"* Ivan Scales writes about a similar practise that conservation organisations use in conservation projects in Madagascar.¹²⁴

REDD a risk to rights

Unresolved conflicts between the state, corporations and forest communities over customary rights to territories and ownership of forests are common throughout the regions where REDD initiatives are implemented. In all examples reviewed for this report, project proponents failed to fully acknowledge the complexities, uncertainties and potential and existing conflicts over rights and access to forests in the areas they had chosen for their REDD project. At best, the issue was condensed into a project objective to be addressed within a short time-frame – an objective all projects in this gallery failed to achieve. They did so in part because land tenure, particularly in relation to forests, is inherently complex, social and political. The suggestion that land tenure and customary rights questions can be achieved within a short timeframe shows the misconception of the tenure context in many countries where REDD initiatives are taking place.

REDD also risks undermining existing and future rights to territories. Even where land title or customary rights might be recognized on paper, implementation of REDD projects – especially those that generate carbon credits – is likely to lead to forest peoples effectively losing the control over their territories that a title document might initially grant. Tradable REDD credits are a form of property title. Those who own the credit do not need to own the land nor the trees on the land. What they do own is the right to restrict traditional use practises on the land; to monitor what is happening in the territory and to request access to the territory at any time they choose as long as they own the carbon credit.

One characteristic of REDD projects which also affects customary rights is that surveillance and monitoring measures focus on community use of forests, not large-scale deforestation or

biodiversity destruction. The use of little aeroplanes for surveillance of customary land use in the WWF / Air France project in Madagascar is only one example of the intrusion REDD projects can cause. Another characteristic that often causes conflict in communities is that among the few jobs offered locally is always the local fiscal or surveillance agent. Their role is to pass information about community use of the forest on to the project developers.

In 2013, CENSAT – Friends of the Earth Colombia undertook research into the contracts of REDD projects that involved communities directly (often, communities are not involved but are only affected by the REDD project's activities).¹²⁵ In addition to the consequences of REDD projects for communities already described above, CENSAT found that where communities receive benefits or are offered jobs, these often increase inequalities within the community: benefits went primarily to local elites and restrictions applied mainly to marginalised community members.

CENSAT also found that many REDD contracts were full of “*words written with the intention of not being understood, not being fulfilled*”, an assessment that corresponds with WRM’s impression of REDD offset contracts that we have come across over the years. Often, the obligations that communities or families enter into are not clearly explained or are described in ambiguous terms that can easily be misinterpreted. Seeking legal advice on such complicated and ambiguous technical documents is complicated by the fact that almost all REDD contracts that CENSAT analysed contained strict confidentiality clauses. Many of the contracts and project documents are also written in English, with only a partial or no translation into local languages, which further restricts the possibility for communities to fully inform themselves about REDD projects presented to them.

REDD as political tool for advancing use of offsetting, including beyond the climate context

The Kalimantan Forest Climate Partnership was “*a political tool for Australia and Indonesia to argue for a market-based approach to financing REDD*,” Friends of the Earth Australia explain in their 2012 report on the Partnership. The same could be said for many other REDD initiatives, in particular those implemented with direct funding from governments that in the UNFCCC negotiations insist on 'market-based' (read: trading) or 'performance-based' (read: offsetting) instruments for REDD. The FoE report cites a draft submission by Australia and Indonesia to UNFCCC working groups which stated that *the KFCP “trials innovative, market-oriented approaches to REDD financing and REDD implementation measures. Australia and Indonesia will provide lessons learned from the KFCP into the UNFCCC negotiations on REDD.”*

It remains to be seen if the governments of Australia and Indonesia have learned lessons from the KFCP –and what lessons they have learned. One lesson that conservation NGOs like The Nature Conservancy appear to have learned is to abandon the projects, or pass responsibility on to the local partners when conflicts arise and just set up new REDD projects in places where the illusion of success has not yet been pinched by reports exposing the reality of REDD conflicts, contradictions and lies. Past TNC “*example[s] of REDD success*” like the Noell Kempff or Guaraqueçaba Climate Action projects no longer appear in current TNC material on the topic. They have been replaced by new supposed “*example[s] of REDD success*” like the São Félix do Xingu REDD+ Pilot Program in Brazil or the Berau Forest Carbon Program in Indonesia.¹²⁶ Also noteworthy is the switch from 'project' to 'programme'. REDD is moving from forest projects to landscape programmes: More of the same, just bigger and with bigger risk to cause harm.

REDD offsets: Immoral and unjust

REDD projects, and carbon offsets in general, raise an ethical 'problem': the burden to reduce what are essentially sustenance emissions linked to a very low-carbon way of life falls to the poorest members of society who have very little scope with which to adapt. REDD offsets generated by those who have contributed the least to the climate crisis and are pushed to alter the land use that provides their sustenance allow the most affluent members of society, who have a historic responsibility for climate change, to pay their way out of the responsibility to change the lifestyle. When, for example, a company offers its clients the opportunity to offset their carbon emissions by financing a REDD project like the HCPF in Madagascar, it equates carbon emissions from leisure activities (air travel for holidays, the purchase of a computer, the FIFA World Cup, a Formula One Motor Racing spectacle, etc.) with carbon emitted in an attempt to meet basic needs and fundamental rights (feeding oneself using shifting cultivation to clear land).

REDD is fatally flawed

This gallery of conflicts, contradictions and lies shows that REDD is doomed to fail forest-dependent communities, forests and the climate. REDD is facing the same fate as the FAO and World Bank *Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP)* did in the late 1980s. TFAP was the first large programme that the FAO and the World Bank launched to halt forest loss. A report for WRM in 1990 showed that "*the Tropical Forestry Action Plan is fatally flawed. Far from curbing forest loss, the Plan will accelerate deforestation.*"¹²⁷ Little change to the analysis from some 24 years back would be required to make it applicable to REDD, REDD+, blue REDD and probably soon, landscape REDD and 'climate-smart' agriculture (nothing smart about 'CSA'!¹²⁸).

Deforestation and the related emissions will continue, and in the process REDD and related initiatives will continue to cause harm by vilifying forest-dependent communities and those who produce the majority of the world's food – small scale farmers. It is therefore time for governments and international agencies to stop supporting the REDD experiment and finally start addressing the underlying drivers of forest loss and climate change!

More information

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End Notes

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