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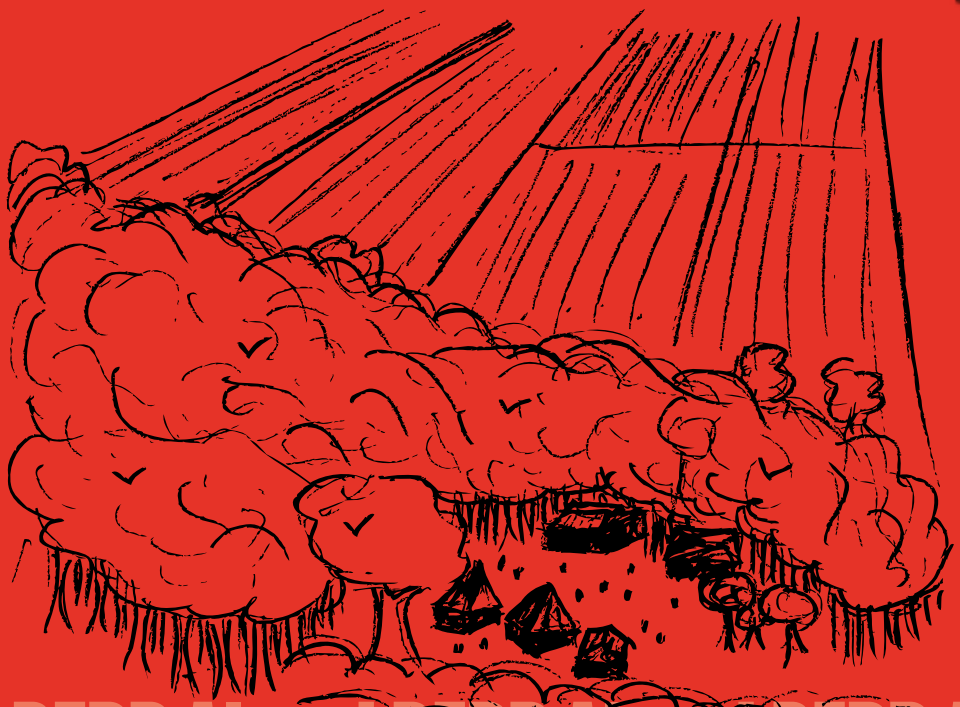
World Rainforest Movement



REDD Alert ! REDD Alert ! REDD Alert !

How REDD+ projects undermine peasant farming and real solutions to climate change

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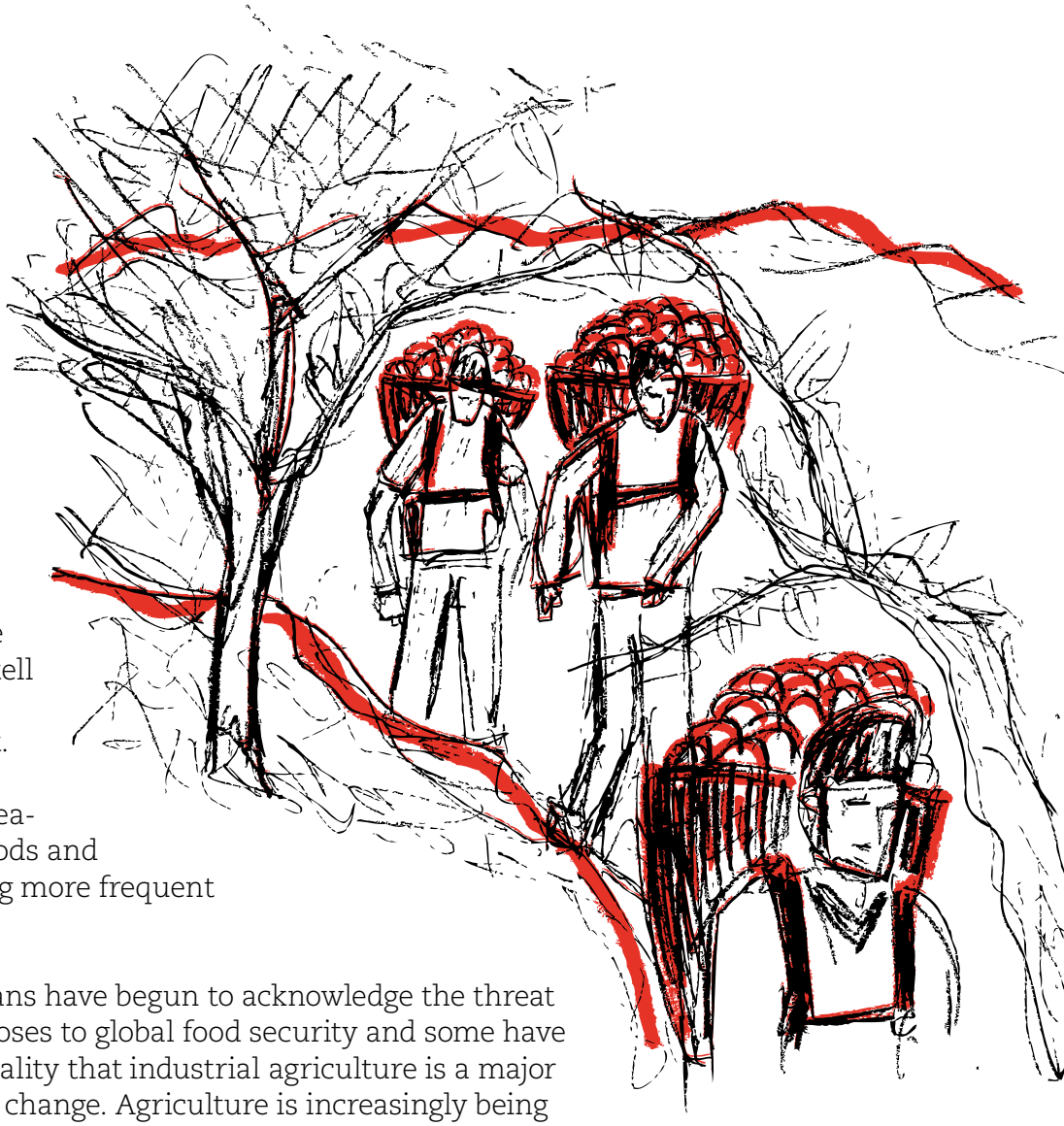
Introduction



Peasants do an incredible job of providing most of the world's food on just a quarter of the world's agricultural lands. But ask any of these small scale farmers about climate change and they will tell you how it is making farming more difficult. It is getting harder for them to predict the weather, while storms, floods and droughts are becoming more frequent and extreme.

Scientists and politicians have begun to acknowledge the threat that climate change poses to global food security and some have come around to the reality that industrial agriculture is a major contributor to climate change. Agriculture is increasingly being discussed at high level forums on climate change, and governments and international agencies are coming forward with different programmes that they claim will help farmers to adapt to climate change and mitigate agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions.

These various initiatives are all politically loaded, just like any other area of international agricultural policy. They are heavily influenced by powerful corporations and governments that want to protect industrial agriculture and corporate food systems from real solutions to climate change that would provide peasants with more lands and support agro-ecological farming for local markets. As a result, small scale peasant agriculture is being targeted by a number of aggressively promoted false solutions

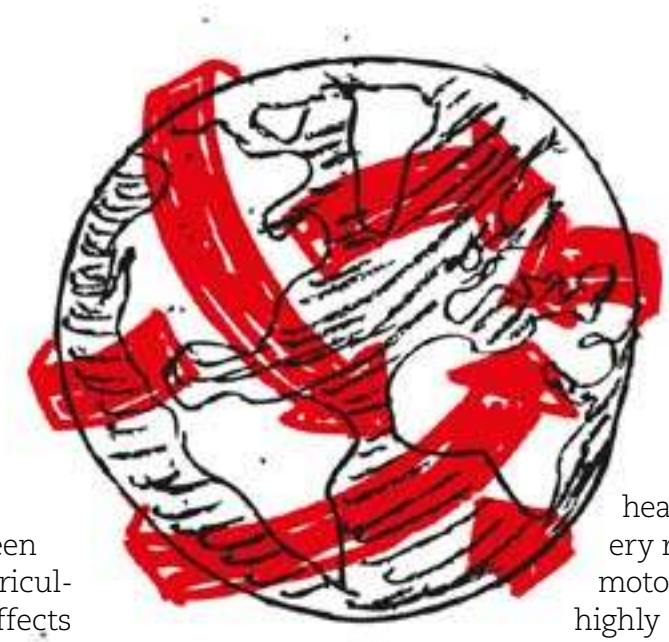
to climate change while industrial and corporate-driven agriculture mostly continues with business as usual.

"Peasants do an incredible job of providing most of the world's food on just a quarter of the world's agricultural lands."

In this context, peasant organisations are under increasing pressure from NGOs, governments and donors to engage their members in new programmes on 'small scale farming and climate change'. There are growing numbers of workshops, booklets and handbooks that promote initiatives with awkward names like REDD+ or "climate smart agriculture". In addition, many industrialized countries and international conservation groups are funding pilot REDD+ projects aimed at peasant farmers. While these initiatives all claim to benefit small farmers, the reality is that most undermine peasant farming and food systems by claiming that traditional agricultural practices, especially shifting cultivation, are a major cause of climate change and forest loss. They also rob peasants to access to lands and forests and restrict what peasants can do on their lands.

This publication, which compliments other materials on agriculture and climate change and false solutions to climate change, provides critical analysis and information about one of the most dangerous false solutions to climate change: REDD+ (**R**educing **E**missions from **D**eforestation and Forest **D**egradation).

Background



There is a two-way connection between climate change and agriculture: climate change affects food production and at the same time, at least 15-25 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions are linked to the agriculture sector. The figure is even higher, around 44-57 percent, if emissions connected with industrial food processing and transport are included.[1]

Expansion of industrial commodity crop plantations like soy, sugarcane, palm oil, maize and rapeseed and cattle ranching for meat production are the dominant contributors to greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture sector. They account for between 70-90% of global deforestation.[2] Additional emissions are generated by those industrial farming practices that rely on chemical (nitrogen) fertilizers, heavy machinery run on diesel motors, and the highly concentrated industrial livestock operations that generate large quantities of methane waste.

Industrial agriculture has also taken a huge toll on soil fertility. Cultivated soils have lost between 30 to 75% of their organic matter during the 20th century. Much of this organic matter has been washed away by erosion and now rests at the bottom of rivers and oceans. But this global loss of organic matter has also resulted in large quantities of carbon dioxide (CO_2) having been released into the atmosphere. The good news, however, is that unlike the carbon released from ancient oil or coal deposits, the CO_2 that has been released into the atmosphere as a result of depleting the world's soils can be put back into the soil. What is needed is a moving away from those agricultural practices that destroy organic matter and, instead, support for practices that build-up the organic matter in the soil - something peasant farmers around the world have been doing for generations.

1. UNCTAD Trade and Environment Review 2013. http://unctad.org/en/publicationslibrary/ditcted2012d3_en.pdf
2. GRAIN (2011): Food and climate change: the forgotten link. https://www.grain.org/article/entries/4357-food-and-climate-change-the-forgotten-link

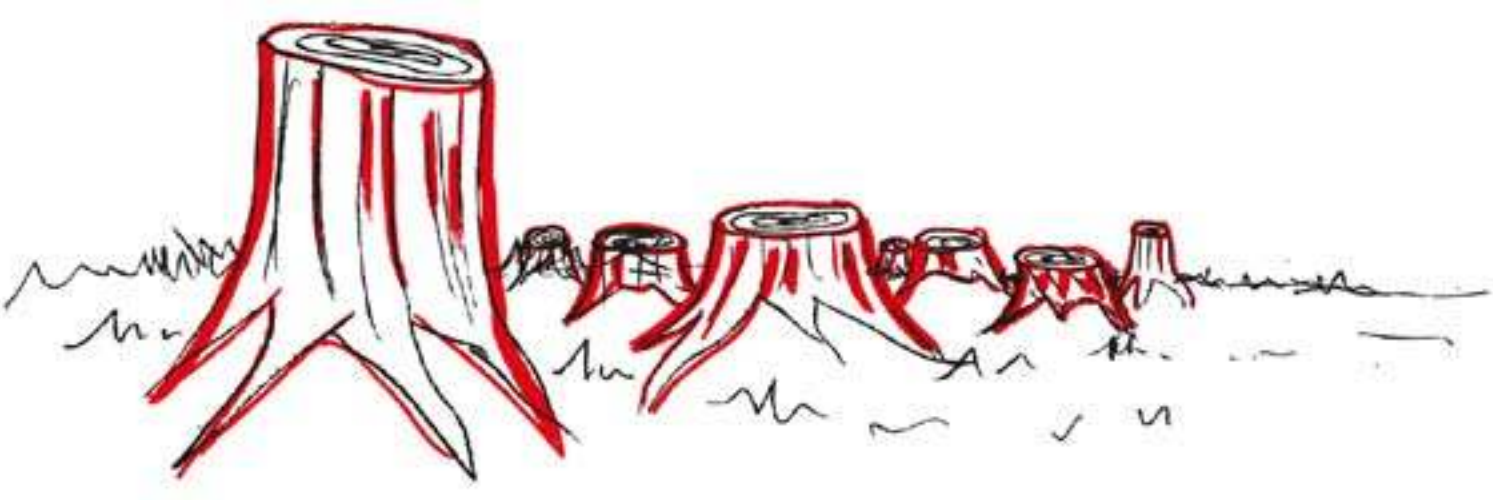
"REDD+ is not just a false solution to the urgent and critical problem of climate change. It reinforces the corporate food and farming system that is largely responsible for climate change and undermines the food and agricultural systems of peasants and indigenous peoples that can cool the planet."

You wouldn't think, however, that the overwhelming majority of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from land use are caused by industrial agriculture when you read reports from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) or the World Bank. Nor would you get a sense from them that peasant farming provides a positive solution to world hunger and the climate crisis. While the odd FAO publication will recognise the importance of peasant practices to forest conservation and GHG emission reductions,[3] the FAO and other international agencies routinely point to peasant farming and shifting cultivation as the main culprits of forest loss and GHG emissions from land use.

Instead of attacking the real problem (industrial agriculture and the corporate food system), these agencies are promoting programmes that target peasant farmers and distract people from the measures that are needed.

One such programme is called REDD (**R**educing **E**missions from **D**eforestation and Forest **D**egradation; see Box 'What is REDD+' for more information). It is advertised as a solution that can help peasants reduce emissions, adapt their farming practises to a changing climate and increase yields. Despite nice claims promising wins for all sides, experience has shown that REDD+ is not an ally of peasant communities.

3. Erni, C. (2015): Shifting cultivation, livelihood and food security. New and old challenges for indigenous peoples in Asia. Joint publication by FAO, IWGIA and AIPP. http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/8a0ee1bf-0285-45fb-bf66-fd9f1f518f60/



In 2014, the World Rainforest Movement (WRM) compiled reports about 24 existing REDD+ initiatives. 'REDD: A Collection of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies' revealed that in most cases, the information peasant communities had received about REDD+ projects was biased or incomplete. 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, loss of access to land and blame for being responsible for deforestation and causing climate change.

Almost all REDD+ activities limit the use of the forest for shifting cultivation, gathering and other subsistence use. Hunting, fishing, grazing or cutting some trees for construction of housing or canoes are also often restricted and the restrictions are enforced by REDD+ project owners, often with the support of armed guards. At the same time, large-scale drivers of deforestation like industrial logging, expansion of oil palm, soya or tree plantations, infrastructure mega-projects, mining, large hydro-dams – and above all, industrial agriculture expanding into the forest – continue without restriction.

In very few of these cases were communities informed that the 'product' these REDD projects generated, the carbon credits, would be sold to polluters in industrialised countries. That the buyers of these carbon credits were some of the largest corporations worldwide, whose businesses are built on fossil fuel extraction and the destruction of the territories of indigenous peoples and forest communities was rarely revealed. Indeed, in the vast majority of these REDD+ projects, peasant farming was singled out as the cause of deforestation while the major drivers of deforestation – extraction of oil, coal, mining,

infrastructure, large-scale dams, industrial logging and international trade in agricultural commodities – were ignored.[4]

REDD+ is not just a false solution to the urgent and critical problem of climate change. It reinforces the corporate food and farming system that is largely responsible for climate change, has robbed many communities and forest peoples of their territories and undermines the food and agricultural systems of peasants and indigenous peoples that can cool the planet.

This publication is meant to help peasant organisations navigate through the promotional material of REDD+ proponents and understand the real dangers that REDD+ presents for peasant communities. It explains some patterns that make REDD+ a danger for peasant farming, and provides a number of cases to help illustrate these dangers.

4. See for instance the now cancelled Kalimantan Forest Climate Partnership, described in Yayasan Petak Danum Letter to the Australian Delegation to Central Kalimantan February 2011, RE: Community Concerns with the KFCP. http://www.redd-monitor.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/YPD-Letter-to-Australian-Delegation.pdf

What is REDD+?

REDD stands for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries. It is the term under which forest loss is discussed at United Nations (UN) climate meetings. Since 2005, the issue of forest loss has distracted governments at these UN meetings from addressing the real cause of climate change – turning ancient underground deposits of oil, coal and gas into fossil fuels and burning them. Instead of coming up with a plan on how to end the release of greenhouse gas emissions that is the consequence of burning these fossil fuels, the UN climate talks have spent much time debating deforestation of tropical forests. Of course it is important to halt forest loss, also because of the CO_2 emissions that are

released when forests are destroyed. But reducing deforestation is no substitute for coming up with a plan on how to stop burning fossil fuel! The trouble with REDD is that that is exactly its consequence: enabling industrialised countries to burn fossil fuels a little longer.

REDD+ is another word the UN uses to discuss forests, and the plus stands for 'enhancing carbon stocks, sustainable forest management and forest conservation' – or, as one commentator stated, "at some stage someone thought it fitting to tag on the "+" which would come to represent all those other things that have come to the attention of the international development industry in recent years (like conservation, gender, indigenous people, livelihoods and so on)". REDD was originally designed for countries with high deforestation, Brazil and Indonesia in particular. This meant that funding would be available primarily for those countries with much potential to reduce their rate of deforestation. Only some eight countries accounting for 70% of tropical forest loss would thus be involved. Countries with much forest but little deforestation - Guyana, DRC, Gabon, etc. - therefore insisted that REDD be designed so they would also have access to REDD funding, for example through being paid to not increase projected future deforestation. The plus was thus also added so that countries with low levels of deforestation but a lot of forest could also have access to what was at the time expected to be large sums of money for REDD+ activities.[5]

How is REDD+ meant to work?

Forest-rich countries in the global South agree to reduce emissions from forest destruction as part of a UN climate agreement. To demonstrate exactly how many tonnes of carbon (dioxide) have been saved, the government produces a national REDD+ plan which explains how much forest **would have been** destroyed over the next few decades. Then they describe how much forest they would be willing not to cut if someone paid them to keep the forest standing that they said would otherwise be destroyed. They calculate how much it would cost not to destroy this forest and how much carbon will not be released into the atmosphere as a result of keeping the forest intact.

In return, industrialized countries (or companies or international NGOs) pay the tropical forest countries (or individual REDD+ projects) to prevent the forest destruction that is claimed to happen without REDD+ finance. The payment will only be made if the forest country shows that forest loss has actually been reduced **and** that the carbon that otherwise would have been released into the atmosphere continues to be stored in the forest. That is why people sometimes talk about 'results-based' or 'performance' payments for REDD+. The REDD+ project also needs to show that without the REDD+ money the forest would have been destroyed. This last point is important because many industrialised countries and corporations that fund REDD+ activities want to receive something in return for their financial support. This something is called a *carbon credit* (the name might change in the UN climate treaty that governments are expected to adopt in Paris in December 2015). The WRM publication '10 things communities should know about REDD' explains why the calculations that create carbon credits are not credible and why it is impossible to know whether a forest was really only saved because of the REDD+ money.

What is this carbon credit good for?

A carbon credit is essentially a right to pollute. A polluting country or company

5. For more information, see WRM website section on REDD and publication '10 Things Communities Should Know About REDD'. www.wrm.org.uy

that has made a commitment to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions does not reduce their emissions by as much as they said they would. Instead, they pay someone elsewhere to make the reduction for them. That way, the polluter can claim to have lived up to their commitment when in reality they continue burning more oil and coal and release more CO_2 into the atmosphere than they said they would. At the other end of the (REDD+) carbon credit deal, someone claims they were planning to destroy a forest but as a result of the payment, they decided to not destroy that forest. The carbon saved by protecting the forest that otherwise would have been cut is sold as a carbon credit to the polluter who keeps burning more fossil fuels than agreed. In other words, the owner of the carbon credit has the right to release one tonne of fossil carbon they had promised to avoid because someone else has saved a tonne of carbon in a forest that without the carbon payment would have been destroyed, releasing CO_2. On the voluntary carbon market, where corporations and individuals buy carbon credits to claim that (some of) their emissions have been offset, REDD+ credits are traded for between USD 3 and USD 10.

Why does trading carbon credits not reduce emissions?

There are many problems with this idea of (carbon) offsets. Among them that they do not reduce overall emissions – what is saved in one place allows extra emissions in another place. In the case of REDD+ offsets, another problem is the very important difference between the carbon stored in oil, coal and gas and the carbon stored in forests. The carbon stored in the trees is part of a natural cycle through which carbon is constantly released and absorbed by plants. The terrestrial carbon has been circulating between the atmosphere, the oceans and the forest for millions of years.

Deforestation over the centuries has meant that too much of the carbon naturally in circulation has ended up in the atmosphere and too little in forests. Today, industrial agriculture, logging, infrastructure and mining are the main drivers of deforestation. When industrialized countries started burning oil and coal, they further increased the amount of carbon that could accumulate in the atmosphere. The carbon in these 'fossil fuels' had been stored underground for millions of years, without contact with the atmosphere. Its release greatly increases the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which in turn causes the climate to change. Although plants can absorb part of this additional carbon released from ancient oil and coal deposits, they do so only temporarily: When the plant dies or a forest is destroyed or burns, the carbon is released and increases the concentration of CO_2 in the atmosphere (adding to the imbalance from forest destruction).

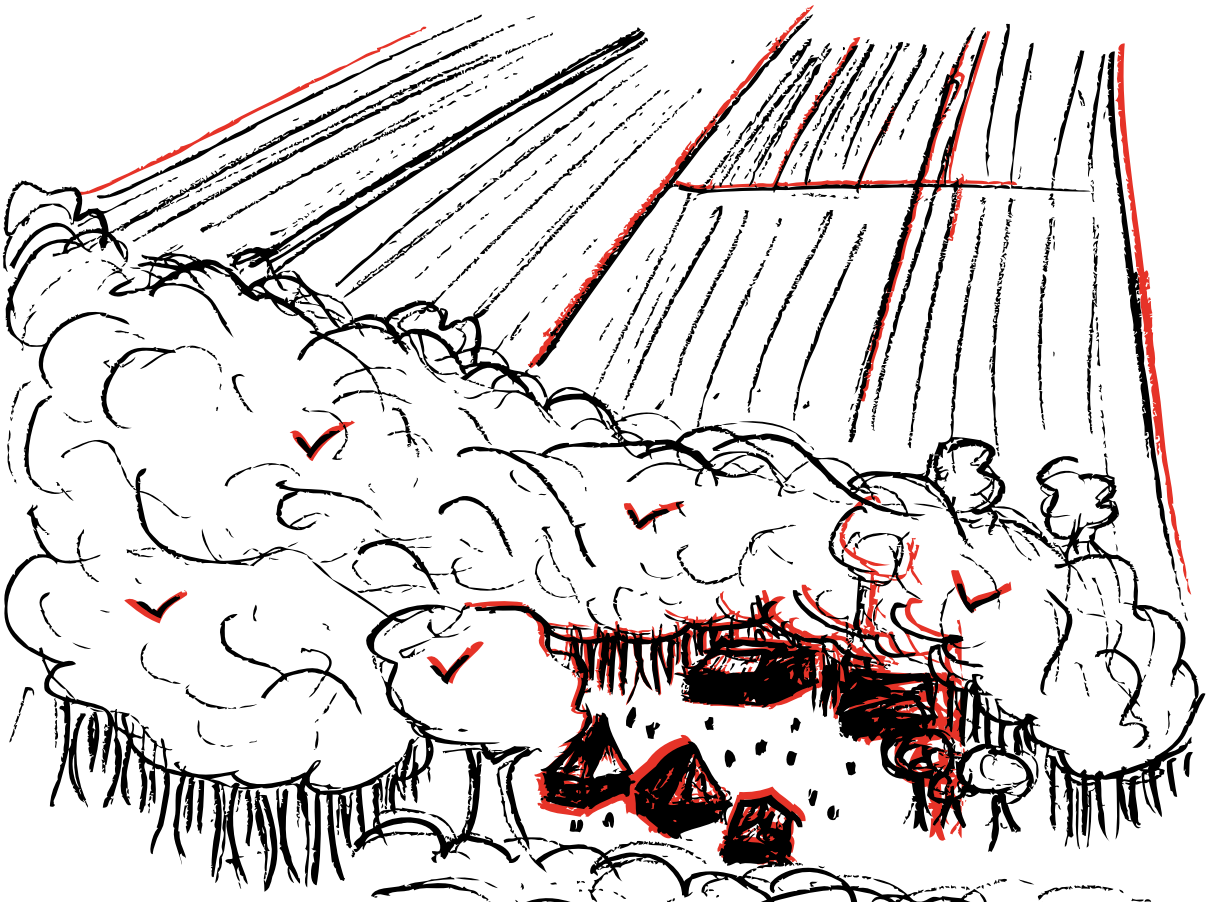
That is why REDD+ credits not only don't help reduce overall emissions. REDD+ credits will lead to an increase of CO_2 concentrations in the atmosphere because REDD+ is built on the false assumption that forest and fossil carbon are the same when from a climate perspective they are clearly not!

For more information:

World Rainforest Movement (2012): Ten things communities should know about REDD. http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/10-things-communities-should-know-about-redd/

World Rainforest Movement (2012): Disputed Territory. Green economy versus community-based economies. Video: http://wrm.org.uy/videos/disputed-territory-the-green-economy-versus-community-based-economies/

Patterns that make REDD+ a danger to peasant farming



1: REDD+ blames peasant farming practices for deforestation and emissions

Peasants around the world are being squeezed onto less and less land. Today, they account for 90% of the farms but occupy only a quarter of the world's agricultural lands. Yet, they still manage to produce most of the world's food, without nearly the amount of GHG emissions produced by large-scale industrial farms.

Any programme that would take more land away from peasant communities can therefore not be a solution to the climate crisis. To cool the planet, the world needs more small farmers farming on a greater percentage of the world's agricultural lands, and less lands in the hands of big corporate farms.

The overwhelming majority of REDD+ projects, however, seek to reduce GHG emissions by further reducing the lands that peasant farmers and indigenous communities have access to or by changing how the land is used.[6]

6. WRM (2015): REDD: A Collection of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies. http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/REDD-A-Collection-of-Conflict_Contradictions_Lies_expanded.pdf

REDD+ proponents justify their backwards approach with the erroneous assumption that shifting cultivation in particular, a practice commonly used by peasants around the world, is a major cause of deforestation. This is simply not true.

Shifting cultivation is a land use practise that peasants have developed over many generations of growing food in challenging conditions. What is usually lumped together under the term "slash-and-burn" in reality are hundreds of different land use practises, adapted to the local circumstances. Far from causing large-scale forest loss, these practises have allowed forest-dependent communities to maintain the forests they depend on.

A recent CIFOR report on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, found a *"lack of strong evidence"* that peasant agriculture contributed significantly to overall deforestation and concluded that *any biodiversity and carbon impacts from deforestation by peasants would be limited."*[7] Another recent study of coastal Madagascar pointed to historical droughts as a cause of deforestation rather than peasant farming or shifting cultivation, as has been widely assumed.[8]

Where shifting cultivation is leading to forest degradation, rotation cycles are usually shortened because less land is available for shifting cultivators. This is almost always a result of expanding industrial plantations or mega-infrastructure projects or industrial logging, which grab land peasant communities rely on for food production.

"A recent CIFOR report on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, found a 'lack of strong evidence' that peasant agriculture contributed significantly to overall deforestation and concluded that any biodiversity and carbon impacts from deforestation by peasants would be limited."

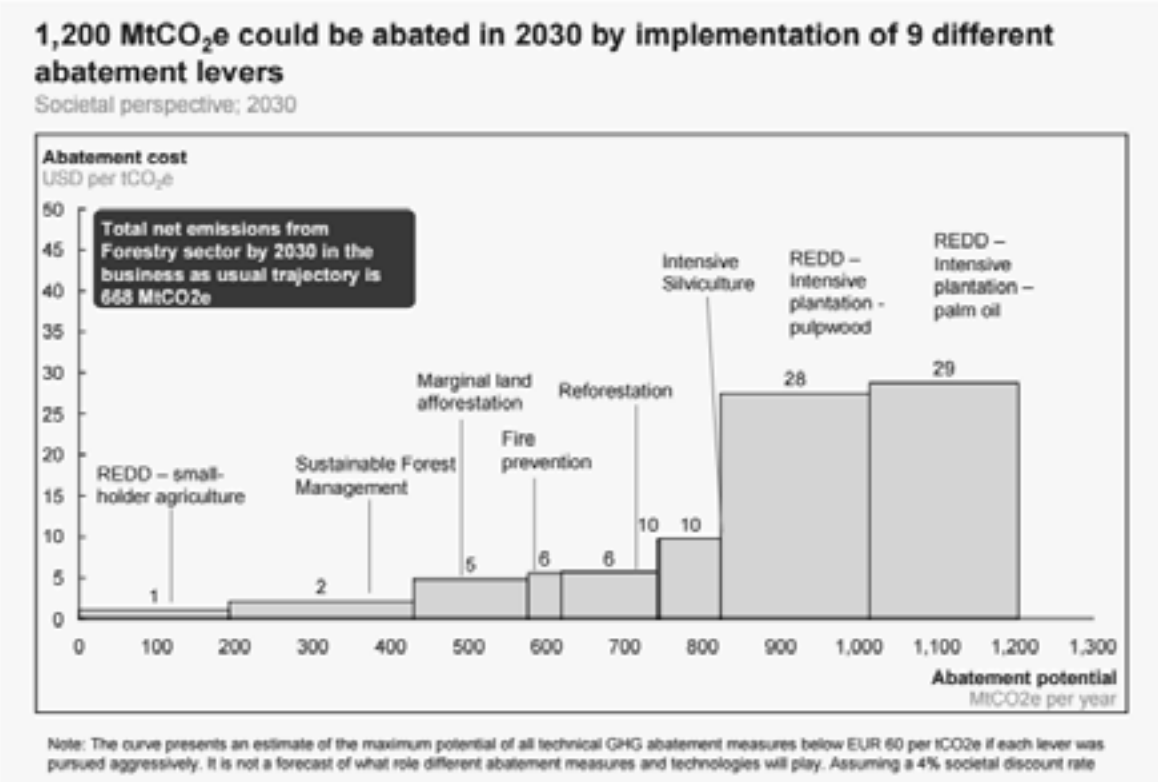
Another argument used by REDD+ proponents is that the "opportunity cost" is lower for restricting peasant farming practises than it is for restricting the expansion of monocuture plantations and industrial farms.

The "opportunity cost" equals the cost of not cutting down forests. It is a measure of the economic value that would have been generated, by companies or peasants, if deforestation activities

7. Ickowitz A, Slayback D, Asanzi P and Nasi R. 2015. Agriculture and deforestation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: A synthesis of the current state of knowledge. Occasional Paper 119. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR. http://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/OccPapers/OP-119.pdf
8. Virah-Sawmy, M. (2009): Ecosystem management in Madagascar during global change. Conservation Letters, 2: 163–170.

were allowed to continue. But, in the biased eyes of the consultants hired on REDD+ projects, the "opportunity cost" of not proceeding with expansion of monoculture plantations of export crops will always be higher than those from restricting the planting of a local food crop by peasants or the costs of restricting a community's access to the forest for hunting and gathering or for grazing. The consultants can see the money that plantations generate for companies; but they do not see the whole value that forest areas represent for peasant communities in terms of local food production, housing, medicines, biodiversity, culture, etc. For REDD+ proponents, therefore, it is more "cost" effective to stop peasants from using forest lands than it is to stop plantation companies and corporate farmers. This approach suits the industrialised countries and international aid agencies that fund most REDD+ projects. It means that for relatively little money they can present the image to the world that 'they are doing something about deforestation' – without having to address their own responsibility for deforestation, through the promotion and consumption of industrial agriculture products for export.

The global consultancy firm McKinseys produced many of the dubious REDD opportunity cost calculations, such as the one below from Indonesia. They all present peasant farming and shifting cultivation as the cheapest options for reducing emissions from land use. As a result, REDD+ plans of many tropical countries focus on the 'low cost option' of shifting cultivation.



Source: Indonesia's National Climate Change Council (2010): "Indonesia's greenhouse gas abatement cost curve". August 2010. P. 21.

CASE STUDY #1

"What have we gained? Not much"

In 2002, the N'hambita Community Carbon Project in Mozambique was started with a €5 million EU grant to Envirotrade, a company registered originally in Mauritius. 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. 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. Opening new fields was not allowed. The project did initially provide some income for people and allowed some families to put tin roofs on their houses or buy a solar panel and run a little business to charge phones etc. But these benefits pale in comparison with the long-term legal obligations involved. Villagers are paid for seven years to plant and conserve trees, but sign a contract 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"*, a clause in the contract states. António Serra from Envirotrade in Mozambique told La Via Campesina who investigated the project in 2012, 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 the researchers examined one 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 than most farmers in the community had and would have to plant many more trees to 'alleviate poverty' – another stated project objective. The payments to farmers are also conditional upon 85% of the seedlings surviving– otherwise payments are reduced. As a consequence, many villagers involved in the project reduced or stopped farming so they could tend the trees. But still, regularly less than the required 85% of the seedlings survived. When payments were reduced or delayed, the lack of money combined with having given up or scaled back farming made their already difficult situation worse. A report for La Via Campesina also found that a considerable number of farmers involved in maintaining firebreaks and patrolling the community forests in the REDD+ area had abandoned farming. One villager who coordinated a group of farmers maintaining firebreaks and patrols used to farm to feed his family. *"Now our main activity is firebreaks. I don't have time to go to the machamba,"* he says.[1] The USD 340 he earned during the firebreak season he has to divide between the group of four that he manages. Securing food has thus become more difficult for many involved in the project.

1. La Via Campesina Africa (2012): Carbon trading and REDD+ in Mozambique: farmers 'grow' carbon for the benefit of polluters. https://www.grain.org/bulletin_board/entries/4531-carbon-trading-and-redd-in-mozambique-farmers-grow-carbon-for-the-benefit-of-polluters#sdfootnote2anc

2. REDD+: Good business for carbon companies, international conservation NGOs, consultants and industrialised countries

One of the big promises of REDD+ is that forest-dependent communities and peasant farmers will get paid for protecting the forest. To entice governments and communities of the global South, REDD+ proponents routinely make exaggerated claims about the size of the global trade in carbon credits – or the expected size of a future forest carbon market.

"Imagine a market that could provide billions of dollars for replanting trees, protecting standing forests, and improving the way timber is harvested. That is what we are talking about when we talk about the potential of carbon markets, and the role forest carbon might play in them."[9] This is how Mark Tercek, CEO of US-based conservation group The Nature Conservancy, one of the strongest proponents of REDD+, described the potential of carbon markets for forests at a "Carbon Finance Speakers" event at Yale University in the USA in 2009.

In 1997, when the UN's international climate treaty, the Kyoto Protocol, allowed industrialized countries to achieve their emission limits in part by paying for reductions in the global South, similar promises were made. The World Bank and the same international conservation groups that today advocate for a forest carbon market predicted that the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) could bring billions to the poor in the global South. But, today, just a few ailing regional carbon markets are all that has materialised from the projected multi-billion, if not trillion dollar global carbon market that was supposed to pave the way for 'carbon' to become the world's new global currency.

The reality is that the price for carbon permits has been in free fall since 2008, among other reasons because governments gave out so many permits to companies for free that few companies needed to buy more permits to cover their emissions. Emission credits in the largest carbon market, the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, now trade at around €7 - far below the €42 level that would be needed to encourage German utilities to switch from burning coal to natural gas and even further from the €60-€80 price that these permits were predicted to trade at when the scheme was introduced. Carbon credits from CDM projects are faring even worse and have been trading for as little as €0.40 for a few years now. In fact, the financial performance of carbon markets is so bad that the World Bank stopped issuing its annual 'State of the carbon market report' in 2012, when it could no longer find a way to at least show some positive development in carbon markets.

Carbon permits might swing back to the expected price. But the experiences of existing REDD+ projects that sell carbon credits in the voluntary carbon market, where corporations and individuals buy carbon credits to claim that (some of) their emissions have been offset, show how most of the supposed profits that are in theory going to communities will be captured by others.

Before a REDD+ project can sell carbon credits, a lot of technical documents have to be written, certified and verified by different auditing firms.[10] Most of the

9. Tercek, M. (2009) "Protecting Forests and Lands through Environmental Markets and Finance", Carbon Finance Speakers Series at Yale. 10 February 2009. P. 35.

10. See the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance website for examples of what such documents look like. They are rarely less than 100 pages long! http://www.climate-standards.org/category/projects/

A report produced for the UK Government in 2008, the Eliasch Review, estimated that in one scenario USD9 billion per year would be captured in "rent" or profit for forest carbon traders out of a total cost of USD22 billion, and in a second scenario USD18 billion out of a total cost of USD33 billion.[8] Source of drawing: FERN (2012): The Story of REDD: A real solution to deforestation?

time, the REDD+ project also needs the help of middlemen to find buyers for its credits. This is always the case in those rare situations where a community itself runs the REDD+ project. All of these preparations do not only use a jargon language but they also cost money. And they are not cheap. They add up to what is called the 'overhead costs' or 'transaction costs' of REDD+ projects. These vary from case to case but typically, they are 20-50% of the offset project budget. Payments to communities are also usually of net, not gross profit – and anecdotal experience suggests that there often is not much net profit left after the project owners have deducted all their costs.

For international conservation groups like The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, and WWF by contrast, REDD+ is good business because they are able to capture a large portion of the international aid and climate funding available for REDD+. They are involved in many REDD+ projects and initiatives and act as advisors on national REDD+ plans. None of these groups have revealed the size of their REDD+ budgets, or how much of their funding comes from the climate finance that industrialised countries account as REDD+ payments to the global South.

Communities participating in REDD+ projects can also be saddled with financial risks and obligations contained in their contracts which were often not clearly explained to them. For example, in one tree planting project in Ecuador run by the Dutch company FACE, the carbon contract between the company and the participating communities included an obligation for the community to replant trees that might be destroyed, for example in wild fires. The trees planted were pine trees, in monoculture plantations and in a region that is not suitable for pine and

"For international conservation groups like The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, and WWF, REDD+ is good business because they are able to capture a large portion of the International aid and climate funding available for REDD+."

has a high risk of fires. It was therefore not really a surprise when the carbon trees burned down – in one location not once but three times! The first time, the community paid to have the trees replanted because the company insisted on fulfilment of the contract obligations. But when the trees burned down again, they refused to pay and the company threatened to take legal action against them.[11]

Industrialised countries also stand to gain even more from REDD+ if the new UN climate treaty currently being negotiated provides them with the possibility to take the credit for tropical countries reducing deforestation. A decision on how reducing forest loss will be financed under a new UN climate treaty is expected from the UN climate meeting in Paris in December 2015. One of the proposals on the table is that the countries providing financial support for REDD+ count REDD+ reductions towards their own emission targets. If the country where deforestation was reduced does the same, the same reduction would in effect be claimed twice, resulting in actual emissions of greenhouse gases being higher than reported to the UN. Therefore, if tropical forested countries cannot agree to industrialised countries taking the credits for their REDD+ emissions reductions, they should not agree to REDD+ being funded by an international trading mechanism.[12]

11. Ivonne Yanez (2015): Josefina and the Water Springs against Pine Plantations in Ecuador's Páramos. WRM Bulletin 211, March 2015. http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/josefina-and-the-water-springs-against-pine-plantations-in-ecuadors-paramos/

12. FERN & TWN (2015): Who takes the credit? REDD+ in a post-2020 UN climate agreement. http://www.fern.org/sites/fern.org/files/Who%20takes%20the%20credit.pdf

CASE STUDY #2

"I and my people have suffered for five years now"

In Cross River State, southeast Nigeria, a REDD+ programme that involves the FAO, UNDP and UNEP includes a moratorium on forest activities that community members have depended on for generations. *"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,"* says Chief Owai Obio Arong of Iko Esa Community. Under the programme, products like kola nuts or fruits deemed to have been collected from the REDD+ forest area are confiscated from community members. The harvesting of Afang leaves, a local vegetable consumed in West and Central Africa, has also been banned in forests designated by the government as REDD+ areas. This criminalisation of food gathering from the forests and related economic activities has promoted an underground market which in turn has driven up the price of forest products. The REDD+ programme has essentially turned community forests into state-controlled areas.[1]

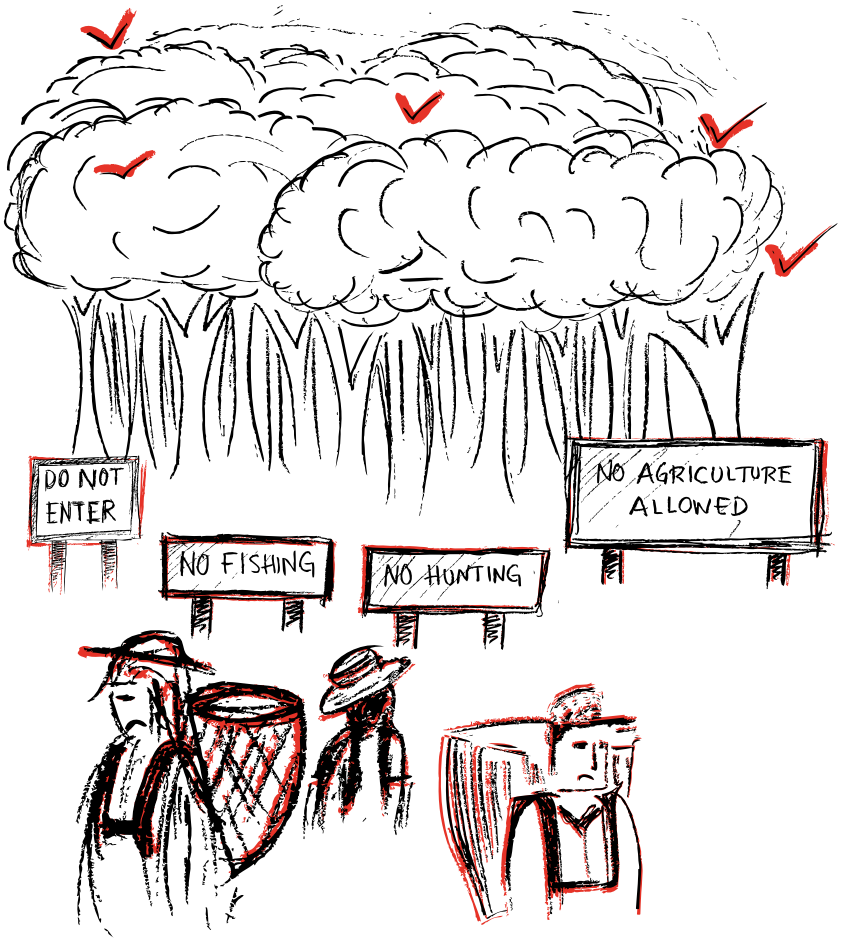
1. Social Development Integrated Centre (2014): Seeing REDD. Communities, Forests and Carbon Trading in Nigeria. http://www.rosalux.sn/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/SEEING-REDD-ready- 1-version-new.pdf

CASE STUDY #3

"There is no compensation, only penalties to pay"

The 'Holistic Conservation Programme for Forests' (HCPF) in Madagascar is run by WWF Madagascar, with financial support from Air France and others. The project objectives include encouraging and supporting local communities in the conservation of biodiversity and promoting alternative activities to shifting cultivation. While alternative activities are yet to take off, the project is already stopping 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 told researchers. Another added: *"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."*

3. REDD+ undermines food sovereignty



There are different ways that REDD+ projects commonly undermine local food production and create food insecurity among local communities. In some cases, families participating directly in the offset project must reduce their production of food crops in order to plant trees for the project. In other cases, the REDD+ project prevents the communities from accessing forested areas that they rely on for hunting and gathering, for shifting cultivation or for grazing.

Because most REDD+ projects start from the false assumption that shifting cultivation and peasant farming in forest areas are a threat to both forests and the climate, they generally include restrictions on families opening new fields in the forest. The documents usually include proposals to increase yields on existing plots, through "modernising" practises such as intercropping to maintain nutrients and soil fertility. The reality, however, is that the large majority of these proposals fail because they are not suitable for the particular local circumstances.

The experience that a community had in Bolivia with a forest carbon offset project is typical of REDD+ projects elsewhere. A villager from the community told researchers about a herd of cows the offset project had provided in an attempt to set up 'alternative livelihoods' for the community to make up for the loss of access to forested lands. 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.*"[13]

The regular failure of such attempts to 'establish alternatives to slash-and-burn' or 'modernise' peasant agriculture through proposals developed by far-away REDD+ project owners or conservation NGOs points to another tension inherent in REDD+ : these projects are concerned first and foremost with maximizing

13. Greenpeace (2009): Carbon Scam: Noel Kempff Climate Action Project and the Push for Subnational Forest Offsets. http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/Global/usa/report/2010/1/carbon-scamnoel-kempff-clima.pdf

"Because most REDD+ projects start from the false assumption that shifting cultivation and peasant farming in forest areas are a threat to both forests and the climate, they generally include restrictions on families opening new fields in the forest."

carbon storage in the area that will deliver carbon credits. Initiatives to involve peasant communities and forest peoples are an afterthought, a requirement from donors or to show supposedly participatory project implementation.

Hardly ever are the needs of forest-dependent communities the genuine starting point for designing such projects. Consequently, failure of initiatives aimed at increasing crop yield or developing new income generation opportunities is predictable for local participants. The ideas might sound good on paper but regularly fail to reflect local circumstances.

CASE STUDY #4

"Suffering here to help them over there"

The Nature Conservancy's Guaraqueçaba Climate Action Project in the south of Brazil is one of the early forest carbon projects. In promotional materials, the project owners write that it is important *"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."* The 'income-generating, sustainable enterprises' and the employment the project provided were short-lived. What remained, however, were restrictions on traditional communities' use of their territories, including the forests they had protected for generations. Harassment of people entering the forests to gather food, wood, or vines became ever more frequent, and many families started to move away from the place that was their home. *"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 in a film about the project. *"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,"* a resident describes his experience with the Guaraqueçaba forest project.

CASE STUDY #5

Local groups "cut out of the budget"

Project documents for the Monte Pascoal REDD project in the Brazilian state of Bahia promise that *"new work opportunities will be created by the project for local community members, who will be paid for their labor inputs."* The project signed carbon contracts with Kraft Foods, a Corporate Partner of Conservation International, and cosmetics company Natura. However, the project has been facing difficulties since 2012 in locating sufficient land for restoration to fulfil the carbon credit sales in the Natura contract. When additional problems arose in project implementation, community interests were the first to be discarded. The local associations felt booted out, commenting that their only remaining contribution to the project is their name and signature in project documents. Promises made regarding local employment and other benefits from the carbon offset project were either never met or lasted only a few years.

CASE STUDY #6

"It is our forest and other people are managing it in our place"

A brochure about a REDD+ project in the eastern part of DRC 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."* The project is supported by Conservation International and provides carbon credits to the entertainment company Walt Disney. One investor in the project notes that the company's 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."* When asked by researchers about REDD+, 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."* A resident of a neighbouring village was less hopeful: *"It is our forest and other people are managing it in our place."*

4. REDD+ undermines community control over territories

Why remain in the forest, if you are forbidden to live with it?"

Dercy Teles, Rural Workers Trade Union, Xapuri, Acre

Tradable REDD+ credits are a form of property title. Those who purchase the credits do not need to own the land nor the trees that are "storing" the carbon, but *they do own the right to decide how that land will be used*. They also usually have contractual rights to monitor what is happening on the land and request access to the land at any time they choose for as long as they own the carbon credit.

Communities often are not informed about how the contract they sign for REDD+ projects might undermine their control over their territories. In 2013, Friends of the Earth International analysed a number of REDD+ project contracts that involved communities directly and found that many REDD+ contracts were full of "*words written with the intention of not being understood, not being fulfilled.*" Often, obligations that communities or families enter into are not clearly explained or they are described in ambiguous terms that can easily be misinterpreted.

"Many REDD+ contracts were full of 'words written with the intention of not being understood, not being fulfilled'. Often, obligations that communities or families enter into are not clearly explained or they are described in ambiguous terms that can easily be misinterpreted."

Seeking legal advice on such complex and ambiguous technical documents is made difficult because almost all REDD+ contracts contain strict confidentiality clauses. Many of the contracts and project documents are also written in English, with only partial or no translation into local languages, which further restricts the possibility for communities to fully inform themselves about the REDD+ projects presented to them.

Community control over territories is also undermined by the inbuilt logic of carbon offsets, which requires that the REDD+ project identifies the users of the land and their activities as a threat to the forest in order for the REDD+ project to generate carbon credits. If the activities are not a threat to the forest, there is no risk of deforestation and therefore no carbon credits can be generated from avoiding deforestation!

For REDD+ projects involving forest communities this means that people who for generations have protected the forest must describe the way they use the forest as a risk in the hypothetical story of what would have happened with the forest without the REDD+ project. Without such a story that the forest would have been destroyed, there is no carbon to be saved, and thus no carbon credits to be sold. This requirement of the REDD+ offset project to describe peasant farming and shifting cultivation as a risk to the forest is already reinforcing the dangerous false belief that forest-dependent communities and small-scale farmers are the most important agents of deforestation and undermines the control these communities have over their territories.

Another important way that REDD+ projects affect community control over territories is by creating divisions within communities. While many promises of employment through REDD+ projects remain unfulfilled, REDD+ projects generally do hire people from within the community to work as forest rangers or guards whose role it is to report on compliance with REDD+ project rules within the community. In other words, they are expected to keep an eye on other members of the community. Their role is to report to the project owners if community members cut down trees, hunt, fish, grow food crops in the forest or use the forests as they have always done but which is forbidden under the REDD+ project rules.

Needless to say that this is a job prone to creating conflict within the community, in particular if the rules were not agreed with the community but imposed by the REDD+ project. This form of 'employment' creates divisions within the community that will negatively affect the ability of communities to organize and work together to defend their territories.

How changes in laws inspired by carbon markets are threatening agrarian reform

The Forest Code in Brazil is an example for how legal changes informed by REDD+ and similar offset trading initiatives pose a risk to agrarian reform and peasant rights to land. The 2012 revision of the Forest Code extends the use of tradable forest restoration credits. These are credits that a landowner can sell if s/he has cleared less forest than allowed under the Forest Code. Farmers who have in the past cleared more forest than the law allowed and are obliged under the 2012 Forest Code to restore the area cleared in excess of the legal limit – or risk losing access to agricultural credit lines – can buy these forest restoration credits instead of restoring the forest on their own land.

These tradable forest restoration credits put a key instrument for Agrarian Reform in Brazil at great risk. The historical instrument of Agrarian Reform has been the expropriation of *latifúndios* that could be shown to be unproductive and thus not fulfilling the constitutionally required "social function" of the land. The introduction of tradable forest restoration credits created an instrument that could shield owners of *latifúndios* from expropriation for social purposes because these credits would transform unproductive estates into carbon factories and repositories of environmental reserves. This in turn would allow land owners to claim that the land is fulfilling the constitutionally required "social function".

"The possibility to buy carbon credits will turn unproductive latifundia into "carbon factories," warns Gerson Teixeira, ex-President of the Brazilian Association for Land Reform (ABRA).

For further information:

World Rainforest Movement (2014): REDD moves from forests to landscapes: More of the same, just bigger and with bigger risk to cause harm. http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/redd

Terra de Direitos (2014): Desmascarando as falsas soluções da Economia Verde frente às crises climática e ambiental. Boletim informativo nº 5 - Dezembro de 2014. http://terradedireitos.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Boletim-Biodiversidade6.pdf

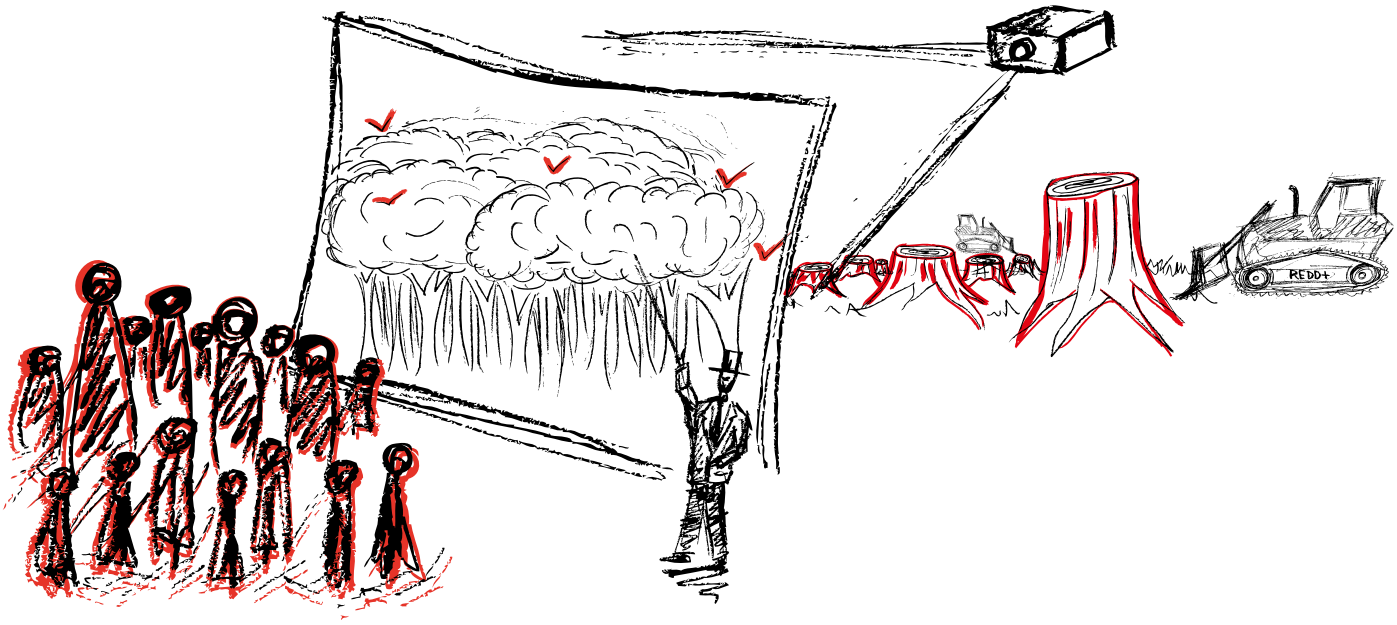
CASE STUDY #7

From food sovereignty to reliance on speculative timber markets

The Scolel Té carbon forestry project in Chiapas, Mexico, is one of the earliest examples of a forest offset. It was established in 1996 and originated from a six-month feasibility study financed by the UK. Mexican and British researchers in collaboration with indigenous coffee farmers from the northern highlands of Chiapas carried out the study. The farmers were attracted to the project as a means of securing land tenure and diversifying land use after prices on the world coffee market had collapsed. By 2008 around 450 individual farmers as well as 12 communities had signed contracts with the project. The 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. Carbon payments support farmers for only the five years of the programme (until trees are expected to grow without additional intensive maintenance). The main financial benefit of the project is therefore not the carbon payment during the first five years but revenue from the expected future timber sales. Farmers commit to maintaining tree plantations over four 25-year rotations for a total of 100 years as part of the project. In 2012, Greenpeace wrote that the project'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.*"

Researcher Tracey M. Osborne carried out a study of some communities participating in the Scolel Té carbon forestry project. She found that for the Mayan Chol community of Frontera Corozal, *"the project has largely failed to meet the needs of participating campesinos, and in some cases, it has exacerbated tensions within households and the community."* She also notes that *"while carbon producers participate in the project in part as a means to secure land tenure, carbon forestry has intersected with a national land privatization process that may make peasant access and control over land tenuous in the future."*[1]

1. Tracey M. Osborne (2010): Carbon capital: The political ecology of carbon forestry and development in Chiapas, Mexico. http://gradworks.umi.com/34/44/3444378.html



5. REDD+ facilitates the expansion of corporate agriculture

The deforestation caused by the agriculture sector over the past few decades is almost entirely due to the expansion of commodity crops for export and for animal feed. The land occupied for growing just four of these crops - soybean, oil palm, rapeseed and sugar cane - has quadrupled over the past five decades, and the vast majority of this expanded production is on large-scale industrial farms and plantations.[14]

Deforestation is therefore directly linked to the international commodity supply chains that are controlled by a small number of transnational food corporations. These include commodity traders and producers like Cargill, Louis Dreyfus Group, Bunge, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), JBS or Wilmar International, food companies like Nestlé, Danone, or Unilever, and supermarkets and fast food chains like McDonald's, Walmart or Carrefour. [15]

To shield themselves from bad publicity and to protect their supply channels, corporations have established voluntary certification schemes and commodity roundtables with the participation of a few large international NGOs. Such roundtables now exist for timber products

14. GRAIN (2014): Hungry for land: small farmers feed the world with less than a quarter of all farmland. https://www.grain.org/article/entries/4929-hungry-for-land-small-farmers-feed-the-world-with-less-than-a-quarter-of-all-farmland; Martin Persson, Sabine Henders, and Thomas Kastner (2014): Trading Forests: Quantifying the Contribution of Global Commodity Markets to Emissions from Tropical Deforestation. CGD Working Paper 384. http://www.cgdev.org/sites/efault/files/CGD-Climate-Forest-Series-8-persson-et-al-trading-forests_0.pdf ; Hosonuma, N., et al. 2012. An assessment of deforestation and forest degradation drivers in developing countries. Environmental Research Letters, Vol 7.; Forest Trends, "Consumer Goods and Deforestation", September 2014: http://www.forest-trends.org/documents/files/doc_4719.pdf

15. Hosonuma, N., et al. 2012. An assessment of deforestation and forest degradation drivers in developing countries. Environmental Research Letters, Vol 7.

(FSC), palm oil (RSPO), soya (RTRS), sugar (Bonsucro) and beef (BRBS, see table). All these initiatives have developed a set of standards against which producers are certified, usually by third-party auditors paid by the enterprise seeking certification, and which have been criticized for greenwashing corporate destruction and failing to address the issue of overconsumption.[16]

"The FAO Sourcebook does not clearly state whether FAO considers the use of synthetic fertilizers, genetically modified seeds or the production of industrial-scale agrofuels as 'climate-smart' practises, thus ensuring that the term can cover the whole spectrum of existing agricultural practise… it also conspicuously omits agroecology."

In the past few years, the connections between these commodity roundtables, certification schemes and initiatives linked to deforestation, climate change and REDD+ have been increasing. All the major roundtables now include requirements related to greenhouse gas emissions, such as identifying 'high carbon value forests', exploring carbon accounting methods, working towards 'zero deforestation' commodities or engaging in carbon offsetting initiatives. With this increasing merger of commodity roundtables and 'zero deforestation' initiatives, the focus of REDD+ has expanded from forests to so-called "landscapes". From late 2013 onwards, terms like 'landscape REDD', 'landscape funds', or 'landscape investment' have been increasingly mentioned in one breath with REDD+.

The World Bank plays a key role in bringing 'landscape' initiatives and REDD+ together with carbon markets. On the sidelines of the 2013 UN climate meeting, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the US together committed US$280 million for the Bank to set up the "Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes" (ISFL) as part of its already existing BioCarbon Fund. The BioCarbon Fund is a "public-private partnership", housed in the World Bank; it was the first carbon fund to implement carbon offset projects in the forest and agriculture sector. Unilever, Mondelez International and Bunge were among the food corporations involved in the preparation of the ISFL and were present at the launch of the initiative. The World Bank announced its new 'Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes' with the promise of "*creating multiple revenue streams from the sustainable transformation of landscapes.*"
This merger of REDD+ and agricultural commodity production provides huge opportunities for multinational food corporations like Unilever and Cargill,

16. WRM (2010): RSPO: The "greening" of the dark palm oil business; Overbeek W, Kröger M, Gerber J-F. 2012. An overview of industrial tree plantation conflicts in the global South. Conflicts, trends, and resistance struggles. EJOLT Report No. 3; WRM (2013): FSC consultation and complaints procedures: the case of Veracel Celulose in Brazil; WRM (2013): 12 Replies to 12 Lies about Oil Palm monocultures plantations.

to protect their "revenue streams" and even create new ones. Both companies are members of the Consumer Goods Forum, a "collaboration of 400 retailers, manufacturers, and service providers with combined annual sales of over US$3 trillion" that have committed to move toward a goal of zero net deforestation in their supply chains by 2020. (see Annex 1 for information on some of these international initiatives). What "zero net deforestation" really means is that companies can continue to source agricultural commodities from deforested areas as long as trees are planted in compensation or forests elsewhere are "protected" by REDD+ programmes. It means that corporations get control over forests (to use for commodity production) and peasant communities and indigenous peoples lose control over forests (which they can no longer use for food production or their livelihoods). Under the "landscape REDD" scenario that is emerging, whole territories would be parcelled out by companies into forested areas that provide them with carbon credits and farming areas where they would set up plantations and force local farmers into contract production arrangements.

CASE STUDY #8

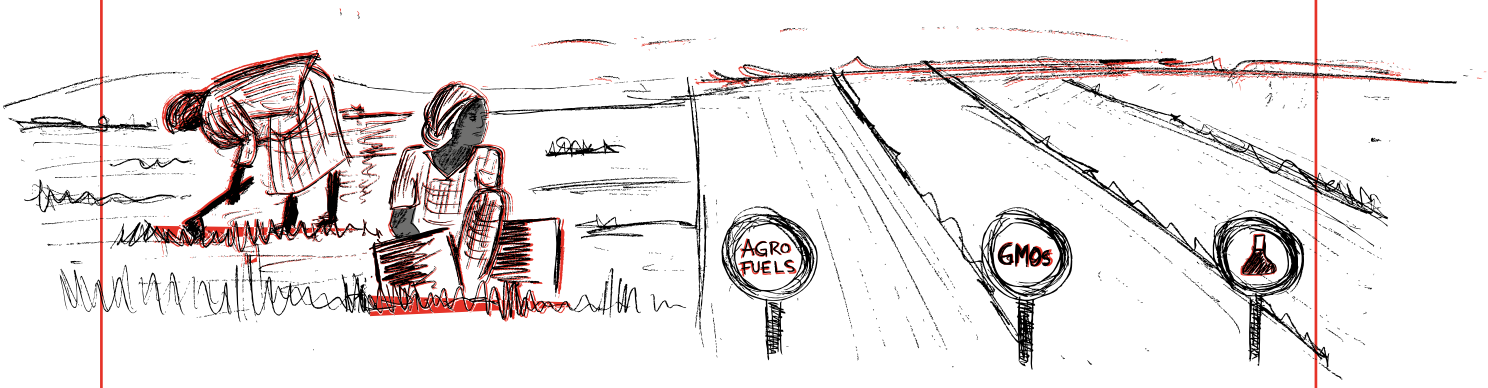
"I lost my land. It's like I'm not a human being"

The New Forests Company (NFC) is a UK-registered company operating tree plantations in Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Rwanda. In 2005, NFC began to establish tree plantations on 20,000 hectares of land in three different locations in Uganda. The business focus is on timber production but marketing material also mentions the sale of carbon credits from one of the plantations. In an undated company presentation, New Forest Company writes *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."* An Oxfam report published in 2011 demonstrated that for local residents, NFC's operations were everything but "charismatic". The report documented widespread conflict and violence when villagers were evicted from the land they had used for years but that had now been included in the plantation license. 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"*, said one farmer about his experience with the NFC carbon and timber plantation.[1]

1. 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/wpcontent/uploads/2011/09/cs-new-forest-company-uganda-plantations-220911-en.pdf

The link between "climate-smart agriculture" and REDD+

Since 2011, the term "climate-smart agriculture" has appeared alongside REDD+ to describe initiatives that link climate change, agriculture and forests. Alliances between the FAO, the World Bank, conservation NGOs like The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, WWF and others and global good corporations have begun to introduce and promote the concept. The first global conference on agriculture, food security and climate change, held in the Netherlands in November 2010 on initiative of the governments of The Netherlands, Ethiopia, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway and Vietnam, and in collaboration with the FAO and the World Bank, prepared the ground for the marketing of this new idea. In 2014, the FAO produced a 500+page "Climate Smart Agriculture Sourcebook" that describes a wide collection of land use practises but contains little tangible information of how these practises contribute to what the



FAO defines as "climate-smart agriculture". The Sourcebook also does not clearly state whether FAO considers the use of synthetic fertilizers, genetically modified seeds or the production of industrial-scale agrofuels as "climate-smart" practises, thus ensuring that the term can cover the whole spectrum of existing industrial agricultural practise. And it is noteworthy that agroecology is conspicuously absent from the list of examples in the FAO "climate-smart agriculture" Sourcebook while several examples that are presented are linked to financing through carbon markets. These include examples from Malawi or Zambia, countries with some of the lowest greenhouse gas emissions in the world. Yet, the FAO's "climate-smart" proposal is that they finance their projects to adjust to a global climate crisis caused by excessive fossil fuel use in industrialised countries through a carbon market that is based on countries like Malawi and Zambia reducing their already low greenhouse gas emissions so industrialised countries can continue burning oil, coal and gas.

Overall, it remains unclear at this stage what exactly is in the box labelled "climate-smart agriculture". In the 1960s and 70s, the FAO and the World Bank heavily promoted their "Green Revolution": replacing local crop varieties with high-yielding varieties that depended on application of fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation to produce the predicted yields. The activities proposed by FAO, World Bank and others under this new label of

"climate-smart-agriculture" sound like "Green Revolution" reformulated to speak to the topic of the time–climate change.

For further information:

La Via Campesina (2014): UN-masking Climate Smart Agriculture. http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/sustainable-peasants-agriculture-main-menu-42/1670-un-masking-climate-smart-agriculture

Attac France & la Confédération Paysanne (2015): La "climate smart agriculture" une agriculture livrée à la finance carbone et aux multinationals. https://france.attac.org/IMG/pdf/note_climate-smart.pdf

CASE STUDY #9

The Harapan forest restoration project

The project known as the "Harapan Rainforest Project" resulted from the first 'Ecosystem Restoration Concession' issued in Indonesia. Though recent materials about the project make little mention of REDD+, earlier publications mentioned carbon markets as a potential source of funding and the project has featured in presentations about REDD+. As in many places where REDD+ is implemented, the land use history in and around the Harapan Rainforest restoration project area is complex. During the 1980s indigenous peoples first lost access to their land when private companies logged the forests. When the timber concession had expired, the companies went away, leaving behind a heavily degraded forest. Peasants and indigenous peoples reclaimed as much as 101,365 hectares of this forest degraded from industrial logging to produce foods such as rice, beans and fruits and build their homes. When the conservation concessionaire PT Reiki took control over the area, peasants and indigenous peoples where kicked out (again). 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*," farmers union SPI wrote in 2008.[1]

1. 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-andagrofuels-mainmenu-75/629-small-farmers-victims-of-forest-carbon-trading

CASE STUDY #10

"Charcoal burners and cattle keepers have to find new jobs or other land"

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 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. Tree planting has caused many conflicts between the project owners and the local residents who use the land but have no title documents. A report prepared for the certification of the project is indicative for the approach the owners (and the auditing company) take towards the disputed use rights for the land included in the plantation concession: "*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 document the company had to prepare to register carbon credits states in the chapter on 'current land use and land tenure at the project site' 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."*[2]

2. 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

CASE STUDY #11

Blaming small-scale farmers as "deforestation agents"

The Purus REDD+ project in the Brazilian state of Acre is implemented by Moura & Rosa Empreendimentos Imobiliários LTDA; CarbonCo LLC. and Freitas International Group LLC. The project owners claim that without the REDD+ project, the local community would not have *"secure and legal title to land"*. They 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 for obtaining this 'certainty', peasants would have to be willing to limit their traditional forest farming practises. There are at last two problems with this, however. The REDD+ project documents state that the company will recognize for each family the right to only an area of 100 hectares (a size considered 'small' in this part of the Amazon).[1] But 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, a 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. Second, participation in the project initially required residents to sign a declaration. *"I asked if the document was detrimental to me. He [the representative of the REDD project] 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 REDD+ project area explained. Those who sign the declaration, however, sign a document recognizing the company as owner of the land while ownership in actuality remains disputed! Signing of this declaration 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 (which is their right under Brazilian law).

The example also shows that certification standards do not protect community rights. The project has been certified by a certification standard commonly used by REDD+ projects, the Climate, Community & Biodoversity (CCB) standard. Such certificates help REDD+ projects sell their credits because the certificate is seen by buyers as an independent assurance that the carbon credits are 'conflict free'. The certification assessment involves a visit by a team of auditors who check if the project is implemented in accordance with the standard. The visits are usually short, accompanied by the project owners and the audit is also paid for by the REDD+project owner. In the case of the Purus project, the certification audit team considered the declaration mentioned above unsuitable, arguing that *"It is not appropriate to ask people to sign a document that they cannot read"*. Indeed, that is not appropriate! But the alternative adopted by the project and accepted by the audit team seems even more inappropriate: The project owners hired a consultant to re-visit the communities, encouraging community members to verbally express their desire to join the REDD+ project instead of requesting they sign a document. Seeking only verbal confirmation of such a decision that could potentially have a lot of influence over the peasant

1. Some families have more than 100ha under use, and the project documents state that those residents who have put over 100 hectares "under productive use" will receive the full area they are currently using.

farmer's land rights was considered the more appropriate form of seeking consent than the written declaration, and the REDD+ project received a "Gold Level" certificate for being particularly beneficial to communities involved.

The Purus REDD+ project documents also 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. A 2013 report for the World Rainforest Movement notes that "*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.*"[2]

2. Centro de Memória das Lutas e Movimentos Sociais da Amazônia (2013): Observations on a private REDD project in the state of Acre, Brasil. A report for the World Rainforest Movement.

CASE STUDY #12

"We don't want this conservation area, we want land titles first"

In Peru, hundreds of migrants who had to abandon their land in regions where mining made the land unfit for growing crops are affected by a REDD+ project run by the French group Pur Project. Pur Projet was launched in 2008 by Tristan Lecomte, a key promoter of 'responsible entrepreneurship' in France. The group offers corporations like French construction company Vinci or energy utility GDF Suez the opportunity to offset their carbon emission by financing Pur Projet activities. One such activity is the REDD+ project in Peru. The people who had migrated from the mining areas to the region where the REDD+ project is being implemented were never formally consulted on the REDD+ project, because their rights to the land they have migrated to were never officially recognised. Thus, they could not assert their opposition to the REDD+ project taking control over the local area's forests on which they now depend for part of their livelihoods. The Pur Projet, meanwhile, has set aside a budget of €150,000 for "*legal assistance (lawyers) to get court decisions on migrant invasion in the conservation area.*"[1]

1. 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

CASE STUDY#13

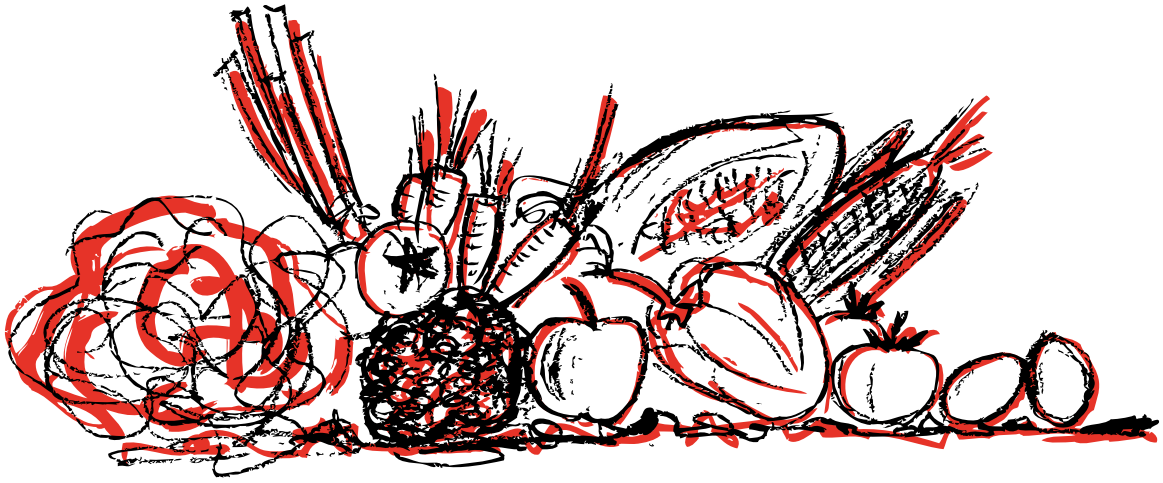
Agriculture, climate change and carbon markets – an example from Kenya'

At the first Conference on Food Security, Agriculture and Climate Change in November 2010 in The Hague, the Netherlands, the World Bank launched its first agricultural soil carbon project in Africa. The Kenya Agricultural Carbon Project (KACP) has been promoted as a "triple win": it would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, help farmers "adapt" to climate change and increase crop yields. It has been used by the World Bank and others to convince governments in the global South that this is the right approach to attract urgently needed finance for both adaptation to climate change and agricultural development. The World Bank press release at the time stated that "*the direct benefit to local communities is over $350,000, with an initial payment of $80,000 to be made in the first year, 2011*." The project involves among others farmers switching to hybrid seeds and herbicides provided by multinational agribusiness corporation Syngenta. Along with other hybrid seed sellers, Syngenta stands to make up to USD 52,300 from the project. The involvement also positions the company to benefit from future REDD+ projects. The Syngenta Foundation is also one of the investors in the World Bank BioCarbon Fund.

In addition to the risks of reliance on hybrid seeds, a report by IATP in 2011 also puts the World Bank's claims about the benefits to farmers into perspective. Using the project developer's own figures, the report shows that the carbon revenue would yield less than a dollar per hectare per year for 60,000 farmers (depending on what was included in the transaction costs) and taking the carbon calculations at face value. The Bank has guaranteed to pay USD4/tonne for at least 150,000 credits generated by the project, a small proportion of the 1.2 million tonnes of Co2 the project is supposed to save in its lifetime. The Bank's purchase would add up to USD 600,000 for the 150,000 credits. By comparison, the Bank has spent over USD 1 million on the methodology alone. And over a million dollars would be spent by the Swedish development organization Vi Agroforestry, which is also involved in the project, in the first three years of the project. It is highly unlikely that the Bank will continue to guarantee a US$4/tonne price for the remaining credits, particularly if the price of carbon credits remains low.[3]

3. Shefali Sharma (2012): An Update on the World Bank's Experimentation with Soil Carbon. http://www.iatp.org/documents/an-update-on-the-world-bank%E2%80%99s-experimentation-with-soil-carbon

Conclusions



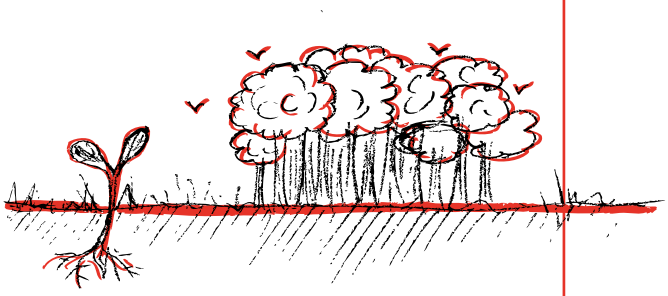
The problems are clear, the solutions exist …and they are very different from the REDD+ concept. The big gap between the reality and the promises of the REDD+ promoters shows that, for peasants, REDD+ is a false solution that undermines food sovereignty and the control forest-dependent communities have over the lands they depend upon.

REDD+ also helps to conceal the fact that while agriculture is a major contributor to climate change, not everybody growing crops shares the same responsibility for the emissions. It is the industrial food system – with its heavy use of chemical inputs, its erosion of soils, its deforestation and its emphasis on production for export markets – which is the main source of greenhouse gas emissions.

Yet, REDD+ falsely blames shifting cultivation and peasant farming for deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions. In reality, peasants are already proving that it is possible to 'feed the world' while producing far fewer emissions than the export-led, industrial model of agricultural production. Giving lands back to small farmers and indigenous communities is the most effective way to deal with the challenges of feeding a growing global population in an era of unpredictable climate change. REDD+ is a dangerous distraction from urgent action in this direction.

Food sovereignty:
5 steps to cool the planet and feed its people

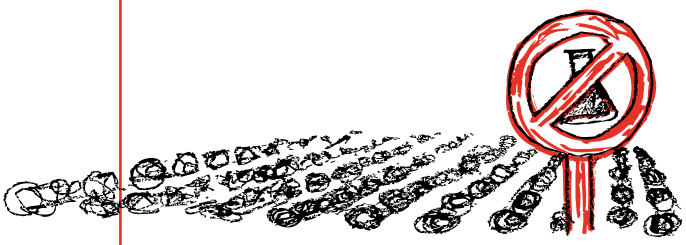
1. Take care of the soil



The food/climate equation is rooted in the earth. The expansion of unsustainable agricultural practices over the past century has led to the destruction of between 30-75% of the organic matter on arable lands, and 50% on pastures and prairies. This massive loss of organic matter is responsible for between 25% and 40% of the current excess CO_2 in the earth's atmosphere. But the good news is that this CO_2 that we have sent into the atmosphere can be put back into the soil, simply by restoring the practices that small farmers have been engaging in for generations. If the right policies and incentives were in place worldwide, soil organic matter contents could be restored to pre-industrial agriculture levels within a period of 50 years – which is roughly the same time frame that industrial agriculture took to reduce it. This would offset between 24-30% of all current global greenhouse gas emissions.

2. Natural farming, no chemicals

The use of chemicals on industrial farms is increasing all the time, as soils are further depleted and pests and weeds become immune to insecticides and herbicides. Small farmers around the world, however, still have the knowledge and the diversity of crops and animals to farm productively without the use of chemicals by diversifying cropping systems, integrating crop and animal production, and incorporating trees and wild vegetation. These practices enhance the productive potential of the land because they improve soil fertility and prevent soil erosion. Every year more organic matter is built up in the soil, making it possible to produce more and more food.

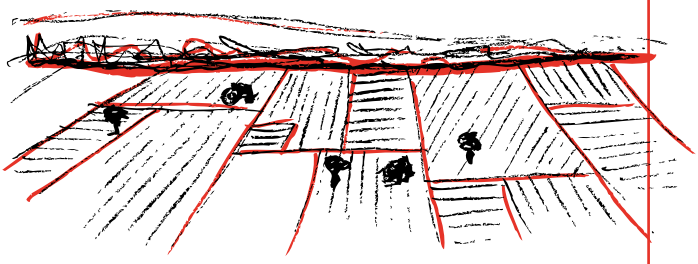


3 Cut the food miles, and focus on fresh food

The corporate logic that results in the shipment of foods around the world and back again, makes no sense from an environmental perspective, or any other perspective for that matter. The global trade in food, from the opening of vast swaths of lands and forests to produce agricultural commodities to the frozen foods sold in supermarkets, is the chief culprit in the food system's overweight contribution to GHG emissions. Much of the food system's GHG emissions can be eliminated if food production is reoriented towards local markets and fresh foods, and away from cheap meat and processed foods. But achieving this is probably the toughest fight of all, as corporations and governments are deeply committed to expanding the trade in foods.

4. Give the land back to the farmers, and stop the mega plantations

Over the past 50 years, a staggering 140 million hectares – the size of almost all the farmland in India – has been taken over by four crops grown predominantly on large plantations: soybeans, oil palm, rapeseed and sugar cane. The global area under these and other industrial commodity crops, all of them notorious emitters of greenhouse gases, is set to further grow if policies don't change. Today, small farmers are squeezed onto less than a quarter of the world's farmlands, but they continue to produce most of the world's food – 80% of the food in non-industrialised countries says the FAO. Small farmers produce this food far more efficiently than big plantations, and in ways that are better for the planet. A worldwide redistribution of lands to small farmers, combined with policies to help them rebuild soil fertility and policies to support local markers, can reduce GHG emissions by half within a few decades.



5. Forget the false solutions, focus on what works

There is growing recognition that food is central to climate change. The latest IPCC reports and international summits have recognised that food and agriculture are major drivers of GHG emissions and that climate change poses tremendous challenges to our capacity to feed a growing global population. Yet there has been zero political will to challenge the dominant model of industrial food production and distribution. Instead, governments and corporations are proposing a number of false solutions. There is the empty shell of Climate Smart Agriculture, which is essentially just a rebranding of the Green Revolution. There are new, risky technologies such as crops genetically engineered for drought resistance or large scale geo-engineering projects. There are mandates for biofuels, which are driving land grabs in the South. And there are carbon markets and REDD+ projects that essentially allow the worst GHG offenders to avoid cuts in emissions by turning the forests and farmlands of peasants and indigenous peoples into conservation parks and plantations. None of these "solutions" can work because they all work against the only effective solution: a shift from a globalised, industrial food system governed by corporations to local food systems in the hands of small farmers.

Source: La Via Campesina & GRAIN (2014): Food sovereignty: 5 steps to cool the planet and feed its people. https://www.grain.org/article/entries/5102-food-sovereignty-5-steps-to-cool-the-planet-and-feed-its-people
Graphics: Raúl Fernández

Find out more

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Annex

Table: Key public-corporate – conservation NGO initiatives promoting REDD+

Initiative	Key Corporate, Public Sector and NGO Participants	Aim of the Initiative
Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)	Founding Members include Unilever, Migros, AarhusKarlshamn, Golden Hope, MPOA, IOI Group, The Body Shop, Pacific Rim Palm Oil WWF[1]	*"The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil RSPO aims to transform markets to make sustainable palm oil the norm"*
Round Table on Responsible Soy (*RTRS*)	Founding Members include Grupo Maggi, Cordaid, COOP, Unilever WWF	*"Encourage current and future soybean is produced in a responsible manner to reduce social and environmental impacts while maintaining or improving the economic status for the producer"*
Bonsucro	Initial members of the 'Better Sugar Initiative' (later became Bonsucro) include Cargill, ED&F Man, Tate & Lyle, WWF By 2014, members included among others Mars, Shell, BP, Coca-Cola, Grupo Bunge, Petrobras, Syngenta, Bayer Crop Science, Kraft Foods, Wilmar The Nature Conservancy, Solidaridad[2]	*"A sugarcane sector that is continuously improving and verified as sustainable"*
Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB)	Founding Members include Cargill, JBS, Elanco, McDonalds, Walmart, WWF, *Solidaridad*	*"The GRSB envisions a world in which all aspects of the beef value chain are environmentally sound, socially responsible and economically viable"*[3]

1. http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/people/richardson/ethical_sugar_guide_to_bonsucro_english.pdf
2. http://www.mpoc.org.my/upload/POS_-_Roundtable_on_Sustainable_Palm_Oil.pdf
3. http://grsbeef.org/

Initiative	Key Corporate, Public Sector and NGO Participants	Aim of the Initiative
The Consumer Goods Forum (GCF) Collaboration of 400 retailers, manufacturers, and service providers with combined annual sales of over US$3 trillion	Members include Unilever, Syngenta, McDonalds, Monsanto, Nestlé, Coca-Cola, Mondelez *"Unilever and Ahold, members of the CGF opened the 10th Annual Conference of RTRS with a call for action. They urged the participants to act upon their commit-ments to responsible soy to achieve the goal of zero net deforestation"*	*"Bringing together consumer goods manufacturers and retailers in pursuit of business practises for efficiency and positive change across our industry benefitting shoppers, consumers and the world without impeding competition"*[4] CGF Board approved a resolution in 2010 for members of the Forum to achieve *"zero net deforestation by 2020."*
Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 *"catalyzed by The Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) commitment to mobilize resources within their respective businesses to help achieve zero net deforestation by 2020"*	*Founding Partners are Government of the United States and The Consumer Goods Forum.* Members include Cargill, Unilver, Wilmar, Marfrig, Mondelez International, Nestlé, Terra Global Capital and NGOs Forest Trends, Conservation International, Flora & Fauna International, Forest Stewardship Council, Rainforest Alliance, Solidaridad The Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society, World Resources Institute, World Wildlife Fund[5]	*"Reduce tropical deforestation associated with sourcing of commodities such as palm oil, soy, beef, paper and pulp and [do] so by tackling the drivers of tropical deforestation using a range of market, policy and communications approaches."*
Forests, Farms and Finance Initiative	Led by the Earth Innovation Institute Includes Bonsucro, Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB), Roundtable for Responsible Soy (RTRS), Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), Unilever...	*"The Forests, Farms and Finance Initiative seeks to [link] incentives for more environmentally and socially responsible agricultural commodities production with initiatives to reduce deforestation and other environmental degradation"*[6]

4. http://www.theconsumergoodsforum.com/about-the-forum/our-mission
5. http://www.tfa2020.com/index.php/about-tfa2020
6. http://earthinnovation.org/our-work/global/forests-farms-finance-initiative/

Initiative	Key Corporate, Public Sector and NGO Participants	Aim of the Initiative
	...Amazon Environmental Research Institute (IPAM), Forest Trends Solidaridad, WWF	*"aims to build bridges between agricultural commodity roundtables and REDD+ financing"*[7]
Global Landscapes Initiative (GLI) at University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment	Research support from Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation Additional fundingamong others from WWF, The Nature Conservancy, *"Contributions by General Mills, Mosaic, Cargill, Pentair, Google, Kellogg's, Mars, and PepsiCo supported stakeholder outreach and public engagement"*[8]	The initiative "is *developing and applying tools needed to characterize global land use; understand land use changes; assess trends in global agricultural supply and demand; improve our ability to balance human needs with environmental stewardship; and promote secure landscapes across the globe."*
New York Forest Declaration Drafted by Climate Advisors, as part of a contract between Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative and the Meridian Institute, a US-based consulting firm. Announced during the UN Climate Summit 2014.[9]	Signatories include 36 countries, (but not Brazil), 34 companies incl. Unilever, Asia Pulp&Paper, Cargill, Walmart, Nestlé, Wilmar, Golden Agri-Resources, 53 NGOs incl. Rainforest Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, WWF, Conservation International[10]	Signatories commit to among others "**At least halve the rate of loss of natural forests globally by 2020 and strive to end natural forest loss by 2030. * Support and help meet the private-sector goal of eliminating deforestation from the production of agricultural commodities such as palm oil, soy, paper and beef products by no later than 2020, recognizing that many companies have even more ambitious targets."*
Project 'Sustainable Landscapes in Brazil and Indonesia: São Félix do Xingu REDD+ Pilot Program in Brazil'	Project by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) financed with grant from the Government of Norway, and support from USAID, UK Prosperity Fund, Mafrig, Walmart, Cargill, the Amazon Fund, and the Ann Ray Charitable Trusts	*"This model helps to register all of the municipality landowners to comply with Brazil's Forest Code, and assists ranchers to increase cattle production on their existing pasture land."*

7. http://www.pcfisu.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/IPAM.pdf
8. www.environment.umn.edu/gli
9. http://www.redd-monitor.org/2014/10/02/made-in-the-usa-paid-for-by-norway-the-new-york-declaration-on-forests/
10. http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/07/New-York-Declaration-on-Forest-%E2%80%93-Action-Statement-and-Action-Plan.pdf

Initiative	Key Corporate, Public Sector and NGO Participants	Aim of the Initiative
TEEB for Business Brazil	Co-ordinated by Conservation International, the project *"calculated the natural capital impacts of the different agricultural practices"* of two companies in Brazil, Natura and Monsanto[11]	*"Corporate Practises linked to biodiversity are good business"* Conservation International, March 2014

11. http://www.trucost.com/news-2014/186/valueofnaturalcapitalaccounting

GRAIN is a small international non-profit organisation that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems. For more information, visit **www.grain.org**

World Rainforest Movement

The World Rainforest Movement (WRM) facilitates, supports and reinforces struggles against deforestation and land grabbing in countries with forests and forest-dependent communities. WRM also exposes international initiatives and policies that are presented as solutions to halt or reverse deforestation but in reality fail to conserve forests and ignore the demands and analysis of forest communities about the underlying causes of forest loss. For more information, visit **www.wrm.org.uy**