

<p>Institution: University College London</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 24 – Anthropology and Development Studies</p>
<p>Title of case study: Promoting environmental justice and social sustainability in the Congo Basin</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p>
<p>Dr Jerome Lewis’s research defining how to implement free, prior and informed consent has led to effective and equitable relations between indigenous forest people and FSC-certified forestry companies operating in the Congo Basin (over 4 million ha). It enabled forest people to monitor illegal logging and improve forest governance and has been adopted by forestry organisations in the region. It was instrumental in setting up the Centre d’Excellence Social which recruits students from the region to train a new generation of forest managers with the skills required to put the newly defined social principles into practice, as well as Radio Biso na Biso, a community radio station which disseminates indigenous views on local issues, logging and conservation.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p>
<p>Research at UCL Anthropology by Dr Jerome Lewis (lecturer at UCL since 2007) seeks a better understanding of how to promote the application of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in the relations between local forest people and powerful third parties. He has worked in the Congo Basin with forest communities since 1993 and through regular research visits, notably to Congo-Brazzaville, gained unique insight into local culture and society, and the impact of national and global forces on forest peoples’ lives and livelihoods. Since the late 1990s there has been an increasing international effort to regularise the application of the concept of FPIC to govern the relations between third parties seeking to exploit or otherwise impact on local peoples’ land or resources.</p>
<p>Together with Luke Freeman (lecturer in Anthropology at UCL since 2007) and Sophie Boreill (Anthroscape Ltd), between 2006 and 2008 Lewis visited some of the most advanced forestry companies in Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo and Gabon to identify effective practices they employed to develop partnerships with local people. Based on the observation of cultural differences between Northern conceptions of ‘consent’ (a signature) and local ideas (a process of mutual satisfaction), following Lewis’s arrival at UCL, he and his colleagues identified and drafted clear guidelines for implementing an FPIC approach to relations between powerful industrial companies and local people that would be meaningful for both parties [a, b]. This was used to define the steps required to apply FPIC in the context of forestry certification schemes [a]. To do so required the development of new engagement methods, organisational approaches, and specially adapted tools (both hard and software) to enable well-informed and fairer discussions to be possible between these different groups, and so that local forest people can accurately map their lands and resources, and monitor logging activities in their forest areas [c, d].</p>
<p>Regularly returning to the forest for research means that Lewis maintains regular contact with local people. When visiting in 2008 to set up the community radio station <i>Biso na Biso</i>, local Mbendjele Pygmy hunters asked Lewis to develop a means for them to monitor illegal poachers so that government enforcement agents would be more effective at catching them. This led to the Extreme Citizen Science Research Group (ExCiteS), established in 2011 to develop the methodologies, technologies and theory to enable any community to set up its own ExCiteS project. Based in UCL’s Department of Geomatic Engineering, Lewis co-directs the research group with Professor Muki Haklay. In 2012–13 ExCiteS successfully developed and trialled iconic software based on the Android operating system which can be uploaded onto cheap smartphones to enable non-literate people to collect information that scientifically describes and geo-tags their resources, or specific environmental problems that they are concerned about, such as resource damage during logging (Cameroon 2008 [c] and Congo 2013), or poaching (Congo 2012–3 [e]). Lewis developed the iconic language and a robust methodology for co-developing software and introducing these new technologies among forest peoples [c, e, f]. Currently the project has begun to develop geographic information analytic tools (supported by ESRI) to enable non-literate people to benefit from the analytic power of GIS to support them in managing their local environment.</p>

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3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[a] **2008** *Free, Prior and Informed Consent and Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin*. Jerome Lewis, Luke Freeman and Sophie Borreill. Berne: Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Intercooperation and Society for Threatened People Switzerland. Translated into French. http://assets.gfbv.ch/downloads/fpic_congo_report_english.pdf. Output went through a rigorous peer-review process.

[b] **2010** Free, prior and informed consent: Implications for sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin. In *Governing Africa's Forests in a Globalised World*. Ed. Laura German, Alain Karsenty and Anne-Marie Tiani. London: Earthscan, pp. 319–331. With Luke Freeman and Sophie Borreill. Available on request. Output went through a rigorous peer-review process.

[c] **2012** Accessible technologies and FPIC: independent monitoring with forest communities in Cameroon. In *Participatory Learning and Action* 65: 151–165. London: IIED. With Teodyl Nkuintchua. <http://pubs.iied.org/14618IIED.html?c=part> Output went through a rigorous peer-review process)

[d] **2012** Technological leap-frogging in the Congo Basin. Pygmies and geographic positioning systems in Central Africa: What has happened and where is it going? In *African Study Monographs Supplementary* 43: 15–44. http://jambo.africa.kyoto-u.ac.jp/kiroku/asm_suppl/abstracts/pdf/ASM_s43/2.LEWIS.pdf. Output went through a rigorous peer-review process.

[e] **2013** Making local knowledge matter. Supporting non-literate people to monitor poaching in Congo. *DEV '13*, 11–12 January 2013, Bangalore, India. With Michalis Vitos, Matthias Stevens and Muki Haklay. <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1368259/>. Output went through a rigorous peer-review process.

[f] **2013** A grievance mechanism in the forestry sector in Congo: The case of Congolaise Industrielle des Bois. In, Wilson, E. and Blackmore, E (ed.). *Dispute or Dialogue? Community Perspectives on Company-led Grievance Mechanisms*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development. pp. 66–83. With Sophie Borreil. Available on request.

Key peer-reviewed grants underpinning the research include:

Swiss Ministry for Economic Affairs, Intercooperation. Grant holder: Society for Threatened People. Title: Defining Free, prior and Informed Consent in the Context of Forestry Operations in the Congo Basin. £164,000. 2006–2008. Funded the original FPIC research with this peer-reviewed grant and led to [a, b, c].

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council Challenging Engineering Award. PI: Muki Haklay (UCL Civil, Environmental & Geomatic Engineering). Title: Extreme Citizen Science (ExCiteS). £1,000,000, 2011–2016. (AB) [22729]. [d, e].

Chirac Foundation. Grant holder: Tropical Forest Trust. Title: Radio Biso na Biso, setting up a community radio station for forest people, including hunter-gatherers. 2005–2010, €700,000. Led to [a].

Chirac Foundation, Waterloo Foundation, Synchronicity Earth, Virgin Media and Albert II Monaco Foundation. Grant holder: Tropical Forest Trust. Title: Centre for Social Excellence in Yaounde, Cameroon for providing training on the social aspects of forestry in the Congo basin. €1,200,000. 2008–2013.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The Congo Basin, straddling six countries in Central Africa, is home to remarkable biodiversity, and the second largest rain forest in the world. It is also home to nearly 150 distinct ethnic groups, including many whose lifestyle and identity is closely tied to this forest. In recent decades, however, local forest people have lost control over their traditional areas as governments are encouraged to capitalise on the region's wealth of natural resources by renting out the rights to international companies and organisations. These logging, mining and plantation companies, and conservation organisations, obtain rights over local resources through central government, without any requirement to consult local people. Lewis's research has developed the protocols and tools to

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ensure that previously ignored indigenous and local forest people now have a say in the management of their local forest areas, their rights to their land and resources are formally recognised, they are able to protect their key resources from damage during industrial activities, and they can report illegal activity or damage to their resources to local and national authorities, based on operationalising the international legal concept of FPIC.

As a result of research at UCL, **two professional organisations for forestry companies in the Congo Basin have adopted FPIC principles for their members**. Additionally, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which offers the premier certification for sustainable forests worldwide, requires certified companies to adopt FPIC criteria in the region. Since April 2012, all companies harvesting FSC-certified wood sold worldwide, deriving from the 4 million square kilometres of the Congo Basin, are required to follow the FPIC process.

Lewis and Freeman's work on FPIC resulted in a book [a] translated into French, three summary pamphlets in English, Portuguese and French, formal presentations at the United Nations, Swiss Ministry for Economic Affairs, ministerial meetings in France, FSC meetings in the Congo Basin, project reviews and presentations at Chatham House, and training sessions for forestry workers from at least 12 African and non-African countries through the Centre for Social Excellence [1].

Reading the book persuaded professional organisations representing the tropical forestry industry in the Congo Basin (Association interafricaine des industries forestières IFIA, representing over 300 companies, and L'Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux ATIBT, 260 members) to adopt FPIC as the basis for establishing partnerships between the companies they represent and the people living in their concessions [2]. They signalled this by organising training sessions run by Lewis for 40 staff working in the social aspects of forestry from 12 of their member companies through the Centre for Social Excellence, as described below [5], as well as sponsoring talks by Lewis for their members in September 2008 and February 2009 [3].

Despite pressure to reject FPIC from some quarters, regional guidelines for the application of FSC Principles and Criteria in the Congo Basin adopted FPIC as a central concept mediating relationships on 26 April 2012 (FSC-STD-CB-01-2012-EN Congo Basin Regional Standard), as a result of Lewis' research [2]. This document lays out the FSC standard for all forests in the six countries of the region [4]. FSC Criterion 2.2, for example, states: 'Local communities with legal or customary tenure or use rights shall maintain control, to the extent necessary to protect their rights or resources, over forest operations unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies' (p. 23) and similar language is included in 3.1 (control of forest management by indigenous people, p. 26), and 3.4 (compensation for traditional knowledge, p. 32). By 15 July 2013, 10 FSC certificates covering over 4.4 million ha of forest had been issued [4].

Recognising that there was a lack of local capacity to implement forestry based on FPIC with local communities, The Forest Trust sought funds amounting to €1.2 million to set up a **specialist regional training centre for young graduates on how to implement the highest standards in social forestry**. Based on his research which had shown the lacunae in forestry skills, Lewis planned and helped establish the Centre for Social Excellence (CSE) in 2008 – designing the curriculum based on the principles of research, purchasing the library and organising student selection processes – and has taught there bi-annually since 2008. The CSE provides a one-year theoretical and practical training for graduates from the Congo Basin to learn the social aspects of forestry, including FPIC, involving forest people in mapping and decision-making processes, conflict resolution, advanced communication skills, rural micro project management, etc. [5].

The CSE recruits students from Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Cameroon. It also runs short courses for employees of forestry companies. By mid-2013 the CSE had 40 current students or alumni [5], of whom all but two were employed in forestry orientated research, industrial and commercial forest sectors or in civil society organisations in the Congo Basin. Two-week short term training for full-time professionals was provided to almost 52 individuals from over 12 forestry companies and 4 NGOs [5].

FPIC requires that forest communities are well informed about the issues facing their forest. With a low population density (<1 person/km²), little infrastructure and small communities effective communication represents a real challenge. To develop an **effective strategy to raise community awareness** of these issues, Lewis supported TFT with a €700,000 Chirac Foundation

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grant in 2005 to set up Radio Biso na Biso, a community radio station for forest people. The radio station has been operational since June 2009 broadcasting exclusively in the 12 local languages spoken in the forest for 4–6 hours a day, with 20,000 known listeners, and an estimated 30,000 more outside the concession [6]. At least eighteen local people were trained in journalism and programme-making in 2008–2013 [9]. As of 2012, it is now fully financed by the forestry company on whose concession it is based, and is a sustainable and independently supported enterprise.

This has had many benefits: Previously ignored local forest people now have a say in the management of their local forest areas, their rights to their land and resources are formally recognised, they are able to protect their key resources from damage during industrial activities, and they can report illegal activity or damage to their resources to local and national authorities. One advantage of the system appreciated by local people is that their maps do the talking for them, they can avoid going in person to negotiate in intimidating surroundings and in languages they often do not understand. In 2010, Lewis was awarded the Cuthbert Peek award by the Royal Geographical Society in recognition of the benefits to local communities of this unique approach [7]. Additionally the geo-tags enable local concerns to be easily and efficiently integrated into forest management planning which is organised in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This simplicity led to the rapid adoption of this methodology (with many modifications) by every logging company seeking an FSC certificate in the Congo Basin. So far FSC has certified companies working in over 4 million hectares of high conservation value forest of the Congo Basin [4]. This exposure led some hunter-gatherers to request new software builds to document illegal poaching [e]. This has been developed and they are currently in the early stages of deploying the system in 2,800,000 hectares of forest in northern Congo [e].

The project attracted substantial media coverage which brought to global attention the research and how it helps to fulfil the need for forest peoples to be proactively involved in protecting their environment, for example [8]:

- BBC News at Ten: *GPS helps Pygmies defend forest*. 30 January 2008 (averaging 4.9 million viewers);
- *New Scientist*: 'Interactive maps help Pygmies fight back', by Kat Austen. February 2012 (Global readership 764,371 per week).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[1] Statement provided by Project Manager, The Forest Trust, on training sessions for 12 attendees from African and non-African countries. Available on request.

[2] Statement provided by Consultant on FSC Regional Standards corroborating link between Lewis's work on FPIC, and the adoption by IFIA and ATIBT, and in FSC standards. Available on request.

[3] Examples of invitations and reports on ATIBT events are available on request.

[4] FSC standards for Congo Basin: <http://bit.ly/1aDO5tm>. FSC certificates issued by 15 July 2013 in Cameroon, Gabon and Congo-Brazzaville: p. 3 <http://bit.ly/1a3rM49> [PDF].

[5] Statement provided by CSE Project Manager corroborating contribution of Lewis' research to CSE and the numbers of students. Available on request.

[6] Radio Biso na Biso: Listener numbers: <http://bit.ly/1aDSoou>.

[7] Citation for Cuthbert Peek award 'for the innovative use of GIS in empowering indigenous communities' in 2010: <http://bit.ly/1doi3tm>.

[8] Full list of media coverage is available on request. The specific examples included in the case study are from the BBC (<http://bbc.in/170Q91t>), with viewership figures from <http://bit.ly/HM3TU5>, and the *New Scientist* (<http://bit.ly/1eKsCX7>), readership figures from <http://bit.ly/1bnPs05> [PDF].

[9] Statement provided by Director, Radio Biso na Biso on number of trainees. Available on request.