

# Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

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## ABOUT REDD+ [2] [11] [12]

REDD+ was formulated by the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) of the Parties (COP), discussed since 2007 and implemented since 2013

### AIMS of REDD+

- reducing human pressure on forests that result in greenhouse gas emissions
- reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
- enabling sustainable management of forests
- conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries

## CRITIQUE

### REDD+ is criticized as a "greenwashing" governance mechanism [2]

- implementing government control over forests
- excluding local communities from forest management and removing their rights and livelihoods
- winners = private and/or national government interests
- losers = local and indigenous communities

### SHIFTING THE FOCUS [2] [10]

- REDD+ is shifting the focus from large scale commercial companies mainly responsible for deforestation to communities as key actors of deforestation
- carbon is seen as the most important value of the forest
- local communities are little involved in decision-making processes and around REDD+, contrary to what is emphasized in theory
- while industrialized countries have the highest share of carbon emissions, the task of solving the problem is placed in countries of the South

## GREEN GRABBING [13]

Concept: "selling nature in order to save it"

- REDD+ as an appropriation of natural resources with devastating social and environmental consequences for the local communities
- REDD+ as a form of "green" land grabbing that involves the direct or indirect displacement of local people

## DISPLACEMENT

REDD+ overlaps with contexts of repression and murder of environmental activists as well as displacement and dispossession of local/indigenous populations, among others. [2] In postcolonial contexts, it is important to consider that pre-existing inequalities in land tenure distribution may be reinforced, resulting in wealthier landowners benefiting the most while poorer populations are displaced. [5]

# CHALLENGING REDD+

## A CALL FOR JUSTICE

### FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

...claim approximately **80%** of the planet's biodiversity and ecosystems [3]

...legally own around **11%** of the world's forestland [3]

...suffer distributive, procedural, and recognitional injustices resulting conservation initiatives such as

- displacement
- unequal burden of conservation
- Neglect of local knowledge [2]

Rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, are negatively affected by restrictions on "locking up forests" under REDD+ projects:

- restricted access to land for cultivation, hunting, charcoal production, and fuelwood collection
- restriction on fuelwood extraction and charcoal production [5]

These restrictions result in loss of revenue. [5]

### CASE IN POINT: REDD+ IN TANZANIA [9]

REDD+ restricts activities that provide livelihoods and subsistence for forest-dependent groups:

- Sale and use of charcoal and timber
- Collection of wild fruits
- shifting cultivation

Resulting in:

Social and economic pressures from the REDD+ project and everyday resistance practices such as informal gatherings

## INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

More than **50%** of the world's tropical forests are located in the traditional territories of indigenous peoples [2]

### Strong resistance against REDD+ from the indigenous communities:

- as early as 2009, more than 400 indigenous people from 80 countries denounced REDD+ in the *Anchorage Declaration* [14]

### Forests are an essential part of existence for many indigenous peoples [3]

Displacement and abandonment of traditional farming systems as a result of REDD+ initiatives could lead to

- loss of traditional knowledge and practices
- disruption of communities

## GREEN MILITARIZATION

To enforce initiatives such as REDD+, law enforcement or intelligence initiatives are increasingly being used to "police" the conservation resources, which can be described as militarized conservation. [4] For example, as part of a preparatory REDD+ initiative in Nigeria in 2008, a militarized anti-deforestation taskforce was set up to enforce a logging ban. However, the violent surveillance and policing techniques often criminalized the local population. [11]

## ENVIRONMENTAL (IN)JUSTICE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM [2]

**Environmental justice** is a concept exposing how low-income and non-white communities suffer from **Environmental Racism** because they carry the primary burden of environmental impacts while often being denied inclusion in decision-making processes related to the environment in which they live.

## GENDER ASPECTS

The current consideration of gender in REDD+ initiatives is insufficient and needs to be strengthened [6]

- the knowledge of especially indigenous women involved in forestry and forestry work is subject to systematic devaluation or neglect although these knowledge systems are necessary for coping with the effects of climate change [7]

Thus, the strategies of REDD+ initiatives that often ignore (indigenous) women's experiences and knowledge are insufficient [7]

### CASE IN POINT: REDD+ IN INDIA [8]

The national REDD+ strategy ignores the role of women as potential entrepreneurs in forest management, with gendered roles for women such as firewood collection making them highly dependent on forests.

## WHERE TO GO ?

### ENABLING JUSTICE

A way to enable justice REDD+ could be strategically used by (indigenous) grassroots organizations as a mouthpiece to draw attention to (already existing) injustices at the international level [2]

### DECOLONIZING REDD+

It is necessary to actively involve women in the decision-making and implementation of REDD+. The starting point should be the environmental knowledge systems of indigenous women [6] [7]

Gender mainstreaming within REDD+ must be seen as a fundamental principle that goes beyond the level of representation [8]

In terms of environmental justice, it is necessary to increasingly incorporate the traditional knowledge on forest management systems and climate change adaptation of forest-dependent and indigenous communities into REDD+ [3]

In order to fulfill the rights of indigenous communities in REDD+, fundamental decolonial transformations of the framework are necessary [14]