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*Conserving global benefits at local cost? Lessons from biodiversity offsets and a REDD+ pilot project in Madagascar*

Co-authors: Cecile Bidaud, School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography, University of Bangor, UK; Julia Jones, School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography, University of Bangor, UK; Mahesh Poudyal, School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography, University of Bangor, UK; Rina Mandimbiniaina, Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Agronomie, University of Antananarivo, Madagascar; Patrick Ranjatson, Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Agronomie, University of Antananarivo, Madagascar

There is growing concern that provision of global ecosystem services such as biodiversity, conservation and carbon sequestration can have a negative impact on local communities by imposing land use restrictions which are not sufficiently compensated. This has led to a requirement for safeguarding activities to minimise and compensate the costs borne by local people. Taking an environmental justice lens we analyse the extent to which the costs and benefits of conservation are unjustly distributed between stakeholders at different spatial and temporal scales. We draw on findings from two studies in the eastern rainforests of Madagascar, both of which employed a mixture of community-level focus groups and household surveys combined with local- and national-level key informant interviews. The first investigated the socio-economic impacts of the Ambatovy nickel mine and its biodiversity offset interventions, while the second explored the impacts of the creation of the Corridor Ankeniheny Zahamena REDD+ pilot project on adjacent communities. Both studies highlight injustices of distribution, participation and recognition, with poor targeting of affected households, significant time lags between households bearing costs and receiving benefits and very little perceived involvement of communities in deciding on protected area or biodiversity offset boundaries, associated activity restrictions or the types of compensatory benefits on offer. We show that these local injustices must be understood within the larger-scale context of decision-making about ecosystem management initiatives that are considered to be of national and global benefit. We find that an environmental justice lens enables a holistic appreciation of the implications of ecosystem management for people at local-to-global scales and across generations. In conclusion, we argue that conservation initiatives, whether instigated by NGOs with an explicit conservation remit or businesses seeking to offset negative biodiversity impacts elsewhere, must consider justice issues and ensure that any compensation activities do not reinforce existing injustices.