

K4D International Nature Learning Journey

Session 2: The Dynamics of Deforestation

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Session summary

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Why forests are important? What is driving deforestation and what policies will work in combating deforestation? One third of the world's land is covered by forests and these forests hold 80% of terrestrial diversity. 1 billion people in low and middle income countries depend on forests for their livelihoods. Forests are vital to our global climate and they help generate rainfall because they pump water into the atmosphere. Deforestation in the tropics can change rainfall in food producing areas thousands of miles away. Forests remove carbon from the atmosphere through photosynthesis, the natural carbon capture and storage tool. Forests are a net carbon sink unlike the sea, as its carbon sink can expand. Many countries, like Indonesia, are now actively trying to reduce deforestation, but others such as Brazil, are seeing the rate of deforestation increase. 30 million hectares of forests are lost each year. That is the equivalent in size of about half the landmass of the UK.

Due to deforestation and the carbon emissions created from it, people's health and wellbeing are also impacted. One of the impacts is the release of pathogens which can cause deadly diseases for people. Indigenous people have also been the victims of threats, forced evictions and even murder while trying to defend their land against deforestation. It is vital that consuming countries share the responsibility for emissions from deforestation.

In Ghana and Indonesia, the hugely in demand commodity palm oil is sometimes sourced from palm oil plantations. Some of these plantations have been grown in areas where deforestation has taken place in order to make way for them.

Despite its growing popularity, especially among politicians the term Nature based solutions (Nbs) isn't always a favoured term to be used when thinking of policies that can be implemented to reduce deforestation. It is considered quite a vague term by some and causes some confusion in political circles.

The best conserved forests are normally in areas where local communities have secure rights over their land and are allowed to manage their land. This contributes to the maintenance of their livelihood resources. Where this is the case, the rate of deforestation is 20 times less than in areas that they don't have control over.

Financial incentives and payments are not enough to stop deforestation and more stringent policies are needed. Policies that can work are clear laws that don't have any loopholes, monitoring areas at risk of deforestation and using law enforcement and penalties against offending parties.

Increasingly, UK consumers want to be assured that the produce they buy has been sourced legally and more companies are expected to prove where their goods come from. Companies are now needing to prove that their goods are free from human rights abuses and haven't come from areas that have been deforested.

UK Aid Direct has helped to bring diverse partners from different industries to the table to assist with the urgent task of tackling climate change. However, it isn't just politicians who want to be in the room of policy makers to ensure that what is needed for change is implemented. For a long time young people and indigenous people have had their voices silenced, and are now having more of a say in deforestation laws and policies.

Katie McCoy, Team Leader, Case study on Partnerships for Forests

Partnerships for Forests work with private sector partners to ensure that the private sector can be part of the solution in combating deforestation. Partnerships for Forests also works with financial investors in the private sector. It is important to bring together the private sector with consumers and residents of deforested/potentially deforested areas. Financial support, grants and technological innovations assist with this. Partnerships for Forests work across the entire value chain, addressing barriers to supply and stimulating demand for forest-friendly commodity production. They support forest partnerships, enabling conditions and demand side measures. The Cocoa and Forests Initiative has brought together the governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire to help fight deforestation. There are more than 500 stakeholders that have been brought together with 37 cocoa and chocolate companies. 90% of cocoa in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire is produced by smallholder farmers. Traditional smallholder systems are challenged by unprofessional farming, ageing farms, and limited access to finance and extension services. Between 2013 and 2014, over 2.3 million children were working as child labourers in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Voluntary sustainability standards have been seen to be ineffective. Partnerships for Forests' portfolio has created 22 commodities and has supported 50,350 people in 12 countries.

DISCUSSION

Unsustainable charcoal production is a driver of deforestation. This is evident in Kenya and parts of the DRC, in particular where you have very large intermediaries purchasing charcoal from small holders in forests, which is then sold to big businesses in urban areas. Charcoal is exported all over the world, to places like the UK. FCDO's regional forestry advisor for Africa has been working to develop programmes in woodlands in Southern Africa. There have been various initiatives to support the development of supply chains of sustainably produced charcoal. For example, the **UK-funded Partnerships4Forests (P4F)** supports one such effort in Ghana. TNC funds an interesting project in Kenya, where there are also other efforts. Research shows that charcoal bans drive production "underground", so one has to work with actors along the supply chain.

Large scale biomass of wood pellets is a major problem. Wood pellets made on a huge scale from natural forests are being imported into China for conversion of coal plants to biomass burning. The **curing of tobacco** also has a massive impact in parts of Africa and in Brazil. Tobacco can cause issues of gender inequality. As a cash crop, nearby forest resources are used to produce tobacco, meaning women have to go further to find land and resources they need.

The European Union has **biofuel directives** which control and track the impact of the palm oil or biofuel that is added to diesel and monitors its impact on the landscape. It is important to not just think about biomass but also renewable energy in these discussions. Forest communities often live off grid and a lot of farmers find it difficult to get a reliable supply of electricity to be able to harvest their crops. There is an attempt to get solar energy to these areas for the small holders and farmers. Biomass and biofuel legislation is needed.

The UK made the first grant to the Global Forest Watch in the 1970/80s for its first development of software. It puts together in real time hundreds of **global remote sensing satellite images** for authorities to monitor and help to stop deforestation as it is happening. There are communities that use handheld devices in remote areas to check where there are illegal loggers. This information can then be sent to Global Forest Watch. Drones and other technical devices are also used for forest protection.

What is the **role of forests in energy markets**? The International Energy Agency forecasts in the net zero emissions scenario there will be about a 2.5 increase in biomass energy markets out to 2050, and biomass markets are expected to continue to grow.

Sadly, a lot of **tree planting** fails as many seedlings die. This is sometimes because there is a lack of knowledge about land ownership where new trees are being planted so they are not being looked after. Small holders, farmers and members of the community are now being allowed to own the land

where these trees are being planted to help ensure that they are looked after. It's also important to remember to plant the right species of trees in the right places. Food systems globally are in need of systemic change.

Working with China on how its investments outside China are driving deforestation is key. For example, the UK-funded Forest Governance Markets and Climate (FGMC) supports a partnership with China (although this may be subject to cuts). The [China-UK Collaboration on International Forest Investment & Trade \(INFIT\)](#) supports China to establish a tracking system to try and control its own investments in illegal logging and deforestation. Various private philanthropic foundations are working with China to do environmental social governance (ESG) due diligence (with training for Chinese foreign service and finance staff). The [China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development](#) has briefed officials on greening supply chains. It would be worth ensuring that colleagues in the Chinese embassies where you work have access to these materials.

Examples of Scale - The \$1bn [Brazilian Amazon Fund](#) (before Bolsonaro came to power) had some great successes across the Amazon and reduced deforestation dramatically. Central government financial transfers to local governments were conditioned on a green/grey list with premiums added to transfers made to green local governments and deforesting local governments penalized. Deforestation alerts were monitored by enforcement agencies that penalized the big illegal deforesters. Large areas of intact forest were established as Indigenous or other types of sustainable reserve and TA was provided to strengthen local governance and forest management in these areas. A combination of policies implemented in Brazil were [successful in reducing deforestation between 2005-9](#). These examples are step by step being followed by other countries. Indonesian government officials visited to see best practice in the Amazon seven years ago and are trying to implement some adaptations of what they learned – so south-south cooperation among tropical forest countries is worth supporting.

The UK-funded [Just Rural Transition](#) is producing a series of briefs with some examples of successful actions taken by many countries that could be scaled up. The next brief is launched on [June 24](#) and open for registration.

A great resource is the Partnerships for Forests 2019 '[Prosperous Forests](#)' report. It features a number of P4F's models as case studies and looks at barriers as well as opportunities to scale these approaches. It is relevant for policymakers that are looking at specific ways to regulate and support this sector. Specifically on the finance sector, the '[We Need Nature: building resilience through nature-positive investment](#)' [webinar](#) hosted last July, featuring an introduction from Lord Goldsmith, is also relevant watching.

Key generic success factors: Partnerships for Forests 2019 '[Prosperous Forests](#)' report covers this topic. For lessons from landscape approaches in Ghana, see '[Financing the Future: a guide for forest landscape businesses](#)'. More broadly, explore [P4F's Knowledge Library](#) for a selection of case studies and knowledge products across all the key themes raised in the session.

FACT COP26 - FCDO country offices could better ensure that the [FACT Dialogues](#) happen at country level, include a deeper and wider spread of in-country local stakeholders, support focus working groups on specific issues, and be accompanied by a communications and press strategy to influence national as well as international decisionmakers.

Touton SA -Cocoa & Forests Initiative - [Touton SA publishes on its website its progress reports for Ghana](#) and Cote d'Ivoire with respect to its commitments under the UK-supported Cocoa & Forests Initiative (CFI) to protect and restore forests, support sustainable production and promote social inclusion and community engagement. However, there are various constraints - if farmers do not have secure land tenure; are not organised in groups to benefit from technical practice and marketing; and if groups are too small and isolated in the landscape. They need to inhabit larger landscapes that

support ecosystems (with shade trees, pollinators, etc) that enable individual coffee and cocoa farms to be sustainable.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

[K4D Learning Journey on International Nature course overview](#)

Session 2 detailed outline and videos:

[The dynamics of deforestation: drivers, Nature, interventions and challenges](#)