

Forest Peoples Project



**Annual Report
2007**

Forest Peoples Project

Forest Peoples Project (FPP) aims to improve social, economic and environmental conditions for indigenous and tribal forest peoples. Using a rights-based approach we help forest peoples gain knowledge and skills to defend their own rights, influence policy makers and develop sustainable livelihoods so gaining control over their lives for a better future. We advocate at national and international level for secure rights for forest peoples to their lands and livelihoods, rights which are essential if forests are to be managed and used sustainably.

We support indigenous and tribal forest peoples to:

- ▶ promote their collective and individual rights
- ▶ secure their lands and manage their natural resources
- ▶ build their capacity to carry out actions for the long-term relief of poverty
- ▶ educate policy makers and civil society about their concerns and aspirations

We work to achieve these aims by means of :

- ▶ technical support, capacity building and policy advice for forest peoples
- ▶ networking with NGOs, indigenous support organisations and agencies
- ▶ researching and analysing the situation of forest peoples
- ▶ providing information on forest peoples

Forest Peoples Project was established on 29 October 1999 as a company limited by guarantee to become the UK-registered charitable arm of the Forest Peoples Programme. Forest Peoples Project was registered as a UK Charity in August 2000.

Cover photo: Twa children dancing, Burundi, by Téa Braun

Report edited, designed and produced by Dorothy Jackson

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Overview of the year

During 2007, Forest Peoples Project worked with indigenous and tribal peoples in South America (Guyana, Suriname, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Argentina & Paraguay), Africa (Cameroon, Gabon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo & South Africa), and Asia (north-east India & Indonesia).

Pages 2-6 ▶ Supported by our Legal and Human Rights Programme and after nearly 10 years in the courts, the land rights of the Saramaka people of Suriname were finally upheld in a groundbreaking ruling issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In addition thousands of indigenous people in South America, Africa and Asia have benefited from legal assistance, training and capacity-building as well as support that has enabled their meaningful participation in national and international human rights processes.

Page 7 ▶ We succeeded in getting the land rights of 20 Bagyeli and 7 local Bulu communities recognised by the Cameroon government through the use of participatory mapping techniques and by creating new opportunities for dialogue. Similar mapping and documentation of traditional use is enabling 30 Baka and Mbenzele communities in Cameroon and Republic of Congo to campaign for access to forest resources previously denied to them in government-approved conservation management plans. The threats of human rights abuses by loggers and eco-guards have been reduced and some communities have started small projects to improve livelihoods...

Pages 8-10 ▶ Our integrated sustainable livelihoods, education and advocacy project reached nearly half of the Twa population in Rwanda, improving food security, incomes and living conditions. 114 children have been supported in secondary school and the literacy skills of 529 Twa people have increased. A Twa social movement is now developing and Twa people are better able to defend their rights and civil liberties.

Page 11 ▶ Our project to promote sustainable livelihoods for the indigenous Twa potters of Rwanda received a boost in 2007 with the award of a four-year grant from the BIG Lottery Fund. With additional funds from local donors and ArtVenture, we are continuing training in production methods and business skills with 7 potters groups and strengthening links with national and international markets.

Page 12 ▶ Having learned advanced methods for monitoring oil exploration on their lands Achuar people in the Peruvian Amazon are now better able to hold the government to account over its promises that damaging operations would be stopped and that they would receive compensation for past destruction..

Following the passing of the UK Charities Act 2006 and new definitions of charitable activities, FPP's Board of Trustees reviewed FPP's statutes and decided to revise FPP's objectives to make explicit our focus on human rights. It has been decided that Forest Peoples Project will merge with its sister organisation Forest Peoples Programme. The new organisation will take on the name *Forest Peoples Programme*. Measures to effect these changes were put in place during 2007 and will be completed by the summer of 2008. The 2007 annual reports of both Forest Peoples Project and Forest Peoples Programme provide a good overview of the vital work that the revamped organisation, Forest Peoples Programme, will do in the future.

Defending indigenous peoples' rights under national and international law

FPP provides legal and strategic support as well as capacity building for forest peoples to claim their rights in national and international law. This involves bringing legal cases, providing information and training, and using international human rights mechanisms to press governments to apply international standards on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. Our team of lawyers works with forest peoples, NGOs and legal specialists in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

South America

In November 2007, after nearly 10 years of preparation, FPP obtained a ground-breaking, unanimous, ruling by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights that **Suriname** had violated the human rights of the Saramaka people by granting logging and mining concessions without their consultation and consent, reasonable benefit sharing or proper social-environmental studies. The court ordered Suriname to demarcate and title the Saramaka people's territory, and review existing concessions on Saramaka lands to repeal or modify them in line with the court decision. Suriname must also pass laws to secure the territorial rights of all indigenous and tribal peoples in Suriname.

The Court decisions have set legal precedents with implications for governments throughout South America. These include standards for good faith negotiations with indigenous and tribal peoples for the proposed exploitation of natural resources on their lands, and the recognition that indigenous and tribal peoples' property rights include the right to self-determination about their own social, cultural and economic development. Consistent with this, the Court ordered that recognition of the Saramaka people's territorial rights must include their right to manage, distribute and control their territory, according to their customary laws and traditional collective land tenure system. During 2008 FPP will work with the Saramaka people to ensure proper implementation of the Court decisions.

We continued work on the implementation of our first landmark legal decision – the Inter-American Court's June 2005 judgment in favour of the Cottika N'djuka maroons in the *Moiwana Village* case. The Suriname government has now complied with all but two of the Court's orders. We helped our partners to engage with the specially established National Land Rights

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& private donations.
The work was carried out
in collaboration with
our sister organisation
Forest Peoples Programme.*

Highlights

- Land rights of the Saramaka people of Suriname secured by ground-breaking judgement from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- Cottika N'djuka maroons in Suriname secured their land rights and obtained compensation
- Forced evictions of Diaguita communities in Argentina were halted
- Pressure put on governments to uphold human rights standards in Guyana, Brazil, Argentina, Rwanda, Uganda, DRC, northeast India and Indonesia through the use of UN and African human rights systems
- The African Commission on Human Rights put pressure on governments to uphold human rights standards in Uganda, Rwanda and DRC
- Indigenous peoples in 18 countries have increased knowledge and capacity to defend their rights

Commission which still has to draft laws on indigenous and tribal peoples' rights. We will continue to work with the *Moiwana* community during 2008 to secure full compliance with the Court judgment.

In October 2007, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights admitted a petition on behalf of the Kaliña and Lokono indigenous peoples of the Lower Marowijne River to redress violations of land and resource rights caused by logging, mining and protected areas, and to secure Kaliña and Lokono ownership rights over their traditional lands. Suriname has offered to settle through negotiation. FPP is supporting the Kaliña and Lokono in that process.

We helped the Association of Indigenous Village Leaders in Suriname and Trio and Lokono indigenous communities of west Suriname draft complaints and protocols to deal with proposals for massive bauxite mining in their territory. The companies involved recently accepted the need to negotiate agreements with the communities and we are now assisting with these negotiations.

In **Guyana**, after many frustrating delaying tactics, the national court finally received our first set of

depositions in a potentially landmark aboriginal land title case brought by the Akawaio and Arecuna indigenous peoples of the Upper Mazaruni river basin. Shortly thereafter the Guyanese government proposed settlement terms which the Akawaio and Arecuna are now discussing.

We also obtained important 'follow up' measures from the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), reiterating its concerns about Guyana's 2006 Amerindian Act and proposing to adopt stronger measures if Guyana fails to remedy deficiencies in that law. With the Amerindian Peoples Association of Guyana, we submitted additional information to CERD in late 2007, which will be considered in March and August 2008.

FPP provided technical support and funds for the **Venezuelan** indigenous organisation Kuyujani to commission a study confirming the legality of the 3000 Ye'kuana and Sanema indigenous peoples' claim to their 'habitat' in the Upper Caura, which has never been formally recognised. The time period for challenging the non-recognition of the claim expired while they waited for the government to provide the information needed. Kuyujani decided not to mount a court challenge due to the non-independence of the judiciary and possible harmful repercussions. About half of the 150,000 indigenous people in Venezuela would benefit if political reluctance to titling of indigenous 'habitat' were overcome.

In **Brazil** FPP helped the Macuxi, Wapichana, Taurepang, Ingaricó and Patamona indigenous peoples of the Raposa Serra do Sol with their petition to the Inter-American Commission alleging that Brazil has violated their physical, cultural and territorial rights by failing to remove non-indigenous settlers from their newly-titled lands and protect them from increasingly violent attacks and threats. We were granted a formal hearing in March. The Commission reaffirmed precautionary measures requiring the government to take effective steps to protect the lives of the indigenous peoples of Raposa. Due to Brazil's failure to respond appropriately and the increased violence in the area, we expect the Commission to officially admit the case in early



2008. This would result in tougher action against Brazil and the possibility of going to the Inter-American Court should Brazil fail to comply.

In response to our request for urgent assistance, CERD issued two letters to Brazil about the Raposa situation, and requested Brazil to meet with the Committee in Geneva. Following this CERD recommended that Brazil completely remove non-indigenous settlers and prosecute perpetrators of violence and racial hatred. We expect a further decision in 2008.

In **Peru** FPP continued its work with the Federación Nativa del Río Madre de Dios y Afluentes (FENAMAD) to help the Mashco Piro, Yora and Amahuaca isolated indigenous peoples in Madre de Dios. Their lands, resources, culture and even their lives are severely threatened by illegal loggers and oil concessions granted on their lands. Based on reports from FPP and partners, the Inter-American Commission instructed Peru to take precautionary measures to protect the lives of the uncontacted indigenous peoples. Due to Peru's sluggish response, FPP helped FENAMAD request, and participate in, a formal hearing before the Commission to discuss progress. So far, the government has made few amends bar a small contribution to monitoring posts and some measures to mitigate health risks in the event of contact. It has not cancelled oil concessions or halted logging. With FPP's help, the parties will submit a full petition to the Commission in 2008 allowing the body to issue stronger measures, and forward the case to the Inter-American Court if Peru does not comply.

FPP also helped the indigenous federation FECONACO and Racimos de Ungurahui submit an urgent request for assistance to CERD in the case of the Achuar indigenous peoples of río Corrientes, Peru. The 13,600 Achuar are suffering lead contamination and the devastating environmental, social and cultural impacts of past oil exploration in their lands (see page 12). Despite these problems new oil concessions have been granted within their remaining lands. CERD will review the request in early 2008.

FENAMAD representatives presenting their case on violation of rights of isolated indigenous peoples in Madre de Dios, Peru, to the Inter-American Commission in Washington DC.

Photo: Vanessa Jiménez



Achuar territory in River Corrientes is criss-crossed by a web of aging oil pipelines, many of which slowly leak crude into the surrounding jungle.

Photo: Martí Orta



Argentinan police illegally evicted Diaguita indigenous families from their lands using tear gas and rubber bullets, and destroyed their houses. FPP's swift legal support and advocacy prevented further evictions and helped the Diaguita obtain compensation.

Photo: Vanessa Jiménez

In the face of violent forced evictions of Diaguita families in the north of **Argentina** during March 2007, FPP provided emergency legal and technical advice and helped the Diaguita publicise the atrocities to the UN and OAS Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The Presidency of Argentina responded by appointing a special prosecutor to investigate the matters and sanction responsible individuals – including government officials. No forced removals have occurred since and a new law has been drafted to relocate the evicted indigenous families to other suitable lands within their ancestral territory. Some reparations were paid as well.

As part of our capacity building work, we participated in training workshops on indigenous peoples' rights and international law in Argentina, and provided technical and financial support to an indigenous lawyer who has been filing domestic cases for the Diaguita involving land claims and restitution, forced evictions and preservation of cultural patrimony. FPP also found funds for the community to pay for emergency legal fees, hold meetings, build a legal office to serve all the indigenous peoples of the northern provinces, and buy a truck to promote inter-community trade and enable their lawyer to travel between the communities.

In **Paraguay** FPP held meetings with the Totobiegosode indigenous peoples to help them strengthen their new organization, OPIT, to advocate for the rights of their people, including those that remain uncontacted in the Chaco region of Paraguay. State-sanctioned logging continues on their lands and the Totobiegosode traditional territory is still not fully titled and protected. FPP found funds to help build OPIT's new office and enable several members to participate for the first time in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. FPP also arranged for the Totobiegosode delegation to meet UN officials and Paraguay officials, the Inter-American Commission

and the Inter-American Development Bank. Their visit to the US enabled the Totobiegosode to learn about the international human rights system and the struggles of other indigenous peoples in the world.

In the Totobiegosode communities, we trained several young people in how to develop small community projects, write proposals, and manage small project funds.

We helped the national indigenous organization CAPI present the concerns of its 12 member organisations to the Inter-American Commission in Asunción and prepare a report on the situation of indigenous peoples in Paraguay for the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

FPP also worked with the Mby'a Guarani in southern Paraguay and their representative organization, ACIDI, to address the serious impacts of a national park imposed on Mby'a ancestral lands by the Government with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). Following our advocacy work UNDP and GEF have committed to ensuring indigenous peoples' participation and consent and expressed interest in supporting indigenous mapping of their traditional lands and resource use and titling of their lands in order to ensure sustainable conservation.

Africa

FPP's training and support work with indigenous peoples in nine African countries focused on strengthening their understanding of legal and human rights norms and mechanisms, and their ability to apply these in practice to defend their rights. We also started work on comprehensive land rights studies in five countries and a dedicated Central African indigenous peoples website. We produced two guides, one on the African human rights system and one on the land rights of indigenous peoples in international law from an African perspective.

At regional level, FPP worked to increase the ability of indigenous organisations and NGOs to understand and use the **African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)**. Training

Representatives of CAPI meeting with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, to present the concerns of the indigenous peoples of Paraguay.

Photo: Vanessa Jiménez



included a regional seminar with indigenous peoples from Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Gabon and CAR and 'on-the-job' trainings at the twice-yearly sessions of the ACHPR with partners from Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Cameroon. Our partners learned how to lobby Commissioners, and how to write and deliver statements in order to increase discussion and action on indigenous issues at the ACHPR.

The Commissioners examining Rwanda's state report used information supplied by FPP and CAURWA to question Rwanda about its denial that indigenous peoples exist in Rwanda and the name change forced on CAURWA (see page 10), observing that self-identification as an indigenous person should not be criminalised. A statement on natural resource rights by our Cameroon partner CED (Centre for Environment and Development) resulted in CED being asked to prepare a paper to support setting up a Working Group on Natural Resources at the ACHPR.

FPP's statement and briefing about indigenous women in Central Africa encouraged the Commission's Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa to expand her work on indigenous women's issues. At the ACHPR's request, FPP also submitted a detailed analysis entitled 'Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Transnational and Other Business Enterprises: A Review of International Law and Jurisprudence' to assist the Commission's deliberations on the human rights obligations of non-state actors in Africa.

In collaboration with the **Rights and Resources Initiative**, FPP hosted a workshop in Cameroon on forest tenure and community land and resource rights with indigenous and civil society representatives from 12 west and central African countries. Participants compared national contexts and recommended actions to strengthen indigenous and local community forest tenure, as part of longer term research and advocacy strategies.

At national level FPP continued to work with the indigenous Twa of **Uganda** who were evicted from their ancestral forests when they were converted into national parks. We continued to help strengthen UOBDU, the Twa's community-based organisation. We helped UOBDU purchase



Participants from Cameroon practising drafting and delivering oral interventions during FPP's regional training workshop on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Photo: Lucy Mulvagh

a tract of forested land with funds from a UK donor, develop a land management plan and take the first steps in creating a Twa land trust to secure their land ownership for present and future generations. We supported UOBDU to discuss land issues with the national authorities and continued the groundwork for longer-term plans to help the Twa start formal negotiations and, if necessary, a land claim in the national courts in respect of the loss of their ancestral lands.

We also helped UOBDU find funds to start a pilot housing project. During 2007 construction started on eight houses in different Twa villages, providing shelter for desperately needy Twa families as well as rainwater harvested from the tin roofs for the entire village. UOBDU hopes to expand the housing project once additional donors are found.

A report submitted by FPP and partners to the ACHPR resulted in the ACHPR recommending that Uganda ensure that indigenous peoples' rights are respected. Following our report to NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism, Uganda's 'self-assessment report' included recommendations for compensation to minorities deprived of their ancestral lands.

In **Cameroon**, FPP held a training workshop with indigenous organisations, NGOs, intergovernmental organisations and government to strengthen their understanding of land rights in international law and the application of these rights in Cameroon's legal system. We helped our partner CED draft an Urgent Appeal to CERD and strengthened CED's advocacy in the EU FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement process, to demand that the definition of 'legal' timber sold by Cameroon to the EU must address indigenous land and resource rights. We also helped CED lobby the government to vote in favour of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (which it eventually did) and to start advocacy on the application of the Declaration in Cameroon.

Indigenous peoples in **DRC** are severely threatened by logging and conservation areas imposed on

This Twa family at Senzoga, Uganda, will be built a new house under UOBDU's pilot housing project. Photo: UOBDU



their traditional lands. Following a report submitted with our partner CAMV and five Congolese organisations, CERD issued concluding observations recommending DRC to protect indigenous land rights, include indigenous peoples' rights to their forests in national laws, register their ancestral lands, impose a new moratorium on logging forest lands, and provide remedies for violations of indigenous rights. As an exceptional measure CERD required DRC to report back within one year.

The ACHPR responded to our two Urgent Appeals on DRC, which urged suspension of commercial logging pending a detailed study of indigenous land rights and the protection of their rights in national law, by scheduling an examination of DRC for May 2008.

With CAMV we organised a training workshop for indigenous and NGO activists on indigenous land rights in international law and how to use international human rights mechanisms to defend rights to land, education and health in DRC. CAMV will follow this up with a simple guide to land rights in 2008. The training also increased the effectiveness of partners' advocacy at the ACHPR and their ability to transmit information to the indigenous communities they work with.

Land is a key issue in **Burundi** where some 90% of Twa people are landless. During 2007, FPP worked with our partner UNIPROBA to start analysing Burundi's draft land law. The report, due out in 2008, will propose revisions to ensure the protection of Twa land rights and land use. We also supported a staff member of UNIPROBA appointed to the National Land Commission, to advocate for Twa inclusion in the government's proposed land

redistribution programme in 2008. Several Land Commissioners now consider landless Twa a priority group for land redistribution.

FPP coordinated a training workshop on 'Strengthening Capacities to Defend Twa Rights using National and International Law', with Twa organisations, NGOs and State institutions. Participants compared national laws on land, and women and children's rights, with what Burundi should be doing under its international obligations, and learned how they can use international mechanisms to claim these rights.

In **South Africa**, we helped the Richtersveld Nama people implement the Constitutional Court's landmark judgment recognising the Nama's rights to their lands. The Land Court overseeing the process has now confirmed that the Nama's own freely chosen representatives must consent to the deed of settlement, and has rejected a deed developed by a government-imposed institution which must now be reworked. FPP also provided expert input to the process of revising South Africa's constitution in regard to indigenous peoples' rights.

Asia

CERD issued a strong set of recommendations for legal and policy reforms in **Indonesia** following our complaint about plans to expand oil palm estates on indigenous lands. CERD required Indonesia to report within one year on its implementation of these reforms. We supported a coalition of Indonesian organisations to meet with the National Commission on Human Rights about implementing the measures. We also held a workshop in international law to explore further ways of reforming industry practice and national policy to protect forest peoples' rights.

CERD issued concluding observations that **India's** Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958, and the construction of dams, discriminate against indigenous peoples. CERD's decision was influenced by our report compiled with the United NGO Mission Manipur, representing over 300 indigenous organisations in north-east India. In 2008 we will follow up by helping our partners to document government violence in relation to dam-building.

The land of this Twa community at Mutaho, Burundi, was taken by their neighbours. FPP is helping them inform the UN Special Rapporteur on indigenous Peoples and ask him to raise this case with the Burundi government.

Photo: Dominique Ntagisigaye



Securing indigenous rights in the Congo Basin

In early 2007 we completed our project supporting indigenous Bagyeli communities affected by the controversial World Bank-backed Chad-Cameroon Oil Pipeline Project.

Together with our local partners CED and Planet Survey, FPP supported consultations and training of local partners to help the communities document their resource use in 85,000 ha of farm lands. We then helped them prepare maps using the data they collected, and use these maps to secure local land rights. The mapping was backed by five meetings of a land forum set up to facilitate dialogue on land issues between Bagyeli communities and the politically dominant Bulu local communities. This resulted in new agreements between Bagyeli and Bulu concerning rights to land, followed by formal recognition by the Cameroon government of the lands of 20 Bagyeli and seven Bulu communities, altogether about 3000 individuals. The project also set up several small projects (managed by Bagyeli community fieldworkers) to improve livelihoods including agricultural tools and seeds, fishing nets, and a village shop.

The pipeline project created the Campo Ma'an National Park to offset the environmental damage of the pipeline. FPP and partners mapped 160,000 ha of lands used by five Bagyeli communities in and around the park, leading eventually to government recognition of Bagyeli access and use rights in the whole of the park.

With our partners and Bagyeli representatives, FPP successfully lobbied the World Bank's International Advisory Group, set up to oversee the pipeline project, to resolve individual Bagyeli claims for compensation. During 2007 FPP continued to advocate at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and World Bank for Bagyeli participation in designing and implementing the Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) required by the Bank's indigenous peoples policy. We helped indigenous participants from six Central African countries meet the World Bank in Yaounde to discuss the problems of implementing the Bank's indigenous policy.

We completed the first 18 months of a second project in the Congo Basin, to reduce violations of indigenous rights by national parks and logging



Highlights:

- Lands of 20 Bagyeli and 7 Bulu communities formally recognised by Cameroon government
- Creation of a land forum for inter-ethnic dialogue on land rights
- Six community-managed micro projects to improve livelihoods for Bagyeli people
- Government recognition of Bagyeli use rights inside Campo Ma'an National Park
- Compensation secured for Bagyeli affected by the Chad-Cameroon pipeline
- Threat of indigenous rights violations by loggers and conservation guards reduced in Cameroon, Republic of Congo and Central African Republic
- Agreements reached between conservation agencies and 30 Baka and Mbenzele communities in Cameroon and Republic of Congo to protect indigenous rights in conservation management plans

concessions in central Africa. In Cameroon, Republic of Congo and Central African Republic we helped reduce threats of human rights abuses by loggers and conservation guards against 9500 indigenous people, including the burning of camps and villages, destruction or confiscation of personal possessions and arbitrary violence.

In Cameroon and Republic of Congo, we helped 30 Baka and Mbenzele communities document their key resources in and around Boumba Bek, Nki and Noubale-Ndoki National Parks. This provided maps and data which the Baka and Mbenzele presented to government and conservation agencies, and enabled them to develop agreements with conservation agencies and government to protect their forest rights in government-approved management plans.

The work involved mapping 600,000 ha of community lands used by 9,000 Baka people and other local communities on which the Boumba Bek and Nki National Parks were imposed. We also mapped Baka and local community lands under logging and safari hunting concessions outside the parks. Our sister organisation, Forest Peoples Programme, is now continuing this work.

The Chad-Cameroon pipeline crosses the lands of indigenous Bagyeli communities in southern Cameroon. Between 2002 and 2007 FPP and our partners worked with the Bagyeli and local Bulu communities to engage civil society and government to improve Bagyeli land rights and livelihoods.

Photo: John Nelson

Funded by:
Comic Relief and DFID.

Supporting rights and livelihoods for Twa people in Rwanda

Our project with the Twa NGO CAURWA (Community of Indigenous Peoples in Rwanda) was completed in September 2007. In almost six years the project has made lasting positive changes to the lives of thousands of indigenous Twa, who are among the most deprived and marginalised people in one of the world's poorest countries.



148 Twa communities have increased their food security through training in agriculture and animal husbandry, provision of starter kits and strengthening the organisational capacity of their farming cooperatives.
Photo: Marielle van Uiter Photography

Origins of the project

When the project began in January 2002, eight years after the 1994 genocide, Rwanda's national programme of reconstruction and development was already underway. But the Twa, a severely impoverished former forest-dwelling hunter-gatherer people, stood to gain little, because they were invisible to policy makers.

The Twa's socio-economic deprivation was due to age old, deep-rooted prejudices against them, which blocked their access to services, support and training, compounded by violations of their rights to land, culture, participation, identity and association. In recent times, to promote reconciliation and avoid a repeat of the genocide, government policy has banned reference to ethnicity. This risks deepening the Twa's poverty and exclusion by making support actions overtly directed at the Twa difficult, if not illegal.

The Twa's dire situation was confirmed by a national survey carried out by CAURWA and FPP in 2003. This found that the number of unemployed Twa adults was 30 times higher than the national average (30% vs. 1%) and casual labour was 7.5 times more prevalent (69% vs. 9%). Systematic discrimination meant that Twa casual labourers were usually paid less than other ethnic groups.

The Twa's lack of education affected their ability to find work. Our survey found that compared with the national average, twice as many Twa had never attended school (51% vs. 25%), net primary school enrolment was less than two-thirds (48% vs. 78%) and adult literacy was less than half (23% vs. 52%). The Twa drop out rate from primary school was 11 times higher than the national population (56% vs. 5%), due to lack of money to pay for schooling, and bullying. Very few Twa girls attended secondary school. The Twa's low level of education undermined their confidence to take up public positions and be accepted as leaders outside their own communities.

Over centuries, the Twa's ancestral forest lands were taken over for agriculture, industry and

Highlights:

- Food security, access to land and increased incomes for 3,043 members of 148 cooperatives and their families, benefiting 46% of the Rwandan Twa population
- Improved housing, sanitation, and health
- Increased investments by the Twa in land and livestock
- 19% growth in primary school enrolment
- 114 students (40% girls) attend secondary school
- 529 adults in literacy groups, with over one-third able to read and write
- Twa people, national government and the international community are significantly more aware of the Twa's rights
- Twa people have increased social standing, participate more in Rwandan society, and can advocate for their rights

conservation. Landlessness was 3.5 times more common in Twa households than the national population (43% vs. 12%) – a major cause of the Twa's poverty. Neighbours and local authorities could steal Twa land with impunity due to the Twa's unequal access to the justice system. Twa people were much more likely to live in inadequate huts made of plastic or straw (20% vs. 3%), lack latrines (35% vs. 5%) and rely on non-potable water (37% vs. 19%). This caused a higher burden of ill health, but only 7% of Twa could afford to become members of local health insurance schemes, the cheapest form of rural healthcare. Due to child-bearing, Twa women's health was worse than that of men, yet nearly half of them had not received ante-natal vaccinations.

CAURWA asked FPP to help them design and fund a project to reduce the Twa's poverty and increase their participation in society. Through community consultations we jointly developed an integrated, participative programme focused on sustainable livelihoods, education, human rights and advocacy, backed by institutional strengthening.

The programme provided immediate practical help for Twa communities to quickly meet their urgent food and shelter needs, and also carried out longer-term work in skills-building and advocacy to develop sustainable livelihoods and secure the Twa's rights for the future.

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Developing sustainable livelihoods

By helping Twa communities set up cooperatives to develop small scale farming, the project increased food security and incomes, and enabled participants to invest surplus income in housing, sanitation, health care and education. Professional agronomists and vets delivered training tailored to the cooperatives' needs and, to help them get started, we distributed inputs such as seeds, hoes, fertiliser and goats. We helped diversify incomes by providing training in off-farm skills such as brick making and tailoring and we strengthened the cooperatives' leadership and communication skills and basic book-keeping. The project trained hundreds of people, with women comprising on average 58% of the trainees.

By 2007, the project had supported 148 cooperatives (25% more than our target) comprising 3,043 adult members. Including the members' family dependents the programme reached about 15,000 people – 46 % of the Rwandan Twa population. By 2007 participants' families ate at least two meals a day and were using money generated from the sale of surplus crops and livestock to send their children to school, buy and rent land, pay for health insurance, refurbish houses and build latrines. The sustainability of the interventions is shown by the fact that one third of the cooperatives now support themselves without further assistance. The project's practical inputs and sensitive approach have helped Twa communities become more dynamic and confident, and more optimistic about their future.

Improving education and literacy

The project's strategy was to run livelihoods and education programmes in the same communities, so they would reinforce each other. Encouraged by project staff, families were soon able and willing to use their increasing incomes to pay for their children's schooling, such that Twa primary school attendance in the participating communities increased from 977 in 2004 to 1,165 in 2006 (latest figures).

Focusing on the Twa's medium to long term needs, the project aimed to increase their



opportunities in secondary education and adult literacy. A bursary scheme covered school fees, uniforms and materials, and provided an incentive for primary pupils to go on to secondary school. The literacy programme made Twa adults more aware of the benefits of education and so more willing to pay for their children's studies. CAURWA's education team provided encouragement, moral guidance and practical support in dealing with discrimination and other obstacles.

The project supported 114 secondary pupils, 46 girls and 68 boys. This exceeded our target by 128%, and the fact that 40% were girls was very encouraging. The graduation of 21 students under the scheme so far is a huge achievement for the students personally as well as for the Twa people as a whole.

Nineteen literacy groups (26% more than our target) run by trained local community members taught 529 adult learners. By 2007, one third of them (55 men, 136 women) could write and read newspapers and booklets.

Promoting human rights

The project's training increased CAURWA and the Twa's informed participation in government and donor policy discussions and programmes on land, human rights, national development and reconciliation. Free legal support enabled Twa communities to seek redress for human rights violations, including land theft, assault and arbitrary detention, while advocacy and media work increased national and international awareness of the Twa's situation.

The project's advocacy and legal support has helped over 150 Twa communities secure access to farm lands.

Photo: Lucy Mulvagh

Twa communities are using their growing incomes and increased awareness of the importance of education to send their children to school.

Photo: Marielle van Uitert Photography





CAURWA's education coordinator addressing the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights about the violations of the Twa's rights to identity and freedom of association in Rwanda.

Photo: Lucy Mulvagh

The project trained CAURWA's staff and over 600 Twa community representatives in human rights, national and international human rights law and implementation mechanisms, women and children's rights and development policy. Twa communities now can hold their own in discussions on these subjects with a wide audience, including neighbours, local authorities, the media and international community, contributing to the project's long-term goal of Twa empowerment.

The legal support scheme helped 40 Twa communities recover land stolen by neighbours or local authorities. This, together with the livelihoods programme's work to secure land for all the 148 cooperatives and encourage them to invest incomes in renting or buying plots, has helped reduce Twa landlessness.

With FPP's support, CAURWA strengthened links with development and rights networks and forums, thereby raising the profile of the Twa internationally and nationally. CAURWA and FPP submitted reports to the UN, NEPAD and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, which resulted in these bodies questioning the Rwanda government about its treatment of Twa people and calling on Rwanda to recognise and enforce international standards on indigenous peoples in its own policies and practice.

Strengthening the Twa movement

Exchange visits between Twa communities, and training of Twa community support volunteers improved information flows between CAURWA and the communities. This, and increasing rural Twa

membership of CAURWA, has helped to improve CAURWA's accountability.

The strengthened Twa social movement together with the increased land, food security, incomes and education levels has raised the Twa's self-confidence and social standing, and in turn increased their participation in civil society and decision-making structures. By the end of the project there were 77 Twa Gacaca (traditional court) judges (55 men, 22 women), seven Twa members of Abunzi mediation committees (four men, three women), 62 Twa members of the cellule-level authorities; and 20 Nyumbakumi (head of ten households).

Increasing institutional capacity

These results were achieved despite a national environment that does not support human rights, freedom of expression and self-identification. Under the post-genocide ban on reference to ethnicity, the government considered CAURWA's insistence on its Twa identity as unconstitutional and 'divisionist', and refused to legally register the organisation. From 2003 to 2007 CAURWA was under constant threat of being closed down. This affected the project's work as some donors could not release funds until CAURWA was registered.

CAURWA finally capitulated in May 2007. After adopting new statutes omitting the word 'indigenous', replacing 'Twa' with the word 'potter', and renaming itself COPORWA (Organisation of Rwandese Potters) it was duly registered.

Despite the difficult political environment, FPP's technical and capacity-building assistance helped CAURWA to improve its organisational and management skills during the course of the project, thereby enabling it to bring about the changes described above.

In October 1996, one of FPP's external trainers working with the Twa observed that 'The scale of the task that [FPP] and CAURWA have set themselves... is enormous. The enterprise should be seen clearly by all concerned as high risk, high reward and long term.' Though ambitious, the project has succeeded in bringing about lasting positive change to the lives of thousands of Twa people and the recognition of their rights and needs nationally and internationally.

The project helped the Twa improve their living conditions, defend their rights and gain skills to deal with future challenges.

Photo: Dorothy Jackson



Generating sustainable incomes through Fair Trade Pottery

Highlights:

- New funding secured for four years
- Seven potters groups with strong women's empowerment
- Revitalised business skills and production training programme
- New handwheels and design training for improved product range
- Tourism and pottery classes increased potters' incomes

Our 'Dancing Pots' project aims to improve the living conditions and reduce the social exclusion of impoverished, marginalized indigenous Twa potters in Rwanda, by commercializing their traditional crafts of pottery and dance. Over the last six years we have established the framework for an effective Fair Trade business. During 2006 the project had a shortfall in funding, but continued operating thanks to the dedicated staff who took salary cuts and made other economies.

In early 2007, with seed funding from the BIG Lottery Fund (BIG), we produced a new business and marketing plan, and succeeded in getting a 4-year grant from BIG later in the year. This, together with grants from ArtVenture and local onors Norwegian Church Aid and Christian Aid, has enabled us to resume full operations.

Co-managed by FPP and CAURWA, Dancing Pots is the first project in Central Africa to help indigenous, former hunter-gather, people set up their own enterprise. The project's Pottery Centre in the capital Kigali provides a retail outlet, warehouse and training centre, coordinates tourist visits to Twa communities, and organizes pottery classes for the public. In the long run, it will be developed into a cultural centre for Rwanda and the Twa. The project works with potters to improve their production capacities, business skills and organisational capacity, so they can increase their access to high-value markets, and thereby increase incomes and improve socio-economic conditions in their communities.

The project involves 160 potters (74 women and 86 men) who have formed seven cooperatives to produce and sell pottery. Two of the Twa cooperatives have also formed dance troupes.

Three cooperatives are non-Twa; their participation helps to foster respectful collaboration between Twa and other communities, thereby increasing the Twa's confidence and social inclusion.

In 2007 we provided follow-on training for all the groups in cooperative and financial management, and communication and leadership. We helped two cooperatives to complete the paperwork for official registration, and assisted six of them to open bank accounts. All groups now keep written records of regular meetings and elections. Our effort to support and empower women has resulted in women comprising 50% of elected members in the Potter Committee, and achieving almost 100% participation in trainings.

We provided further training in production planning and quality assurance at the Dancing Pots premises in Kigali, and helped two cooperatives obtain secure access to land and clay, resources which are now controlled under new laws. We will do the same for the other groups in 2008.

We hired a local marketing manager in December, to increase Dancing Pots access to existing and new markets in line with the new business plan and using Dancing Pots' Fair Trade accreditation – it was the first Fair Trade-certified (IFAT registered) business in Rwanda. During the year, we continued to organise responsible tourism visits to see Twa pottery production and dance displays in their communities, and pottery classes for Kigali residents at the Dancing Pots centre.

During 2008 we'll further improve potters' business skills through training in Fair Trade practices, trading and partnership capacity, simple book-keeping and business management, costing and pricing, managing credit and savings, and micro-finance. A loan fund will help potters manage cash flow. With our new hand wheels we will train potters in throwing, designing new products, and producing decorated and glazed products. The potters have requested literacy classes and a social fund to provide financial resources for community amenities; these will start in 2008.

Early next year, a professional photographer will work with the potters to document their activities and their lives, for a photo exhibition later in the year.



Above: A Twa potter from the Runda cooperative.

Photo: Michael Grosspietsch



Below: Children take lessons from a Dancing Pots potter.

Photo: Jean Munyaneza

Funded by:
BIG Lottery Fund and ArtVenture
with additional local funding from
Norwegian Church Aid and
Christian Aid.



Above: The crude oil pumped up from under the jungle of River Corrientes comes up mixed with hot salty water full of heavy metals. These 'production waters' are pumped straight into the streams that feed the River Corrientes. Photo: Cristina O'Callaghan Cordo

Below: Two Achuar community monitors from River Corrientes learn to use GPSs in order to monitor new oil spills and environmental contamination in their territory. Photo: Marti Orta

Monitoring indigenous rights & oil exploration

Highlights:

- Achuar communities in the Peruvian Amazon trained to monitor oil exploration on their lands
- New methodology developed for monitoring

Achuar communities in the Corrientes river basin in the Peruvian Amazon learned how to monitor and report on oil extraction operations on their lands and in neighbouring areas. The Achuar have suffered the negative impacts of oil exploration and extraction for over thirty years. Their rivers, wetlands, drinking waters and fisheries have been contaminated, their forests have been cleared and burned and their air has been polluted by destructive and careless oil extraction by Occidental up to the year 2000, and by Pluspetrol since then.

These severe negative consequences of oil development have resulted in proven cases of blood poisoning from heavy metals and other toxic crude oil chemicals as well as harmful effects on diet and local livelihoods. Yet many of these gross violations of community rights perpetuated by various oil companies have gone on with impunity. Over the years the State has turned a blind eye to the damage caused by the oil industry in the region.

Through demonstrations and peaceful direct action in 2006 and 2007, the Achuar managed to finally secure commitments from the Peruvian government that damaging operations would be halted and compensation paid for past damages. FPP collaborated with the local NGO Shinai and indigenous Achuar organisations to provide the cutting-edge training for the communities to enable them to monitor oil activities and hold the government to its promises. The training involved developing a practical field methodology for identifying, documenting and reporting violations of national and international environmental and social norms regulating the oil industry. Several indigenous monitors have already been trained and systematic monitoring work got underway at the end of 2007 in the forest and wetland areas around the communities.

Funded by:
Network for Social Change

FPP Publications

'Advances in legislation recognising indigenous peoples' rights in Central Africa: a collision course with industrial logging concessions' by D Jackson, in: *Concessions to Poverty: The environmental, social and economic impacts of industrial logging concessions in Africa's rainforests*, Rainforest Foundation UK and Forests Monitor, pp 17–20, 2007

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'Uganda', report by T Braun in *The Indigenous World 2007*, IWGIA

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Finance

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Grants:	•	O/B	£196,363
European Commission	•	Income	£331,530
Comic Relief	•	Grants	87.6%
BIG Lottery Fund	•	Donations	11.0%
Art Venture	•	Interest	1.4%
Law Society	•		
Network for Social Change	•	Expenditure	£ 440,634
Rights and Resources Group	•	Field projects	50.0%
Sigrid Rausing Trust	•	Staff costs	33.8%
	•	Travel/M&E	9.4%
Donations:	•	Administration	5.1%
Private donations to FPP's Africa and	•	Documentation	1.7%
Latin America work and core costs.	•		



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