

Project: Conservation, Indigenous Peoples and Gender

This project analyses changes in conservation policy in the DRC, drawing on historical debates between conservation and development, as well as more recent approaches in political ecology and environmental justice. It focuses in particular on the experiences of indigenous peoples and women within conservation areas and territories affected by environmental policies.

Our initial findings highlight:

- the limitations of approaches that simply pit conservation against development;
- the importance of local struggles in gaining a practical understanding of environmental justice issues;
- the need to avoid romanticising these struggles or the vulnerabilities experienced by women and Indigenous peoples;
- the tensions created by oversimplified dichotomies between Indigenous peoples and national parks, or between women and environmental violence;
- the importance of local collaborations, collectives and territorial alliances in the search for sustainable solutions.

Our current research focuses on:

- the links between conservation, environmental justice and public policy;
- local forms of participation, recognition and redistribution;
- potential alliances between conservation actors and local communities;
- the territorial knowledge and practices of Indigenous peoples and women;
- the production of knowledge useful for supporting local struggles and for more just and context-specific conservation policies.