

Land Sale Talk: Stakeholders' Mediations of Free Prior and Informed Consent in Large-Scale Foreign Land Acquisitions

Synopsis

This project provides an innovative culture-sensitive approach to so-called universal concepts in the context of large-scale foreign land acquisitions (e.g. 'land (ownership)'; 'land transfer'; '(free prior and informed) consent'; 'agreement'). Its focus is the result of a rapidly deteriorating situation concerning many of these acquisitions: violent evictions of the local communities, community resistance and a *coup d'état* (Madagascar) being among them. The project takes the inherent multi-cultural context of these deals as a primary complexity, which if not dealt with adequately can be a major trigger for local and - in the long-term - regional conflict. It studies concepts and practices considered of fundamental importance in the land transaction process by the different stakeholders in a case-study in Kenya, in order to transform an existing and potentially useful UN instrument of indigenous people's rights (Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)) into a culture-sensitive model for achieving equitable and fair participation of all stakeholders. Interactions with land being quite similar across Africa, the model can be applied across a continent where 50% of the transnational land deals are taking place (Oxfam 2011). Additionally, the model could be adapted to non-African contexts. Focusing on the cultural component, the project aims at producing a proactive instrument in preventing future local/regional conflicts. Finally, the project contributes to training and capacity building at Kenyan institutions.