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Human Rights Impact Assessment of harvesting operations at Green Resources Uchindile Forest: The health impact assessment framework repurposed

Submission date
20/03/2013

Registration date
11/07/2013

Last Edited
16/07/2013

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Overall study status
Completed

Condition category
Other

[ ] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[ ] Results
[ ] Individual participant data
[ ] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol
Background and study aims
Although human rights have historically been under the scope of governments, it is now widely recognized that multinational corporations impact human rights through their operations, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. The United Nations (UN) has issued widely adopted guidance to corporations recommending that they predict, lessen and monitor human rights impacts. However, to date no commonly agreed upon methodologies for such investigations have been established.
This study aimed to test a methodology for human rights impact assessment and monitoring on a forestry project in southern Tanzania. This methodology was developed not from the environmental or social impact assessment frameworks, but from the health impact assessment framework. Health impact assessment (HIA) provides a valuable balance of transdisciplinary perspective (the study of a relevant issue or problem that integrates the views of multiple disciplines in order to connect new knowledge and deeper understanding to real life experiences) and awareness of human rights measures of sufficiency (i.e. accessibility, affordability, appropriateness and adequacy of care), which can be expanded to the full suite of human rights.
Findings from this study provide new evidence on the effectiveness of human rights impact assessments for predicting and mitigating (reduce) human rights impacts of corporate developments while also examining the relationship between health and human rights as bi-directional.

Who can participate?
All project area inhabitants who are potentially affected either positively or negatively by the project can participate. Key informants include project managers (in environmental, human resources and operations departments), educators, health practitioners and local leaders and authorities. Community members (referred to as rightsholders) engaged in discussions of human

rights-related topics include employees, former employees, first and second wives, the elderly, the young (including school-aged children), single-mothers, union members and non-unionized workers, and the ill.

What does the study involve?
Study participation is voluntary in semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions pertaining to daily life and perceptions. Consent is acquired orally, owing to low literacy rates (<50%). Interview questions focus on topics of labour, local politics, economics, health, education, empowerment (make someone stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights), discrimination and culture. Focus groups aim to identify topics of shared concern related to livelihood and empowerment.
Responses will be coded for relevance to human rights listed in the International Bill of Rights (UN, 1948, 1967a, 1976b).

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Participants will provide qualitative data to supplement quantitative data acquired from clinicians, educators and local leaders on human rights conditions. Identified negative human rights impacts will be analysed to develop plans, which will be monitored.
Often human rights-related topics are sensitive and personal. Interviewers are trained in the cultural-epidemiological method (known as EMIC) interviewing to accommodate the emotional challenges associated with certain health, social and stigma-related questions (pertaining to, for example, HIV status, relationships between first- and second wives, and mistreatment at the workplace). Because sensitive topics are discussed anonymity is respected for all interviewees.

Where is the study run from?
The study is conducted in Uchindile and Kitete villages in rural Iringa District, Tanzania. Interviews are conducted at the clinic, school and streamside, as well as in residences and public spaces such as restaurants.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
The study started in December 2008 and ran until December 2010. A final monitoring visit is scheduled for mid-2013.

Who is funding the study?
The study is funded by NomoGaia, a US-based think tank dedicated to clarifying the role of business in human rights worldwide.

Who is the main contact?
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Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
N/A

Study information

Scientific Title
Human Rights Impact Assessment of harvesting operations at Green Resources Uchindile Forest: The health impact assessment framework repurposed: a mixed-method analysis study

Acronym
HRIA-Uchindile

Study objectives
The Green Resources Uchindile Forest project in Tanzania has human rights impacts and these can be predicted, analysed and mitigated. The methods employed in assessment of health impacts can be expanded to achieve this.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
The initial assessment was conducted not as scientific research but as quasi-journalistic investigation. The team was invited by the company in question to examine human rights impacts. As such, work fell under the umbrella of corporate study, rather than scientific study. There are currently no protocols for seeking ethical approval for corporate social responsibility (CSR) studies. Ethical approval will be sought for all follow-up work at this site, as investigation will include personal interviews and consideration of health records.

Study design
Mixed-method analysis incorporating qualitative and quantitative data coded by human rights implications

Primary study design
Observational

Study type(s)
Quality of life

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Human rights impacts of corporate projects

Interventions
Participants contributed inputs into an analytical framework for assessing human rights impacts. Impacts deemed negative in an established scoring process were earmarked for mitigation. Mitigation measures address negative impacts on the rights to food, water, favourable working conditions, unionization, standard of living, housing, health, non-discrimination and education.

Follow-up monitoring involving interviews with rightsholders, analysis of environmental monitoring data, and corporate policy review is used to quantify changes in impacts (i.e. improvements in impacts from negative to positive, or exacerbation of negative impacts).

Intervention Type
Other

Phase
Not Applicable

Primary outcome(s)
Changes in human rights conditions

Key secondary outcome(s))
1. Changes in corporate policies and practices
2. Changes in local understandings of equity and human rights

Completion date
30/06/2013

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Project area inhabitant, all ages, male or female
2. Oral informed consent by participants (parents/guardians of minors)

Participant type(s)
Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
No consent

Date of first enrolment
01/12/2008

Date of final enrolment
30/06/2013

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Switzerland

Tanzania

Study participating centre
57 Socinstrasse
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Switzerland
4051

Sponsor information

Organisation
Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Switzerland)

ROR
https://ror.org/03adhka07

Funder(s)

Funder type
Research organisation

Funder Name
NomoGaia, Denver (USA)

Funder Name
NewFields, Colorado (USA)

Funder Name
Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Basel (Switzerland).

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary

Not provided at time of registration

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes