



TFD IMPACT STORIES

Centering Community Engagement in Plantation Management

BUILDING TRUST AND DIALOGUE SKILLS

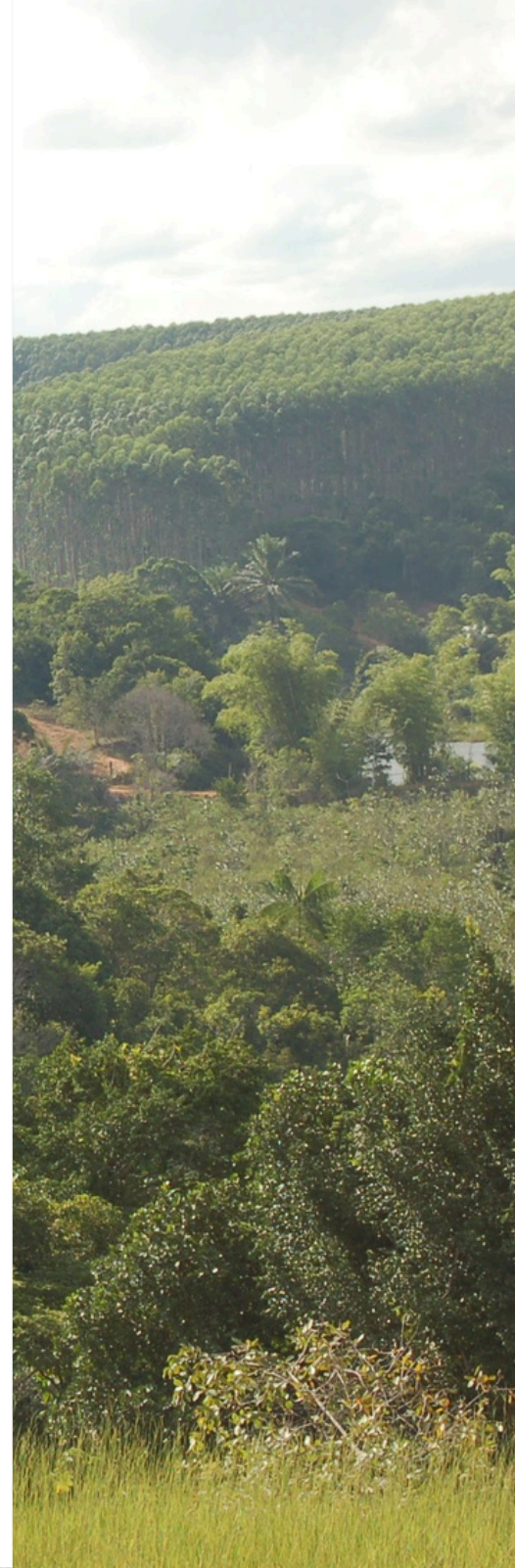
Effective community engagement in forested systems is critical for ensuring forest and forest plantation management is socially and environmentally sustainable. **The Forests Dialogue (TFD)** continued engagement in key regions – Bahia, Brazil and Riau, Indonesia to spotlight two – and facilitated positive change in stakeholder interactions in these forested landscapes.

Inclusive dialogue efforts establish a space to acknowledge the voices of communities. Dialogues further foster mutual understanding, establish collaborative relationships amongst stakeholders, and drive long-term cultural shifts in corporate approaches towards community involvement.

Community Engagement in Bahia, Brazil

Intensively Managed Planted Forests (IMPFs), or highly-productive plantation forests grown primarily for wood and fiber production, contribute disproportionately to global wood production. As a result of this skewed production, land tenure, environmental degradation, and **corporate social responsibility (CSR)** emerged as key issues regarding IMPFs throughout the world. Moreover, local communities – those who bore the greatest impact from IMPF outcomes – were often left outside of decision-making rooms. Bahia, Brazil was a hotspot for this discussion in 2008. TFD saw the opportunity to engage and thus created a space for communities and practitioners alike to dive into conflicts regarding IMPFs.

Intensively Managed Planted Forests Dialogue in Brazil, 2008





Intensively Managed Planted Forests Dialogue in Brazil, 2008

“Once you are in a dialogue, you will always be in a dialogue. Learnings from the dialogue are not just content, but also skills and a culture of engagement.”

– Miriam Prochnow, co-founder of Apremavi and former Executive Director of the Brazilian Forests Dialogue

Entering the dialogue in Bahia, Miriam Prochnow, former Executive Director of the Brazilian Forests Dialogue, was ready to focus on results. She knew from her past experience that the proof of a real dialogue included decisions, especially in times of heightened conflict. During her time as a participant, she was delighted at the level of commitment to constructive and productive dialogue that TFD facilitated in its discussions, particularly in facilitating communication and collaboration amongst diverse actors. By the end, Prochnow witnessed at least ten agreements being reached between companies and communities. Impressed by the methodology, Prochnow went on to become the first Executive Director of the Brazilian Forests Dialogue.

In her current role as co-founder of Apremavi, an environmental NGO focused on restoration and stakeholder engagement in the Atlantic Forest, Prochnow additionally highlighted the lasting importance of the TFD approach in bringing all stakeholders into the conversation to effectively implement a landscape effort: “You need to have dialogue with the eye of a drone and the vision of a dragonfly. The drone sees the big picture from above, while the dragonfly’s vision is complex like a kaleidoscope, recognizing the need to involve all sectors and uses within the landscape.”

Ivone Namikawa, past Forest Sustainability Coordinator for Klabin – Brazil’s largest paper manufacturer and exporter – shared her experience at Bahia as one driving long-term



Intensively Managed Planted Forests Dialogue in Brazil, 2008

cultural shifts in Klabin's engagement with communities. "It's not about giving things to people — it's about exchanging knowledge and building together." Field dialogues were valuable in providing lessons for Namikawa in engaging long-term with diverse stakeholders, particularly Indigenous and traditional communities. After participating in a field dialogue about the **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)** certification process, Namikawa explained her takeaways: "When you go to traditional communities and want to engage with them, there is a timing. Even being in the same country, the culture is different. You need to learn how to respect this." Continued and respectful dialogue emerged as a part of the important narrative TFD built during the dialogue in Bahia. Namikawa specifically mentioned the lessons learned from engaging the Bahia chapter of the Brazilian Forests Dialogue in multi-stakeholder dialogue as well:

"Make it not about giving, but about exchanging. Exchanging knowledge and engaging with communities as owners of what they have. The impact is going to be related to the continuity of [exchanging] conversations."

– Ivone Namikawa, former Forest Sustainability Coordinator for Klabin

Community Engagement in Riau, Indonesia

Similar to Bahia, Brazil, IMPFs in Riau, Indonesia emerged as a conflict area for TFD to address. In 2007, a dialogue was held to address environmental concerns surrounding tree plantation operations on peatlands and related social conflicts amongst Indigenous communities and private companies for land tenure. During this dialogue, TFD established



Tree Plantations in the Landscape Dialogue in Indonesia 2023

efforts toward inclusive governance and the adoption of mechanisms like **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)**. In 2023, TFD held a subsequent dialogue on **Tree Plantations in the Landscape (TPL)** to revisit the location of the IMPF dialogue, with the goal of understanding progress made and remaining challenges. Focused efforts included resolving ongoing land tenure disputes, developing new mechanisms for conflict resolution, and securing customary land rights for indigenous communities.

Multi-stakeholder dialogues facilitated by TFD opened up rare opportunities for engagement in the complex and sensitive area of intensively managed plantation forests. Marcus Colchester, Senior Policy Advisor at the Forest Peoples Programme, noted this complexity, further elaborating, “it is difficult for people to have a voice, and even if they have a voice to be heard, it is difficult to make a difference.” TFD’s approach

invites historically marginalized community members to engage directly with their counterparts, allowing them to inform perspectives of other stakeholders and encourage equitable solutions. Nigel Sizer, TFD co-founder and former Forest Lead for The Nature Conservancy (TNC), emphasized that “TFD enables open dialogue across a broad spectrum of participants, regardless of their power status.” By creating a non-intimidating environment, TFD ensures that community members can voice concerns candidly, addressing the power gap between local communities and stakeholders such as large companies and government officials. Community members can then effectively engage with decision makers and directly assert their perspectives, fostering a deeper understanding of community needs and establishing stronger accountability among stakeholders with more decision-making power. Colchester, like Sizer, emphasized inclusivity as “provenly liberating,” as it



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encourages participants to step outside of accustomed practices and openly discuss challenges faced by all parties involved. Socially-informed approaches to conflict resolution are guiding TFD's approach to transformative impact on the private forestry sector. Prior to the dialogues, many companies were unaware of the extent of their social impact, a theme Colchester described.

Lucy Jasmin, Group Sustainability Director at RGE and the Director of Sustainability & External Affairs at APRIL Group, described how engaging in TFD's dialogue offered APRIL a fresh perspective: "it allowed APRIL to engage as one of many actors, fostering introspection and learning." She described hearing community perspectives as being "invaluable," demonstrating the importance of direct engagement with local communities rather than relying on intermediaries. Chris Burchmore, also positioned in the APRIL Group, emphasized TFD's influence on APRIL's internal culture. Seeing dialogue as an ongoing, constructive process, as modeled in TFD's dialogue approach, Chris believes APRIL now prioritizes building an internal culture that values diverse viewpoints, shaping its own engagement forums to be more open and inclusive.

A key change in the forestry landscape over the past couple of years was the introduction of the FSC Remedy Framework, which established a standardized criteria to assess the efficacy of remediation activities undertaken by companies to address past social and environmental harms. Since the 2023 TPL Dialogue, APRIL committed to the FSC's remedy process. Colchester noted: "[APRIL's] commitment to the [FSC] remedy process marks a significant improvement from its past operations, signaling a shift in industry standards that other companies are beginning to emulate."

To inform how the Remedy Framework will be implemented in Indonesia, APRIL convened a multi-stakeholder forum in Bogor, Indonesia. TFD methodology was implemented in the design and facilitation of the dialogue to support effective multi-stakeholder engagement. Focused on building a shared understanding and gathering inputs from all participants, Burchmore and Jasmin reflected on how the forum allowed for APRIL to take stock of concerns from a range of stakeholders to inform its approach to the remedy process.

In Burchmore's experience, this sort of forum likely would not have happened had it not been for the trust built and comfortability with open dialogue developed through the TPL dialogue a year prior. Following the lead of the TFD approach, the forum made an effort to include all stakeholders holding a wide range of perspectives.

"We had full representation of the communities. Some of the feedback we received, particularly from the NGOs critical of the process, was that they were quite surprised that they had been invited."

–Chris Burchmore, APRIL Group

While there were uncomfortable moments for APRIL, these expressions allowed for the understanding of impact versus intent, according to Jasmin. Recalling his time in the dialogue, Burchmore elucidated, “while it may have been a painstaking process, going around the room and allowing everyone to be heard in the dialogue eventually allowed people to start to find some common ground, not necessarily resulting in agreement, but an ability to see common issues.”

Cultivating Community

By cultivating a culture of listening, mutual respect, and shared responsibility amongst stakeholders, engagement with TFD has supported communities, organizations, and corporations in establishing trust amongst one another. As a result, many long-term

relationships have been established between stakeholder groups with historically conflicting interests, providing the necessary perspectives to develop equitable solutions. Introducing stakeholders to the dialogue methodology and skills necessary to engage in constructive dialogue, the TFD model has helped to drive positive change in how communities are engaged in the decision-making process. As challenges in IMPF and related forestry industries continue to arise, TFD’s approach serves as a valuable blueprint for fostering collaboration to develop novel solutions.

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