

# Mapping UNSW Impact Global Development

<b>Primary SDG</b>	<b>1: NO POVERTY</b>
<b>Broad theme</b>	Protecting Indigenous biodiversity rights
<b>Research</b>	Helping countries to prevent resources valuable to indigenous people from being exploited by companies
<b>Impact region</b>	South Pacific, Indigenous Australia, Madagascar
<b>Faculty</b>	Arts and Social Sciences
<b>School/Institute</b>	Environmental Humanities Group
<b>Academic</b>	Associate Professor Daniel Robinson
<b>Project partners</b>	ABS Capacity Development Initiative (EU Commission/GIZ, other European business partners)
	UN Environment: \$700,00-800,000 in funding until 2021
	South Pacific Regional Economic Partnership
<b>Related SDGs</b>	2: Zero Hunger
	15: Life On Land

## Elevator pitch

UNSW is playing a key role in the Pacific to protect natural resources from being used excessively by pharmaceutical and cosmetic companies and to ensure indigenous communities share in the benefits made by those companies.

## The Challenge: Companies are patenting native resources to the detriment of indigenous communities

Cosmetic and pharmaceutical companies are increasingly searching for exotic natural plants and resources across the other side of the world that they can turn into health, medical and beauty products. They then patent the use of the resource to restrict competitors from copying them. But by creating a patent over the resource they can end up restricting local indigenous community access to it, negatively impacting local protocols and traditions. Indigenous communities are also missing out on any benefits from the exploitation of the resource.

## UNSW's solution: Apply UN policy to ensure fair access to the resource and sharing of benefits

The UN has released the Nagoya Protocol to direct company behaviour when sourcing a native resource from an area populated by indigenous communities. Signatories to the Protocol must ensure companies respect an indigenous community's relationship with the resource, that the resource is used sustainably, and that the company shares the benefits it makes with local communities. Benefits can come in the form of money, equipment, additional education, the building of schools and roads, or new areas research.

Daniel is helping countries in the South Pacific and around the world to ratify and implement the Nagoya Protocol. He engages with communities and promotes collaboration with government and private enterprise. He helps establish community protocols for when a company enters their space, researches and redesigns supply chains, investigates and challenges patents and law to ensure a 'fair and equitable' balance, and writes up case studies to highlight best practice.

With further funding, he is looking to hold workshops with non-participating countries to encourage them to ratify and implement the Protocol. Countries include Palau, Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and PNG.

#### **The Impact: Ensure resources are sustainable and indigenous communities benefit**

With the right protocols and laws in place, indigenous communities can benefit in areas such as funding, infrastructure and education. The Protocol also ensures the native resource is used sustainably, so both indigenous and private parties can use it regularly. It is a win-win for local communities and industry. It just takes a while to make an impact: local rights and needs must first be assessed before protocols and laws can be drawn. Negotiations with companies and the distribution of benefits can also take time. Daniel estimates it takes around two-to-three years from ratification to getting a benefits scheme up and running.

#### **Researcher**

Daniel Robinson specialises in the regulation of nature and knowledge. His main area of work is the protection of indigenous rights relating to biodiversity. He is a Research Fellow for the International Centre for Trade and Development, and he is Pacific Regional Project Manager of the ABS Capacity Development Initiative. After years studying science, environmental law, and human geography, Daniel became passionate about protecting indigenous rights with regard to the environment.

Ben Falkenmire 19.10.17