



Natural Resource Governance Law and Community Rights in DRC: An African Perspective

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Abstract

Natural resource governance in DRC has been a contentious issue, with significant legal frameworks but often unequal application and enforcement. An interpretative phenomenological analysis of interviews with community leaders and legal practitioners from DRC's eastern provinces, emphasising thematic synthesis to understand perceptions and practices. Community voices highlight the challenges of enforcing DRC's Natural Resource Governance Law (NRGL) in rural areas, particularly regarding resource allocation and traditional land rights. Community members often engage in informal agreements with local authorities, indicating a complex interplay between formal law and community practice. The NRGL provides a framework for legal recognition of community rights but faces challenges due to enforcement issues and cultural context differences. Enhanced capacity-building programmes for local communities and stakeholders should be integrated into the implementation strategy, alongside more robust monitoring mechanisms.

Keywords: *African geography, Legal pluralism, Customary law, Interpretative phenomenology, Community empowerment, Indigenous knowledge systems, Jurisprudence*

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