

Emilie Beauchamp

Awarded the CIBC Scholarship 2015-2016

PhD Philosophy Environmental Studies, Imperial College London

While studying International Development at McGill University, Emilie worked abroad in Barbados and it is this experience that influenced her interest in the combined fields of Environmental and Development studies. After her undergraduate degree, Emilie worked with NGOs in India and environmental consultancies in Canada giving her exposure to environmental and social impact assessments triggering her interest to pursue her chosen studies.

During her Master's Degree Emilie specialised in Ecological Management at Imperial College London, where her thesis focused on the multiple impacts of community forestry in Cameroon. She then spent two years working in London for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and for the private environmental sustainability research firm Verdantix. These experiences confirmed her interest and passion to return to the field of Conservation Science.

Over the past several decades conservation has undergone a transformation. Traditionally the field has focused on conserving biodiversity in isolation but today practitioners implement integrated conservation and development projects that aim to find solutions that enhance the wellbeing of communities too. Emilie has recognised that impact evaluation methodologies still, however, focus on standard economic measures as proxies for human wellbeing (e.g., income), and that this approach fails to capture the outcomes considered relevant by local people and to their livelihoods.

Emilie's cutting-edge PhD aims to develop a new methodology for evaluating the impacts of development and conservation projects through a human wellbeing approach. Her work involves consulting and integrating local communities' concerns to transform the effectiveness of policies to enable appropriate sustainable development to meet the aspirations of local people as well as governments. Emilie collaborated with the Wildlife Conservation Society in Cambodia for her research where she studied 20 villages in Northern Cambodia, interviewing over 1,200 households. Her research needs required that she learn Cambodian, adding to her fluency in French, Spanish and English, in order to train eight assistants all of whom were students from Cambodian Universities.

Emilie points out that working in developing countries like Cambodia is important, as communities often don't have a voice in the policy agenda: yet the same approach can also be taken for community-based conservation projects in developed countries across the globe. Emilie will spend this, her final, year writing up her research. She plans, upon completion of her PhD, to work more directly with practitioners helping them design and implement evidence-based projects that include a human well-being approach. Emilie is a keen writer and is involved in both cultural and political journalism. She also keeps busy playing football and misses hockey.

Emilie was awarded the Imperial College Rector's scholarship, the most prestigious PhD scholarship that Imperial College gives. The Scholarship covered the period Oct 2012 - Sept 2015, leaving Emilie with a funding shortfall for her final year. On receipt of the 2015-2016 CIBC scholarship Emilie explained that these funds would enable her to complete her analysis and thesis. She replied: "I am delighted by the prospects of what this will allow me to achieve: to focus finishing (my thesis) and furthering the dissemination of the results from my research and to advance the state of knowledge in conservation and development."



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