

RUFFORD SMALL GRANTS CONFERENCE IN GHANA

"Connect for Nature Conservation"



October 29-30, 2016, Erata Hotel, Accra, Ghana

Organized by
Sustaining Africa Youth Organization



Fully funded by



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Background

With all the success stories of the small grants it was felt by the Rufford Small Grants Trustees that there was a need for more direct communication between the grant recipients. Very often researchers work in isolation but these conferences provide a forum to discuss ideas, problems, solutions, issues at hand and create invaluable networking opportunities. It is in that respect, the Rufford Small Grants funded the Regional Conference of the Grantees of the Rufford Small Grants in Ghana.

The Rufford Conference in Ghana took place at the Erata Hotel in Accra, the Capital City of Ghana, from 29th to 30th October 2016. This conference aimed at enhancing the direct communication and partnership between the regional RSG recipients by providing a forum for them to discuss ideas and issues; share the best practices and promote the regional RSG Partnership (network).

This two-day conference brought together 40 Rufford Small Grants Recipients from 6 different west-African and east-African countries, for a weekend of relationship building and mutual learning. 21 RSG recipients came from Ghana, 8 from Benin, 5 from Nigeria, 3 from Cote d'Ivoire, 2 from Rwanda, and 1 from Togo. This conference was officially launched by Mr. Japhet Roberts from Ghana Wildlife Society, on behalf of Dr Erasmus Owusu the CEO of Ghana Wildlife Society.

Conference theme

The theme for this conference was “Connect for Nature Conservation”.

The Conference Organizer

Alphonse KARENZI, 27, the Organizer of this conference, is the Founder and Director of a very ambitious environmental organization called Sustaining Africa Youth Organization (SAYO). SAYO started 2010 in Rwanda as an outcome of Rufford Small Grant successful project. Alphonse has been also the organizer of the Rufford RSG Conference in East-Africa which previously took place in Rwanda and He recently completed his Second Booster RSG Project.

Alphonse has 8 years of experience in the environmental project management sector, and earned a Bachelor's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the National University of Rwanda and is a masters graduate in Entrepreneurship from Makerere University. He did masters in entrepreneurship in pursuit of understanding and practical skills to enable him to profitably engage local poor communities in nature conservation and also insure sustainability of conservation projects he implements through GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP (green business).

Conference Summary

Day 0 - Welcoming the Participants and Tasks Sharing

by Alphonse Karenzi the conference Organizer

Thursday 28th October, 2016 was a day of welcoming the regional participants upon their arrival at the Accra International Airport and Different Bus Parks. Though, some

of the participants from Nigeria had arrived a day before. Around 7:30 PM was a dinner and briefings and task sharing session by Alphonse.

Participants enjoyed the idea of self-organization whereby every conference session was to be chaired by someone from among participants themselves. And the task sharing session was very participatory and took longer than it was expected, especially when it came to discuss on how to form the group discussions for the next day session.

As it was for the previous Rufford Conference in Rwanda, some participants were supporting the idea of forming groups randomly while others were strongly about forming groups based on thematic areas. After 20 minutes intensive discussion, we decided to form four groups according to four thematic areas (Group1 Education and Outreach, Group2 Policy and Law Enforcement, Group3 Research in Conservation, and Group4 Community and Engagement). Each group was to elect president, secretary and presenter who will lead and present their group discussions.

Day One - Saturday 29th October

Session One: Self-introduction of every participant,

Chaired by Paul TEHODA & Evelyn Asante-Yeboah, RSG Recipients from Ghana



Paul & Evelyn entertaining the audience

The first day started with Alphonse Karenzi, the conference organizer giving the background of this conference to the participant and then a self-introduction of every Participant. A microphone was circulated where every participant had some seconds to say his/her name, the country, organization or project and his passion in conservation.



Every participant was attentive to know what fellows do and this lead to connection and networking between participants afterwards.

Session Two: Opening Ceremony

Chaired by Dr. Evans Ewald Nkrumah, a RSG Recipient from Ghana,



Evans on the left and Alphonse on the right chairing the session

Dr. Evans introduced and welcomed our guest of Honour Mr. Japhet Roberts from Ghana Wildlife Society, on behalf of Dr Erasmus Owusu the CEO of Ghana Wildlife Society who was not able to make it to the conference that morning due to some urgent incident.

Interestingly, Japhet was commissioned by his boss to represent him in this conference while he had been already applied to attend this conference, as he is currently working on his RSG project proposal. “I’m privileged to be here as a representative of Ghana Wildlife Society and I was to be here anyway as prospective RSG Applicant“ Japhet said.



Japhet Roberts officially opening the conference

“When you look at the Rufford Foundation website you can see many funded conservation projects around Ghana. We thank the Rufford Foundation for such a great support” Japhet said.

Even if many projects have been funded and implemented in Ghana, Wildlife Society has no data on those individual projects due to lack of collaboration between conservation organizations. This calls for a better collaboration, communication and coordination among the conservationists.

Japhet also mentioned that, apart from the opportunities like Beauty of the Nature that attract more partners in nature conservation and tourism business, there is a need of individual researchers especially RSG Recipients to use their researches to influence policies. “Influencing Policies is the best way to insure sustainability of your work as a conservationist” Japhet said.

He thanked Director Josh Cole for the conference and all great work that Rufford Foundation has done in Ghana and around world. And He welcomed all participants and officially declared the conference open at 9:30.

Coffee Breaks and networking



Participants used coffee breaks and any free time to connect and network with each other.

Session Three: Group Discussions

Chaired by PEREKI Hodabalo from Togo and Andrews Agyekumhene from Ghana

After coffee break, the participants were split into four groups according to their thematic areas interest. Some went for Group1 Education and Outreach, others for Group2 Policy and Law Enforcement, others for Group3 Research in Conservation, and others for Group4 Community and Engagement. To guide the discussion, some general questions were posed including what are the Challenges met, Opportunities, Future partnerships, And Recommendations? Each group was also tasked to identify a unique project that proves special achievements or challenges to be presented among two special RSG projects.



This session lasted for three hours and twenty five minutes of participatory discussions where every participant shared the experience of his/her projects especially RSG projects. Different participants seemed to be more interested in the work of other participants from different countries as they were seen posing questions to one another. Notes were taken by the secretary and were later presented in the after-lunch session.



Participants enjoyed discussions to the extent they didn't want to finish this session. And some participants showed interest in knowing what other groups discussed. This made the planned group presentation make sense as these presentations help everyone to know what presented in other groups.

A special project from research group was identified and presented before lunch



Gilbert Adum Baase, presenting his Save The Frog Project, 2nd Booster RSG Project

Gilbert's presentation, of his Save The Frog Project, was full of beautiful photos and it amazed participants. Gilbert shared a story how they spent a whole year without finding any single Giant Squeaker Frog, a specie that they were trying to do research on and conserve. It was such inspiring story of how this project that had started as a failure became a highly successful conservation project which has received 2nd, 3rd and 4th Rufford Small Grants and other awards including the Whitley Awards.



Gilbert Adum Baase receiving his Whitley Award

Session Four: Group Presentations

Chaired by PEREKI Hodabalo from Togo and Andrews Agyekumhene from Ghana

After lunch - a moment when participants enjoyed Ghanaian typical buffet and kept networking, four groups presented what they had discussed in their respective groups. The audience was also given time to ask questions and get answers from each group.



Various challenges, opportunities, future partnerships and recommendations were presented by each group. The most common challenge for all groups was tradeoff between survival of rural communities and conservation where the RSG Projects should always insure alternative livelihood for rural community to survive without compromising on nature. Most of all presentations recommended that Rufford Foundation should provide training to applicants or recipients especially in the field of nonscientist communication. Detailed information of each presentation are enclosed in the annex of this report.



Networking at coffee break after two first group presentations

Session Five: Feedback from Participants and closing remarks

Chaired by Rachel Ashegbofe Ikemeh from Nigeria

All participants were given opportunity to give feedback regarding the conference and the first day sessions. Below are their recommendations and observations;

- The attendance is very encouraging
- All the activities are very good
- Discussions have been very productive
- The tags should have had individual names of participants instead of participant
- Names of participants and their country should have been placed in front of the participants.
- There should have been a group photograph after the opening Ceremony.
- Next conference, field trips should be included
- Very grateful to Alphonse Karenzi for being the brain behind this important conference.
- Next time map and contact number of the venue for the conference should be sent to participant before the conference day to make accessibility of the venue very easy.



Rachael giving closing remarks

The first day session was ended at 17:30 as it was planned. The rest of the day (evening and night) was used for networking where participants really networked and enjoyed a shared dinner together and great stories.

Day Two: October 30th 2016

This was the final and most exciting day of the conference. Two special projects were to be announced and presented. These two projects were to be chosen over four projects which had been selected by four groups. Participation Certificates signed by RSG Director Josh Cole were to be handed over to Participants too. And three Rufford Project Photo winners were to be announced and receive their awards. This day was to be ended as early as 11:30 am for some people to leave and others observe different places in Ghana (especially Cape Coast). This day was also characterized by much exchange of contacts among participants.

Session Six: Discussing the way forward

Session chaired by Justus Precious Deikumah from Ghana



Different participants gave their views on the way forward. Below are common points that participants made;

- We should always include communication costs in conservation project proposal
- Our conservation projects should incorporate income generation schemes.
- Organization with common interests and areas should work together (network)
- We should establish MoU, Management plans for trans-bordering collaboration
- Sub-regional partnership: Rufford should try and establish sub-regional partnership.

Session Seven: Handing Over Certificates

This was an exciting conference where every participant received his/her participating certificate in front of the audience. Facilitated by Justus Deikumah, Josh Cole signed and handed over the certificates to the participants.



Session Eight: Announcing and Rewarding the Photo Competition Winners

Rufford Project Photo Competition was participated by 17 RSG project leaders who submitted 50 photo entries. A team of four representatives from Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria was selected and led by Alphonse Karenzi (the conference organizer) to carefully select 6 best photos. Josh Cole was then involved and asked to choose the first, second and third winner out of those six best photos. Three winners proudly received their prizes and certificates. Facilitated by Alphonse and Justus, Josh Cole gave away prizes to the winners.

The first winner: Houngnon Alfred, from Benin

Mr Houngnon Alfred as the first winner received a certificate and cool hall-watch, branded with Rufford Logo.



Alfred's Winning photo of a Local Speaker During Workshop at EARSF



Emeline ASSEDE receiving the prize on behalf of Alfred

The second winner: Andrews Agyekumhene, from Ghana



Andrew's second winning photo



Justus announcing, Andrew receiving a certificate from Josh

The third winner: Tajudeen Okekunle AMUSA, from Nigeria



Pix 2: Elephant's dung collection for measuring decay rate at a survey site in Okomu National Park, Nigeria

During Coffee breaks participants passionately interacted especially with Director Josh.



Session Nine: Two Special Project Presentation

the first special project was “Status and Conservation of Robbins House Bat in Krokofua Hills Forest Reserve” by PAUL TEHODA, from Ghana.



Paul presenting his project

The second special project was “Promoting Best Practice for Combating Bowalization in West Africa” by Elie Antoine Padonou, from Benin.



Elie Antoine Padonou adressing the conference audience

Session ten: vote of thanks and closing remarks

Session Chaired by Racheal from Nigeria

Participants including Evans, Racheal, and Andrew thanked Rufford Foundation to support conservation works in the region and also bring together the regional RSG Recipients in Ghana. Rachael emotionally expressed her gratitude towards Rufford Foundation, saying “Rufford Foundation believed and supported my idea from its earliest stage, when it seemed to be no other funders to believe in me”. Many thanks also went to Alphonse Karenzi for organizing such a successful participatory conference in Ghana.

At 11:30 AM, the conference was declared ended. Participants shared the last lunch at Erata Hotel, some especially local participants departed that after noon, others mainly participants from Nigeria, Rwanda and Cote D’Ivoire stayed one more night and visited different places in Ghana, companied with Ghanaian friends.

A Word from Conference Organizer

I thank very much The Rufford Foundation for continually supporting my conservation projects; from the starting of my career as an environmentalist with RSG phase-one to the recent finished 2nd Booster RSG Project. I also thank the Rufford Foundation for trusting and giving me an opportunity to organize the RSG Recipients Conference in both Rwanda 2014 and Ghana in 2016.

Let me take this opportunity I thank the RSG Director, Josh Cole, for trusting and directing me. Thanks to you all the Ghana conference participants -you have made this conference a success. Special thanks go to Mr. Mike Owusu, who has been my first contact person in Ghana in organizing this conference, my secretary Mutoni Mable who fairly handled the logistics, and Dr. Evans Ewald Nkrumah, Dr. Justus Precious Deikumah and his secretary Mary Adjei-Ayiah, Mr. Andrews Agyekumhene, Evelyn Asante-Yeboah, Paul Tehoda, PEREKI Hodabalo and Rachel Ashegbofe Ikemeh who chaired different sessions and greatly contributed to the success of this conference.

I also congratulate the three photo competition winners (respectively Hounnon Alfred, Andrews Agyekumhene, and Tajudeen Okekunle AMUSA) and special project leaders (PAUL TEHODA and Elie Antoine Padonou). On behalf of my organization Sustaining Africa Youth Organization (SAYO), I thank you so much !

Annex

Group one presentation

1. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

The education and outreach groups presented the following:

Challenges

- **Misidentification of research personnel:** When research get into community, they are misidentified to be from the forestry commission who is coming to get information and they use it legally against them.
- **Teaching something which are not practical:** It had been observed that some of things that the community members are thought are not practical.
- **Less knowledge about the culture of the people:** Researcher are not able to learn the culture of the various research communities so it is always difficult getting along easily with the community members.
- **Communication barriers:** Some of the speak languages that the researchers do not understand so it is always difficult to get the feedback needed.
- **Participants request for allowances:** Participants that from the various communities request money or payment before assisting the researchers in their various research.
- **Issues of tools used in education:** Tools used in education are inadequate and sometimes there is no knowledge about it at all by the researchers.
- **Lack of alternative source of livelihood:** The researcher lack alternative livelihood for the community members.
- **Issue of sustainability of projects after funding:** Researchers always have issues with how to sustain the various research after the end of the funding period.
- **Lack of technical people to advice:** Researchers do not really know who to contacts to get experts advise and recommendation for their research.
- **Unwillingness towards attitude change:** Most of the community members are having difficulty in attitudinal change. They prefer to be in their bad old attitude.

- **Unwillingness of young people to participate in conservation:** Most young people do not want to do anything in relation to conservation because they have bad perception about it.

Opportunity

- **Venturing in ecotourism:** The community members can get income and other resources from ecotourism.
- **Increase in categories of endangered species:** Because the community members are involved in the research, they show researchers more species and it helps the researchers to learn more about those species.
- **Partnership from government agencies and NGOs:** Research get the opportunity to get partnership with government agencies and NGOs in their various research.
- **Green enterprises:**
- **Education of the population about government policies:** The Community members or people at the research area are educated about government policies.
- **Infrastructure e.g. Roads, communication:** Now that there are new road constructions, movement from one community to the other is very easy and it had really helped in the development of the various communities.
- **Using online search engines to identify funding opportunities e.g. Terra Viva:** Researchers now have various opportunity to search for funding opportunities to apply to be able to get assistance in carrying out their various research.
- **International funding agencies e.g. Rufford:** Researchers have gotten in touch with international agencies to help fund their research one of such is Rufford Small Grant.

Future Partnership

- **Sub-regional partnership:** Rufford should try and establish sub-regional partnership.
- **Partnering with other research scientists or organisations:** Researchers should try and partner with other scientists and organisation to share ideas and learn from each other.
- **Taking advantage of corporate social responsibilities in private firms:** Private firms should be encouraged to take advantage of corporate social responsibilities.
- **Co-operating with state agencies, Tourism Development Agencies e.g. educational institutions:** Researchers should try and cooperate with state agencies to help educating their nation on their findings and the way forward.

Recommendation

- **Setting up Alternative Support Scheme:** Rufford should set up alternative support scheme to help researchers in their work.
- **Provide incentives to project participants:** Rufford should provide incentives to project participants in the various areas.
- **Come up with ideas that create jobs:** Rufford should help researchers to come up with ideas with of creating jobs for the communities and the researchers.
- **Integration of conservation in basic education:** There should integration of conservation in the basic schools so that they will educate the elderly about them.
- Young generation should be the strategic target: The young generations should be the ones to carry the conservation information to the community. Adult listen to young people more than adults and they will heed to all that these young people will teach them.
- Use of technology e.g. Social media: The use of social media can be used to educate people on conservation activities.
- Rufford Training Support for good idea proposals e.g. International Foundation for Science (IFS)
- Funds for Rufford recipients partnerships

Group two presentation

2. POLICY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Introduction

- What is the policy?
 - Statement of intent implemented as a procedure or protocol
 - Basic principles of actions adopted or proposed by government, parties, business or individuals.
- How can policy be used for long-term conservation?
 - It is important to regulate, protect and manage natural resources

Core challenges

- Inadequate communities supports
 - E.g. of Elephant conservation in Nigeria
- lack of common policies for cross bordering resources management
- Insecurity in conservation area
 - E.g. Boko Haram operating from a forest reserve areas and doing illegal activities in those places.
 - Killing of rangers by illegal hunters
- Ineffective policies and legislations (Weak policies) are put in places so that contribute more to people with
- Tradeoff between survival of rural communities and conservation
 - Man must survive
- Lack of political will (democracy): There is no democracy in policy making thereby affecting people concerned.
- Interference (order from above): Political leaders, Directors, Heads of Departments (Superiors) always interfere in the judgment or implementation the policy among those they know.
- Lack of enforcement: There are many laws governing conservation but very few are applied.
- Lack of resources for law enforcement.
- Bureaucracy (administrative bottomless)
- Conflict of interest (cotton production in W Parks in Benin)
- Low man power in the law enforcement
- Corruption
- Lack of data to inform enforcement
- Lack of education about existing laws

Opportunities

- What is the opportunity?
 - Existing circumstances that makes it easy and possible to do something.
 - Existing prospects

- Existing strong will power
 - Young scientists
 - Grassroots communities (River in Nigeria, sacred forest in Benin, CREMA in Ghana)
- Ecosystem services
- Community- based organization that could be trained to apply themselves for grant
- Cross-sectoral engagement between different actors (e.g. case of Lama forest in Benin)
- Government – legislation arm
- Economic benefit (e.g. tourism in the national park of Pendjari)
- Sustainability of actions (maintenance of policy irrespective of government change)
- National fund for conservation (e.g. Nigeria)
- Media

Future partnership development

- Organizing fora between different stakeholders like rural communities, policy makers, media etc.
- MoU, Management plans for trans-bordering collaboration.
- Creating networks
- Traditional enforcement systems

Recommendation for RUFFORD

- Continuity in target approach (Young innovative project)
- Repeat this experience of Ghana with not only former recipients but also others policy makers and others organization that fund conservation in Africa
- Training of recipients especially in the field of nonscientist communication (eg: EPS)
- Trans-boundary research funding (e.g. elephant in West Africa ever link with policy)
- Effective communication in conservation funding (eg: RARE pride training of conservationists in outreach)

Group three presentation

3. RESEARCH IN CONSERVATION

Challenges

- Difficulty in finding Rare Species: How to solve? Some issues raised from our results: control of invasive species.
- How to help : local population to move to alternative activities to reduce their impact on natural resources
- Research needs money to be properly done : Availability of experts with whom you want to work with.
- Research should take into account local population needs and expect positive impact of the results
- The methodology developed in the project sometimes is not applicable in the field.
- How to use results from research findings to have impact on the field for sustainable management on natural resources is not known.
- The way to translate the results from research into easy terms to be understood by policymakers, stakeholders and local populations in general is a problem since some researchers do not know how to do that.

Opportunities

- Difficult to find Rare Species: Use funds from RSG to look for co-occurring species issues
- Publications : Research findings are published by the researcher.
- Research funds : This to help to involve and train people, especially students to get their various degrees.
- Use social media : Videos, photos, documentation are used to make our results visible.

Recommendations for RSG

- How to use results and have impact:
- Availability of people with whom you want to work local population
- Mentorship program involving past awardees and RSG Board members:
- Develop a program: Collaborative grant with multi-disciplinary competence to look after a topic: social, economic, ecology; etc,

Future partnership

- Collaboration between different scientists in the same project is very important and should be encouraged.
- Collaboration with local organisations should be practiced.
- Getting local expertise involved in the project will help attain a better result or findings.

Group four presentation

4. COMMUNITY AND ENGAGEMENT

Challenges

- **Leadership:** Before any research can be successful in a community, the leadership support of that community is needed. It is very difficult getting these support from the leadership of the communities.
- **Financial Constraints:** There is always financial problems associated with various area like in research, various community leaders, members, participants etc. want money before getting you the information the researcher needs.
- **Poor participation of community members in stakeholder meetings:** It is always difficult getting the community members in various programme i.e. stakeholder meetings. Their attendance is always very low.
- **Difficulty in extracting information from the communities:** The community members are afraid of the researchers because they don't know their background and even if they are told, they do not believe them. They think are law enforcers agents who have disguise themselves so getting information from the community member is very difficult because they will not open up to the researcher.
- **Provision of alternative livelihood (Should be sustainable and benefit the community):** Provision of alternative livelihood should be discussed with the community members and know what they would love to have before

getting it for them otherwise, that alternative livelihood would not be appreciative or used.

- **Development of value-chain:**
- **Motivation:** All those who come into contact with the researchers to help in one way or the other needs to be motivated to boost their morals.

Opportunities

- Ecotourism
- **Opportunity to learn from the local communities:** Researchers get opportunity to learn from the various community they carry out their research.
- **Identifying key sacred grove (areas):** Sacred grove (areas) are identified by researchers.
- **Sustainable management of resources:** Management resources should be sustained.
- **Opportunity to educate the future generations:** opportunity to educate the future generations (young / children) on the various conservation ethics and other issues related to conservation.
- **Identify the needs of the communities:** Research get the opportunity to identify the needs of the community and find the way forward in solving those needs.
- **Opportunity to develop co-management of resources:** Researcher get the opportunity to develop co-management of resources.
- **Opportunity to mentor and deepen the interest and sense of responsibilities of local community member:** Researchers get the opportunity to mentor and deepen the interest and sense of responsibility of the members of their research areas.

Future Partnerships

- **Organization with common interests and areas should work together:** This would help to share ideas and learn other approach to the research.
- **All projects should include all the decision making bodies:** All decision making bodies should be included in the various project to help the findings to be implemented easily.

Recommendations

- Rufford should fund more socio-economic study for conservation output.

- Rufford Newsletter should be sent to all recipients.
- Rufford should have regional managers to monitor various projects.
- Review comments should be made available to rejected participants upon request.

SUCCESSFUL GRANTS

Status and Conservation of Robbins

- House Bat in Krokofua Hills Forest Reserve. We recorded eleven (11) individuals which is the highest recorded from one reserve known to science.
- Educated more than 450 communities members
- Train ten (10) volunteers in bat sampling and identification.
- Produce a paper on a “disclosure of the phylogenetic position of Robbins house bat”.