

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details

Your name	Henderson Maposa
Project title	One Leader One Forest - a participatory community action towards total reforestation of Mikolongwe Mountain side
RSG reference	11336-1
Reporting period	01/03/2012 – 28/02/2013
Amount of grant	£5915
Your email address	hend_maposa@yahoo.co.uk
Date of this report	12 th March 2013

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Formation and training of a forestry committee drawing membership from each of the seven mountainside communities				<p>A 20-member forestry committee was formed and trained by the Mikolongwe training school. They were trained in community mobilisation and forestry development technologies. This team was fully responsible for project planning and implementation of project activities in coordination with their respective community leaders and the community at large.</p> <p>The committee would become a permanent structure through which future environmental activities for the area would be channelled. It is a well connected team, enjoying support from other local organisations as well as government departments.</p>
Mobilisation of seven mountainside communities into production and planting of 200,000 trees on the mountain side				<p>The house-by-house campaign ensured that all community members were reached.</p> <p>The campaign was carried out by project managers together with two groups of students pursuing a course in community development at the Mikolongwe Vocational Training during their practical sessions.</p>
Production of 200,000 trees in two community nurseries				<p>A total of 150,000 trees were produced in the communal nurseries, 50,000 less from the original plan.</p> <p>Two community nurseries were established as originally planned and two wells were dug and equipped with hand rope pumps. The budget suffered a setback 2 months into implementation due to the devaluation of the local currency at 49%. This was cushioned by the acquisition of material assistance from the government forestry department, making the difference between the planned and the achieved quite small.</p>
Planting 200,000 trees on the mountainside				<p>Of the 200,000 trees planned to be raised, the project managed to raise 150,000 of which 136,346 were planted around the mountain.</p> <p>Around 14,000 plants died in the nurseries due to poor handling and some suffered a little pest attack, especially the acacias.</p>

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The devaluation of the local currency had a major impact on the project budget, reducing its value by 49%. The project team responded by requesting for material support in acquisition of planting pots whose price was forced up by 76%. The District forestry department provided 30% of the polythene pots used. The team also resorted to using a smaller type of plastic potting whose cost was far less than the type originally planned to be used.

Youth participation was not impressive during the first 6 months; there was low turn-up and those present would not work as expected. The project came up with a programme specifically targeting the youth in which their qualification to participate would be determined by their activeness in the forestry activities. They were to participate in groups according to the communities they were coming from. This was a great motivation to them with the result that over 30% of the trees were planted by the youth.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- The formation of the forestry committee, with membership drawn from all communities has been regarded as one of the most important achievements of the project by many. The committee has since been given the authority to oversee all forestry development activities in the area. Future environmental programmes will be channelled through the committee, owing to their success in mobilising their respective communities and achieving the targets set. The inclusion of women in the committee has seen the rise in the number of women participating in community activities which is considered new in the area.
- The introduction of an environmental youth week is another positive outcome of the project, since the youth were usually considered to be unwilling to participate in community programmes. The project included elements of sports within the youth week which motivated a huge number of youthful participants with the result that almost 30% of trees were planted by the youth, who even pledged to help look after the new mountain-side forest.
- The overriding outcome of the project is the planting of over 100,000 trees around the mountain by the communities surrounding the mountain. It is an achievement which has been praised by many including government as well as non governmental agencies, who have pledged to support future related activities. Other trees were planted along river banks as well as some homesteads.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

Community participation throughout the project period of implementation was overwhelming. From the very first meeting, it was resolved that each mountainside community chooses a person who would represent them in the forestry committee. Each community proposed two names instead of one because according to them, it was more practical that way.

Nursery operations did not suffer as communities were always there to offer assistance especially in human labour. This had the advantage that trees were ready for planting right from the beginning of the rainy season, making the likeliness of a high survival rate a possibility.

During the actual planting in the mountain, each community was available to ensure that their own side of the mountain was planted.

The general benefit to the communities is that each of them has got their own forest to protect and benefit from. Some communities got trees to plant along the banks of the rivers running through their areas. Some even got trees to plant at their homes and asked for the project to continue in subsequent years until each household has got its own woodlot.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

There is a strong plan to continue with the work especially to ensure that the new mountainside forest survives. The next action is aimed at developing family woodlots in order to protect the new mountainside forest reserve. Each household will have a plot of trees whether around the homestead or planted in an agro-forestry model with food crops in their fields. This will divert attention from the mountainside forest, allowing it to grow in the process. The next action will also promote the use of vetiver in controlling runoff from the mountain catchment, protecting crop fields in the valley. The same project structures will be used in this and many other future programmes.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

Being the first of its kind in the area, many people from different sectors were curious to see how it would achieve its goals. There were constant visits from people during the course of its implementation who also came for the closing ceremony to see and hear for themselves what the project had achieved.

Since the forestry committee is still there, and the managers live within the area, they will be sources of information for whoever wants to learn about the project. The project will be a reference point in all environmental meetings the managers will be attending so that many more people come to know about it. The government office organises these meetings every month.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

Use of the RSG did not suffer any timing implications. The fund was used in 12 months as originally planned, without need for extensions on the timescale. This would be attributed to the fact that each party involved played their role, right from the chiefs, the forestry committee and the managers of the project.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Trainings	425	516	91	The number of training sessions was increased from three to five
Planting pots	2012	2675	663	Prices were affected by the devaluation of the local currency
Assorted stationery	179	267	88	More items were purchased due to the increase in the number of

				trainings conducted
Nursery operations and tools	2405	2405	0	
Well and hand rope pumps	335	450	164	
Environmental campaign	112	124	12	Costs went up due to the environmental youth week which was deemed necessary in order to involve the youth in environmental actions
Transport	448	648	200	A rise in fuel costs made total cost of transporting plants to the planting area higher than planned
TOTAL	5916	7134	1218	

At the time of budget compilation the local exchange rate was 257.7 Malawi kwacha to the pound Sterling and went up to 383.97 two months later due to the devaluation of the Kwacha. By the time the project was getting into its 9th month, the local currency was already trading at 480 to the Pound, and now it is trading at 567.5 to the Pound Sterling.

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

The next steps will aim at protecting the new forest from damage either by natural forces or facilitated by man. Although the community leaders have pledged to strengthen communal laws to protect the new forest together with the forestry committee, there is need to provide an alternative so that non-compliant members do not sneak out to destroy the new forest. The next steps will be:

- Promoting the establishment of family woodlots which will provide a source of wood for the families' immediate needs. Nurseries will be reopened and trees produced for distribution.
- Periodical monitoring of the mountainside forest so that any need for a common action to protect the trees from damage is established as soon as the action is required, for example clearing a firebreak around the forest.

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The RSGF logo was used in all publication materials as well as correspondence for the project. All letters of request for material support had the logo on them accompanied by a short description of the foundation as being the source of the grant which made this project a success.

11. Any other comments?

The project team would like to thank RSGF for making this grant available in time, which has made it possible for the action to be completed within the 12 months as planned. This also gave members of the team time to attend to their duties in their workplaces without seriously impacting on their work outputs.

In the final evaluation meeting, the community leaders expressed appreciation for what the project had achieved. According to them, they did not expect that their own sides of the mountain would be reforested in their lifetime and pledged to do everything in their capacity to protect the new forest. Personally, I wish to thank RSGF for the trust accorded to me to manage the huge funding, and I look forward to working together again in subsequent environmental programmes.