

The Rufford 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	Gerardo Lucio Robledo
Project title	Conservation and restoration of Puffball fungal diversity in Polylepis forests, Argentina.
RSG reference	13.10.06
Reporting period	February 2007- November 2008
Amount of grant	£ 5000
Your email address	glrobledo@yahoo.com.ar
Date of this report	17/10/2008

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

Objective	Achievement			Comments
	Not	Partially	Fully	
To know diversity of Puffball fungi of <i>Polylepis</i> and its relationship with forest conservation state.			✓	
Inoculums development		✓		Only 1 species was isolated
Evaluation of Reforestation Not initially proposed nor budgeted		✓		The last sampling will be done during the beginning of December.
Fungal Conservation Websites			✓	1 server of exclusive use for the website Asociación Micológica Carlos Spegazzni and Fungal Conservation in Spegazzni and Fungal Conservation in Argentina section. Coneccion thanks to Univ. Nac de Córdoba.
Educational material			✓	1 guide, 1 manual, 1 audiovisual, 1 interactive CD in construction
Human resources formation			✓	4 students involved, 2 of them develop their final works of Biology Career.
Presentation at VI CLAM. (Latinoamerican Mycological Congress)			✓	5 works presented

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

The identification of some species has been difficult and took more time than programmed. Isolation of strains was more difficult than expected. Only one species could be isolated.

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

Research:

This is the first research on fungal conservation in Argentina, and, to the best of our knowledge, in South America. It constitutes a reference project regarding South American Mycology. With our results now we could show how we are losing "invisible" biodiversity. We could show how Fungal Diversity decreases with forests degradation, and how conservation and reforestation permits recover the lost diversity.

We also found a high richness of species, including 4 new species to science. Near 300 specimens were collected and now integrates the Mycological collection of the Museo Botánico of the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba.

Human resources formation

Within this project 2 students are developing their final works of Biology career. Two students of countries where Mycology is not developed took tutorship's in our Laboratory. Now, they are able to start their own research projects in their countries. The team of the project acquired experience into develop a project in Fungal Conservation.

Educational activities and materials:

Workshops and the educational material were really satisfactory. Guides and Manual developed are free distributed. The audiovisual developed and uploaded to the web is a way to reach many interested people.

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

Students were really interested and participate actively in workshops. With materials given by us they could develop preliminary researches on Mycology. Besides, computer's technicians of the University were interested in participating from their position , doing possible the installation and connection of the server and website.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes

This first Project permitted to establish the baseline regarding human resources, ideas and equipment. We are planning to continue research, training and communicating knowledge about Fungal Conservation in Argentina. Nowadays a project for 2009-2010 is being constructed, including new protected areas, new fungal groups, more students and more educational activities.

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

One of the objectives of this project was to share and make freely available the results developing useful tools for Fungal Conservation. In this way the development of a website was successful product of the project.

Two educational materials (field guide and manual) has been used in workshops, and distributed among students, naturalists and Park rangers. In addition, they are freely available in our website.

We also developed an audiovisual, actually available in the Fungal Conservation Website (throughout Youtube).

Results were also presented and shared with Latin-American mycological (“scientific”) community during the Latin-American Congress of Mycology (www.almic.org). These preliminary results will be conform manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals.

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

The timescale originally proposed was February 2007-Julio 2008. Field Work was done in time. However identification of species was difficult and took more time than estimated and consequently delayed all subsequent activities. However we feel that the richness of species founded in these forests compensate the delayed.

Isolation attempts and activities related to the development of the website, and installation of the server in the University net, also more time than estimated, but now are finished.

The inclusion of the new objective (evaluation of macrofungal diversity on reforested areas) involved more samplings trips not initially include in the original proposal.

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. 1£ = \$6.035 at the beginning to \$4.98 at the end of the project

ITEM	Budgeted amount	Actual amount	Difference	Comments
Field and Laboratory work	880	1000		New sampling trips and soil analysis where included. An electric generator for workshops (used of notebook and projector) and batteries charge for gps was acquired.
Sampling trips	480	550	-120	
Field Equipment	350	400	-70	
Culture media elements	50	50	-50	
Workshops and education	3250	3250	3250	A laser printer was acquired.
Pc computer, projector...	1400	1450	-50	
Booklets	300	200	+100	
CDs	150	100	+50	
Workshops	150	200	-50	
Web	400	450	-50	
Tutorship's foreign students	850	850		
General expenses	870	750	+120	Vehicle maintenance and logistics expenses were reduced and
Logistics	100	80	+20	
Technician salary	620	620		

Vehicle maintenance	150	50	+100	partially affronted compensate differences workshops Education	personally to in and
TOTAL	5000				

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

- To consolidate a Fungal Conservation Network throughout:
- Research in others fungal groups and areas of Argentina
- Adding more researchers and students to the network
- Giving more training to students, Park Rangers and Naturalists
- Elaborating others educational and diffusion materials such as illustrated field guides for species identification.
- Continuing developing and uploading information in the website.

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?

Yes, we include the RSGF logo on two field guides, in the posters and oral presentations presented in the Latin-American Mycological Congress, and in the audiovisual (actually uploaded in Youtube)

We also designed and distributed bookmarks in the Congress, with the logo and with the link of our Project to the website of RSGF

11. Any other comments?

We would like to highlight that we are very grateful to the support received by RSG to our project. With this support we now conform a baseline of people, ideas and equipment for Fungal Conservation in Argentina that will continue growing.