

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	Samantha Earle
Project title	Communities Count: understanding local perspectives of participatory monitoring in Madagascar's new Protected Area system
RSG reference	16386-1
Reporting period	5th January 2015 – 5th January 2016
Amount of grant	£4777
Your email address	s.earle13@imperial.ac.uk
Date of this report	5th February 2016

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
1. To understand how engaged the local monitors feel with the project, and what impact it has had on their lives.			Yes	
2. To understand the monitors' role and social status within the community and in relation to management of the protected area.		Yes		I had planned to conduct a 'Social Network Analysis' as part of this research toward this objective, but this didn't work very well – see below.
3. To understand the perceptions of the monitoring project by villagers not directly involved in the project.			Yes	

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

Initially I had planned to conduct my fieldwork in the Alaotran wetlands of Madagascar. However, after consultations with Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, we decided that the social-economic situation of the Alaotra was challenging at that time. Therefore, we decided to switch the field site to Menabe – the research questions and objectives remained the same.

As part of objective 2 I had planned to conduct a 'social network analysis' to map the monitors position in the network of people that are involved in management of the protected area. However, in the field this technique didn't work very well, it seemed difficult for the monitors and other respondents to understand the question and idea of the survey. Although I worked with my research assistants to solve this problem, I wasn't confident that we were getting the 'full picture'. I wondered if this would improve as the research assistants gained more experience. However, as a back-up plan, I also included extra questions that would help me answer this research question using qualitative data rather than a quantitative analysis of a social network.

During the first 3 months, there were logistical problems getting to the study villages because of high levels of rainfall. In total this caused a three-week delay and meant in we spent more time in Morondava and less time in the villages during this training period. During this time, I took the opportunity to spend more time training my three research assistants and developing a good working relationship.

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

The overall objective of the project was to understand the local perception of the monitoring project and gauge the sustainability and the durability of the project for the long-term management of protected areas in Madagascar. The three main outcomes of this work are:

- 1) The project is well known within the study villages and is positively perceived from all sectors of the community.
- 2) Overall, there are a wide range of benefits to local people, however these benefits are not equally distributed, and a few people think that they lose out because of the project.
- 3) This approach to monitoring and patrolling the protected areas is durable in the long-term.

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

The local communities were at the centre of this research. During our village visits we were careful not to offend local people. We rented a house from someone in the village and employed a cook to prepare meals. Most surveys lasted 30-60 minutes, therefore in appreciation for their time they gave up to us, we presented the interviewees with a small food package at the end of the interview. Once our presence in the village had been established, we found that people were keen to talk to us and share their experiences and viewpoints on the topic matter. Many people commented that they were pleased that someone was interested in hearing their voice. It is hoped that the outcome of this research (currently being analysed) will be disseminated throughout the communities in the near future.

After placing an advert for research assistant, my three were selected from 36 applications and 10 interviews. I trained and paid these assistants to assist my data collection. We built a good working relationship and were grateful for the opportunity to develop some skills, including improving their English language skills.

Please note: this research was conducted with ethical approval from the Imperial College Ethics Review Committee, reference number: 15IC2451.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The monitoring project continues to run across five sites in Madagascar, therefore there are many opportunities to continue this work both across other sites in Madagascar and within my study area in Menabe. As this is the first social science data that have been collected on this topic, it would serve very well as a baseline for further work to better understand the local impact and perceptions of this project. Throughout this research I have maintained a strong link with the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust who are responsible for implementing the project. Currently I am focussing on writing my PhD thesis, but I am hopeful that there will be opportunities to continue this research.

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

This research will form at least two chapters of my PhD thesis. As part of this process I plan to write and submit two papers to a peer-reviewed scientific journal. The methods and outcomes of this research have been the focus of two presentations I have given; one at the International Conference

for Conservation Biology in August 2015 and in Durrell Wildlife Conservation Symposium in September 2015, plus an informal talk to the Imperial College Conservation Science group. There is also a 2-day workshop planned in Madagascar for April 2016. Various stakeholders will be present, and the outcomes of this research will be the starting point for discussion on the how to improve and develop the monitoring project.

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

The RSG was used during the data collection period January – September 2015. This is longer than the anticipated 3-month collection period January – March 2015 because additional funds were secured that enabled me to hire research assistants for an extended period of time.

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.

Local exchange rate: 1 Ariary = £0.000222

Item	Budgeted Amount (£)	Actual Amount (£)	Difference (£)	Comments
Return airfare London-Madagascar	1000	810.06	- 189.94	
2 x research assistant salary	1200	1798.20	+ 598.20	Extended period of data collection
Local travel	108	95.68	- 12.32	
Private vehicle hire	300	290	- 10.00	
Fuel	100	0		Incorporated into 'private vehicle hire'
Accommodation in villages	420	40	-380.00	Less time spent in villages than anticipated plus it was cheaper than anticipated (see section 2).
Accommodation in Morondava	195	1072.00	+ 877.00	More time spent in Morondava than anticipated (see section 2).
2 x research assistants living expenses (food)	800	719.28	- 80.72	
3 x dictaphone	60	53.85	- 6.15	
Photocopying, stationary, communications	100	62.68	- 37.32	
Gifts for villagers	30	112.09	+ 82.09	
Airport transfers	30	0	+ 30	
Contingency 10%	434	83.18	- 350.82	For first aid/health supplies
TOTAL	4777	5246.87	+ 469.87	Overspend covered by a grant from Chester Zoo

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

On a personal level, the next important steps are to write these data and submit the papers for peer-review as part of my PhD research. Disseminating the results of the research are essential, and I look forward to playing a key role in the workshop currently being organised for spring 2016 – see comment in section 6.

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 RSG logo has been used in 3 talks/presentations given to various audiences. See section 6. RSG will also be acknowledged in the PhD thesis, papers and any other communications about this research.

11. Any other comments?

None – except to say thank you for your support in conducting this research.