

Project Update: November 2003

In 2003, I was awarded a Rufford Foundation Small Grant to explore the use of traditional medicinal by refugees in East Africa. It was proposed to spend time in Kakuma Refugee Camp in northern Kenya collecting this data. After repeatedly contacting and visiting in person the Lutheran World Federation in Kenya, I was informed that students, researchers and interns were no longer permitted to work in the refugee camp. For that reason I focused my attention on refugee camps in western Tanzania catering to Burundian refugees in the Kigoma Region. I visited various UN agencies and NGO's working in these camps in Dar Es Salaam and contacted them repeatedly asking for permission to conduct my study in these refugee camps. Again I was not able to secure permission to conduct my project in refugee camps of Tanzanian origin.

Looking more broadly, I was able to focus in on a project site area with severe conservation and environmental forced migration issues. I selected a site where the continued creation of protected areas has turned entire communities into environmental refugees. This is a problem which links directly to conservation policy, poverty alleviation and forced migration which were my primary research goals submitted in my Rufford Application.