

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	David K. Nkwanga
Project title	Pro-poor community ecotourism window for sustainable ecosystem conservation, community participation and wise use of Mabamba Bay Ramsar site, Uganda
RSG reference	62.02.09
Reporting period	May 2009 – April 2010
Amount of grant	£ 6,000
Your email address	naturepaldn@gmail.com
Date of this report	7 th May 2010

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. Expanding the tourism base to reduce the pressure on the wetland resource that is likely to increase with the increasing influx of tourists		√		Working with community through their association, Mabamba Wetland Eco-tourism Association (MWETA), the project was able to map at least seven new tourist attractions with a potential to appeal to both domestic and foreign tourists. A brochure with briefs about these attractions was produced. We (project and MWETA) however, have to market and publicise these attractions more to fully achieve our objective.
2.Improving collaboration with stakeholders (tour operators, local government leadership, etc.) to jointly map out ways of promoting pro-poor community tourism		√		The project has closely collaborated with the local government of Kasanje sub-county and Wakiso District. The local governments have consequently accorded the Wetland system special consideration in the Sub-county development plan for the first time and instituted a committee to develop its development plan. Our collaboration with the tour operators, however, has not moved at the same pace. This is because there are some individuals in the community working as tour guides who still think they can benefit better if they don't operate under the community association. For this reason they provide divergent information to tour operators leading to slow progress in developing a positive collaboration. We are working on this through continuous dialogue meetings to ensure that all stakeholders are on board.
3.Documentation of indigenous knowledge to further inform conservation efforts and appeal to more community support		√		We have collected reasonable indigenous knowledge about birds, mammals and plant species. However, we have been limited by funds to make available publications for sharing with the wider audience.
4.Institutional development and further cohesion			√	A number of training/capacity building activities were done. We also organised exchange visits for the guides and

building within Mabamba Wetland Eco-tourism Association (MWETA)				association members to learn from other related projects. Inter-cultural and hospitality training was organised, conducted by a volunteer from Germany, and is to run through the year till January 2011 and the guides have expressed that they are benefiting a lot from the training.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

1. Production of video documentary: The first person that was hired to work on the documentary did not produce good work. This was partly due to limited finances since we were avoiding the more expensive ones because of our budgetary limitations. From the lessons learnt from this experience, we did source out a technician with a track record and profound interest in natural resources and conservation projects and worked together to develop a long-term programme of using IT to document and educate about conservation and environment management.

We therefore designed a programme called *Climate Touch Africa: Using Video to Document and Augment Climate Change in Africa*. This programme is in response to the fact that in Uganda and most African countries there are many climate change impacts affecting especially the heavily natural resource-dependent poor communities which are not documented and therefore remain unknown. This results in various actors not having a clear picture of what is on the ground which could inform their plans and programmes. At policy level, the decisions that are made without vivid knowledge of the forms and extent of climate change impacts among the grassroots communities miss out some important points; in most cases this underrates the extent of such impacts and results into making policies that are not very relevant to the needs of the wider layer of the population. The programme will also highlight the priceless contribution of eco-systems like wetlands in both migrating climate change and assisting local communities cope with climate change. We are soliciting additional for support for this programme which will enable acquisition of the necessary equipment.

2. Increasing external threats to the wetlands: While the project has achieved much in addressing internal threats to the wetlands, e.g. burning, cultivation, poaching etc., there has been an alarming rate of increase in external threats. These are mainly in form of wetland sand mining and catchment area degradation, especially deforestation. We are proposing a scientific study on the impacts of such threats to wetland species, especially those that are already threatened with extinction.

3. Mobilisation of tour companies has not moved on as smoothly as had been anticipated. Reasons for this have already been given under 1.

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

1. Building a foundation for sustainable conservation of Mabamba Bay Wetland of International Importance. This is expressed in improved collaboration with stakeholders to participate and support conservation work and in promoting pro-poor and sustainable ecotourism. The

Kasanje local administration, for example, has accorded priority status in its development plan to Mabamba Wetland, which was never the case before.

- II. Mapping of other tourist attractions to reduce pressure on wetlands, improve visitor satisfaction and sustainability of community initiatives and participation. The initiative is also promoting participation and benefit sharing by the wider community members which is also a pointer to community ownership and support to conservation work.
- III. Institutional development of a community association to aid project sustainability. Mabamba Wetland Ecotourism Association is becoming a formidable community organisation that from time to time is consulted by ministry departments and other institutions in matters regarding Mabamba Wetland of International Importance.

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

Project design, Implementation and institutional development:

Community members, through their association MWETA, have been involved right from project design by proposing intervention areas. They are also involved in project implementation mainly through managing the Eco-tourism Information Centre and in all engagements with local governments and other stakeholders. They have also been involved through training and participating as tourist guides.

MWETA is also involved in identification of capacity development need and in contributing to project costs beyond the project budget.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. The next phase intends to address areas that have not been fully achieved - consolidating the achievements registered and tackling the increasing external threats to the wetland, especially unsustainable sand mining and catchment degradation.

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

- I. Paper reports.
- II. Website: updates are already linked to our website (www.naturepalace.net).
- III. News paper supplements e.g. World Wetlands Day and World Environment Day.
- IV. Network system: e.g. Uganda Forest Working Group; Clean Up the World (CUW); Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN); Climate Change & Development Network (CDN); and The East African Communities' Organization for Management of Lake Victoria Resources (ECOVIC).

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 over a period over 12 months, the actual length 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
Interactive joint planning meetings	300	310	10	
Production and dissemination of awareness and education materials about the project	300	300		
Establishment of joint committee and holding regular meetings	100	100		
Participatory mapping of alternative tourist attractions	220	250	30	
Community Tourism Plan	850	850		
Training of tour guides	655	650	5	
Data collection	430	400	30	
Documentation and Publication	900	900		
Data bank	80	200	120	Professional costs were higher. We are developing this in stages.
Leadership development and training programmes	800	800		
Group dynamics training	500	500		
Educational materials (publications)	450	450		
Documentary	200	300	100	Professional video experts with experience are expensive
Solar system to power computer	1,000	1,000		
Mowing machine	200	200		
Internet	750	750		
Training	330	300	30	
Monthly Incentive	450	450		
Fuel	440	500	60	Cost of fuel increased sharply
Communication	75	75		
Secretarial services	100	100		
Report reproduction and dissemination	180	50	130	Have not done most of the dissemination yet.
TOTAL	9,310	9,435		

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

- I. Addressing external threats to the wetland, specifically mechanised sand mining and catchment degradation.
- II. Integrating more scientific research to back-up our arguments for conservation.
- III. Marketing of mapped tourist attractions to aid more community participation and benefit sharing while reducing pressure on the wetland resource.
- IV. Addressing inter-cultural issues through training.

- V. Individual follow-up with tour operators for further improved collaboration.
- VI. Improved coordination with RSG-supported projects especially those on wetlands of international importance e.g. Sango Bay for better utilisation and improvement of the Eco-life – the first web sub-domain with information about Ramsar sites in Uganda.
- VII. Expanding collaborations to include Universities and other higher institutions of learning.

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?

- I. The logo was used on publications e.g. *Rediscovering Mabamba: Stunning, But Little Known Tourist Attractions of Mabamba*; and *Identifying and Building on Synergies: A win-win Strategy for Natural Resources Conservation and Project Sustainability*.
- II. RSG has been published on our website: www.naturepalace.net under 'Our Supporters'.
- III. RSG has been published on Nature Palace *Ecolife* (<http://ecolife.naturepalace.net/>) – the first sub-domain for information concerning Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) in Uganda.
- IV. RSG has been published in Newspaper supplement on World Wetlands Day:
Site:
<http://www.observer.ug/docs/wetlands%20day.pdf>.