

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	James Manyungwa
Project title	Saving the critically endangered Malawi's official national tree, Mulnaje cedar (<i>Widdringtonia whytei</i>) through community participation and environmental education
RSG reference	RSG 30.04.08
Reporting period	1 August 2008 to 31 July 2009
Amount of grant	£5981
Your email address	jmanyungwa@hotmail.co.uk
Date of this report	6 th October 2009

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
(a) To conduct environmental education meetings with local communities and stakeholders				<p>10 meetings were held with traditional leaders and their subjects in 24 villages found around Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve (MMFR)</p> <p>20 environmental education and awareness campaigns were held in 20 villages and environmental information was disseminated through drama, traditional dances/songs, posters, leaflets and organising seminars and lectures.</p> <p>About 450,000 people in the district have increased their knowledge and understanding on importance of Mulanje cedar and dangers of bush fires to nature and peoples' livelihoods.</p>
(b) To promote community capacity building in nature conservation				<p>The meetings did set-up a solid bond of cooperation and a good working relationship between the project team and community members including NGOs.</p> <p>Community members have acquired relevant knowledge and skills that enable them to establish Mulanje cedar nurseries and take part in effective conservation of nature in MMFR.</p> <p>Mulanje cedar degraded areas have been reforested in MMFR.</p> <p>20 consultative meetings were held with traditional leaders and key profile community members in 20 villages around MMFR</p> <p>About 4,900 local community's informing them the importance of forming active working committees to be trained in various concepts of nature conservation and environmental protection.</p> <p>Meetings held resulted in formation of:</p> <p>15 Village took part in the meetings which aimed at Natural Resources Management Committees (VNRMCs) with 450 members with a 60% of women</p>

				<p>representation.</p> <p>All the 450 VNRMCs were trained in tree nursery and woodlot establishment and managed and firefighting techniques.</p> <p>15 cedar tree nurseries have been established in villages around MMFR and about 1,000,000 seedlings have been planted (600,000 in MMFR and 400,000 in communal woodlots).</p>
To promote livelihoods for poor communities				<p>The project team has built a good working relationship with community members especially women.</p> <p>Disadvantaged women are now economically empowered as they have acquired relevant knowledge and skills which able them to produce good quality natural products that they sell to organisations and other community members in the district and beyond thereby earning their living.</p> <p>10 short training courses on promotion of forest-based enterprises were conducted.</p> <p>A total of 434 community members were trained and equipped with knowledge and skills on promotion of forest-based enterprises such as bee keeping for honey and wax production, indigenous fruit and mushroom harvesting, processing and packaging, cane furniture making and tree and flower seedlings production.</p> <p>Among the 434 people trained, 58% were women and young girls.</p>

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

Resistance to exploitation of the remaining stands of Mulanje cedar trees since this was the only source of income for community members. This problem was tackled by introduction of alternative income generating activities such as beekeeping, mushroom production, processing of wild fruits and marketing, among others. Environmental education also played a vital role in changing local peoples' attitudes towards conservation of Mulanje cedar and other natural resources.

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

- A group of well trained community members in nature conservation and forest-based enterprises: This initiative has helped community members to acquire new knowledge and

skills which enable them to carry our nature conservation work effectively and efficiently. Further, skills acquired in agro-based entrepreneurs will help them to offset pressure that they exert on nature, especially Mulanje cedar which produces high quality and durable timber.

- Decreased rate of deforestation: This has been possible as a result of the introduction of alternative income generating activities (mushroom cultivation, bee keeping, fish farming, fruit juice production, etc) which enable the community to generate income and supplementary food for their families.
- Increased rate of plant cover in MMFR: this has been achieved through reforestation of degraded areas with young seedlings of Mulanje cedar and promotion of natural regeneration of plants in the forest reserve.

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

Right away from the beginning, local communities have been involved in all processes which started with project planning, design, conception and implementation. In this case, local communities have greatly benefited from the project as they have acquired relevant knowledge in project management and also in effective nature conservation and promotion of income generating activities.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, there are plans to continue this work in future. It was observed during project implementation that there are some areas which need to be put in order to community members such as harvesting of medicinal plants which currently is not sustainable. There are also small occurrences of alien invasive plant species such as pine and lantana camara which should be cleared before they get fully established in the forest reserve.

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

The project team is busy making applications to various organisations in order to solicit funds for holding a one day project results dissemination workshop to inform the general public about the impacts of the project and the milestones that have been achieved at the end of project implementation and plans drawn up for future work in the area.

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 for a period of twelve months. I am pleased to report that the project was implemented within the actual length of time as laid in the project document.

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
Farm inputs and tools	2,716	2,716		The costs of items as indicated in the project document were correctly budgeted for.
Assorted stationery	1,593	1,593		
Environmental education materials	1,190	1,190		
Short training courses	482	1,050	568	The cost for training courses were under budgeted and we drew some funds from OTR to meet the cost for conducting all courses.
TOTAL	5,981	6,549	568	

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

Clearing of alien invasive species and (ii) training of community members in sustainable harvesting of medical plants to achieve long term for nature conservation.

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, I used the RSGF logo in all environmental education materials and people were happy to learn that the RSGF is doing commendable work in promoting nature conservation and community capacity building in developing countries like Malawi which has rich biodiversity but poor economic muscles to support the conservation of its rich nature.

11. Any other comments?

I would like to sincerely thank the management of the RSGF for awarding me the grant which has encouraged many people to start supporting and taking active part in nature conservation and promoting community capacity building in nature conservation.