

## 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Chris Sandbrook
<b>Project title</b>	Bwindi Advanced Market Gardeners' Association (AMAGARA), Uganda
<b>RSG reference</b>	30.12.06
<b>Reporting period</b>	February 2007 to February 2008
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5,000
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:csandbrook@yahoo.co.uk">csandbrook@yahoo.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2008

**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
Register AMAGARA with the district			X	The association was formally registered as a Community Based Organisation in Kanungu district in February 2007
Finalise constitution and membership			X	A successful 3 day constitution writing workshop was held in February 2007 with all major stakeholders represented
Set up a demonstration plot			X	The demo is now a thriving 3 acre vegetable garden used for training and production purposes. Demo garden produce on sale since May 2007
Hold training sessions with farmers			X	Trainings have been run covering many aspects of vegetable growing, soil management & nutrition. As well as members of AMAGARA, school groups, women's groups and other local people have benefited from training sessions
Set up temporary office in hired accommodation			X	An office was hired for 6 months, and then a temporary structure was erected at the demo plot to save resources. This is now fully functional
Purchase and install honey and tea packing equipment		X		Honey was bottled and sold successfully – now waiting for local production to increase to match demand. Local women were trained to produce boxes for tea, but have had problems with quality. This requires further attention in the next year
Prepare marketing materials to display in the tour camps	X			Insufficient time was available for me to do this, and other team members do not have the right skills. This remains a major area for improvement in the next year
Begin sales of produce to tour camps			X	AMAGARA is now the major supplier of fresh vegetables to tour camps at Bwindi, to the benefit of all parties. However, the Association is not yet making a profit.
Boost household income of local farmers			X	103 member households now selling produce through AMAGARA. About 20 casual staff hired to work on the demo

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

Inevitably, various unexpected difficulties arose during the period of the RSGF grant. These are detailed below:

1) One important objective for the RSGF grant was to use £508.22p to prepare posters, leaflets and other marketing materials. I took the lead on this as I have the appropriate IT skills, language skills, and knowledge of tourist preferences to prepare good quality items. We managed to start working on a logo, but unfortunately, due to the many activities I was working on and the short time available before I returned to the UK, I did not have time to complete the marketing materials. This is something which we are hoping to rectify in Year 2, and VSO are now looking for a short-term volunteer with marketing expertise to work specifically on this task with AMAGARA for 6 months

2) A group of local women were trained by Uganda Community Tourism Association to make boxes from banana fibres to hold sealed foil packs of loose-leaf tea. They learned how to do this but then refused to charge a reasonable price for the finished boxes, making it uneconomical for the Association to use them. This seriously spoiled the quality of the final product, as AMAGARA tea is currently on sale without boxes. This is something to be improved upon over the next year

3) Local honey sold very well for AMAGARA, but production was not sufficient to meet demand. Efforts are now being made to encourage increased local honey production which will boost income for farmers and for the Association

4) At the beginning of the year office space was hired, in line with the original plans. However, it soon became clear that staff were not using the office as it was not located at the demo plot, and the rental costs were a drain on resources. As a result the decision was taken to build a new, temporary office on the demonstration plot and give up the rented space. This was done and the new office is now functioning well. This is not a permanent solution, but it will suffice for several years

5) Although most vegetable crops have grown extremely well on the demo plot, inevitably some did not. A particular disappointment was Irish potatoes, which would have a very good market. Pius Ombaka (the project VSO volunteer) suspects that the soils on the demo plot are too depleted of nutrients to grow potatoes, and alternative promising sites are now being used to trial this crop

6) Transportation has been a major problem for Bwindi AMAGARA. The Association currently has no vehicle, so all deliveries of farmers' crops to the demo site have to be made by manpower alone, and products are collected by the buyers, often using motorcycles or tour camp vehicles. This constrains the geographical area over which the project can operate and makes organising sales and deliveries complicated. Running a vehicle at this stage would be very expensive, but alternative possibilities such as sharing a vehicle, using bicycles or using a pack animal are being considered

7) It was initially hoped that Bwindi AMAGARA would have achieved financial sustainability by the end of Year One operations. Experience has shown that this was an overambitious goal, and this remains a major target for the future. Happily, sales growth has been strong, and at present sales revenue is covering over 50% of all costs. With a good plan in place for new products and improving production and sales during Year Two, reaching financial sustainability by early 2009 is definitely achievable. More details on the strategy to achieve this can be found in the Year One Progress Report which has been submitted to Rufford separately

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

- 1) Bwindi AMAGARA has made it possible for people to earn money from mountain gorilla tourism who were previously excluded from this opportunity on the basis of age, gender, education, wealth and location. As a result, AMAGARA has brought incentives for natural resource conservation to a new section of the local community, including poorer people who suffer the most negative consequences of living just outside the National Park. This is a crucial outcome which has positive long-term implications for conservation in the area
- 2) As well as creating incentives for conservation, improving household income helps to alleviate human poverty. Bwindi AMAGARA has helped to increase revenue for over 100 member households and over 20 casual staff who work at the demonstration plot. This has important implications for poverty alleviation in the area, and it is hoped that the number of households receiving this benefit will continue to grow in the future
- 3) Bwindi AMAGARA has trained several hundred people in improved agricultural techniques, including member farmers, school groups, women's groups and other local people. This has boosted productivity at the household level, creating income generating opportunities through sales, improving household nutrition, and reducing the demand for new land to be cleared from the forest. This has important implications for income, health and ultimately natural resource conservation

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

Bwindi AMAGARA is a community-based project which is owned and managed by local people living around Bwindi Impenetrable NP. As a result, local communities are fully integrated into all aspects of the project, and they are the main direct beneficiaries. As detailed above, Bwindi AMAGARA has increased household income for over 100 local households, delivered training in agriculture and nutrition to several hundred people, and helped to boost food production at the household level. Sales revenue underpinning these community benefits has come from tourism, tying these benefits to the conservation of mountain gorillas and their forest habitat

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Bwindi AMAGARA is now one year old, and in good shape to look to the future. With modest further donor support the Association will be able to continue its work, and it is anticipated that Bwindi AMAGARA will be entirely self-financing by the end of the second year of operations. Once this goal has been achieved, the Association is expected to continue operations indefinitely

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

The progress of Bwindi AMAGARA over the first year of operations has been written up into a comprehensive report which has been distributed to over 50 different organisations and individuals. Results from the activities of the Association have also been contributed to the Pro-Poor Tourism partnership's annual register of projects, and plans are underway to carry out a formal study of the impacts of the project (including how it has affected attitudes to forest conservation) during year 2, leading to at least one academic research article. Plans have also been made to improve the marketing aspects of the project in year 2, which will ensure that more visitors to Bwindi learn about the work of Bwindi AMAGARA. All new marketing materials will include the RSGF logo. Additionally, discussions are under way with the Institute for Environmental Security in the Netherlands about the possibility of replicating the AMAGARA project at another gorilla tourism site in Rwanda

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

The RSGF was used over the full 12 months of the grant duration, as was initially planned. The RSGF grant has been the biggest single source of finance for Bwindi AMAGARA to date .

**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.**

As well as the RSGF funds detailed below, Bwindi AMAGARA received other donor support and generated revenue through sales during Year One of operations. Details of all this revenue and total spending can be found in the first year progress report, which has been submitted to RSGF separately

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Setting up the demo plot	£848.79	£1,200	+ £351.21	Setting up the demo was more expensive than anticipated
Running training sessions	£508.22	£508.22	-----	Activity completed as planned
VSO allowance & expenses	£676.12	£676.12	-----	Activity completed as planned

Equipment for honey & tea processing	£1356.57	£1356.57	-----	Activity completed as planned
Marketing materials	£508.22	£0	- £508.22	See Question 2 above
Hiring Johnson Twinomugisha	£1016.68	£1173.69	+ £157.01	Used to hire Johnson and an Accounts Clerk for 7 months
Renting temporary office for 6 months	£85.40	£85.40	-----	Activity completed as planned
<b>TOTAL</b>	£5000	£5000	£0	Exchange rate: £1 = UGS 3,331

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

1) Bwindi AMAGARA must achieve financial sustainability by the end of year 2 to ensure the long term viability of the project. Several activities are planned to make this happen:

- VSO are looking for a marketing specialist to join AMAGARA on a six month placement with the goal of developing marketing materials and new products to be sold directly to tourists. This will include honey and tea, and is expected to greatly boost income
- As well as new products targeting tourists, other new ideas are being developed, such as having a piggery at the demo plot. There is a strong local market for pigs so this would increase revenue and provide a great source of manure for the demo plot
- Efforts are underway to recruit more members and to encourage existing members to boost their production. This will increase benefits for members and simultaneously boost income for the Association

2) Transport remains a major challenge for the Association, as it is very difficult to get products from members' fields to the demo plot, and from there to the customers. At this stage running a vehicle would be prohibitively expensive, but alternatives possibilities, such as using bicycles or a pack animal, are being considered. Solving this problem is an important next step

3) Until the Association can achieve financial sustainability, further donor support will be required. It is anticipated that AMAGARA will be making a profit by the end of Year 2, and that the shortfall during year two will be around £5,500 (see First Year Progress Report for a detailed budget). Raising this final round of support from donors is now an urgent priority

4) Bwindi AMAGARA aims to deliver both conservation and development goals through its activities. Now the project has been running for over a year, an important next step is to systematically evaluate how the project has performed against these goals. This will allow areas of strength and weakness to be identified and improved on, and also provide information for other sites where similar projects could be implemented. To achieve this goal I am planning to carry out a 2 month field study in Uganda in August and September

2008 which will then be written up as a report and an academic research article. Results of this study will of course be shared with the Rufford Small Grants Foundation

**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?**

Unfortunately the one planned activity for year one which did not take place was developing marketing materials, logos and signage. As a result, no materials have been produced at the project site which could have carried the RSGF logo. This activity is seen as absolutely crucial for year 2, and the RSGF logo will certainly be used wherever possible in future. The RSGF logo was used on the first year progress report and the foundation did receive some minor publicity through word of mouth, but it is recognised that this was an area of weakness in the use of the 1<sup>st</sup> RSGF grant

**11. Any other comments?**

As I am now based in the UK, I feel it is important to comment on my own personal involvement with Bwindi AMAGARA, both now and in the future. I left Uganda in April 2007, three months into the RSGF grant, and did not return until February 2008, when I made the visit which I have written up as the first year progress report. During the intervening 10 months I had minimal input into the day to day running of the Association, being limited to occasional email contact. I was therefore absolutely delighted to discover on my return to Buhoma that the project had been performing excellently in my absence under the management of Johnson Twinomugisha and Pius Ombaka, and had achieved many of the first year objectives. I think this bodes very well for the future of the organisation and gives me confidence that it will run well completely independent of donors and outside help once financial sustainability has been achieved. This year I intend to return to Uganda to carry out the field study on AMAGARA mentioned above (this will be funded through my one year ESRC postdoc at the University of Cambridge). Beyond that, it is my intention to continue making regular trips to Uganda, and to continue offering my support to the project.

Finally, on behalf of all the Bwindi AMAGARA team, I would like to thank the Rufford Small Grants Foundation once again for their fantastic support during the first year of operations. Without this support the Association could not have made the excellent progress it has. Thank you!