

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Julius Nziza
Project Title	Conserving the diverse bat species assemblages at the Musanze volcanic caves in the midst of misplaced COVID-19 fears, Northern Rwanda.
Application ID	34049-B
Date of this Report	13 th September 2022

1. 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
<p>- Local communities around the volcanic caves will be sensitized on COVID-19 and bats</p>				<p>Robust sensitisation through 10 radio talk shows on three different radio stations in the region of Musanze were conducted as this was the most appropriate mode of communication due to the pandemic and because most people listen to the radio. Questions from listeners were answered too while information on bats conservation was conveyed. The radio stations advertised in advance about the talk hence increased audience levels. At the same time brochures about bats conservation were distributed to the locals hence more mass sensitisation.</p>
<p>- Training and empowering local Bat Conservation Cooperatives with knowledge and skills about bats so that they become bat conservation champions.</p>				<p>Bat conservation cooperative (with 200 members) was targeted for training. They were taught about the different species of bats, ecosystem services and threats to bats conservation and how to mitigate them. They were given cotton masks for biosecurity purposes.</p>
<p>- Engagement of local conservation stakeholders and leaders about the importance of conserving bats and their roosting habitats through meetings and workshops.</p>				<p>Meetings and workshop were conducted but due to the strict social isolation measures that were being followed in Rwanda, the meetings were few and low numbers.</p>
<p>- Set up environmental school clubs and build strong community groups as</p>				<p>Two environmental groups were formed one at Musanze Primary school and another at Susa secondary school. They were sensitised on bat</p>

agents of advocacy for bats within communities				conservation and how to be bat conservation champions in their schools and home villages.
- Benefit community groups with vital skills and technology to create awareness both physically as well as utilizing social media platforms like iNaturalist as well as mentoring talents around technology to create either mobile or web applications that help monitor and provide information on situations at bat habitats.				Some of the teachers and leaders were sensitised about this aspect of using social media to promote bats conservation. Even during radio talk shows, the audience were sensitised on this aspect of social documenting any bats seen and even any persecution that can be observed being done on the bats due to the misplaced information that bats were the cause of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- a) Very much sensitised community about bat conservation. This was mainly achieved by the many radio talks shows on bats conservation that I conducted. This has led me to have more phone calls more than ever before about how to protect bats and need for more knowledge about the bats.
- b) A cooperative whose main goal is promoting bats conservation efforts in Musanze region.
- c) Two environmental clubs of students both in primary and secondary schools that are near the Musanze Caves that will be young champions for bat conservation.
- d) Some local leaders who have become bats conservation champions too and hence can help in mitigation of any threats to the bat colonies.
- e) Some of the bats cave systems fully fenced off and some fences repaired to minimise uncoordinated entry in the caves to minimise bats colony disturbance.
- f) Provision of masks that were highly needed during the pandemic as they were highly recommended and yet not affordable by the locals.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

The major one was due to partial lockdowns; meetings were not encouraged and that's why I opted for radio talks for community sensitisation. This helped very much in reaching the larger audience in timely manner and hence interaction by answering the curious questions about bats and their conservation.

4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.

The local communities benefitted by gaining the knowledge about bats and the need and how to conserve them during the pandemic which they were being blamed for causing. At the same time, provision of some protective materials came in handy during the pandemic.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, because the many species of bats in this locality require conservation from the different threats that can potentially cause population decline.

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

I will be involved in different meetings and will be the voice of bats conservation in the different forums both locally and nationally but also in the region where I work from.

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

Continuous mass sensitisation about bat conservation in the Musanze area and also studying the impact of the conservation efforts at the same time studying the population ecology of some bat species in this ecological zone.

8. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes, on the masks and brochures, there were logos of Rufford. At the same time during the talk shows, it was always elaborated to the listeners that the talk show was supported by Rufford Foundation.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

Dr. Julius Nziza Overall coordinator of the project

Mboneza Jean Bosco Field coordinator

Umuhiza Agnes Field coordinator

10. Any other comments?

The COVID 19 pandemic caused lots of misinformation that the bats are the cause of the pandemic and hence the threats to bats conservation increased. These threats require long term intervention strategies and therefore such projects are needed more than ever before to help conservation of bats species particularly in critical ecosystems like Musanze caves.



Project coordinator meeting the stakeholders on bats conservation.



Community stakeholders meeting on bats conservation in Musanze caves.



Project coordinator handing over masks for use in Musanze Caves.



Field assistants handing over educational materials to one of the schoolteachers.



Sensitization of the School children about bats conservation and importance of forming environmental clubs.



Community members meeting about bats conservation and also COVID 19 prevention while also observing social distancing.







More sensitisation of School going children about Bats conservation amidst COVID 19 Pandemic.



Project Coordinator on one of the radio stations talking about bats conservation amidst COVID 19 Pandemic scare. This was one of the constantly done activities as the best approach to get to the reach more people due to lockdowns.



The project coordinator again doing mass communication about importance of Bats Conservation in Musanze.