

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Martin Wachira Mwangi
Project Title	Promoting Sustainable People-Forest Relationship to conserve Aberdare Mountain
Application ID	37815-1
Date of this Report	April 2024

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
Improve local ecological knowledge and promote behaviour change by establishing environmental ambassador volunteers and build their capacity to practice and train other locals to protect and conserve species and habitats in Aberdare Mountains				<p>Through this project, 3900 persons have been directly reached and over 6000 indirectly reached with ecological knowledge and skills for conservation. This contribution to the objective was through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Trained 43 persons residing adjacent to the Aberdare Mountains in 2 workshops on behavioural change to promote conservation. Topics on forest importance, threats to the forest, species and habitat conservation and community contribution were covered. -The project supported preparation, printing and distribution of education and awareness materials. -Community engagement was also done through outreach activities in School and community meetings. Seven schools with a total 2600 students were visited but only 391 students directly reached. This was in addition to 6 opportunistic meeting attended/addressed by the project team members with ~600 residents.
Ecological restoration of destroyed forest sections and adjacent private farms by planting indigenous trees				<p>The project rehabilitated 4 hectares of destroyed sections of the Western Aberdare Mountains and 2.5 hectares of private land. In total, 5100 indigenous trees were planted for this project. This</p>

				<p>was achieved following a training to 17 local youth on nursery management and establishment of 2 nurseries from which the seedlings were produced. The project carried out 2 tree planting days that brought together 142 participants. These activities were implemented with close collaborations with Kenya Forest Services, Friends of Kinangop Plateau, schools going youth and forest adjacent community members</p>
Support establishment of sustainable income generating activities and improve entrepreneurship skills of conservation-based women/youth groups.				<p>-The project established 2 poultry farms one in the North and one in the South of project area. This was done after training 23 women on good poultry management and entrepreneurial skills. The farms which are group owned will sustainably benefit over 100 residents from 23 households</p> <p>-Established 2 tree nurseries from which seedlings used to rehabilitate the landscape by the project were produced. The remaining seedlings will be sold out to earn an income for 90 residents from 19 households.</p>
Conduct community social-economic survey on factors affecting forest dependency, attitudes and perceptions towards forest conservation and management partners in Aberdare Mountains				<p>The project conducted a study on forest dependability, perception and attitude of residents adjacent to the forest and a comprehensive report is attached to this report.</p> <p>Part of findings include "The respondents identified wild fires, poaching, logging, charcoal burning and fire wood collection as the main threats facing the Mountain and its wildlife. Men above 35 years were</p>

				mostly directly engaged in illegal activities. The study identified most, 82%, residents were willing to participate in patrols, rehabilitation, awareness and education interventions.”
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2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- a) **Aberdare Forest restoration** -Our project has contributed to the rehabilitation 6.5ha destroyed sections of Aberdare Mountain and adjacent private land. Planting of 5100 indigenous trees including; Juniperus procera, Podocarpus latifolius, Orea Africana, croton and Prunus Africana was done in the worst identified destroyed sections mimicking the naturally existing trees in these sections and within community land where trees were planted in private farms adjacent to the forest- only 1-2 km from the forest boundary.
- b) **Building local conservation capacity to over 9,900 residents** for promotion of behavioural change to achieve Aberdare Forest conservation. The project through training, education and awareness creation engaged residents on threats, opportunities and community contribution: different aspects of promoting conservation and protection of the forest.

The communities engaged on issues around conservation of the forest and species, are now capable of steering conservation actions and educating to their fellow residents on why and how they should protect and preserve the forest.

- c) **Piloting forest-friendly livelihood activities**- Our project trained residents on entrepreneurial skills in poultry and tree nursery management. It is positively impactive over 112 households from the established poultry farms and tree nurseries which will eventually sustainably benefit the beneficiaries while also complementing forest conservation. The project considers these as demonstration sites from which knowledge will be shared and replicated by other community members for a greater positive impact to the landscape and the Aberdare Mountain.

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

Most of the project team has previously worked for and in the project area. Knowledge of the project area dynamics informed the design of this project. To its benefit, most of the project activities were implemented as planned. However;

- 1) Establishing woodlots in private farms adjacent to the Aberdare Mountains proved to have a challenging end with residents not willing to secure part of their land for trees despite their use. This resulted to the team adopting promotion of agroforestry trees and practice amongst beneficiaries. This worked well with no objection from the communities.
- 2) Despite the poultry management training to the beneficiaries of the poultry farms before establishment, the survival of chicks was at 64% for the initial one-week chicks donated. This was managed by engaging a local vet for intervention. Also, in the 2nd face, the project donated chick at approximate 2-3 months of age. This had a higher survival rate at 94%.

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

The project design is based on community participation on voluntary bases. This has been incorporated in all the objectives of the project.

- 1) In objective 1 and 2, the communities were trained and awareness created to different segments of the community including women and school going youth.
- 2) Residents were involved in rehabilitating the destroyed sections of the Mountains by planting trees and also planting trees in their private land.
- 3) In objective 3, the communities were trained on entrepreneurial skills in the field of poultry. They were also trained on poultry management as well as nursery management before both projects were established for different community groups. These income generating activities will benefit participating residents directly and more indirectly, contributing to community outreach.
- 4) Finally, objective 4 saw the project engage local youth trained as data collection assistants and assigned roles of collecting data on perception, attitude and other factors affecting forest dependability.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

This project is partly self-sustaining. The income generating activities established by the project i.e. the poultry farms and the tree nurseries will sustain themselves way beyond the project time. This is because they will generate income and the beneficiaries are trained on good management and entrepreneurial skills which will help them scale up and replicate activities piloted by this project. The results of the study carried out by the project shows that community members are more reliant to the forest if they are 'poor'. The project team therefore will put more efforts to scale up of the piloted income generating activities is achieved. This will be done through fundraising and engaging more partners who have the potential to support the IGAs

The rehabilitation of the mountains will continue with support from community members and stakeholders of this project and more. The supported community groups whose interest in rehabilitating the forest has been cultivated through this project will continue to optimally deliver actions that benefit the forest.

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

The progress and reports of this project will be shared for consumption by different audience through different sources including; our main partner Friends of Kinangop Plateau website and social media pages. They will also be shared to stakeholders and communities through printed comprehensive project reports and emails.

An article on the study on perception will be published in Nature Kenya's Nature Net magazine that publishes progress of Kenyan Important Bird Area.

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

The next conservation intervention will be informed by the recommendations of the social economic survey carried out by this project which are:

- ❖ Prioritization of identification of persons directly engaged in illegal activities
- ❖ Establishment and strengthening of sustainable income generating activities for men above 35 because they are the mostly directly engaged in illegal activities
- ❖ Engage willing local residents in forest protection through patrols and monitoring of forest destruction
- ❖ Training and equipping youth as local forest guides to avert new entrants into illegal activities when they attain 35 years of age
- ❖ Promotion of on-farm tree growing and energy saving technologies to reduce pressure to the forest resources
- ❖ Promotion of strategic activities and actions that strengthens partnership between communities and government agencies: Kenya Wildlife Service and Kenya Forest Services to make the Aberdare Mountain protection and conservation seamless
- ❖ Continuous training and awareness creation on conservation importance to residents: in one-on-one or group setup

Priority actions should involve engaging persons directly engaged in forest destruction to be trained, have alternative sources of income, be engaged to protect the forest and include interventions that avoid new entrants into illegal activities.

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?

In different activities including presentations prepared for use in schools and training in communities. Calendars that were distributed to communities, partners and stakeholders, prints like mammal guide, leaflets and T-shirt had the logo used to show that the project was supported by the Rufford Foundation.

The logo was also used to report on the study report on perception and factors affecting Aberdare forest dependability by community members.

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

Martin Mwangi- led the project, coordinated the implementation of all aspects and partnerships established by the project with guidance from the project advisor.

Dr. Joseph Mwangi- He advised project team, guided the project implementation of all aspects of the project from rehabilitation, awareness and training, to research and reporting

Julia Karanja- she worked in aspects community outreach, trainings and design and distribution of awareness materials.

Paul Kimani- He participated in organizing tree nursery training and management sessions as well lead data collection to the research aspect of the project

Cynthia Waithira- led the forest rehabilitation aspect of the project working closely with other partners and community members

10. Any other comments?

We consider this funding from Rufford Foundation as pivotal and a springboard to achieving a sustainably rehabilitated Aberdare Mountains surrounded by communities that are willing and capable to intervene for optimal livelihood and conservation benefits. It has helped establish interventions and partnerships that guarantees a better future for the communities, the Mountain and its biodiversity. However, It is critical that supplementary interventions are implemented to replicate and scale up the projects impact and ensure a wholistic solution to the threats facing the ecosystem.

Pictorials



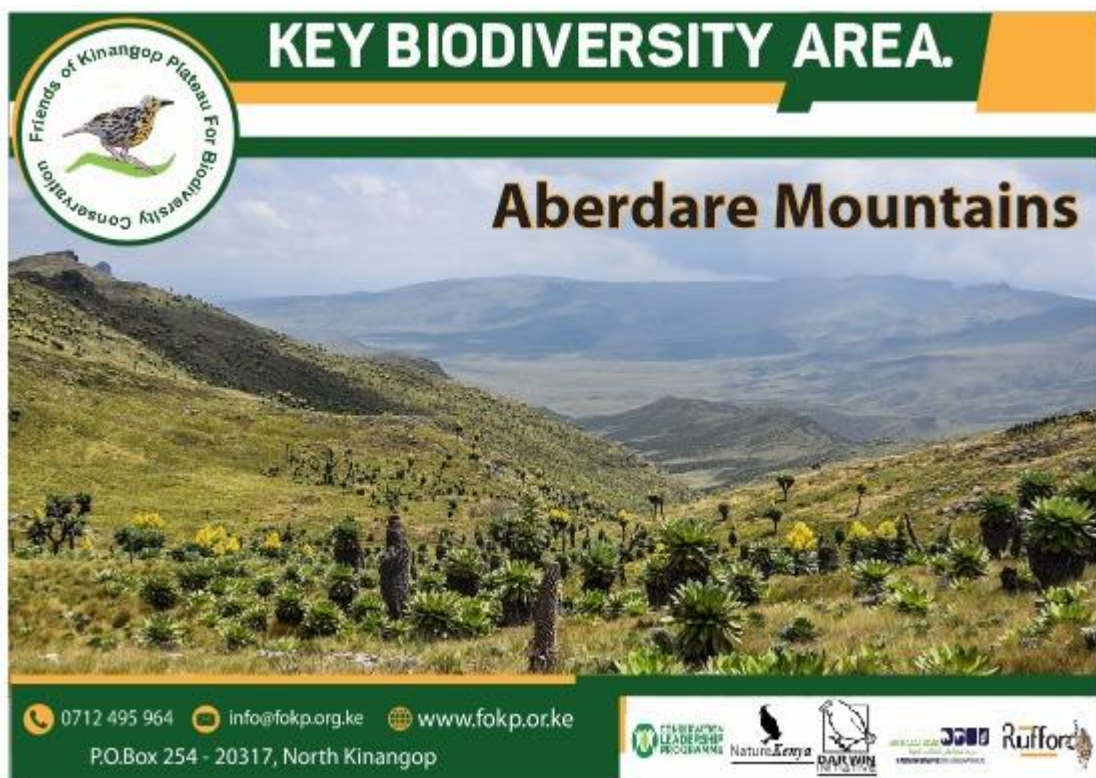
Workshop participants on forest conservation



Tree planting



A youth attends to chicks in a newly established poultry farm



Promotion page in a calendar with a focus on Aberdare Mountain



Outdoor nature engagement during school environmental outreach activity



Indoor school outreach activity on forest threats and opportunities

**ANNEX – Financial Report
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