

## Final Evaluation Report

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We ask all grant recipients to complete a project evaluation that helps us to gauge the success of your project. This must be sent in **MS Word and not PDF format**. 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 – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

**Please DO NOT fill in and submit this form until the project has been completed.**

Complete the form in English. Note that the information may be edited before posting on our website.

Please email this report to [jane@rufford.org](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

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Your Details	
<b>Full Name</b>	Julius Nziza
<b>Project Title</b>	Enhancing the protection and monitoring of bat species in Volcanic caves of Musanze district through local community empowerment and Participation.
<b>Application ID</b>	ID: 41095-D
<b>Date of this Report</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> July 2025

**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>Increasing the level of awareness about bats conservation among the local people to enhance motivation for preserving and protecting bats and their roosting caves.</p>			X	<p>Installation of eight metallic bat information signs post in local language near bats caves and school was done. End of month Saturday cleaning activities were more focused on cleaning at the entrance of caves and dust bins were distributed to 250 homes near the Musanze caves. Demand for the dust bins was high, but our budget allowed only 250. In our next stage, if supported, we shall supply communal dust bins to overcome the shortage because this will greatly improve the hygiene around the caves.</p>
<p>Effective bats /caves proception through creation of a community of bat guardians.</p>			X	<p>A cooperative comprising of 36 members was selected to be bat guardians. This was mainly due to their enthusiasm about bats conservation and my past interaction with them. They were oriented to the park authorities and now have official recognition as BAT GUARDIANS OF MUSANZE CAVES. We trained these bat guardians in direct bat counting.</p>
<p>Creating and devising a conservation action plan integrating bats conservation into</p>		X		<p>The Bats conservation action plan has been drafted and agreed upon by most of stakeholders in the meetings conducted. Final will need validation by higher</p>

<p>other socio-economic activities in local governance structures.</p>				<p>levels when included into the National Biodiversity Plan.</p> <p>We conducted two seminars. In each seminar we had 30 participants excluding myself and 2 assistants. Stakeholders included Rwanda Development board/Department of tourism and conservation staff, Volcanoes national park staff, Turambe conservation staff, Bat cooperative senior staff, local leaders of Musanze and Burera (environment, veterinary and agriculture officers), local school head masters, religious leaders, local community leaders (village level), One Health University students, former poachers and Indigenous Peoples.</p>
<p>Incentivising local community stakeholders to conserve bats and their roosting habitats.</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>Through consultation with the bats guardians, pigs were distributed to some cooperative members (8 young pigs to 8 families). They will give to other members the off springs and hence in the end all will be having piggery projects. Before being given the pigs, participants were trained by the local district vets as part of supporting local pig association members. They were trained on proper husbandry.</p>
<p>Sensitizing the local communities where the new colonies had been discovered.</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>Two sensitisation community meetings were performed in the kinigi and ntaruka areas to increase community awareness in these new areas. We held 2 meetings and each had 50 people, these excluded myself and my two assistants. The key messages in our local language</p>

			<p>were about bat species identification, biology, ecological, health and economical importance, threats to bats and how to conserve the bats and their habitats, zoonotic diseases and ways of prevention including de-mystifying the bad cultural information held on bats.</p> <p>For awareness materials we used leaflets, car and motorcycle stickers</p>
<p>Monitoring the bats movements in the Musanze area.</p>		<p>X</p>	<p>The tag were effective for only few days and they did not last long enough to document the bats movements. One got lost and we lost signal for monitoring of the bats. There were few tags also and therefore not very efficient. The cheaper tags were only effective for 2 days and then batteries died and one became malfunctional on second day. From this experience we have learned that using more expensive and robust tags is crucial. I have a contact in the USA who can supply more robust tags. Because of the Marburg outbreak in Kigali city, the government imported more robust tags for the population in Kigali city from this contact in the USA and I will use the same so for the future, I will deploy more tags (numbers) and more effective and robust ones although they are pricey.</p> <p>We used Camera traps to estimate bats existing the caves.</p>

				<p>We placed two camera traps in different locations around the different entrances of the caves for 182 days. From these cameras we obtained information on times that bats exit and enter the caves. We estimated there to be c. 15,000-15,500 bats. We noticed some threats like tree cuttings, children disturbing the bats, and some wildlife like serval cats coming to feed on dead bats. We gave all this information to partners and government.</p>
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**2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.**

- a) A fully functional team of bats guardians in a cooperative who are now bats champions.
- b) A sensitised community protecting the bats and roosting sites, and reduced illegal activities
- c) Drafted bats conservation action plan by relevant stakeholders to protect the caves and bats

At the end of the project I conducted a post-project evaluation but due to budget constraints, I conducted only key informant interviews on major stakeholders i.e. the head of the bat guardian cooperatives, two school headmasters, four district officials and the Volcanoes Park Manager. In brief, the noted challenges were the recent marburg outbreak that had raised the stakes again on human-bat relationship and hence needed more sensitization, sustainable funding of such work, the disturbed cave habitats ecosystem that needed restoration, need for more incentives to the bat guardians and activation of the bats action plan that we had formulated. Noted successes were the generally improved awareness about bat importance and their conservation, formation of the bat guardians, general hygiene in caves and reduced encroachment, formulation of the bat action plan to inform policy advocacy and having bat champions like myself and team to bring to the forefront the issues of bat conservation because in this region (the conservation that is mainly talked about is mountain gorilla conservation).

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

Organizing the cooperative in terms of incentives due to the low budget to give all of them pigs, but in the end, we agreed that few are given, who will give others the off springs to sustain the project.

Fear of bats due to the marbug outbreak reversed the already realised achievements and the last stakeholder meeting was in almost in jeopardy, however it still went ahead with more future recommendations considering the new information and request to continue the support in terms of community sensitization.

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

Local communities' members were involved in cleaning activities, in attending the community meetings. The cooperative is also from the community members, so there are economic benefits. At the same time, the dustbins supplied helped in hygiene and sanitation efforts for the community members.

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

In the wake of Marbug outbreak in country, this work is more needed than ever before. Yes, I intend to community this work. More community sensitization particularly on radios, More signposts in areas far from the caves etc, Policy advocacy for the drafted conservation plan, research on microbiome of the bats species in the caves would also import the scientific community about the health status of the bats.

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

I will share with the local stake holders and policy makers through personal meetings.

I negotiated with a local trained film maker and managed to make 2 short videos one in local language for local sensitization (200 pounds) and another in English for tourists (300 pounds) which I handed over to the Park authorities and then local, I gave to the district information office of Musanze.

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

- More community sensitization using mass media and other platforms
- Policy advocacy.
- More support for the identified bats champions and expand in the new areas where a new cooperative has been formed that need support.
- Bats health research -microbiome work to identify any microbes associated with the bats and their health.

**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, I did during meeting and on some signposts. The foundation was always mentioned as the supporter of the project at all opportune times.

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

Julius Nziza: Overall Coordinator of the project  
Mboneza Jean Bosco was the focussed mass community mobilization.  
Angelique Uwitonze was more on the mobilization of stakeholders for action plan and environmental clubs in addition to bats monitoring.

**10. Any other comments?**

Marburg outbreak has reversed some community perspective about bat conservation with potential increase in the threats to bats increase. Therefore, I would wish to continue this work. I delayed submitting the report because of my involvement in the Marburg out break and then further studies of my PhD but now I can resume the work if supported again.

**ANNEX – Financial Report**  
**[Intentionally deleted]**