

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. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other 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. 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. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. 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	Donald Mpalika
Project title	Community demand driven of cultivation of Critically Endangered and endemic devil's claw and conservation of their threatened ecosystems in Nkuwazi Forest, Malawi
RSG reference	49.02.09
Reporting period	September 2009 to February 2011
Amount of grant	£5,876
Your email address	dmpalika@hotmail.com
Date of this report	8 April 2011

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
(i)To promote environmental education			√	<p>This objective was fully achieved because of the adequate funding that the project team received from RSGF which made it possible for all activities planned to be undertaken in accordance to the work plan and time schedule. The activities that were carried out include organising and conducting traditional dances and drama/play in all seven villages around the forest. In total, 10 traditional dances and 10 plays in a form of drama were performed in villages. Additionally, 1500 simple calendars, 1100 leaflets and 1000 posters depicting devil's claw and useful information in both local and English language were produced and distributed to various schools, government and NGOs offices around the project area and to some institutions in other parts of the district.</p> <p>The results of these interventions is that at least 85% of the local communities living around the project area have understood and do appreciate the importance of practising sustainable utilisation of forest resources which include devil's claw. Local communities have also fully understood that unsustainable harvesting of forest resources, especially devil's claw poses serious negative impact on their lives and it brings poverty amount the communities. The knowledge that local communities have assimilated has assisted them to take action and active role in preservation of the environment and the remaining few stands of devil's claw in Nkuwazi Forest. Some positive results have been seen from mid-2010 to the beginning of 2011 as there is about 75% decline in forest encroachment to hunt for this important socio-economic plant and hence there is forest recovery in some areas that were heavily degraded.</p>

<p>(ii) To mobilise local communities to form farmers clubs and train them on cultivation of devil's claw</p>			<p>v</p>	<p>Ten meetings were held with local communities and about 700 people living the forest attended. Of these 700 people, 420 were women representing 60%. In addition, five meetings were also held with government officials (from the departments of Agriculture & Food Security and Forestry) and Beekeepers Association which is one of the community-based organisations working in the project area.</p> <p>The impact of the meetings organised has attracted local communities living around the project area to form thirty farmers clubs comprising of 350 people and interestingly 65% of these people were the ones that were unsustainably harvesting the devil's claw from the forest for income. Of the 30 farmers clubs, five are chaired by local chiefs, 18 clubs are chaired by women and seven by men. It has been observed that the active joining of forest encroachers and the participation of traditional chiefs in the project had increased and instilled confidence, commitment and interest among local communities in the project area and this cooperation has helped to reduce forest encroachment and degradation of forest resources. The meetings organised with key profile government officials, academicians and researchers had helped develop a training manual to be used by extension workers and farmers on how they can propagate devil's claw.</p> <p>Five resource harvesting monitor groups were also formed in strategic places around the forest and were trained in resource management and monitoring. These groups were formed to regulate harvesting of forest resources including, the devil's claw plant cultivated by farmers to ensure that farmers and other local communities are following harvesting standards set by clubs and government officials.</p> <p>Three hundred and fifty simple training manuals on cultivation of devil's claw were</p>
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			<p>developed, printed and distributed to members of farmers clubs in the project area.</p> <p>A total of 180 farmers (96 women & 84 men) were selected from the 30 farmers clubs established in the project area and were intensively trained in collection of seed, seed storage, nursery site selection, nursery preparation and treatment, seed propagation and transplanting. Field demonstrations were also undertaken to increase trainees' understanding on how they can propagate the devil's claw seeds. This training course was tailored towards propagation of devil's claw. Further, trainees were also trained in environmental protection, natural resource management and best practices in harvesting of devil's claw. The training workshop was trainer of trainers and it was expected those people trained would also train other community members in their respective clubs. It is pleased to report that today, there are almost 500 farmers who are cultivating devil's claw for sale and their socio-economic status, especially of women has improved. This intervention has also led to decline of forest encroachment and recovery of some forest resources such as plants.</p>
(iii) To promote natural regeneration of forest plants and rehabilitation of degraded habitats		v	<p>This objective was partly done because the number of indigenous tree seedlings of 5,000 that was budgeted in the project application was on a slightly lower side compared to the total land area (hectares) to be re-afforested. At the same time, the price of each tree seedlings went up by £0.05 and there was a short of about 833 seedlings. Therefore, about 4,000 tree seedlings were planted in some degraded areas which if translated to percentages, it can be said that about 75% were rehabilitated leaving out 25% of the degraded forest areas un-rehabilitated.</p> <p>The impact of the intervention that has been observed at the end of the project is that in some areas natural regeneration has taken place and together with the</p>

				planted trees, ground cover has been improved and soil erosion has been reduced.
(iv) To lobby the government to accord Nkuwazi Forest a legal status			√	<p>Several consultative meetings and one workshop at both local and national levels were conducted in order to map a way forward on improved managed and conservation of Nkuwazi Forest and its forest resources. The meetings and the workshop drew participants from the Department of Forestry, Department of Agriculture & Food Security, Department of National Parks and Wildlife, The Judiciary, Ministry of Lands, Ministry of Local Government (District Assembly), NGOs, CBOs, traditional chiefs and representatives of local communities.</p> <p>The initiative led to the development of a Policy Bill Proposal which has already been submitted to Government to consider enacting Nkuwazi Forest to be one of the forest reserves so that it can enjoy the maximum protection which is accorded to other protected areas in the country. The Bill has will be sent to Parliament this year so that Parliamentarians can debate before it is enacted into a law. It is our sincerely hope that once the Parliament meet before this year the Bill will be passed into a Law.</p>

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

One of the unforeseen difficulties that arose during the implementation of the project was scarcity of fuel (petrol and diesel) on the local market. This problem made the project team very impossible to implement project activities on time. This problem was tackled by using traditional chiefs and other key profile local communities, including the Government officials from the Departments of Agriculture & Food Security and Forestry who are based in the district to implement some of the project activities as these local and national institutions are located near the project area. Some major activities such as training had to be rescheduled and this prolonged the actual length of the project.

Language was also another problem. In the project area, people do speak Chichewa and Nkhonde. Since Chichewa is our local official language, we assumed during the project development that every community member would be able to understand us in our official local language. However, this was not the case; there were some individuals, especially elderly people who did not understand Chichewa. The only language that they understood much better was Nkhonde. This problem was

tackled by employing a local interpreter who translated Chichewa to Nkhonde and vice versa. This enabled the two sides to understand each other properly.

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

- Establishment farmers clubs who cultivate the endangered devil's claw. The establishment of these clubs will make devil's claw readily available to communities in the area. This effort will help reduce pressures that local communities were exerting on the forest resources in search for this economic plant.
- Formation of management and monitoring committees around Nkuwazi Forest. The committees will help enforce by-laws and ensure that forest resources in the buffer zones are harvested in a sustainable manner. This initiative will help to improve forest and biodiversity recovery in the forest.
- Development and submission of a Policy Bill to Government. It is our hope that one the proposed bill is passed into a law, it will help Nkuwazi Forest to receive maximum protection through the Department of Forestry. This arrangement will therefore, significantly help to reduce encroachment and deforestation in the forest.

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

Local communities were fully involved in all activities and in planning of some activities. It has been observed that local communities involved in the project have acquired new knowledge and skills on project planning, management, control and implementation of various activities and the project team is optimistic that these local communities are now able to carry out any conservation and agri-business project with ease.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, there are plans to continue this work. The project team intends to finish the re-afforestation of the remaining few hectares of land in the forest and create more natural-based entrepreneurship opportunities for local communities so that they should completely stop encroaching the important forest in search for valuable forest resources which they can sell to generate incomes as this has negative impact on the conservation and sustainable management of the forest and its resources.

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

The project team is planning to hold a 1-day stakeholders workshop where different people will present their project and research results to a wide audience.

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 18 months. The period had been slightly longer if compared to the actual length of the project that was laid down in the project document. However, the implementation of the project was prolonged due to unavailability of fuel at the local market as a result of the shortage of Foreign Currencies (USD, GBP) in the Malawian banks.

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
Stationery and supplies	1473.00	1472.90	0.00	
Nursery equipment	2720.00	2720.00	0.00	
Training workshop rental fees	732.30	732.30	0.00	
Environmental education and awareness	900.00	900.80	0.00	
Report writing and disbursement	50.00	50.00	0.00	
Total	5875.20	5876.00	0.80	The project got an additional funding of £0.80 from RSG to make our to have a round figure of £5876

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

The next steps are to strengthen the established community groups and take more on board and also increase their livelihoods to offset pressures that they exert on forest resources.

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, the project team used the RSGF logo on all environmental education materials and communities and other stakeholders were amused with it. Therefore, the RSGF did receive the publicity that it deserved because of the financial assistance that we received for this project.

11. Any other comments?

The project team would like to thank the management of RSGF for the grant which has made our project to reach this end and establish good rapport between ourselves and stakeholders in areas of biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. The project team looks forward to work with RSGF in future.