

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.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details

Your Name	Frank Kasiya (Ph.D)
Project Title	Community Participation In Conservation Of Critically Endangered And Threatened Native Medicinal Plant Species In Nyika National Park, Malawi
RSG Reference	14.09.05
Reporting Period	1 st December 2005 – 1 st December 2006
Amount Of Grant	£4750.00
Your Email Address	Fkasiya@Hotmail.Com
Date Of This Report	20 th May 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
(1) Educate local communities and traditional leaders on the importance of protecting plants of socio-economic importance.			This objective was fully achieved. It was achieved through organising sensitization meetings, public lectures and environmental talks (Fig.1 & 2). These methodologies have helped to stimulate interest and in-depth understanding of the importance of conserving and sustainably utilising medicinal plants and other natural resources.	Ten sensitization meetings were conducted in sixteen villages bordering Nyika National Park. Seven public lectures and ten environmental talks were conducted in three secondary schools and eighteen primary schools. In total, about 2,500 people living around the project area benefited from these environmental sensitization meetings, public lectures and talks. The results of implementation of these activities have significantly helped local communities and stakeholders to be more aware of the environment and developed keen interest in joining the project team in the fight against loss medicinal plants and degradation of the environment in the project area. Further, school pupils have also benefited from this project as 65% of all the pupils in the project area have fully understood the importance of protecting nature and are taking an active part in environmental awareness and protection activities. There are currently fourteen wildlife clubs that have been established in the area with technical assistance and support from their biology and social studies teachers and teachers are also patrons of these clubs. This ensures long term support for environmental protection work to be garnered from these future conservation leaders.
(2). Carry out environmental awareness campaigns on conservation problems associated with over-utilisation of plant species.			This objective was fully achieved through organising drama, local band, traditional songs, informal education (Fig. 3) and distributing 1,000 leaflets	About 105, 000 people in 45 villages surrounding the project area were sensitized about the importance of medicinal plants as they are sources of cheap traditional medicine which cures various diseases, improve income at household level and the economy of the country through sale and also help to ecologically support the ecosystem as medicinal plants are source of food for animals and

			<p>and 2,300 posters on the importance of medicinal plants and problems that arise as a result of over-utilisation. The methods helped the project team to take environmental messages to a wider section of the society.</p>	<p>insects, including man, conserve soil and water, control floods and help in the formation of rains among others. In addition, local communities, stakeholders and schools pupils were also sensitized on the dangers of over-utilising these resources which may end up in increase in poverty among people, increase in diseases, decrease in animal and insect populations and increase in environmental degradation. These activities stimulated interest in people as they had fully understood the importance of conserving and protecting nature. It was observed that many local communities, stakeholders and school pupils joined hands with the project team in the implementation of the project and this assisted in building human capacity at grassroot and regional levels as many people had acquired skills and new knowledge used to effectively conserve nature.</p>
<p>(3) Integrate local communities, traditional healers and stakeholders in management and conservation of the threatened medicinal plant species.</p>			<p>This activity was fully implemented in almost all villages surrounding Nyika National Park. This activity was achieved by deploying the following methodologies:- consultative meetings, participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), advocacy and lobbying and organising short training courses (Fig. 4) to lure them to join us in the implementation of the project.</p>	<p>Twenty four consultative meetings were held in 24 villages surrounding Nyika National Park. This was done to solicit local communities, traditional leaders and healers, and stakeholders' views on what exactly should people be trained on so that they could effectively contribute to the preservation and conservation of the threatened medicinal plant species. In total, 210 people comprising of 56 traditional healers, 17 park managers, 24 foresters, 113 local communities, including 35 school pupils were trained in biodiversity management and conservation, nursery site selection, nursery establishment, seed collection, seed treatment, storage, propagation, seedling management and rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems. This activity had helped many traditional healers, some local communities and stakeholders to collect seeds of critically endangered medicinal plant species of mainly Aloe spp., <i>Azela quanzensis</i>, <i>Prunus africana</i>, <i>Hypoxis goetzii</i> and <i>Catha edulis</i> among others which became</p>

				<p>extinct from Nyika National Park and surrounding villages due to over-utilisation. The project has helped to raise seedlings of many threatened medicinal plants in the area (Fig. 6) and some of them were reintroduced in Nyika National Park thereby preventing these species from locally, national, regionally and globally extinct which could be a great loss to the people.</p>
<p>(4) To advocate and lobby local communities, school pupils and stakeholders to establish wildlife management committees and clubs to protect flora and fauna in the park and other similar areas.</p>			<p>This activity was fully implemented during the project using the following PRA and organising short training courses (Fig. 5).</p>	<p>Forty consultative meetings were conducted in 40 villages that surround Nyika National Park. Eleven schools i.e. primary and secondary schools were visited and sensitised on the importance of establishing natural resources management committees and clubs to safeguard our prestigious natural resources. One of the outputs of this activity was establishment of 10 natural resources management committees and 15 wildlife clubs in various schools surrounding Nyika National Park. In total, 322 people joined the natural resources management committees and clubs (Fig.7). One of the significant achievements was that about 80% of all the people who joined these committees were young people and school pupils. These people were also trained in habitat assessment, monitoring, enforcement of by laws and rehabilitation techniques of degraded habitats. These people had therefore, great opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills in better management, protection, conservation and utilisation of medicinal plants and other natural resources. This increased motivation and interest in implementation of project activities.</p>

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

- (a) Inaccessibility of some seasonal roads in the project area during the months of November and December when the rains start made the roads almost impassable and the project team could not travel to target areas to sensitize local communities and stakeholders about the project and lure them to take active part in the implementation of the project. This was addressed by shifting this activity to the months of March and April when the rains stop. However, it had a negative impact on meeting the deadline for the project.

(b) During the first 15 days of conducting sensitization meetings, many local communities were unwilling to attend our meetings as they thought we were trying to spy on them about people who destroy medicinal and other plants from Nyika National Park. In this case, we went through their traditional leaders (chiefs) who are more influential when it comes to decision-making so that they could convince their subjects that we were there to assist local communities and other stakeholders to conserve natural resources in Nyika National Park, including surrounding areas for their own benefits. It was then observed that when the chiefs called a series of meetings with their subjects in various villages of the project site, attendances to the project sensitization meetings significantly improved as more and more people, including women and young people attended our meetings.

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

(a) Capacity building of grassroot people in nature conservation was one of the most important outcomes of this project. Two hundred and ten local people, including school pupils were trained in prudent nature resources management, assessment and monitoring. They were further trained in nursery management techniques. This will go a long way as people have acquired new knowledge and skills which is going help them to effectively and efficiently protect, conserve, manage and sustainably utilise natural resources for the benefit of the present and future generations.

(b) Establishment of 20 tree nurseries around the project area. This has helped local communities and stakeholders to rehabilitate degraded parts of Nyika National Park and reintroduce in the wild medicinal plant species that at one time became extinct from the area due to over-utilisation. Further, some of the seedlings raised are sold to the department of forestry and the European Union Micro project Unit and the committees and wildlife clubs generate some money for implementation of their activities in the area. This has helped to promote nature conservation work in the three districts surrounding Nyika National Park as more and more degraded ecosystems are being rehabilitated using native tree seedlings produced by local natural resources management committees and wildlife clubs established in the area.

(c) Increase in assimilation of environmental knowledge by local communities, teachers, pupils and other stakeholders. As many people were reached and sensitised in the importance of conserving nature and the dangers that arise as a result of abusing nature, it was then observed that more and more people, including young people and women started supporting and taking active part the implementation of the project. This clearly shows that they benefited a lot from the environmental education and awareness that were conducted in their respective areas as they had acquired in-depth understanding of the importance of nature and why it is important to conserve and protect it and they also fully understand that abuse of nature can result in devastating negative effects such as shortage of food, medicinal products, loss of soil and fertility, occurrence of floods, loss of wildlife, increase in poverty among the people and many other problems.

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

The involvement of local communities was overwhelming. He project team received and witnessed massive support from local communities, traditional chiefs and the departments of National Parks and Wildlife, and Forestry. This was evidenced by large attendance of local communities, youths,

traditional healers, traditional leaders and school pupils to our sensitization meetings, awareness campaigns and short training workshops that we conducted in many villages around the project site. With such commitments, the project team believes that local communities, including school children and their teachers will continue to take an active role in conservation of nature in the project area and this will make pragmatic and long lasting solution to nature conservation in the country.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

On behalf of the project team, I would like to inform your office that I am planning to continue this work in other parts of this country where many tree species particularly those species which provide local communities, local pharmaceutical industries and other stakeholders with traditional medicinal plant products and timber are highly threatened of extinction. This is so because, people only know how to unsustainably harvest them and do not know how they can replace them back in the wild for the benefit of the present and future generations. I strongly believe that these environmental problems can only be addressed through environmental education, awareness and strengthening human capacity building at grassroot level so that they should fully understand and develop interest in nature conservation and eventually become responsible citizens. There are also more and more people in the project area who are knocking on our door to seek technical assistance on nursery management and propagation of medicinal plant species. With this commitment, I would like to say I am interested to continue this work so that many people are trained and are capable of raising seedlings for their own use and this will offset over dependency on forest resources thereby promoting nature conservation in the area.

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

I am pleased to inform your office that I would like to have a one day brainstorming workshop on preservation of traditional medicinal plants in Malawi. We are planning to conduct this workshop members of Traditional Medicine Umbrella of Malawi, Department of Forestry, Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Forestry Research Institute of Malawi, Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust and the Ministry of Health. The aim of this workshop is to map sound strategies on how best we can rescue the dwindling populations of our native plants which provide us with traditional medicines and to elect as Chairman to look into the implementation of this work.

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

This work was implemented in 15 months. The time taken to implement the activities of this project was a bit longer simply because of the unforeseen circumstances as mentioned above such as inaccessible roads during rainy season hampered the implementation of activities. As a result, we had to reschedule some of these activities to ensure that they were all implemented. This therefore affected our adherence to anticipated time schedule of the project.

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.

The prevailing exchange rate at the time of the project execution was £1 = MK161, MK = Malawi Kwacha our local currency.

Item	Budgeted Amount £	Actual Amount £	Difference £	Comments
<u>Farm inputs & tools</u>				
-50 kgs of medicinal tree seeds @ £1.50/kg.	75.00	75.00	0.00	
-2,000 seedlings of medicinal plant species @ £0.4/seedling.	4000.00	400.00	0.00	
-8,000 polythene bags @ £0.04/bag	320.00	320.00	0.00	
-20 water cans @ £2.00/water can.	40.00	40.00	0.00	
-8 Wheel barrows @ £15.50/wheel barrow.	124.00	124.00	0.00	
-10 hoes @ £1.50/hoe.	15.00	15.00	0.00	
-20 rakes @ £1.00/rake.	20.00	20.00	0.00	
-20 panga knives @ £1.50/knife.	30.00	30.00	0.00	
Sub-total	1,024.00	1,024.00	0.00	
<u>Stationery & supplies</u>				
-20 reams of photocopying paper (A4) @ £4.50/ream	90.00	90.00	0.00	
-10 reams of photocopying paper (A3) @ £6.00/ream.	60.00	60.00	0.00	
-5 Toner cartilage @ £51.00/cartilage.	255.00	255.00	0.00	
-2 flash disks @ £48.50/flash disk	97.00	97.00	0.00	
-5 boxes of pens @ £2.00/box	10.00	10.00	0.00	
-2 boxes of magic markers @ £8.50/box.	17.00	17.00	0.00	
-5 rolls of flip charts @ £3.80/chart	19.00	19.00	0.00	
-15 pairs of batteries for a camera @ £4.00/pair	60.00	60.00	0.00	
Sub-total	608.00	608.00	0.00	

<u>Transport</u>				
-Fuel assist in covering a distance of 20,160km.	2,520.00	2,520.00	0.00	
The cost of 1 litre of fuel was £0.75.	20.00	20.00	0.00	
-20 bottles(250ml) of oil @ £1.00/l				
Sub-Total	2,540.00	2,540.00	0.00	
<u>Wages</u>				
-wages for 2 temporary workers @ £30/month x 2 months	120.00	120.00	0.00	
Sub-Total	120.00	120.00	0.00	
<u>Communication</u>				
-telephone, internet, e-mail, fax estimated.	250.00	250.00	0.00	
-postage stamps	80.00	80.00	0.00	
Sub-Total	330.00	330.00	0.00	
<u>Final reports writing and binding</u>				
-10 copies of Technical reports	80.00	80.00	0.00	
-4 copies of financial reports	48.00	48.00	0.00	
Sub-Total	128.00	128.00	0.00	
TOTAL	4,750.00	4,750.00	0.00	

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

I strongly feel that the next important steps are:-

- (a) To lobby and mobilise traditional chiefs to acquire knowledge and skills in good governance and nature conservation because we have seen that when leaders have interest in nature conservation, it is very easier for their subjects to follow suit i.e. to also take an active part in conservation of nature but when leaders do not have interest in nature conservation and if they are also corrupt, it is very difficult for their subjects to obey nature conservation laws and to take active part in the conservation work. It is therefore, very crucial that traditional chiefs in all villages of the project area must be trained and made aware of principles, laws and acts of nature conservation and taught their responsibilities in relation to nature conservation.
- (b) To establish more wildlife clubs in schools in many parts of the country. This will help to stimulate interest and cultivate a continual in-depth understanding and appreciation of nature conservation in the future leaders.
- (c) To introduce the subject of nature conservation and management in primary school curriculum. His will help to build a deep understanding and appreciation of nature in many school children

and eventually they will have a continual in-depth interest in nature conservation and protection and hence will become good future leaders.

- (d) To continue with environmental education in some villages that were omitted during the project implementation due to their proximity. This will help local communities to fully understand and appreciate the importance of protecting and conserving nature as environmental education is a powerful tool for nature conservation.

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, I used the RSGF logo on the environmental education materials printed and distributed to local communities, schools, government offices and other NGOs working in the three districts. The outcome of the activity show that the RSGF indeed received the publicity as many people approached us in order to learn more about the objectives of the project and whether we work with traditional healers in Malawi. Further, more and more school children and their teachers took active part in the implementation of the project.

11. Any other comments?

The long term management objective of this project is to build local human capacity of the project area through environmental education and awareness and hands-on-doing so that local communities should become responsible citizens who are cautious of their surrounding environment and have devoted interest in conservation, sustainable management and use of nature to ensure that it is readily available for the benefit of the present and future generations. I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Management of the Rufford Laing Foundation for the financial grant that it rendered to me for the conservation of the critically endangered and threatened native medicinal plants and other socio-economic plant species in Nyika National Park. The grant has significantly helped to positively realise the objectives and the goals of this project such that many local communities and stakeholders have acquired new skills and knowledge on effective conservation of nature in general. The skills and knowledge acquired will help them to embark on any conservation work on their own without always relying on external technical personnel.