

## 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Benjamin De Ridder
<b>Project title</b>	HONKO Mangrove Conservation and Education project in SW Madagascar
<b>RSG reference</b>	23.08.09
<b>Reporting period</b>	08.09 – 12.10
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£ 6000
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:deridder_benjamin@yahoo.com">deridder_benjamin@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2011

**1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Not achieved</b>	<b>Partially achieved</b>	<b>Fully achieved</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Continuous surveying of local communities in order to evaluate the effects of our project</b>			Fully achieved	With the help of three socio-organisers we kept a close look on changing patterns in behaviour of local communities towards durable management of their resources. We saw a clear shift towards a more responsible behaviour.
<b>Control surveys of replanted mangrove areas and training of local populations in monitor and evaluation techniques</b>			Nearly fully achieved	Continuous training was given to local population as well as research students to identify success rates of replanted areas and possible negative triggers.
<b>Develop and elaborate the community mangrove information centre</b>			Fully achieved	Regional and national recognition is starting to come as more community groups visit the Centre and learn from our experiences.
<b>Establish an informative boardwalk</b>			Nearly fully achieved	Over 1 km of mangrove boardwalk brings visitors right up to the main channel while learning more about mangroves with the help of a herbarium walk as well as five big informative panels.
<b>Develop an environmental education programme for visiting schools and youth groups</b>		Partially achieved		More and more schools (private and public) gain interest in visiting our mangroves. A first environmental education curriculum was put together and tested out on visiting groups. We still have to improve our complete school package with pre- and post-visits to the classroom.
<b>Support the creation of local mangrove conservation committees</b>			Fully achieved	'Mamelo Honko' is the local mangrove and wetland management committee grouping the five villages. Recognised by the authorities it is continuously growing and already comprises over 300 members.
<b>Continuous formation of committee members</b>			Fully achieved	Regular training sessions help form committee members in financial and secretarial matters, as well as leadership skills are being taught.

Capacity building of local fishermen and natural resource collectors		Partially achieved		Local fishermen start to see the benefit of permits and strict management of the mangroves as they see improved catch/effort ratios.
Creation of core mangrove reserves			Fully achieved	Local people helped paint the boundaries of the core areas and local guardians control access.
Sustainable and alternative livelihood development			Nearly fully achieved	One of the biggest success stories is our training program regarding artisanal
Alternative Energy Programme	Not achieved			Due to local traditions and encountered problems regarding filling the biogas cylinder, we didn't continue with this programme.

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

We worked with a local consultant to establish the mangrove conservation committee and this process took around 6 weeks, including general awareness campaigns in the five different villages. Afterwards we realised this process had been too fast and due to misunderstanding and communication problems, certain crucial regulations weren't as ideal as we had wanted. Afterwards we held some village meetings to discuss certain items that had or still has to be altered.

We also had some difficulties creating our informative panels, as this only could be achieved in the capital and several times the publishing companies had technical issues.

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

*1. Emerging local management committee and continued restoration of the degraded mangroves*

In 1 year the newly created local Mangrove Committee has been very promising. In a few months time over 300 people from the five villages surrounding the wetlands signed up with the association to be part in future decision making and to be able to keep utilising their natural resources. In 2010 over 20,000 mangrove trees have been planted by the local association and community members. The local guardians also grew into their role as mangrove ambassadors and really educate the local people about the benefits of durable exploitation.

## *2. Promising pilot project of alternative livelihoods promotion*

In one year time over 100 natural crafts have been woven and sold by the local reed cutters. A collaboration has started with local luxury hotel to make specialised unique handbags. Training and practicing is still going on to end up with a 'high quality' product aimed at international level. Local fishermen also raised and sold over 40 kg of mangrove crabs. Most of these crabs have been sold to local hotels and resident expats.

## *3. Successful 1 year tourism and development boardwalk*

2010 was the inaugural year for the ecotourism site of our project. In total 180 international visitors and over 400 local students explored the mangroves and wetlands on our developed boardwalk. We are pleased with this result as Madagascar has been already 2 years in a national political crisis and international visitor numbers have been low.

We are now able to offer different mangrove circuits and different viewing platforms make the visit really worthwhile.

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

Firstly all construction work of the boardwalk, viewing tower and bird hide have been done by local people. Our target was to give as many people the possibility the change to gain an alternative livelihood during the construction period. In total over 50 people participated with these activities.

For each of our alternative livelihood projects, different focal groups of the local population were targeted: the reed-cutters were approached to take part in artisanal crafts training, the fishermen were asked to participate in crab-fattening culture workshops and the farmers were targeted to attend our beekeeping programme. In total over 50 individuals took part in one of these workshops to promote alternative management and exploitation of the mangrove and wetland resources. In total more than 50 kg of crab and over 200 artisanal products have been sold last year.

With the creation of the local mangrove committee our aim was to include as many local households within this association. It is important to demonstrate the advantage of becoming member of this local management group, not only to participate in management decisions but also to obtain cheaper permits and rights to utilise the local natural resources. People from outside one of the five local villages cannot become member, and cannot freely or unauthorised have access to the natural resources. Until now over 300 persons became member of this association.

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

We continuously look for new funding to enable us to guarantee the success of our project on a long run. Especially after a recent study that showed proof of the regional importance for birdlife of the adjacent wetlands and mangroves, we are determined to enlarge our activities and organise exchange visits between different communities to learn from each other.

We are also in the planning process of creating an audiovisual tool to aid other communities, associations, institutions in Madagascar to manage or ecologically restore their mangroves in a durable way.

The start-up of our alternative livelihood program has proved very successful. We are looking into enlarging this programme with aquaculture. We are also looking into constructing an attractive shop in the village to attract tourists in buying the beautiful hand-made items.

We are also planning to organise exchange visits with other communities which have similar ecosystems and are in need to restore and protect the mangrove ecosystems. Several community groups already approached us for advice. These kinds of exchange visits between communities are continuously being admitted to be successful if well organised and a suitable follow up exists.

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

We keep our support groups updated through our website (own and Facebook). We are also writing up articles about our successful community reforestation programme for upcoming conferences.

We are also being published in the new Bradt guide, which can bring extra tourism to our site. Through our partnership with the local university and WWF, a lot of visitors come to our site to learn from our experiences. We also envision organising various exchange visits to strengthen both our own association as well as other local associations.

We also recently had a documentary made by a visiting crew from the national Belgian television, which will be broadcasted at the end of this year in Belgium.

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

We actually needed more time than anticipated. We were planning to utilise our funding over a time span of 1 year, instead we needed 18 months to accomplish our goals. The delay mainly had to do with technical problems of publishing, as well as certain delays in organising our alternative livelihood workshops in partnership with a local institution CITE.

#### **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
Socioeconomic Surveys and Participative Research	500	415	-85	
Awareness raising program and environmental education	2000	2264	+264	
Capacity strengthening programme	500	566	+66	
Creation of core mangrove reserves (logistics support)	200	254	+54	
Sustainable and Alternative livelihood development	1500	1975	+475	
Alternative Energy Program	800	94	-706	
Project manager per diem	500	500	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6000</b>	<b>6068</b>	<b>+68</b>	

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

Two steps must be taken to ensure the continued success of the project: promotion of adequate alternative livelihoods for the local population and increased advertising regarding the ecological and cultural visits.

We intend to engage more fishermen in durable aquaculture techniques as well as the creation of a village shop to attract possible visitors in buying their artisanal products.

**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?**

We have used the logo on panels alongside main road indicating the newly created mangrove committees in the 5 villagers, as well as on the informative panels along the mangrove boardwalk. We also used the logo on our website as in our newsletters and information brochures.