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 R,ecipient Details	
Your name	Stella Sofasi
Project title	Research and eradication programme of invasive alien plants causing massive loss of indigenous biodiversity at Nyika National Park
RSG reference	30.12.08
Reporting period	May 2009 – September 2010
Amount of grant	£5991
Your email address	stelsofas@yahoo.co.uk
Date of this report	August 30, 2010

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
To conduct systematic surveys to identify, assess abundance and distribution of Alien Invasive Species (AIP)				This activity was 100% achieved. Bracken fern, Rubus ellipticus, pine stands and Lantana camara were major invasive alien plants documented and were causal agents of loss of indigenous biodiversity in areas where the plants colonised. Rivers and streams are colonised by water lettuce and Azolla nilotica. The results showed that bracken fern was more diverse (1-D = 0.81, $p < 0.0001$) at Nyika than any other AIP. This was followed by pine (1-D =0.24). The results further showed that almost two thirds of montane grassland where wildlife used to live is now colonised by bracken fern. Twenty AIP monitoring plots have been established. They will significantly help detect the resurfacing of AIP that had been removed from almost all infested areas. Further, a database of AIPs of Nyika has been established to assist conservationists and researchers in mitigating the impacts of AIPs.
To conduct environmental education and awareness campaigns to local communities, stakeholders and policymakers on the impacts of AIPs				This objective has been 100%. At present, The impacts of this objective is that about 620,973 local communities living around the project area had access to AIP information which include types of AIPs, their threats to biodiversity and economy, and how to control the AIPs. The information was distributed to local communities, stakeholders and policymakers through radio and TV programmes, posters, leaflets and public talks, lectures and seminars
To integrate local communities and stakeholders in eradication of AIPs to create conducive environment for				This objective was also 85% achieved. 35 stakeholders comprised of 24 men, 11 women and 5 national park scouts were trained in various tools/methods (slashing, cutting, burning, digging) used in eradication of AIPs. The results had been 25 ha out of the 32

indigenous plants				ha of land that were colonised by AIPs have been cleared of pine, Rubus ellipticus, bracken fern. However, due to limited financial resources, manpower and financial inflation which resulted in hike of prices of commodity (fuel, lubricants) on the market, funds allocated for this activity was observed to be inadequate and as a result few hectares have not yet been cleared off AIPs mainly the bracken fern.
To establish community and sectoral based AIPs management, monitoring and eradication committees around the park				This objective was fully achieved as 10 AIPs management and monitoring committees have been established in villages around the park. Committee members have been trained in eradication of AIPs, monitoring and management. In total there are 324 members from 13 villages.Fig. 6. One of the committees established at Chisanga School.
To reforestate AIPs colonised areas using community groups and stakeholders				This objective was fully 80% achieved as 1,500 stakeholders were trained in tree nursery establishment and management. They were also trained in forest management. The result has been establishment of 20 tree nurseries with a total of about 50,000 tree seedlings being raised and some were used in the rehabilitation and restoration of areas that were previously infested with AIPs.Fig. 7. One of the communal tree nurseries that was established at Mbuzizinandi.

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

Some active community members silently quit the implementation of the project activities because they were expecting to be paid after work even though they were told before the project implementation that the project was for their own benefit. This was tackled by lobbying the village headmen/women so that they could encourage and convince their subjects that the project was indeed beneficial to them. In addition, communities were told that the tree seedlings to be raised would be sold to the project for reforestation of degraded sites and this initiative motivated a good number of them to rejoin the project team.

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

- Eradication of some AIPs. This has significantly helped reduced the populations of AIPs in the park and has in turn created a natural conducive environment for indigenous plants and animals.
- Reforestation of some sites previously colonised by AIPs. This has greatly helped create a natural conducive environment for both wildlife and plant species in the park and the coming back of wildlife in these restored areas could promote eco-tourism which is one of the economic areas that contribute to the national GDP and create employment for local communities living nearby.
- Establishment of AIPs management, monitoring and eradication stakeholder committees. These committees will greatly help in detecting early resurfacing and appearing of new species of AIPs in the park and the committees work hand in hand with the Department of National Parks. Early detection of AIPs is more important because the problem can be addressed with very little financial and human resources than when the problem is well developed and deeply rooted.

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

- Local communities that were involved in the project had played a very big role to ensure that AIPs that were identified were eradicated even though not all populations quantified were eradicated due to inadequate final resources.
- Local community groups have also acquired and assimilated new knowledge and skills in eradication of AIPs, monitoring, management; tree nursery establishment and management and have also developed a good rapport with staff of the national park.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

As I have already indicated above, the major plan of the project was to eradicate all AIPs that were identified and quantified in the park. However, due to inadequate financial resources only 78.1% of the land cover colonised by AIPs have been cleared and reforestated and this means that 21.9% of land colonised by AIPs have not yet been cleared of AIPs. This means that there are still problems and challenges which need to be addressed if effective conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity in the park is to be achieved. Yes, I have plans to continue with this work and ensure that all AIPs are eradicated and areas restored to create a nature environment for all biodiversity.

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

I am planning to share the results of the project with other stakeholders working in environmental protection and nature conservation at the workshop to be organised later this year by the National Research Council of Malawi.

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. It has been noted that the project had been behind schedule by two months when compared to the anticipated actual length of the project indicated in the project document.

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 (paper, flip charts, inkjet, flash disks, field notebooks, magic pens and pens)	909.50	909.50	0.00	
Field and Tree Nursery Equipment (slashers, wheelbarrows, polythene tubes, hoes, watering cans, machete, etc.)	1,330.00	1,330.00	0.00	
Environmental education and awareness materials (posters, leaflets, calendars, etc)	1,510.50	1,510.50	0.00	
Subsistence allowance from our organisation	8,880.00	8,880.00	0.00	
Transport expenses	1,051.00	1,800.00	(749)	We had to source this additional money from our organisation. The problem arose due to inflation which caused the price of fuel and lubricants to increase.
Training of various community groups	380.00	520.00	(140)	Funds were underestimated and we had to source additional money of £140 from our organisation to ensure that all community groups were trained as planned.
Communication (internet, telephone, fax, postage)	850.00	850.00	0.00	
Reports (technical & financial reports)	60.00	60.00	0.00	
Sub-total	14,971.00	15,859.50	(889.00)	
TOTAL FUNDING RECEIVED FROM RSGF	**5,991.00**			

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

The next important steps to ensure sustainable biodiversity conservation are completion of eradication of AIPs and promotion of livelihood programmes for poor local communities living around the park

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, during the environmental education and awareness campaigns, the RSGF logo was used. The general public were happy to learn that the project was funded by RSGF and were looking forward to learning more about other funding opportunities that RSGF offer besides nature conservation grants.