

The Rufford Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford 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	Yves Pacifique Gakunde
Project title	Assessing the relationship between ecosystem services and socioeconomic wellbeing of communities. Does payment for ecosystem services matter?
RSG reference	23291-1
Reporting period	
Amount of grant	£5,000
Your email address	ygakunde@antioch.edu
Date of this report	March 15, 2019

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
Identify the resources from tropical forest ecosystems used by communities and look for the signs of human presence in the forest				A detailed report of the resources used by members of the communities around this protected area has been developed and illegal activities observed during the field work have been documented and a detailed report will be shared with the Forest of Hope Association currently managing this newly protected area.
Understand the socioeconomic wellbeing of communities				<p>The four communities that were studied demonstrated a heavy reliance on forest resources such as land for farming, medicinal plants, firewood for cooking, trees to use when building houses.</p> <p>These communities are classified as low to middle income communities where nearly 85% of members struggle to feed their families (large families with average of four children per family).</p> <p>Among the potential factors to motivate these communities to engage in biodiversity conservation include availability of land for farming away from the park, direct cash payments to be used for starting small businesses, assistance with health care and school fees for the children.</p> <p>These communities would also love to be involved in decision making over projects that affect their livelihoods such as the ongoing project to expand the boundaries of the park.</p> <p>These communities would also like to be the ones taking decisions when it comes to who should receive support from the government. A good percentage of interviewees agreed that the government could decide for</p>

				them how much money could be given to an individual for his/her activities that support biodiversity conservation.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

- ✚ Delay in starting the project: As Gishwati Forest became a national protected area, research permits are supposed to be received before starting any research within the forest or around the forest. With the bureaucracy often observed in developing countries, I had a hard time getting the permit to be able to start on time. I had to go to Rwanda to be able to push my request.
- ✚ Financial challenge: what I had budget was under the actual budget for this research. Since the beginning of 2018, prices went up in Rwanda due to tax increases and high demand with less businesses to satisfy the demand. To be able to complete my research, I had to take a family loan and cut down significantly my living expenses.
- ✚ Hard time scheduling interviews: while in the field, it was not that easy to schedule meetings with local leaders to talk about this research and be able to get them involved. However, by building trust, I gained their interests and the four local community leaders were involved in two phases of this research (interviews and focus groups). When there are no monetary benefits, people in Rwanda show less interest in participating in research. It takes time to build relationships and trust to the point where there will be a good participation.

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

A good understanding of the communities' perceptions about biodiversity conservation of this newly protected area and their wishes related to the decisions to expand and protect this forest. Communities' inputs should have been a priority before implementing any decisions to protect this forest. As this was not the case, communities are reluctant in being involved in the protection of the forest. These communities are also upset about the way the expansion of this forest is being done which is affecting their lands that were dedicated to farming and are the main source of resources for their livelihoods.

I am currently drafting guidance to be taken into consideration when establishing a new forested protected area in the context of a developing country where people directly rely on the forest to be protected.

As the focus groups brought together community leaders, environmental management leaders, and members of the communities, these members had a chance to express their frustrations, wishes, and expectations to be considered for a successful collaboration in the management of this park. In the past 5 years, this was

the only time community members had a chance to be with their local leaders and other stakeholders talking about just environmental issues and biodiversity conservation.

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

As mentioned above, four focus groups gave a chance to members of the four communities (that were involved in this research) to interact with their local leaders and other leaders in biodiversity conservation in the area. The talks were 100% focused on how to meet the socio-economic wellbeing of communities in the proximities of the park while conserving this park.

Local leaders and those involved in the management of this park agreed to continue discussions beyond this research.

Both local leaders and communities' members had a chance to express themselves. Their ideas and comments will be compiled in my dissertation that will be shared with those involved in environmental policy making in Rwanda.

Five community members working as a conservation education and outreach volunteers were hired during this research to assist with getting around in the communities, finding identified interviewees, scheduling meetings, and observations in the forest.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Absolutely yes. One of the ideas that were born during the field work is to do an evaluation of the current project that worked on expanding the park's boundaries which affected many members of the communities who have their lands in the proximities of the forest. The expansion of the park boundaries created frustrations among members of the communities and as many communities' members expressed their frustrations and anger towards biodiversity conservation, I would love to explore more about the issue of conflicts between human beings and biodiversity conservation around protected areas.

I am looking forward to returning to Rwanda early to the mid-next year to explore these conflicts.

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

I am currently doing data analysis and my hope is to complete my dissertation by early 2020. This dissertation will be in the format of three publishable papers which I plan to publish.

I will also be going back to Rwanda to make presentations to various conservation organisations that I belong to such as the Rwandan Conservation Forum, the Network for Biodiversity conservationists and practitioners in the Albertine Rift region,

the University of Rwanda, the Center of Excellence in Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resource Management, etc.

At the end of April 2019, I am scheduled to give a presentation about my research at Antioch University. This conservation forum is organised by the Center for Tropical Ecology at Antioch University New England.

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

The Rufford funds was used from October 2018 through February 2019. As mentioned above, there was a significant delay in starting the research mainly because of research permits that were delayed.

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
Ground transportation	2000	3275	+1275	Due to high demand in car rental and transportation in general in Rwanda and fuel increase due to tax increase, the budgeted amount was way too low compared to the budget I ended up having for just transportation in the field.
Stipend for two (2) research assistants	3000	2900	-100	One of the research assistants missed some days of work as she had a training that was organized by the University of Rwanda and the Rwanda Environmental Management Authority. This amount was used to cover part of the difference in ground transportation.
Lodging for the Team		1500	+1500	The cost of living has increased especially in Kigali where we stayed for part of the research. I had a hard time securing a house where my research team and I would stay during data collection.

				As it was not advisable to live in tents, I ended up renting a house and had to purchase basic furniture for the house. This was costly but I ended up leaving the equipment with an organization that does conservation work in the area where my field research was. The plan for this organization is building a research house where researchers will be staying at this new park Is attracting many researchers.
Living expenses for the team	1000		-1000	
TOTAL	5000	7675	+1675	

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

- ✚ Evaluating the landscape approach to forest restoration and conservation project to understand communities' frustrations and resistance about biodiversity conservation (one of my research assistants got interested in doing this analysis and I am looking forward to working with her)
- ✚ Motivating those involved in the management of the park and the local leaders to engage members of the communities to best they can.
- ✚ Share my research outcomes with those involved in environmental decision-making in Rwanda and insisting on the role of engaging members of the communities (around the park) in achieving sustainable management of this new protected area.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did The Rufford Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes! I used the Rufford Foundation logo: 1) on the presentations I made at Antioch University New England, 2) on the printed questionnaires that were shared with stakeholders in environmental protection during interviews, 3) I also verbally addressed my gratitude to Rufford Foundation during this research especially when interviewees were signing informed consent forms, and 4) the logo as well as the recognition of Rufford's contribution in making this research a possibility will have space in my dissertation book.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Professor Beth A Kaplin, Research advisor and helped with research permits, field planning, and the content of the research document.

Dr. Jean Kayira helped especially with the methodology used for data collection and is the second reader on my dissertation committee.

Professor Herman Musahara assisted with understanding the socioeconomic aspect of this research and revising questions to be able to capture the current reality of the community wellbeing in Rwanda.

Dorine Intwarinkase helped with data collection (forest observations, interviews, focus groups, and data entry).

Alphonse Nyandwi helped with data collection (forest observations, interviews, focus groups, and data entry).

Thierry Aimable manager of Forest of Hope Association (currently managing Gishwati forest) helped with scheduling meeting with local leaders and introduced my research team to the four communities we studied.

Peter Ntawuheziminsi, Celestin Ndindabahizi, Pierre Habufite, and Esperance Bareberaho (community volunteers working with the Forest of Hope Association in the forest protection and community engagement) helped with connecting with members of the communities, getting around in the communities, and getting to know the people we identified for interviews.

Damascene Uwanyirijuru (from the Forest of Hope Association) helped with forest observations. Without him, we would have been lost in the forest.

12. Any other comments?

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for the delay in getting this report together. The field had its own unforeseen realities that were challenging but the import is that by staying focused and positive, this research was a success.

I would like to thank the Rufford Foundation for making this research possible. Without this funding, there was no way I was going to pull this together. I would always be thankful to the Rufford Foundation for contributing to my doctoral program by making this research grant available.

I am looking forward to staying in touch with the Rufford Foundation as I will be exploring potential research projects for Rwanda and especially around protected areas in Rwanda. A comparative analysis could be a good indicator of how biodiversity conservation in Rwanda could be done without jeopardizing the socioeconomic wellbeing of those who directly depend on natural resources.