

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Bethlehem Abebe Astella
Project Title	Examining the effects of community-based conservation on social and conservation outcomes: Evidence from joint controlled hunting areas, Bale Mountains Ethiopia
Application ID	27908-1
Grant Amount	£5000
Email Address	bethyabebe@gmail.com
Date of this Report	4/21/2020

1. 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
Examining the effects of the CHA program on community’s perception of social equity				Through a qualitative study we have generated a nuanced description of the individual characteristics, socio-economic and political contextual factors shaping equity.
Examining differences in perceptions of social equity within and across communities				We have also generated a descriptive information on the governance characteristics that affect perceptions of social equity across different communities. We have finalised the collection of quantitative survey data and are currently assessing equity perceptions in four different communities found in two controlled hunting areas.
Assessing the effects of social equity perceptions on conservation attitudes and behaviour?				We have finalised the collection of quantitative survey data and are currently analysing the effects of social equity on conservation behaviour.

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

Survey Data Collection

We had run into an active political unrest in our study area that had impacted our ability to travel to the Bale Mountains in the Summer of 2019 as previously scheduled. This in turn pushed our data collection to December 2019-January 2020. We were able to maintain close contact and coordinate with our project partners on the ground, keeping up to date with the best times to travel and collect our data. We had to avoid travelling during the harvest season in early autumn to avoid inconvenience and ensure availability of our respondents and field assistants. Finally, we managed to get our data collection completed in the winter of 2020.

Navigating our way through the political unrest required our constant versatility. The biggest challenge in this aspect was the uncertainty of how things would transpire in any number of months, weeks or sometimes even days. Our local contacts on the ground including our collaborators played invaluable roles in continually keeping us updated with the latest, facilitating our logistics such as finding key gatekeepers. We made changes as circumstances on the ground required us to. Some of the changes included the changing research sites and establishing prior rapport with

the communities we were going to as far as who we are and what the purpose of our research is.

Throughout the collaborative process, we have developed a first-hand experience on the skills of crafting and sustaining meaningful relationships with various actors. We have also developed a nuanced understanding on the importance of commitment, adaptability, mutual respect, trust and communication as being key elements that sustain a collaborative process in the face of several unforeseeable challenges.

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

- We evaluated the perceptions of the equitability of a controlled hunting programme in the region which is helping inform the design of more inclusive and equitable conservation programme. Presently, efforts are underway to scale up the new CHA conservation model to five other hunting areas.
- By assessing the linkages of equity and conservation outcomes, we are supporting and contributing to improving the ongoing efforts of our collaborators on the design, monitoring and evaluation of a wildlife conservation programme. Improved conservation practices in the Bale Mountains will have critical conservation value for the protection of endangered and endemic mountain nyala (*Tragelaphus buxtoni*) and its habitat. Given the conservation significance of the hunting areas to mountain nyala, it is essential that CHA programmes provide meaningful involvement and equitable benefit opportunities to different groups of the surrounding local communities.
- We have built vital professional networks, collected baseline data and identified future research questions that will be indispensable inputs to the ongoing and upcoming collaborative research and action in the study area.

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

We sought to apply the principles of social equity and reciprocity throughout the research process starting from the early stages of data collection through the final phase of disseminating results. We have included diverse group of local community in the process of defining our research question and collecting data. We also plan to share our results with different community groups through community workshops.

Our findings are highlighting under-researched issues of power, access to benefits, and trade-offs resulting from conservation programmes. By developing a locally grounded and nuanced understanding of how different groups and individuals perceive the costs and benefits of conservation programmes, the study is contributing to devising approaches between local communities and practitioners that enhance meaningful involvement and equitable benefit opportunities for all groups within local communities. Thus, the research contributes to the inclusion of

diverse and grounded community perspectives on in current and upcoming design and monitoring of the CHA programme.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, based on preliminary results and the feedback from our collaborators on our findings, there is an imminent need for evidence-based decision making in the evaluation and implementation of community-based programmes in the Bale Mountains. We want to continue with our research works where we plan to use our collected data and results towards co-developing indicators and programme theories for effective community-based conservation programmes in the study area.

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

In addition to scientific peer reviewed journal articles, we plan to hold a final workshop in which we will have diverse representatives from community groups and implementing government and non-governmental organisations. The goal of the workshop is to serve as a platform to bring together relevant stakeholders and discuss collaborative conservation approaches in light of our findings.

To enhance fair access in the distribution of the research findings to broader groups in the community, we will conduct separate workshops in community venues where community groups from each sample kebele will have access to participate. These meetings will be held with sub-groups such as women, youth, men as well as community leaders, based on what we have learnt about the importance of these different groupings in our qualitative research. In sharing findings with different groups of the local community, we will work with local facilitators and translators to simplify results using visuals, demonstrations and discussions to ensure the language and terms are well understood by the local community. Finally, we will synthesise the inputs from these workshops in the form of a summary document to give back to the conservation organisations.

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

The initial projected time scale of the project was summer 2019 to autumn 2019. The project was completed between summer of 2019 and spring of 2020. As mentioned above, this was due to the inability to make the field trip in the summer of 2019 given the impending political instability in Ethiopia. But we have now accomplished the collection of our data and are finalising the writing of our results.

8. Budget: 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. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
International Transportation	298	1065	+767	The full airfare was covered through the Rufford grant. We originally planned to cover part of airfare through an external funding. That funding application was not successful and paid full airfare through Rufford.
Domestic Transportation	1532	1241	-291	Used a local rental company and driver at a discounted rate
Driver per diem	63		-63	
Communication	47		-47	
Field Assistants per diem	1667	1396	-264	
Questionnaire printing cost	100	125	+25	Pretesting and correction cost added
Food	450	35	-415	Refreshment for facilitators in each village
Accommodation	833	90	396	Was able to save cost utilizing local food and accommodation and food in the Bale Mountains
Supplies/ Buying notebooks		8	+8	Purchased local products and was cheaper
Print policy brief	10		-10	
Sub-total	5000	3960	-1040	
University overhead cost		898	+898	
Passport/Visa		142	+142	Visa expired while on travel and renewed this
TOTAL	5000	5000		

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

We plan to conduct a workshop where we will share the results with community groups and collaborators in the Bale Mountains in the autumn of 2020 to spring 2021. We also plan to co-develop and refine our research questions for the next phase of our research. We are planning to develop programme theories and indicators that best reflect the perspectives of diverse group of local actors.

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

We have communicated our funding source to the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, the Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise and the public at Colorado State University where we have shared the proposal and preliminary results. We have not yet finalised the results and publication of our papers based on the Rufford grant. We will give appropriate recognition to the Rufford in all upcoming publications and other public communication platforms.

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

Bethlehem Astella has worked in Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources for over five years as teaching and research assistant. As part of her job in the college's research and community outreach mission, she has been involved in initiating and supporting grassroots level community conservation projects in BMNP as well as other protected areas in Southern Ethiopia. Bethlehem was involved as a PI, making developing relationships, collecting field data, analysing and interpreting results.

Dr. Kelly Jones is an associate professor in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources with extensive research and applied experience on topics of payments for ecosystem services, impact evaluation, land tenure and property rights, and drivers of land cover change. Dr Kelly was closely involved as a Co-PI involved in mentoring, advising, facilitating and overseeing the field work as well as data analysis and interpretation.

Dr. Paul Evangelista a Research Ecologist at Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory at Colorado State University. Dr. Evangelista has over 18 years of experience working on the nexus between ecological and human systems in the Bale Mountains. Dr Evangelista provided mentoring and advising from his experiences with collaborative wildlife conservation projects in the Bale Mountains and beyond.

Collaborators from Ethiopia

Abdulkedir Ibrahim is a senior researcher with Frankfurt Zoological Society. He holds a Master's degree from Wondo Genet College in Natural Resource Economics and over 10 years of experiences working with NGOs in the establishment, monitoring and evaluation of community conservation programs in the Bale Mountains.

Muktar Kedir is a community development officer with Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise which the main government organization is responsible for the implementation, monitoring and community development work related to forest and wildlife resources in the region. He holds a BS from Wondo Genet College in Wildlife management and has over 5 years of experience as a government research officer on community engagement works in conservation.

Both collaborators were useful as important key informants regarding the goals and objectives of the CHA program, its implementation processes and upcoming plans. Additionally, they helped in facilitating fieldwork and gaining access to these communities through community leaders.

12. Any other comments?

On behalf of myself and my team, I would like to express so much gratitude to the Rufford Foundation for giving us the opportunity to work on an engaging and challenging applied community conservation project for the past 2 years. It has truly been one of the most impactful experiences of my graduate programme that has taught me a lot about the interface between the science and practice of conservation and my roles in this realm as an emerging scientist.

The support from the Rufford has made it possible to not conduct my research on the nexus between equity and conservation outcomes but also do it a collaborative manner with the stakeholders most affected by these conservation programmes.

I had the opportunity to partner with and learn from different stakeholders in the region and community groups. This enabled me to broaden my understanding of the broad range of issues that affect conservation from different angles I am inspired to further strengthen and create similar collaborative platforms using the experiences I have gotten through this fellowship.

I have also personally and professionally grown in many ways through this fellowship. I have developed skills of managing a project involving diverse groups. This in turn required me to develop confidence, organisation, facilitation and interpersonal communication skills to a broad range of non-academic audience. We have come across many challenges in the course of this programme that taught me invaluable lessons on perseverance and flexibility.

As these programmes are still on going and in their early stages of implementation, it would be very helpful if there we could get the support of the Rufford to conduct follow up studies that build on our results, validate our findings as well as assess long term social and environmental outcomes of conservation programmes.