

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. 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	Onja Harinala Razafindratsima
Project title	Effect of habitat disturbance and edge on diversity, evolutionary patterns and dispersal
RSG reference	11288-2
Reporting period	May 2012 to May 2013
Amount of grant	£5,985
Your email address	onja@rice.edu
Date of this report	May 5 2013

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
Collecting data on vegetation composition in several habitats with different level and histories of disturbances, and in forest edge vs. interiors.			X	
Creating a regional phylogenetic tree of all the plant species within our sampling plots			X	
Determining the dispersal mode of all plant species		X		We have been collecting ripe fruits of several species to infer dispersal mode based on their morphology and their potential consumer for an extended period to include species with asynchronous fruiting season. However, some species are being consumed or explode even before ripening that we were unable to collect. In addition, some plant species are only found in some part of the forest, often far but do not fruit during our sampling period. A team of local botanists is still continuing monitoring fruiting and collecting fruits to complete our data.
Increasing people's awareness on the importance of forest and biodiversity and the effects of human activity on the ecosystem			X	

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

No major problem arose during the project, except that it is usually difficult to access the forest during the cyclone season.

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

- 1) Contribute to our understanding of community ecology and ecosystem maintenance.

- 2) Provide insights in prioritising conservation toward protecting species in local communities and preserving evolutionary history within communities in disturbed habitats.
- 3) Provide educational development and training opportunity for local people in a conservation hotspot.

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

I have worked with four technician-guides at Centre ValBio who are familiar with the forest and local flora within RNP. They provided valuable help in identifying plant species, collecting scientific data, monitoring fruiting phenology, conducting vegetation surveys, and guiding through the forest. They also benefited from this project through research training and professional development. I also had two Malagasy undergraduate students who helped in data collection while gaining experience in conducting fieldwork.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

My immediate plan is to continue collecting fruit trait data, analyse the collected data and write-up a manuscript for publication. I hope to be able to conduct more local conservation outreach and education of local communities in the near future to increase people's awareness, and to initiate reforestation projects.

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

The results of this project will be shared through publications in a peer-reviewed journal in conservation and/or ecology; presentations in international and national meetings, conferences, and seminars; and as part of my dissertation thesis. I will also put raw data on Ranomafana plant traits and vegetation surveys in my personal website for future use by anyone interested. In addition, I will contribute to TRY, a large-scale database of plant traits.

I also hope to make the results of this study available to forest managers and policy makers in Madagascar by publishing an article in Malagasy conservation journals and via media communication to public. Last year, I was already interviewed by several Malagasy newspapers and television stations about my research and its implications to the conservation of Malagasy forests, and was profiled in a national Malagasy newspaper.

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 12 months, representing 75% of the actual length 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.

Exchange rate used: 1GBP = 0.63 USD and 1USD = 2,090MGA

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Round-trip airfare Houston-Madagascar-Houston	1650	1680.21	30.21	This includes extra luggage fee

Local transportation and travel while in Madagascar	400	396.91	(3.09)	Slight difference in gas price
Porters (for equipment and materials to and from research camp)	200	175.44	(24.56)	We did not require porters all the time
Station fees at Centre Valbio, subsistence and accommodation, and subsistence for everyone on camp	1100	1000.03	(99.97)	I did not always stay at Centre ValBio, but camped most of the time
Salary for Malagasy research technician and local guides	1100	1941.65	841.65	Increase in research technicians' salaries
Malagasy student assistantship	750	288.17	(461.83)	I had a concurrent fund to pay for student assistantship
Malagasy student dissertation fees	150	0.00	(150)	
Malagasy student lab fees	150	0.00	(150)	
Field equipment and supplies	0	16.97	16.97	We ran out of some field supplies
Visa application	85	110.93	25.93	Increase in fees for Visa application
MICET fees and research permit	210	126.00	(84.00)	I only paid for a renewal since this was part of a permit for my dissertation project
Park entrance fees	20	9.94	(10.06)	Part of my entrance ticket was paid with a concurrent fund
Satellite camp and logistic fees	40	85.91	(45.91)	Camping in forest for extended period of time
Medical care in field	30	32.81	2.81	
Communication and documentation	50	59.71	9.71	I often called the team in Mada for instructions and updates, and we printed/photocopied datasheets in field
Other miscellaneous field-related expenses	50	60.82	10.82	This includes some miscellaneous fees for cleaning camping equipment and mailing datasheets, and bank fees for transfer of fund to centre Valbio and for withdrawing money at ATMs
Total	5985	5985.50	0.50	



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

Analysing the collected data and writing a manuscript to be submitted in a peer-reviewed journal; and continuing collecting plant trait data.

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?

I used the RSGF logo and advertised my RSGF funding during my talks. I also put a link and information about the funding in my personal website.