

## 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>	Marina Londres
<b>Project title</b>	Complexity of Forest-Based Livelihood Strategies and Factors Influencing Local Resource Use Across Regions and Scales: Implications for Policy
<b>RSG reference</b>	11958-B
<b>Reporting period</b>	July 2012 - December 2014
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£12,000
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:marina.londres@gmail.com">marina.londres@gmail.com</a> , <a href="mailto:mlondres@ufl.edu">mlondres@ufl.edu</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	January, 2015

**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
Data organisation, analyses and interpretation in collaboration with the Centre of International Forestry Research (CIFOR)			✓	Large sets of secondary data from the Poverty and Environment Network (PEN), encompassing socioeconomic and environmental information at the household and village levels from forest communities were organised, cleaned, processed and analysed. This process was extremely time consuming and new fronts of analyses were headed as results were being achieved. The results refer to the four different geographical settings across the Amazon, three countries, 48 villages and 510 households.
Refinement of research questions, planning fieldwork			✓	Guidelines and research instruments for conducting fieldwork had to be carefully planned and meticulously linked to the quantitative information analysed previously. A mixed methods approach was adopted, that entails more than one source of data as well as triangulation of quantitative (PEN secondary data) and qualitative research methods (semi-structured interviews, participant observation and ethnography).
Fieldwork in Ecuadorian Amazon (Sumaco), Bolivian Amazon (Pando), Western Brazilian Amazon (Acre), Eastern Brazilian Amazon (Pará)			✓	In total, I spent almost 6 months conducting fieldwork: 2.5 months in Ecuador visiting indigenous (Kichwa) and settler communities across the provinces of Napo, Orellana and Sucumbios; 3 weeks in Bolivia visiting non-indigenous forest dwellers in the province of Pando; 1 month in Acre visiting communities of rubber-tappers within the Chico Mendes Extractive Reserve (municipalities of Brasiléia and Xapuri); and three weeks in Pará, visiting riverine and Quilombola (slave descendants) communities in the municipalities of Abaetetuba and Limoeiro do Ajuru. The main activities conducted were: (1) Meetings with local researches, members of the Environmental Ministry and professionals of conservation and development organisations and leaders of indigenous social movements; (2) visiting communities, where I conducted participant observation (ethnography) by

			<p>interacting in the daily life of local people and subsistence activities, building trust and talking about the research topics in a more informal structure; (3) sharing quantitative research results with local leaders and small groups; and (4) conducted and recorded semi-structured interviews with families where I collected non-quantitative values of forest relevance, (i.e., culture, identity and wellbeing), information on conservation incentives, the existence of locally developed natural resource management systems, and the perceived institutional blockages and local visions of alternative policies that would be suitable for promoting both forest conservation and better livelihoods; (5) filmed 5-10 minute testimonials of the most important messages on issues approached (listed above) at the end of interviews.</p>
<p>Participating in broader policy debates concerning forests and communities</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>In November 2012, I have attended the Third National Congress of Extractive Populations in Macapá, Brazil. The event was organised by the “Conselho Nacional de Seringueiros - CNS” (Brazilian Forest Peoples’ council), which is an Amazon wide grassroots’ movement, nowadays composed by forest users such as rubber-tappers, riverines, slave descendants, fishers, and other traditional populations. The majority of participants were traditional forest users, however, there was an impressive board of regional and national political authorities participating in the event, such as: the Brazilian Minister of the Environment, the Brazilian Minister of the Agrarian Development, the Governor of Amapá State, as well as deputies and senators, among others. The main issues debated during the congress were: (1) agrarian reform and creation of new collective use areas; (2) policies related to extension, sustainable management, and market access; (3) differentiated health policies directed to forest peoples; and (4) educational improvements and reforms in the context of forest-based livelihoods. I recorded the entire event, took notes of key information that will be used in my analyses and made some informal interviews with grassroots movements’ leaders, political authorities and fellow activists.</p>

Aggregating the new sets of information gathering and triangulating quantitative secondary data with qualitative data collected by me.		✓		This activity is ongoing. Transcribing research interviews is very time consuming, but I am focusing on the most relevant information given in each interview and I plan to be finished within 2 months.
Writing of three scientific articles		✓		Ongoing activity, the scientific articles will be derived from the three chapters of my dissertation.
PhD defence	✓			Activity not yet achieved, however, my exclusive time dedicated to that goal.
Dissemination of results		✓		Results from secondary data analyses performed were informally shared during fieldwork in all sites visited, but the results dissemination of the entire research will be thoughtfully planned and delivered through local communities involved, research partners at each site studied and political arenas concerning forest sustainability and poverty reduction in Amazonian contexts.

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

The entire project timeframe took much longer than planned, since time needed to complete all the envisioned processes was underestimated. Both project phases involved a longer duration: (1) analysing large sets of secondary data - the Poverty and Environment Network (PEN), which encompasses socioeconomic and environmental information at the household and village levels from forest communities, and (2) conducting fieldwork across five field sites and three countries, to present results of analyses to local communities involved, gather qualitative information on contextual and livelihood aspects, and discuss research outcomes in the context of policy alternatives. If I did not depend on the processing and analysing of PEN data prior to the fieldwork, it would probably be faster, however, extra time was needed in order to access results, gain a knowledge base, understand what information was missing and shape the fieldwork research methods. Another factor was that, as an ecologist focused on conducting participatory research processes, and used to analyse only ecological data, I did not evaluate how much I would have to learn to be able to manage such complex and heavy sets of socio-economic data, and how much time it actually takes to perform its organisation, processing and analyses. Moreover, to be able to conduct a good quality fieldwork, approximately a double time in field was necessary than previously estimated. Another difficulty was that the Amazonas site was missing from the global database as it had many standardisation problems, but I had already two representative sites in the Brazilian Amazon, so project research relevance was not compromised.

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

Across the cases investigated across four distinct Amazonian socio-cultural systems over three countries, very different livelihood strategies were observed. In **Pando (Bolivia)** annual mean

income per capita was composed mainly by: forests (61%, from which 71% was comprised by Brazil nuts, 17% by food-animal; 3% by medicine, 1% by firewood, and 0.5% by sawn-wood); wage (11%); agriculture (8%); own business (7%); livestock (6%), fish (2%) and payment for environmental services (0.8%). In **Sumaco (Ecuador)**, annual mean income per capita was composed mainly by: forests (28%, from which 94% was comprised by sawn wood, 3% by firewood, 2% by medicine, and 1% by fibre); wage (21%); livestock (18%); and agriculture (14%). In **Pará (Brasil)**, annual mean income per capita was composed mainly by forests (37%, from which 78% was comprised by Açai fruits, 15% by other forest fruits, 2% by firewood, 1.5% by sawn wood, 0.6% by food-animal); wage (14%); livestock (5%); fish (4%); and agriculture (3%). In **Acre (Brazil)**, annual mean income per capita was composed mainly by: forests (34%, from which 35% was comprised by Brazil nuts; 15% by rubber; 33% by food-animal; 10% by medicine, 5% by firewood; 2% by sawn wood); non-forest environmental products (21%); livestock (17%); wage (10%); and payments for environmental services (2%).

We can see that in all cases, forest income topped the mix of livelihood strategies, but forests are used in different forms and to different degrees. The type and quantities of forest products that make higher contributions at each site (Brazil nuts in Pando and Acre, Açai fruits in Pará and timber/sawn wood in Sumaco) depends greatly on market demands and natural availability of these high valued forest products. What comes to consideration, however, is that some products harvested confers more ecological sustainability than others: in the case of non timber forest products (i.e., açai fruits, Brazil nuts, rubber), the plants from which products are taken remain alive and can provide more production for the following harvest years; whereas regarding timber products (including palm-heart), the plant must be killed to be harvested and the very slow replacement rates will likely compromise their ecological sustainability over time.

Regarding market oriented strategies (cash income) versus locally consumed products (subsistence income), results evidenced that, In Pando (Bolivia), 27% of total income derives from subsistence, similar to Pará (Brasil; 25% subsistence); in Sumaco (Ecuador) the smaller proportion of subsistence income was observed (13%), while in Acre (Brazil), 37% of income came from subsistence. Subsistence income can be an important complement to the total income that is provided by the natural resources. In addition, analyses indicated that forest resources play an important role in lifting people out or the poverty line: in average, 16% to 17% of people across the studied sites would fall below the poverty line if forest income were not present. Since forests are that important to the poor, measures of conservation and support of sustainable management systems that are adapted to local realities and tailored to environmental limits should be encouraged.

Fieldwork observations and semi-structured interviews suggest that over all settings investigated, people have cultural identities with forests and the environment, but the Kichwa people in Sumaco (Ecuador), disclosed a rich diversity of myths and beliefs that sometimes even rule the dynamics of harvests. Other factor that was common to all sites was their capacity to cooperate and make collective action, involving even structured organisations within and between villages, with locally developed webs of use rights, rules, norms and sanctions. The principal institutional blockages to enhancing livelihoods and securing conservation seem to be the capitalistic-driven market forces and exploitative marketing chains; in some cases, elitist state policies that maintain the cycle of marginality disempowerment and poverty; and incoherent laws and burdensome bureaucracy concerning forest use.

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

Local communities are the central focus of my research and action. The type of fieldwork method was carefully chosen to enable a commitment to give respondents a choice for personal expression and to viewing the events and the social world through the eyes of local forest dwellers (rather than as if those were incapable of their own reflections of the social world). The approach was planned for enhancing the opportunity of genuinely revealing the perspectives of local people. Concerning the questions investigated (livelihood strategies; relevance of forests for survival, culture, identity and wellbeing; locally developed systems for avoiding natural resources overuse; institutional blockages at enabling sustainable livelihoods; and the visions of alternative policies), they were given voice, information was shared in both directions, dialog was established. I listened with attention to their perspectives, valuing their worldviews, cataloguing their solutions and their hopes. These embrace a commitment to involving people in the diagnosis of and solutions to problems instead of imposing on them solutions to pre-defined problems. Ultimately, the field research strategy conducted over the four Amazonian sites across three countries aimed to contribute to marginalised people's voices to be heard, exploitation to be reduced by the establishment of horizontal collaboration, and emancipator goals to be realized by strengthening people's own incentive solutions.

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

I will take a couple of months to finish writing, defending and publishing. However, after the closure of this process, I plan to apply for professor positions in Brazilian universities and continue the work by teaching students, orienting research and conducting similar projects that promote the understanding and pathways for sustainable use of tropical forests, better conditions to local forest dwellers and policy improvements concerning poverty reduction, forests conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

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

Research impact is a central issue for the PEN program and the related institutions that provide part of the data for my PhD project. These include international research institutions from the CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) as well as local Universities and NGOs that have an interest in using quantitative information on the economic role of forest resources (often called "hidden harvest") to defend their interests in policy negotiations. Beyond the academic output of my PhD research, I thus hope to contribute to research outreach material targeted at relevant national and international stakeholder groups; these may include, for example, policy briefs to be published at international or national policy forums. Additionally, my research plan links thematically to current "hot topics" in the international conservation and development debate, such as REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) and "Forests and Food Security." I thus hope that the academic output of my research plan will have as well an influence on the current thinking about these topics. Although gaining international resonance and participating in regional and national policy formulation is not a simple task, I plan to disseminate results among local grassroots organisations to contribute to policy improvements on the local level, and participate in regional social movements and networks such as the "Conselho Nacional de Seringueiros" (Amazonian Forest Peoples' council), the COIAB (Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon), the GT-MFC (Community Forest Management Working

Group), among others. At the regional level, a potentially important policy forum that could benefit from this research is the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (OTCA), which consists in a legal instrument that recognises the transboundary nature of the Amazon, and promotes regular forums of dialogue (some including ministers and even presidents of the Amazon Countries) on actions directed to achieving regional sustainable development through common policies and strategies.

**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 from July 2012 to December 2015. It took considerably longer than what was planned (dates), but it resulted in a more mature and thorough research process.

**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
Airplane travels between sites	1734	2133	399	Prices of airplane travel increased.
In site transportation	1547	1501	-46	
Stipend	5491	6955.95	1464.95	Prices were underestimated and more time was spent in field.
Fieldwork assistants	1700	1185	-515	In the design of the project activities, I have not realised the importance and necessity of hiring field assistants. Also, most of these areas are very remote and dangerous to travel alone.
Workshops	1530	0	-1530	I did not conducted workshops in the way planned, but I travelled more across villages, visited more families than planned and undertook meetings with small groups.
Fieldwork equipment	0	250	250	Tripod for filming testimonials, camping supply.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12002</b>	<b>12024.95</b>	<b>22.95</b>	

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

The next steps will be analysing new sets of information obtained in the field, writing dissertation chapters and publications, defending the PhD dissertation at the University of Florida, disseminating results and working towards influencing policy.

**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?**

At my prior RSGF grants I did use its logo several times; for the actual project, I have made publicity with several research fellows and in the field with research partners through all sites and countries

where I conducted the work. Nevertheless, I will still use RSGF logo through the future disseminations of the research results.

**11. Any other comments?**

This was my third RSGF support, my knowledge and perspectives have been evolving over time and over this trajectory. The support from the RSGF foundation has contributed to my growth as a scientist and professional working towards tropical forest conservation and community development and empowerment. I am truly thankful to the RSGF team and I will keep sending updates and future outcomes derived from this project.