

## 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>	Alphonse Karenzi
<b>Project title</b>	Center for disseminating the best practices for sustainable livelihoods and grass-roots conservation of forests in Gisagara District
<b>RSG reference</b>	14231-B
<b>Reporting period</b>	March 3rd 2014 to June 3rd 2015
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£11979
<b>Your email address</b>	karenzife@gmail.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	June 6th 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
<p>A self-sustained resource centre, with the capacity for community hands-on trainings, demonstration plots and production of numerous best practices, will be established and sustainably operated in a heart of Gisagara District.</p>			x	<p>Instead of spending RSG funds on just renting the space for resource centre, the project team wisely decided to use that budget in upgrading and expansion (of the land and building) of the Improved Cook Stoves Production Unity (the facilities of previous ICOSCAD Project). Therefore, a permanent resource centre has been established with enough inner space and 25 m x 25 m outer space for hosting the community trainings and demonstration plots.</p>
<p>A range of both indigenous and innovative best practices that are locally realistic and suitable will be selected and developed within the centre and continuously demonstrated to thousands of people, entrepreneurs and stakeholders.</p>			x	<p>The 10 most successful green enterprises and concerned institutions around Rwanda and Uganda have been visited.</p> <p>Through community outreach, project team discussed with the target groups, local government and communities a list of the best practices to be adopted.</p> <p>As preferred by the community and stakeholders, mushroom farming, improved cooking stoves, agro-forestry initiatives, improved beekeeping and briquettes making were developed and are being demonstrated at the centre.</p>
<p>Ten local experts (young indigenous people) will be trained for 16 days to run the centre and train other peer educators on all best practices within the centre.</p>			X	<p>Three experts from successful enterprises were employed to develop the best practices, preparing teaching manual and train 10 young indigenous peoples as local experts.</p> <p>Ten trained indigenous youths and operations schedule for the centre were presented to the community for increasing community ownership towards the centre.</p>
<p>Sixty grassroots peer educators and entrepreneurs from 13 Local Youth Conservation Clubs</p>			X	<p>Ten motivated indigenous youths were used in successful training of 60 peer educators from 13 youth clubs and two</p>

<p>(four members from each youth and students' club that worked with the Rufford project phase 2) and two women cooperatives (partners showed interest) will be practically trained in 8 days on the best practices.</p>			<p>women cooperatives. Training sessions were organised whereby two trainers occupied a group of 12 trainees from three clubs over 8 days. It was quite easy for trainees to acquire new skills as many of them had some practical knowledge from previous ICOSCAD projects.</p>
<p>Fifteen sites for the learnt best practices will be established by trained youth clubs and women cooperatives within their communities and schools to educate thousands of peers.</p>		X	<p>Centre keeps providing technical and material support to 13 trained clubs for enabling them to replicate some of learnt practices in their own plots. All trained women and youth clubs have constructed at least one of the learnt best practices in their schools.</p>
<p>The participatory annual action plan for conservation of local forests and dissemination of the learnt best practices will be designed by each of 13 youth clubs in consultation of local people, stakeholders and leaders.</p>		X	<p>Two outreaches were conducted by trained youth clubs to meet with sector authorities, local community and different stakeholders to participatory identify the local conservation problems and suggest the action plan. Every meeting was led by an environmental university student volunteer. Each of 13 clubs has designed an annual action plan for conservation of forests and dissemination of best practices. Two weekly community outreaches of each youth club and one monthly community work were conducted for Creating community awareness about the local annual action plan and Demonstrating the learnt best practices as the solutions.</p>
<p>Twenty-two weekly teaching sessions will be conducted by trained youth clubs in order to disseminate the learnt best practices among the communities (as action plan implementation).</p>		X	<p>On January 7th 2015, evaluation meeting with different youth clubs representatives/stakeholders took place at the resource centre to assess the community understanding and potentials to adopt those best practices, in order to improve project strategies. This meeting recommended slight changes in action plans of some youth clubs. Some clubs reprioritised the practices to be disseminated according to the preference and adoption potentials of their respective</p>

				<p>communities. Improved cook stoves were given most priority in every action plan.</p> <p>Project volunteers are working hand-in-hand with each youth club to conduct twenty weekly community outreaches to implement their action plan.</p>
<p>Six monthly community works for forests restoration and conservation activities (as action plan implementation) will be conducted by the local community in coordination of trained youth clubs and local leaders.</p>		X		<p>Youth clubs have started working with local leaders to coordinate the forest conservation and restoration activities in the most threatened forests through monthly community work.</p>

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

a) Long procedures for getting field visit permission for school clubs in some schools.

After realising that it takes longer for a project volunteer from outside the school to acquire the permission for the students to go on the field, we implemented a strategy of engaging a school staff (especially environment or geography teacher) as a project ambassador in his/her school. This internal contact person/ project ambassador quickened and eased the process as well as helped the sustainability of project relationship with school and club.

b) Some of communities (especially indigenous communities) always want to get mushroom tubes from the project for free.

The project first provided indigenous families with start-up mushroom tubes for free and the Rufford Centre intervened and facilitated in selling their mushroom production whereby the money for next seeds were automatically deducted.

c) Adding mark-up on products and charging service fees strategy seemed to provide less revenue than what was expected for self-sustainability of the centre.

In order to make the products cycle and the centre's activities sustainable, the centre uses to add a little mark-up on products (mushroom seeds, improved cook stoves, honey, etc.) and charge fees for some extra services including consultancy provided to the private companies. This strategy would still work but it needs sometime as the revenue increases with time. As short and long-term solution for self-sustainability of Rufford Centre, Instead of spending RSG funds on just renting the space for resource centre, the project team wisely decided to use that budget in upgrading and expansion (of the land and building) of the Improved Cook Stoves Production Unit (the facilities of previous ICOSCAD Project). Therefore, a permanent resource centre has been established with enough inner space and 25 m x 25 m outer space for hosting the community training and demonstration plots.

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

- a) Decreased level of deforestation in the area through maximizing the sustainable use of forest resources.

The centre and its 15 affiliated clubs have educated and enabled the local community and enterprises to establish best practices for sustainable livelihoods in order to use the forest resources in a wiser way. For instance, the adoption of improved cook stoves that save more than 60% of fuel-wood enabled thousands of rural families and enterprises to reduce daily amount of trees/woods whereby sustainably decreased the level of deforestation. Our current Improved Cooking Stove Version has been scientifically tasted and nationally recommended by the Rwanda Energy, Water and Sanitation Authority (EWASA) as it saves at least 60% of fuel-wood comparing to traditional stoves.

- b) Betterment of the local forests and saving biodiversity through promotion of incentives and alternatives for the community-based conservation of forests.

By reducing the level of firewood consumption and educating young people (young environmental activists) about the role of forests, the movements of people in natural forests have been significantly reduced. For instance, introduction of improved beekeeping practices keeps considerably reducing forest fire burning and loss of many birds and small animals. In addition, establishing several household mushroom gardens has provided the local community (especially indigenous hunters) with daily meat alternative. Therefore, Gisagara District has protected more of its natural forests and the natural habitats of numerous bats, birds and small animals living there. Thereby sustainably prevent the community dependence and threats on forests ecosystem and extinction of biodiversity in the local forests. Indeed, availing the multipurpose and agroforestry trees seeds this project has encouraged the local community to integrate and plant more trees in both public and their private farms.

- c) Strengthening and sustaining grass-roots activism for conservation and restoration of forests.

Training 15 local youth conservation clubs and women cooperative as local peer educators and entrepreneurs, designing and implementing a participatory annual action plan for conservation, and conducting weekly community teaching sessions and monthly community works has ensured the ongoing conservation activities (clubs have planted more trees in line with national policy and their annual action plans, green businesses were established, etc), government involvement in participatory monitoring and expansion of project. The local communities (the most depending on unsustainable use of forest resources) were educated about the role of forests and their knowledge has been enhanced on protection and sustainable use of forests.

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

- 10 local indigenous youths have been fully involved and benefitted from the project as beneficiaries. They have been trained as local experts and given the centre where they get daily income from selling different green products.

- Two local women's cooperatives have been fully involved and benefitted from the project as beneficiaries. They have been trained as local experts and enabled to start making and selling improved cook stoves as income generating activity.
- 13 local students clubs have been fully involved and benefitted from the project as beneficiaries. They have been trained as local activists and enabled to start making and selling different items including improved cook stoves as income generating activity.
- Thousands of local students from 13 local schools have participated in this project through their trained school clubs and best practice gardens within their schools. So, these clubs are helping schools to clean their environment and share the learnt knowledge and practices.
- Thousands of local poor and indigenous families have received a very cheap improved cooking stoves, mushroom seeds and know-how skills to grow mushroom, improved beekeeping techniques and other practices that have changed their life and sustained their livelihood.
- Different local enterprises and businesses have benefited from project significantly. As the project only used local services and products in all steps.

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

Yes. The completed project successfully established a permanent Rufford Conservation Centre and trained 13 courageous student clubs of local activists for dissemination of best conservation practices. With the remaining 3 months and £700 RSG funds of the project, the project continues monitoring and evaluation of student clubs' action plans implementation and organising the 2-day forum for all participant clubs.

The future plan is to expand and sustain the impact of this project. We have realised incomparable contribution of youth and teachers in implementation and dissemination of the best practices in conservation. All these youth are found in primary and secondary schools around Gisagara.

Therefore, our next project is to integrate the best conservation practices into local education curriculum by training and updating the geography and environment teachers, working with them to update their class syllabuses and equip their respective school conservation clubs. The Rufford Centre will expand their resource and hands-on training services to at least 30 student clubs and 30 respective geography teachers.

Having been able to do so, even if the project ends the trained teachers will keep using the Rufford Centre, everyday teaching thousands of students and empowering the conservation clubs activities and action plans fulfilment in their respective schools. The future conservation leaders in Rwanda will be developed from those schools in Gisagara.

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

At local and national level.

Rufford Conservation Centre keeps attracting the individuals and groups of visitors from different backgrounds especially local leaders in Gisagara district. In addition to that, there are two upcoming events that aimed at sharing the results of the project namely:

- 2-day exhibition for all 15 trained clubs and cooperatives to recognise and widely share their achievements with many local communities, stakeholders and decision makers around the area.
- As usual, Sustaining Rwanda Youth Organization has an important stand in annual district partners' exhibition (as the main district partner in environment protection) where the Rufford Conservation centre and its results will be on forefront. So, we are ready to have the most visited stand in a whole exhibition where all categories of stakeholders and decision makers will know what the project has achieved.

Both events above attract visit of different national government officials and non-governmental institutions, private companies, students, parents, local and international communities as well as national radio and TV station and other wide media corporations. The whole nation will surely get to know what Rufford Conservation Centre is and what it has achieved through national TV and Radio Stations.

Indeed, I have started a national programme called "Faith with Action" the faith-based youth employment system in Rwanda. This programme will mostly use my Rufford projects as an example of what faith youth groups can do to save the nature and create jobs.

At international level.

My Rufford projects are highly recognized by USA Embassy in Rwanda, whereby I was recently nominated by the US Department of State through its most premier programme of International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). So, in April-May 2015, I could share my Rufford project results with 22 fellow international leaders from all over the world and thousands of American leaders/officials from different USA states. As an active member of USA Department of State alumni platform, I'm planning to use this online and conference platform to keep sharing my Rufford projects results with thousands of international leaders.

We are planning to use more social media tools than ever to share our stories with as many people as possible worldwide (Facebook page, twitter and You Tube account in the name of Sustaining Rwanda Youth Organization). We plan to keep updating and enhancing the Sustaining Rwanda Youth Organization website: [www.sustainingafrica.org](http://www.sustainingafrica.org) , and our RSG project page website: [http://www.ruffordsmallgrants.org/rsg/projects/alphonse\\_karenzi](http://www.ruffordsmallgrants.org/rsg/projects/alphonse_karenzi)

In addition, we present our centre activities to our international participants who volunteer with Sustaining Rwanda Youth Organization and encourage them to be our ambassadors back in their respective communities. This has been a very effective tool for centre to share its results with international communities.

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

This project has taken 15 months. The actual project length was 18 months. The remaining 3 months will be used to complete all the activities that have not been well satisfactory and prepare for the next Rufford 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.**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Reports review and visiting 10 enterprises around the country for collecting best practices	200	200		
Discuss the best practices at district	99	99		
Renting the center with a store room and	3400	3200	200	Instead of renting, the project used less money to buy an extra land and upgrade the existing improved stoves factory.
Community meeting to present ten young indigenous people and discuss the best practices and center schedule:	15	15		
Install the best practices and train 10 experts	2250	2250		
Preparing and printing Teaching manual for clubs training	350	350		
Training 60 peer Educators (school clubs and women cooperatives)	1800	2000	-200	Arrangements of taking a taxi cab were made 4 times due to the heavy rain.
Technical and material support for establishing school plots	780	780		
youth clubs to meet with sector authorities and locals	234	234		
Designing and sharing the annual action plan for each club	260	260		
2 community awareness outreaches and 1 monthly community work	284	284		
Evaluation meeting	245	245		
20 weekly community outreaches and 5 monthly community works	1380	1380		

Monitoring and evaluation	130	30	100	The monitoring and evaluation is still ongoing for the fulfilment of all action plans.
2 days exhibition for all partner clubs	1200	0	1200	The exhibition has not yet taken place due to the academic calendar. £600 is still available as the RSG funds contribution and £600 value of other contribution is still expected during the exhibition.
The final report:	52	52		

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

Looking ahead, there some important steps to take notably:

1. Campaigning for importance of integrating the best conservation practices in primary and secondary schools curriculum.
2. Training 30 concerned teachers and updating their academic curriculum (class syllabus) to integrate the best conservation practices in education among at least 30 most influential schools.
3. Improving and sustaining the Rufford Centre's services for ongoing development and dissemination of best practices for conservation.
4. Enabling and monitoring the trained teachers to teach students, establish and enhance the student's conservation clubs' activities in their respective schools.

### 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?

We have used the logo of RSGF in all materials and documents in relation with ICOSCAD project including PowerPoint presentations, letters to different officials, posters, announcements, booklets, etc. RSGF did definitely receive some publicity during the course of our work. For instance, I had a presentation on Sustaining Rwanda Youth Organization Activities (Rufford Conservation Centre in front) during the USA Department of state International Visitor Leadership Program in several USA states in the meetings with different international organisation leaders and officials from USA and all over the globe. I also use to make presentation on my Rufford projects in Makerere University, the biggest university in the East African Region, where I'm completing a Masters programme in Entrepreneurship.

### 11. Any other comments?

Being the RSG grantee and successfully implemented three RSG projects has not only made my conservation career clear but also proved my leadership ability to change the world. I started working on my first RSG project when I was a second year university volunteer, but now I'm

completing my masters' degree and have founded and sustained a very ambitious environmental organisation called Sustaining Rwanda Youth Organization. I have developed and confirmed my life-long career and my focus is only on how to improve the impact of my organisation and projects for national conservation and sustainable development.

Every RSG project that I have implemented comes with improved managerial skills, professional opportunities and several international rewards. Some of rewards;

- My first RSG project won the second prize of the World Bank Connect4Climate competition. In the same year -2011 I was also chosen by United Nations Environment Program to present my RSG project and represent my country during the UN Conference of Parties (COP17) and UNEP earth generation summit.
- My second RSG project got funds worth \$450,000 for expansion from UNDP Global Environment Facility. In late 2013, this project also made me nominated by UNESCO and Rwandan Ministry of Youth and ICT to represent Rwanda Youth in UNESCO Youth International Forum in Paris, France.
- My third RSG project made me nominated by US Department of State with a reference from USA Embassy in Rwanda where in April-May 2015 I participated in the most premier leadership program of USA Government (IVLP).

I was also very happy to successfully organise the Rufford Small Grants Recipients' Conference in Rwanda. I will never forget the happiness I felt when Josh Cole, the RSG Director himself thanked me. "Thank you Alphonse for that excellent conference, it was really excellent" Josh said after the Kigali conference. Many RSG Recipients are still remembering me for that conference and welcoming of them in Rwanda.

I'm a very proud recipient of RSG who always looks forward to better completion of the next RSG phase and excellently making it to the RSG final stage. Indeed, I'm very eager to use my new masters' skills to implement a greater RSG Project.

Thank you Josh Cole, thank you Jane, thank you the whole Rufford Foundation for making my dream, of founding and sustaining a national environmental NGO, come true. Thank you indeed for supporting my ideas and ambitions.