

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	Dennis Marita
Project title	Malaulalo Conservation Initiative
RSG reference	15138-1
Reporting period	12 months
Amount of grant	£5,994
Your email address	dennismarita@gmail.com
Date of this report	2nd May 2016

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
Malaulalo Island to be a recognised Marine conservation hub.		✓		We are currently at the national level of formalising the legal status of Malaulalo Island as a Marine Protective site in Solomon Islands. We are working with the Division of Environment and Conservation of the Solomon Islands Government.
Increase the population of the Hawksbill Turtle at Malaulalo			✓	The population of hawksbill and other species of turtles have dramatically increased in past couple of years. This trend has been going on since the conservation initiative was started back in 2010.
Public awareness on the conservation status of Malaulalo Island		✓		We are yet to cover all of the islands around the Three Sisters Group of Islands. We have covered Malulalo, Ugi and Ulawa, except the mainland of Makira, which hopefully should be covered in the next couple of years. Wider nationwide publicity has been quite successful as well through newspapers, radio and overseas media.

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

The research aspect of this project has fallen short of engaging the appropriate people in terms of availability and related conditions. The people who came in to visit were basically conservationists and rangers. I believe this requires an independent project to carry out thorough research on the status of Hawksbill turtles on the island.

The other reason is that Malaulalo Island Conservation initiative is at its infant stage and yet to acquire much recognition to warrant the necessary support that we need from the relevant stakeholders in the country. RSGF is the first organisation to support this initiative and as such we are banking on this reputation for further support.

The other uncontrollable and unpredictable weather condition is another set-back to fulfilling our awareness campaigns on time. The seas in the eastern part of Solomon Islands can become very treacherous which has resulted in loss of lives every year.

Further to this, sea travel between the islands is a very expensive exercise. This has resulted in us increasing the cost of fuel and reducing expenditure in other areas due to the need for more fuel in running the awareness programme (see budget). We feel that making the people aware of this initiative is the priority task as their understanding and corporation is the key to the success and sustainability of this project. So we have to spend more on fuel to be able to reach as many people as possible.

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

The most important outcomes of this project are as follows:

- That the population of turtles (in general) on the island has dramatically increased in the last few years. The general marine eco-system of the island has dramatically flourished as well.
- The Government of Solomon Islands and conservation bodies on the island are now beginning to recognise Malaulalo Island as a conservation site in Solomon Islands.

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

The local community was involved in the awareness of turtle conservation on the island. Members of the island community helped to spread the word of conservation to the neighbouring islands and the people they meet.

The greatest contribution of the community in this project is respecting this conservation initiative and helping to save and protect the hawksbill turtles.

Benefits to community are seen as a long term investments for the children, through the availability of natural resources and other activities like tourism. Short-term benefits involve trading of local sea products for cash, however, strictly by using sustainable methods of harvesting. Turtles are an exemption as they are not allowed to be consumed or sold for cash.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

This Hawksbill Conservation Project is an ongoing exercise, with or without funding, and will continue indefinitely. However, turtle tagging and satellite monitoring is the next step to embark on and in which the Environment Division in Solomon Islands is proposing to support. However, this is not yet definite.

On the contrary, we are planning to move into eco-tourism which specific target on cruise boat tourism.

We plan to build simple infrastructure to cater for wildlife viewing, bush trekking and underwater viewing. This involved creating bush tracks and walkways through the jungle, through the mangroves and along the beach. This initiative will now allow visitors/ tourists to see and feel first-hand the natural wonders of the islands. Turtle viewing will be part of the activities as well.

This tourism initiative will then provide an avenue for economic benefits to the community of the island. There will be spill over effects which will also benefit the neighbouring islands through this tourism initiative.

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

First is the use of the media to publicize the results of this project. The publicity of this project has gone wide in the country and internationally as well. Attachments of media publicities will be sent to you as well.

Secondly, a record of the outcomes will be documented and copies will be given to relevant Government Departments (Department of Environmental Conservation under the Ministry of Environment & Conservation) and established conservation bodies in Solomon Islands.

Local surrounding communities will also be updated through our normal community awareness tours.

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 grant was used within a period of 1 year with much of the funds expended on logistical support. This was basically spent on the purchasing of the Yamaha 40 HP Outboard Motor engine and fuel.

Since we need more fuel for the surveillance and awareness team, much of the funds for the other budgetary items were transferred for this purpose. Much of the money (apart from the OBM and fuel) was spent in the local community.

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
Airfares for 2 researchers @194 x 2 x 3 trips	1164	776	388	Only two trips were taken by one official from the Environment Division and the Solomon Islands Community Conservation Programme.
Airfares for resource 1 person	194	194	0	One person from CI went to do little bit training on Turtle egg handling and breeding.
Stipend for researchers @17 x 2 x 21 days	714	476	238	Cost reduced due to lee days on the island.
Stipend for workshop personnel @17 x 5 days	85	85	0	Done as budgeted for.
1 x 40 hp OBM	3068	3068	0	Acquired as budgeted for.
Fuel (OBM)	559	1185	626	Fuel expenditure increased by double due to being expensive and the need for travel around

				the province.
Ration(4 campaigners)	210	210	0	Done as budgeted for.
Total	5,994	5,994		

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

I feel the important step next is to build on the tourism aspect of conservation so that this brings more value to this initiative, as people will have an alternative means of financial benefits, instead of depending entirely on the natural resources for their livelihood.

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

We have not printed the logo in any produced materials as yet, however, we have shown this visually through slide presentations and awareness talks.

Definitely, the RSGF has very much been the forefront of our publicity on this project. RSGF has been mentioned in all the media publicity we had. There have been a lot of interests from the general public on acquiring similar kinds of assistance from RSGF. We are currently promoting RSGF in this regard and are willing to assist anyone who wishes to forward their proposals to RSGF.

11. Any other comments?

We are looking forward to the second phase of this project which is to help develop this conservation initiative to a tourism level, which we believe has double benefits – bringing more value to the conservation initiative and providing an alternative means of income to the community.