

## The Rufford Foundation Final Report

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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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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| <b>Your name</b>           | Mashjar Juthour   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Project title</b>       | Public Access to Conservation Project at Juthour Arboretum: Eco park in Palestine |
| <b>RSG reference</b>       | 15323-1   |
| <b>Reporting period</b>    | 28/4/2014--28/4/2015  |
| <b>Amount of grant</b>     | £6,000  |
| <b>Your email address</b>  | info@juthour.org  |
| <b>Date of this report</b> | 28/4/2015   |

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  |
|---|--------------|--------------------|----------------|---|
| Develop a trail through our eco-park which makes accessible hiking          |              |                    | X              | We are proud to have completed the major walking trail, made possible by The Rufford Foundation's funding.  |
| Designing the trail to limit foot traffic to ensure wildlife conservation   |              |                    | X              |   |
| Train 3 people from local community to become walking guides at the Mashjar |              |                    | X              | Was very hard to finish this because, as universal rule, good people who want to volunteer are also doing it in other places. But we've managed to find three amazing people who now know the ins and outs of Palestinian nature up at the Mashjar. |
| Equip the guides with a hiking manual, first aid kit, mobile phones         |              |                    | X              |   |
| Create visitor's guide resource   |              |                    | X              |   |
| Organize and host guided walks around the land for the community            |              |                    | x              | Fully completed and ongoing. Community feedback on these walks has been very positive and encouraging   |

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

The bridging between the vision of the trail and the execution of its construction was difficult, especially finding the most appropriate and skilled community member to oversee the trail's completion. After interviewing many contractors, testing their work, doing test runs, not seeming to find anyone (which took lots of time), we settled on one who seemed to have the expertise and cooperation we needed. We then had some difficulties with the contractor seeing eye-to-eye, design implementation, scheduling, etc. This ebbing and flowing also consumed a great deal of time.

We also wanted to make the trail wheelchair accessible, but the land elevation turned out to be very steep. Therefore, most places where the differently abled would need to be mobile would require an assistant to push them. This is a regret we are working hard to rectify; Next year's trail-blazing plans include some levelling of other areas so we can fulfil this essential aspect.

On the volunteer side of things, we found a universal two-sided situation: where there are great people willing to commit themselves to a greater good, they will also be over-committed to other great volunteer projects. Thus it's been challenging to get the volunteers who were trained to commit to regular walks.

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

1) The trail: Now we have a definitive beginning and end to the main Mashjar Juthour walking circuit, winding around the most important of native trees and plants we want to feature in the arboretum and ensuring the protection of wildflowers, plants, trees and creature by marking where and where not to walk.

2) The volunteers: We are quite happy with the three head volunteer walking guides; They are skilled and experienced based upon their enthusiasm meeting our education on Palestinian wildlife and environmental preservation tactics.

3) The literature: the hiking guide manual is one of the most comprehensive guides to the Palestine outdoors we may ever write and it's a great base to build on. Not only does it catalogue all of the flowers, insects, animals, and trees we've identified in and around the Mashjar, it also includes "what to do" section on emergencies (snake bites, heat stroke, etc.), vital information on the dire environmental crisis the Middle East and Palestine faces, how to interact and educate all ages and backgrounds of visitors at the Mashjar, etc.

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

Entirely relevant, because except for international visitors and volunteers, we almost always employ, educate, and invite the community in the process of Mashjar Juthour's building as a beacon of Palestinian environmentalism.

Taxi and van drivers benefit from the fee they charge shuttling community members and volunteers from urban Ramallah to the rural eco-park. Our arboretum development staff Ashraf Yacoub played a major role in the completion of the trail, and his two family members from their nearby village of Ein Kinya (population 1,200), Ali and Yusef, were also employed throughout the construction of the trail.

Materials for the trail were purchased from Ein Kinya locals, a local bulldozer driver was paid to fill a truck driven by a local truck driver to bring the gravel and stones up to the Mashjar.

Further than the community financially benefiting, there is now the total availability of Palestine's rare and threatened landscape. Now, our families, students on field trips, elderly, and all visitors can traverse around our natural museum with the help of educated, able guides. After visiting, many people transform into volunteers or proponents of our work.

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

Yes.

The trail will continue to be built and expanded, the entire time respecting the nature on and around it. Smaller connectivity circuits will be carved in order to create internal trails; Railings and stairs will be installed; We will continue to make Mashjar Juthour as accessible as possible for the differently abled, including finding proper places for wheelchair accessibility (difficult again because of the uneven terrain).

The volunteer program is ongoing; This year, we will have various events, workshops, walks, and school field trips which require the skill of our trained volunteers. We will undergo another cycle of a volunteer call, interviewing and accepting, and then training new young Palestinians to be leaders.

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

Through continued programs up at the Mashjar! Our work on environmental preservation is primarily visual, and now the protected trees and plants have a very natural trail winding around them.

We also plan on filming a video which will be a virtual tour of the Mashjar, a short visual trek around the major circuit and its natural highlights.

Also, the literature is available both online and in printed form. PDFs can and have been sent in an instant to interested volunteers, and the visitors' guide is going to be given to every visitor at Mashjar Juthour.

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

| Activity   | Projected Timescale | Actual Timescale  | Comments  |
|--|---------------------|---|---|
| Design main trail  | Feb-April           | May-July  | We did not receive the Rufford grant until May, and once we did we began designing the main trail.  |
| Development of guide manual  | March-April         | All year  | Far more difficult than expected, because we ended up creating a large-scale guide to Palestinian wildlife and also a guidebook for volunteers.<br>Especially translating into Arabic was difficult, because often there are 10 or more names for a single species. |
| Trail building days with volunteers  | April-May           | August-January  | Weather, hiring hands, implementation of design, all elements which led to a later start date for the trail building.   |
| Volunteer training program using guide manual  | May                 | First training happened in autumn 2014, second in spring 2015. Our next will occur in July at the end of Ramadan. | Rough drafts and PDFs were used for these training programs, as the guide was not entirely translated, finished, and printed until March  |
| Design terrace offshoots   | August              | January   | These were designed when the trail was fully built in January.  |
| Host weekly guided walks with trained guides   | June 14-Feb 15      | Went as planned   | We even offered more than expected, and have continued beyond February  |
| Advertise scheduled walks on social media campaigns  | June 14-Feb 15      | Went as planned   | We even offered more than expected, and have continued beyond February  |
| Review feedback for guide manual, trainings, walking companion, and revise for a second edition. | August              |   | We are in process of revision in preparation for the second edition.  |
| Trail manual labour - volunteer days on offshoot building  | Sept-November       |   | This is really ongoing and will largely happen this summer when more volunteers are free.   |

**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  |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|---|
| Labour                       | 2439            | 3091.9        | -652.9     | Labour was the greatest challenge of this project and ultimately it was not only the most   |
|                              |                 |               |            | Expensive but it was the most distressing in terms of insisting on what we wanted, work that will last through the harsh rains and foot traffic.                                |
| Materials                    | 1830            | 1306.59       | +523.41    | We opted for less materials and to put this towards the labour line deficit as we could use more found materials and thus lower this cost.                                      |
| Hiking Guide Manual Data     | 480             | 464           | +16        |   |
| Hiking Guide Manual Design   | 300             | 300           | 0          |   |
| Hiking Guide Manual Printing | 100             | 100           | 0          |   |
| Training Guides              | 200             | 134           | +66        | This was the second greatest challenge as people were too busy to commit huge chunks of time and thus the trainings stretched into many smaller sessions with more site visits. |
| Walking Companion Design     | 150             | 150           | 0          |   |
| Walking Companion Printing   | 200             | 200           | 0          |   |
| Guided Walks                 | 300             | 305           | -5         |   |
| Total                        | 5999            | 6076.76       | -77.76     | We covered the deficit from our general donations made by visitors on the walks.  |

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

Definitely stage two of the trail, as aforementioned. The full layout of the trail complete with accessibility (as best we can) for the differently abled, as well continuing to enhance the main circuit.

Another major plan is a greenhouse/nursery where we will propagate indigenous plants and trees, particularly endangered Palestinian ones. This too will also be a major place for interactivity and a laboratory for learning, available for workshops and community involvement in this propagation process.

Finally, because we now have a great and growing volunteer base, we are ready for more educational programs, their planning already in process. We will reach out further to schools and youth clubs in Palestine, re-establishing partnerships with existing partners and forging new ones with educators and their students. Now the Mashjar is a more mobile grounds for environmental education, and we are excited to continue hosting a safe space for environmentalism in Palestine.

**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?**

Yes, on Facebook when we posted about the trail's construction at the Mashjar we cited the partnership of The Rufford Foundation.

In the completed hiking guide training manual we included The Rufford Foundation's logo.

In the printed visitors' guide resource we included The Rufford Foundation's logo.

**11. Any other comments?**

Thank you so very much for your support of our project! Looking forward to potential future partnership.