

## 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>	Travis Steffens
<b>Project title</b>	A community-based conservation and education approach to conserving endangered lemur's species found near remote villages in NW Madagascar.
<b>RSG reference</b>	15767-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	July 2014 - June 2015
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£4555
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Travis.steffens@gmail.com">Travis.steffens@gmail.com</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	June 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2015

**1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Not achieved</b>	<b>Partially achieved</b>	<b>Fully achieved</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Conduct stakeholder meetings to gain a better understanding of the community/conservation issues, and to brainstorm possible solutions			Y	We spent approximately 4 weeks speaking with local community officials and national park representatives. We used the information gathered to design the livelihood survey and the education project (see below).
Complete a community livelihood survey to explore demography, income generation, health, and local perceptions of conservation, lemurs, and how people use the forest.			Y	We surveyed 210 out of 243 adults from three communities. The information we acquired will provide a baseline for comparison for all future projects.
Run conservation education projects for adults and children in 15 communities.		Y		We had originally planned to target 15 communities, but we determined that we could only feasibly visit and run our programmes in 11 communities. Not every community was receptive to the project, mainly because they were still unfamiliar with our team and what we were trying to do. Additionally, many communities had poor relationships with other projects and organisations, which have come into the area. This made our job more challenging. We intend to work to foster positive relationships with all of the 15 communities.
Initiate a fire management plan consisting of building firebreaks and monitoring their effectiveness.	Y			We have not completed this objective yet. Due to difficulties obtaining permission to conduct all of our projects, we were delayed by 1 month. However, we are about to

				initiate work on this project. We will cut approximately 10—15 km of firebreaks in July.
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**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

We ran into three main issues during our project:

**Permissions.**

The most difficult problem that we dealt with was obtaining permission from Madagascar National Parks MNP to run this project. Normally, gaining permissions involves a simple application on a project-by-project basis. However, because we wanted to run a larger programme that consisted of multiple small projects, it made more sense to create an accord of collaboration with MNP that would last for 1—3 years. This was somewhat complicated, however, because to obtain an accord of collaboration, we needed to create an association or greater body within Madagascar. We therefore created the Planet Madagascar Association and struck a formal accord of collaboration with MNP. Although the downside of this was that it delayed the start dates of our projects, the accord has strengthened our long-term relationship with the national park, which will help us successfully complete the projects funded by RSG as well as future projects within the national park.

**Staffing.**

Another difficulty that we encountered was having too few staff members to effectively run our programmes. Originally, we had planned to employ our in-country director, and to rely on Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and Madagascar National Park staff to fill in any gaps. We found, though, that we needed one other Planet Madagascar staff member to help support the in-country director. So, we ended up hiring another staff member, which we had not anticipated at the onset of this project. This, of course, meant additional costs. However, having an extra support also helped ensure our project was successful.

**Overhead.**

Another unforeseen challenge with this project was additional overhead costs that we had not fully anticipated. The grant we received from Rufford is a project-based grant. However, our organisation has other overhead expenses (i.e. office supplies, internet costs, transportation for meetings in the capital) that we had not included in the original budget. These costs—though not project-specific—are necessary for this and other projects to operate. We would therefore consider putting these overhead costs into future budgets.

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

The three most important outcomes of our project are:

- Through our livelihoods survey, we acquired valuable baseline data on people’s livelihoods and perceptions of their surrounding habitat within the three core communities in which we work. We spoke with 210 community members in three remote communities in Ankarafantsika National Park: Ambarindahy, Maevatanimbary, and Andranohobaka. Results revealed that over 70% of the people did not have knowledge of the different lemur species

in their region, and few people were aware of the benefits that lemurs had on the forest habitat. For example, in Andranohobaka only 8% of people were aware that lemurs disperse seeds. Additionally, our survey revealed that over 30% of people eat lemurs in all three communities. These results have underlined the importance of implementing education programs in these communities and this information is vital for planning future projects and for measuring their success.

- Our education project engaged people from 11 communities on the importance of lemurs to forests and people. Conservation education programmes as well as community participation in decision-making can be instrumental in fostering local support for conservation initiatives (Wallis and Lee 1999). We distributed lambas (cotton cloths) with a message of conservation to 400 individuals in the 11 communities. Leaving behind these lambas will serve as a tangible reminder of the conservation programme for these community members. Part of our education project also involved training local adults in the communities on how to implement conservation education programmes for the children. This type of engagement has left the communities with capacity to continue to educate their children and themselves on the issues facing the local wildlife and their own livelihoods.
- Once we have completed building our firebreaks—we intend to create firebreaks along 10-15 km of forest—we will have contributed to stopping fires from burning over 357 ha of tropical deciduous dry forest within Ankarafantsika National Park. This protection will contribute to the conservation of the eight different lemur species that live in the region, as well as the people that live there. Coupled with our broader fire management plan (forest monitoring) we will make a long-term contribution to protecting biodiversity in the region.

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

Local communities were involved at every stage of this project. At the stakeholder meetings, we had the opportunity to discuss the major challenges faced by lemurs and people, and to brainstorm collaborative solutions. We were then able to adapt our education programme for each community, to reflect their knowledge and concerns. During the education programme, we trained community leaders on how to implement the programmes. We hired support staff to run the projects from each community. These jobs provide not only much needed income to each community but gave community members ownership of the project.

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

The work supported by RSG is part of an ongoing, long-term programme for Planet Madagascar. We will continue with the fire management programme through the end of this year. We plan to expand the Fire Management Program to more communities in future years, with the objective of reaching every community within Ankarafantsika National Park. In the future, we plan to implement a population health and environment project within the core communities in which we work, later expanding to the remaining communities as our capacity builds.

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

The results of this project will be immediately shared with our on the ground partners Durrell Wildlife Trust and Madagascar National Parks. Additionally, some of the information we acquired will be disseminated through academic avenues. For example, we plan to present data at the 2016 International Primatological Society Conference. Additionally, we will provide access to reports of our work on our website ([www.planetmadagascar.com](http://www.planetmadagascar.com)).

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

The RSG period was from July of 2014 until June of 2015. However, the project will continue through till the end of July 2015. We have added additional components to the project—a fire management plan—that will continue until the end of December 2015.

## 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 (received from RSG)	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Salary for Guide per local village	325	325	0	Sufficient for our local guides but we required a 2 <sup>nd</sup> Planet Madagascar assistant (see bottom line below)
Salary for National Park Guide	116	116	0	
Salary for Project Coordinator	536	536	0	
Transport of project staff	155	467	-312	There were unexpected transport costs to carry equipment between communities for the project
Lambas	1032	1160	-128	Lambas were more expensive than budgeted
Posters	258	237	21	Posters were less expensive than budgeted
Children's Education kits	155	228	-73	Even though we went to fewer schools, printing costs for making lemur masks were greater than expected.
Introductory meetings	77	71	6	
Firebreaks	825	825	0	
Community celebration	250	250	0	

Liaison with local authorities and community leaders	39	39	0	
National park staff support visit	31	31	0	
Mobile communications	124	124	0	
Housing for project staff	186	186	0	
Madagascar National Park fees	46	46	0	
Monitoring forest	400	400	0	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Planet Madagascar assistant	0	581	-581	This was necessary for the project. Rufford staff had commented that we couldn't do the project without further assistance. Even though we had on the ground support from our partner Durrell Wildlife Trust we still required another Planet Madagascar assistant.
<b>TOTAL</b>	4555	5622	-1067	

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

The important next steps are to follow up on our conservation education project in the 11 communities with practical conservation actions, including the Fire Management Plan that we are implementing in three of the 11 communities. Additionally, finding direct benefits to communities outside of jobs needs to become a priority. For example, implementing projects that improve health and sanitation for communities—one of the biggest issues uncovered by our livelihoods survey. Finally, because we found that many community members hunt and eat lemurs, we need to find alternative sources of protein within the remote communities.

### 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?

Yes. I gave several talks at various venues including the Toronto Zoo, the Explorer's Club, the Boulevard Club, several schools in Guelph, Ontario, schools in Bermuda, and the Bermuda Underwater Exploration Club where I included the RSGF logo within my slides and acknowledgements. The RSGF logo is also featured on Planet Madagascar's website ([www.planetmadagascar.com](http://www.planetmadagascar.com)).

### 11. Any other comments?

The RSGF grant in support of this project has allowed Planet Madagascar to commence our on-the-ground conservation programs in earnest. We very much appreciate the support and are looking forward to continuing our long-term programmes in Madagascar, including our fire management programme, future education programmes, and community health programmes. Without the support of RSGF, this would not have become a reality.