

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	Wisdom Jaccob Nyondoh
Project title	Mwakifwamba Community Forest Reserve
RSG reference	Sr. Patricia Lanigan, Brother Pachalo Mfunne, and Mr. Manaseh Chisiza
Reporting period	August 2015-July 2016
Amount of grant	4602
Your email address	Wisdomsm1@gmail.com
Date of this report	18 August 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
Establishment of a community forest reserve in 100 hectare of community land		Partially achieved		We only managed to plant in about 700 km ² Because of short rainy season some of our trees are drying and there is not water to water them
Economic empowerment of the culprits of deforestation		Partially achieved		Some members were badly affected by hunger during the rainy season so their business productivity was hampered
Restoration of the natural environment			Fully achieved	The natural trees are coming up, and even the wildlife like quail birds are being spotted with their chicks when trailing in the reserve site
Eco-conscientization among community members			Fully achieved	All the community members display eco-consciousness on the need to preserve their environment
- Working with individuals as champions of conservation			Fully achieved	We worked with 44 households with several conservation members

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

Firstly, there was a problem of termites that developed at the site where the nursery booth was situated. Having established the site during the dry season it was difficult to know if the place would be prone to termites. From December to January several sections of the seedbed were attacked. In dealing with this problem, we spread Bulldock and Dursban, which helped minimize the rate of its spread to the nearby seedbeds.

Secondly, we experience high seedling mortality rate due to an unexpected 3-week spell of drought in February 2016 that led to wilting of some of the plants especially those that had not yet established their root system in the reserve site. To counteract this challenge, we tried to capitalize on the local method of tying upside down a plastic bottle of water near the plant with a small opening on the bottle-top to let the water sip into the ground over a prolonged period of time without losing much to evaporation.

Thirdly, there was another problem that arose both at the nursery station as well as the reserve. Small insects in form of grasshoppers were destroying the seedlings by eating the shoots, buds and leaves of the young plants. We applied Cypermethrine which helped in curbing and controlling the problem.

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

The first major outcome of the project is that the project has over 40 men and women who are involved in entrepreneurship having been empowered with capital from the project. Some of them are entrepreneurs with food items and groceries, others are involved in making the efficient local stoves, others have changed into opening barbershops and bicycle repair stations.

Through all these interventions these former culprits of deforestation in village handmade Mwakifwamba are now finding alternative sources of earning a living that is eco-conscious and sustainable.

The second outcome is that more than planting and raising the seedlings from the nursery to the community reserve and individual homes, there has been a substantial eco-conscientization that has emanated from the project. Community members are able to move and search for different types of tree seeds beyond their village, to plant during the rainy season. As for some they hope to plant within their homes while others seek to use the skills gained to make it a business.

Lastly, as a project, we managed to plant over 8,000 seedlings in around 700 km² in Mwakifwamba village, and provided around 1,000 to St. Agnes Primary School within the village formerly known as Ndurwe primary school.

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

The project was born out of the local need to preserve and rejuvenate the natural forest by means of reforestation and afforestation, and to empower the culprits of deforestation with eco-friendly means of production for sustainable livelihoods.

From the beginning of the project, the community members worked hard in each and every step of the project life cycle. With the community members, we surveyed the area that needed the reforestation, we constructed the fence on the site of raising the nursery, we dug, transported and moisturised the right type of quality soil that was needed for raising the seedlings, we filled and arranged the polythene tubes in rows, we watered the seedlings for over 4 months on the nursery site, we prepared the site for planting by digging the holes in advance and we planted seedlings.

By taking part in the implementation and management of the project, the community members gained a strong sense of ownership for the project and love for the preservation of environment.

In addition, because of the economic aspect of the project that aims at building resilience of the culprits of deforestation at village level, our project empowered men and women including youths with skills and capital in being local entrepreneurs. As a result, some of the members established groceries shops, some stated bicycle mending shops, others opened barber shops, selling second hand clothes while most who were women started selling food items like cassava for making flour, Chindongwa which is a non-alcoholic drink.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Since our current project was a pilot project, there are plans to continue with the project however, from the experience of our pilot project, I feel there is need for more investment in the economic empowerment of the culprits of deforestation than on reforestation. This is because seeds and seedlings that grow out of their natural environment at the beginning of the rainy season are better adapted than those that are otherwise introduced.

As for reforestation and afforestation, there is need to focus more on household level than on the customary land because in case of unforeseen incident of a dry spell during the rainy season, it is easy for every individual to care for their young trees around their homes that for the community members to respond to the forest reserve that is far even from a water point in case they need watering.

There is again a conflict of interest that arise during a dry spell because it not only affects the trees in the reserve but also the crops in the gardens therefore it is hard to draw the attention of the community members when they know that their staple food crop is also suffering.

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

I have and still am sharing the positive results as well as the challenges encountered during the implementation process of Mwakifwamba Community Forest Reserve project by creating and searching for avenues to teach and share with people of various backgrounds.

In the process of my execution of the project, I was asked by a community college in Karonga called Miracle Technical Institute to be giving workshops to students pursuing a diploma in Community Development with reference to my project. These students are a group of youths who come from all over the country with passion in developing their communities.

Using the project of Mwakifwamba Community Forest Reserve as my background, I am one of the 2016 winners the Community Solutions Fellowship Program, which is a four months fellowship program sponsored by the U. S. Department of State bureau of education and cultural exchange that seeks to bring together young like-minded leaders from all over the world who are devoted to solving the challenges facing their communities. My thematic area being environmental issues, I have tried to expose my work being open to share and learn from other leaders and experts from other parts of the world.

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 Rufford Foundation grant was used between August 2015 and June 2016. By the end of June as a project we had already finalised all the required necessities except for some few details like supervision of the reserve which will continue under the leadership of village headman Bwana Mwakifwamba himself. The anticipated period of using the Rufford Foundation grant however, was from August 2015 to July 2016.

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. The anticipated exchange rate was £1=MK 660 - The Actual exchange rate was at £1=MK 825

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Tree seeds	6	12	6 More	We ordered twice because of low germination percentage the first time
Fruit tree seeds	60	60	0	
Polythene Bags	38	48	10 More	It was not rainy season so they were scarce and expensive.
Transport of seedlings from the planting site	45	37	8 Less	
Tools for working	168	115	52 Less	
Organic Manure & pesticides	107	85	22 Less	
Fire break	228	0	228 Less	We added this money to the capital income because the project had many beneficiaries
Micro-entrepreneur capital income	1,062	1,517	498 More	They were many people who were part of the project beneficiaries
Trainings	454	227	227 Less	We added to the capital for culprits
Salary of Project Coordinator	1,364	1,364	0	
Field Assistants	691	903	212 More	We had three assistants from the department of forestry
Office equipment	379	672	293 More	We purchased a laptop and camera for easy reporting
Total	<u>4602</u>			
In the course of the project, the following costs arose;				

Transport to and from Lilongwe to purchase the seeds	0	60	N/A	I travelled to the Land resource centre in Lilongwe to buy the seeds because they were not locally available
Frequent transportation to the reserve site	0	60	N/A	We bought a bike for easy transportation
Nursery Fencing materials	0	182	N/A	We bought some eucalyptus and grass to use to fence the nursery site
Truncheons for planting	0	109	N/A	We bought truncheons for Mahogany Bean trees because seeds take too long to grow
Community Celebrations	0	76	N/A	They were times when we would buy food if we spent the whole day working at the reserve site with the community members
Total		<u>5,527</u>		

Some Calculations	Explanations
5,527	Total expenditure
-4,602	Proposed budget expenditure
925×825	Multiplied by the exchange rate
763,125.00	Difference brought by exchange rate

MK 763,125.00 was the additional amount that was brought because of the exchange rate. The initial amount I was expecting was MK 3,037,320.00.

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

As a coordinator of Mwakifwamba community Forest Reserve, I feel that the fight against deforestation should be multi-dimensional in every aspect.

Firstly, there is need to lay a good foundation upon which to build economic resilience of all those involved in deforestation not just in one area or a single village but perhaps beginning with several villages at district level. This is because from my

experience, individuals from other villages were challenging the members in Mwakifwamba community that after they have finished the trees in their villages they will turn to the reserve even when it means going at night to cut the trees. This was because this particular village was singled out from the other villages.

Secondly, they is need to invest more resources at household level in agriculture production so that people do not turn into deforestation to earn money to buy basic needs like food. However, unlike in the past when rainfall was more assured from December to April, currently, as a result of climate change, the rainy season is short, unpredictable as well as unreliable. In addition, the farmland these people have been cultivation is exhausted and degraded. Therefore, there is need to introduce methods of improving the quality of soil by natural means like compost which are not only cheaper but also sustainable.

Lastly, in curbing deforestation there is a huge need on the part of the government to diversify the sources of energy both in rural as well as in urban areas. Unlike in other countries where people have access to hydroelectric power (electricity), biofuels, solar power, gas etc., the Malawian community can only rely on hydro-electric power which happens to be in short supply and unreliable. This scenario creates high demand for the most assured alternative which is either to have charcoal or firewood. The situation is worse in rural areas because that is the only readily available source energy.

There is need to tap hugely on the solar energy which is unutilized therefore wasted and yet is present almost all year round. While afforestation maybe a successful initiative at community level, but without looking at the alternative sources of energy that can complement the current energy supply in towns and cities, deforestation (the cutting down of trees) for charcoal and firewood will still be appealing because of the huge demand.

Backed by my simple survey, conducted during the course of the project implementation, it revealed that even the most prominent officials who live in prestigious section of towns and cities in Karonga, Mzuzu and Lilongwe, they are found with a bag of charcoal in their kitchens because of the un-reliability electricity supply.

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?

The RSCF got publicised in one of the local community radio station during the course of implementation process. This was done mostly during the weekends of the first quarter of the project life cycle.

As a project we have not publicised any material yet in relation to the project in which we could have used the Rufford Foundation logo but we will hopefully be able to in the future.

11. Any other comments?

From my experience with Mwakifwamba Community Forest Reserve, I feel that in order to deal with the problem of deforestation in Malawi, there is need for innovative ways to establish and decentralize clean affordable solar energy in both urban and rural communities. This transition into solar energy would act as catalyst for families like those in Mwakifwamba community by providing clean energy rather than buying firewood or charcoal which propels deforestation or using polluting fuels such as paraffin which in this case would be purchased from the income obtained often after selling firewood or charcoal.

From the government point of view, I believe that they have to formulate policies that support subsidized innovative acquisition of the tools for clean energy such as pay as you go or rent to buy solar systems. This would reduce the burden of a onetime cost of payment for buying the whole system by individual in rural communities.

There is also need to reinvest in restoration of soil quality of the farmland by natural means like compost production to substitute the politically motivated distribution of inorganic fertilizers which end up destroying the soil fertility and structure. This is possible because in many gardens, the stocks of maize and rice remain in the fields unutilized and are wasted after the period of harvesting.

As a conclusion, in order to stop deforestation, there is need to act now not just at community level but also at district level and at a country level. Whether it means reducing our population, diversifying alternative clean sources of energy, bringing in soil amendment methods like compost or economically empowering the culprits involved in deforestation all these have to be done now building on and learning from our experiences to create an environment that can support us and our next generations.