

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	Arsen Gasparyan
Project title	The Lichen Conservation and Education Initiative in Armenia
RSG reference	18278-2
Reporting period	15.11.2015 - 15.12.2016
Amount of grant	£4970
Your email address	gasparyan.arsen@yahoo.com
Date of this report	15.12.2016

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
Preparation and publication of the illustrated guidebook about the epiphytic macro-lichens of the temperate forests in Armenia.				Number of publications has been increased from proposed 300 to 500.
Posting of seven informational guideboards in the adjacent area of ecotourism trails of the "Dilijan" National Park.				All seven informational guide boards have been posted at the entrance of ecotourism trails in Dilijan National Park.
Creation of educational section in the secondary schools of city of the Dilijan.				Two education sections have been created in the Dilijan Central School and 6th secondary schools.
Creation of the lichen exhibition area in Yerevan Botanical Garden.				The lichen indoor and outdoor exhibition area has been created in the Yerevan Botanical Garden.
Implementation conservation education campaign.				Approximately 80 students and schoolchildren participated in the educational seminars and outdoor visits in the Dilijan National Park.

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

There weren't any project difficulties, the only shortcoming was a short delay on some of the activities.

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

1. Publication of the first lichen field guidebook in Armenia

The guidebook was designed for educational, research and ecotourism purposes. It includes an illustrated and annotated dichotomous key, notes on species, information about spot tests and a terminological glossary. The identification key includes 51 species of common epiphytic macro-lichens distributed in the temperate forests of northern Armenia and in the dry montane woodlands in the south of the country. As a result of cooperation with Prof Pier Luigi Nimis (Trieste University), the illustrated bilingual guidebook not only was published, but also online version of the guide (link: goo.gl/Rz6yO8) and mobile version (iOS and Android) via the App KeyToNature have been created.

2. Lichen exhibition area in Yerevan Botanical Garden

The indoor exhibition area with the title "Tree of Life", which included not only lichens but also other organisms, has been created in the museum in Yerevan Botanical Garden. The exhibition includes short information stands with attached specimens. The exhibition provides an opportunity for visitor to get information about biodiversity of Armenia and evolution history. In addition, outdoor lichen exhibition area in the greenhouse also has been established.

3. Lichen education and awareness in the Dilijan National Park

Seven informational guide boards have been posted in the Dilijan National Park. Thousands of visitors and users of ecotourism trails will be able to get information about some of lichen species, download via QR code lichen guidebook and get basic information about biodiversity. The printed lichen guidebook is also available in the visitor centre of the national park. The education campaign in the communities in the surroundings of the Dilijan National Park was implemented. About 80 schoolchildren and students participated in the seminars and outdoor visits. The competitions and other activities were organised and copies of lichen guidebook have been provided to the local schools. In two local schools, Dilijan central school and 6th secondary school lichen sections, consists of tablets with interactive lichen tutorial for schoolchildren, specimens of lichens and fungi from the national park and basic information.

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

The project was mostly focused on environmental education and raising awareness. The schoolchildren and students from the communities of Dilijan have been involved in the educational activities.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. I would like to continue and I think to apply for RSG to support further efforts on lichen diversity conservation in Armenia.

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

The printed guidebooks prepared within the project have been distributed among various stakeholders (scientific institutions, libraries, universities, schools, environmental NGOs etc.). The results of all implemented project activities have been posted on our websites www.lichenology.am and www.yba.am, as well as posted on our official Facebook pages.

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 project was implemented within 13 months. About 1 month more was required to finish the 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
Publication of 500 illustrated guidebooks	1500	1600	-100	
5 Trips to "Dilijan" National Park	650	730	-80	
Preparation and posting of 7 informational guide boards	1100	1100	0	
Preparation of 2 educational sections in the local schools	800	650	150	
Establishment of lichens exhibition area in Yerevan Botanical Garden	550	520	30	
Stationary and prizes for educational campaign	370	370	0	
TOTAL	4970	1950	0	

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

I think it is important to identify Important Lichen Areas and explore also lichen diversity of the Important Plant Areas and PAs, which will facilitate conservation of epiphytic lichens within IPAs and PAs. For the first time, the information on lichen diversity and conservation priorities have been incorporated in the management plan of the Dilijan National Park (results of the 1st RSG).

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 logo of the RSGF has been used in the published guidebook, during presentations, on the guide boards, informational and educational stands. Support of the RSGF was mentioned in all news.

11. Any other comments?

I would like to express my gratitude to the Rufford Foundation for continuous support of lichen conservation efforts in Armenia.