

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	Kingsley Bekoe Ansah
Project title	Enhancing conservation and livelihood support arrangements for securing Atewa Range Forest Reserve
RSG reference	21059-B
Reporting period	01 December 2016 to 30 November 2017
Amount of grant	£9,991
Your email address	bekoekingsley@yahoo.com
Date of this report	03 January 2018

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
Support national policy discourse in favour of elevating the status of the reserve to a national park and consequently leading to improved conservation of the area.				The advocacy front to elevate Atewa to the status of a national park was not fully active in 2017 due to several factors including new political administration taking over in Ghana after elections in December 2016, the fact that new ministers and political administrative heads needed some time to be acquainted with the issues before advocacy pressure is mounted. Nonetheless, the project used radio programmes (project team leader participated in radio talk show programmes) to continuously highlight the issue of threats to Atewa and the need to elevate the reserve to a national park, even more so when new and politically motivated strong interests of mining bauxite in Atewa has emerged in recent months.
Enhance awareness for Communities in particular and citizens in general on the conservation values of Atewa and what and how they will take steps to conserve the area or sustainably utilize its benefits.				Awareness materials repackaged and used in creating awareness of community members, and the general population on threats facing the forest reserve and how to conserve the reserve.
Support communities to engage in sustainable alternative livelihoods taking advantage of the conservation of the area to improve their incomes and improve their living standards				25 community members trained in alternative livelihood activities particularly rabbit and grasscutter rearing, supporting the effort to reduce the pressure on the reserve and providing practical incentives to the community members to reduce the pressure on the reserve.

and create buffer zone around forest reserve				
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

No major difficulty was encountered during the project implementation. However, firstly, collaborating with the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service (GES) in relation to the school's quiz competition was more challenging than initially anticipated by the project team. The project team had to follow bureaucratic procedures to get approval to interact with the students even though this module was originally fashioned along the environmental clubs used by AROCHA-Ghana. The approval was eventually given, when the GES recognised the benefits the students stood to gain by engaging in the project and being aware of the benefits of protecting the Atewa forest reserve.

Secondly, due to increased cost of the livelihood training and the increased interest/patronage of the community members, the project team discussed and agreed with the trainees/communities to contribute towards the training. The cost contribution was mainly through labour, which was rightfully quantified in building some components of the startup kits, since the community had carpenters, etc. who were useful in the process. This ensured enhanced commitment and interest from the community members to the project, and it is the hope of the project team that it will translate to sustainability of the interventions.

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

Outcome 1: National policy discourse sustained in favour of elevating the status of the reserve to a national park and consequently leading to improved conservation of the area.

The project through the advocacy campaigns carried out during the radio programmes, production and playing of radio jingles on conservation of the Atewa Range forest reserve, targeting more than 10,000 inhabitants have helped to sustain the push for conserving the Atewa forest reserve in the face of new and daunting competing interests from bauxite mining and increased actions of illegal gold mining. The project team took opportunity of national discourse by participating in NGOs and civil society led advocacy actions at the national level, most notably at the National REDD+ forum in November 2017 to highlight the need for protecting Atewa forest reserve.

Since the new political administration took office on 7th January 2017 in Ghana, it has emerged that there are strong private interests backed by the Chinese Government to mine bauxite in the Atewa forest reserve and this has heightened the advocacy of civil society organisations to pressure government to rescind such move. The project team has leveraged solidarity and goodwill from elements in both public service (in the forestry commission notably within the wildlife division of the forestry commission), NGOs and civil society to increase their voice in protecting the

forest reserve. The effect is that government has slowed down on this move, however pressure in terms of advocacy needs to be maintained while making the economic argument of elevating the status of Atewa to a national park in order to protect critical flora and fauna.

Outcome 2: Communities in particular and citizens in general have enhanced awareness of the conservation values of Atewa and what and how they will take steps to conserve the area or sustainably utilise its benefits.

Through the repackaged awareness materials and playing them on radio, and through the use of community meetings to discuss conservation issues, communities have enhanced their awareness and commitment in protecting the Atewa Forest Reserve. This is evident in the strong opposition expressed by community members in illegal mining and forestry activities in the reserve. The communities have formed community forestry committees (CFCs) whose aim is to serve as “watchdog” to protect the forest reserve against any illegal actions. The interest of the general public in the areas has increased in favour on conserving the forest reserve through the monitoring of radio call-ins during awareness radio programmes. On the average 20 persons call within a 10 minute session during radio programmes to discuss and re-affirm commitment to protect the forest reserve. This is marked improved from a zero baseline before the project began.

Additionally more than 500 pupils of ages ranging from 12 to 16 years benefited from the schools awareness campaigns through the quiz competition by learning the contents of the awareness materials on Atewa produced during the Rufford funded second grant project, and witnessing or participating in the quiz competitions. 10 first cycle schools were involved in the competition, with over 12 teachers taking pupils through the awareness material on the benefits of Atewa, the threats it faces and what can be done to save it. This module was well received by the GES, such that it is discussing currently with the project team of replicating this in adjoining districts and communities of the forest reserve that did not benefit from the current campaign.

Outcome 3: Communities have engaged in sustainable alternative livelihoods to improve their incomes and improve their living standards and buffer zone around forest reserve further enhanced

The project engaged the Business Advisory Centre of the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) to provide targeted and advanced training for a selected 25 participants from the project communities after initial profiling and assessment was conducted. This component of the project was very well received that, the funds allocated for this became inadequate but for the contribution of the participants. The participants received training and start-up kits for grasscutter and rabbit rearing after initial market analysis and discussions with the communities and participants proved this was a financially, socially and culturally viable alternative livelihood. The participants after receiving the training formed cooperatives, to enhance the communal spirit and formalize their activities to attract additional and further financial support to boost their business. Further enhancing the value chain and

linkages with market will ensure sustainability of the interventions and this will be pursued. Feedback received from some of the community members is that people who were previously engaged in illegal mining and forestry activities in the communities are seeing the benefits and results of the alternative livelihoods and are ready to be engaged in it. This will be further explored in future funding proposals.

Additionally, 9,500 tree seedlings of indigenous breed (Ofram, Mahogany, *Terminalia ivorensis*, *Khaya ivorensis*) were distributed and planted by 170 farmers in the four project communities to further augment the buffer areas around the Atewa Forest Reserve. Per the monitoring by the project team, the survival rate is about 70% which is very good. Majority of the seedlings were procured from the community nurseries which are also doing well. The interest shown by farmers in planting timber tree species in their farms has increased with farmers now deliberating leaving out tree seedlings in their farms during farm preparations whereas in the past these would have been cut or burned. This clearly shows that the advocacy and awareness actions are yielding positive results that need to be maintained.

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

The project is local community centred and as such the communities were involved in all the components of the project, as direct beneficiaries of the intervention or as stakeholders in its planning and execution.

The communities were involved in the awareness campaigns, participating actively and asking questions during the meetings. They also formed community forest committees as part of their efforts and contribution to guard against indiscriminate and illegal mining and farming activities in the forest reserve.

The communities and general population were also targets of the awareness raising activities using the radio stations, actively participating and calling in to the radio discussions to share their opinion.

The communities were also involved during the planning and assessment of alternative livelihood actions, and they participated in the training. Additionally, the communities participated in the tree planting in their farms, creating buffer of mosaic farm forest system around the Atewa forest reserve.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Earlier this year, when the new national government took office, one of the key issues they tackled was that of illegal mining popularly called galamsey. This activity destroys forests, agricultural lands and pollutes water bodies, and the move by government received a lot of support from the general public. It is important to note that, the Atewa area and its forest reserve is one of the areas severely affected and threatened by galamsey and this has been widely reported. Thus, the campaign to flush out illegal mining was carried out in the area. It came at an opportune time, as Rufford funded project interventions in the Atewa area although at a smaller scale

has been trying to tackle some of these challenges through awareness creation, rehabilitation of degraded lands through farm forest systems, and introduction of community members who destroy the forest to alternative livelihoods.

With the positive impacts the project has achieved, and the commitment shown by stakeholders especially the District Assembly, the Business Advisory Centre of the NBSSI, the GES among others, the project interventions will be repackaged in a well thought out concept that can be replicated in other areas in the Atewa surroundings and even in other mining prone communities in Ghana. This will be used to solicit for funding support for large scale implementation. Further to this, it is important to develop fully the value chains of the alternative livelihoods actions including packaging, pricing, marketing and linking the participants to sustainable financial solutions especially from the rural banks. This will be pursued with a second Booster grant application.

It emerged during the awareness campaigns using the radio that a number of radio stations were interested in creating a dedicated platform on each of the radio platforms as part of their social responsibility to provide air time and other resources purposely for intensifying the awareness and advocacy campaigns for elevating the status of Atewa to a forest reserve. This will be pursued with a second Booster fund application.

Additionally, due to the interest shown by communities, the tree planting, awareness and livelihood support components will be further strengthened, exploring ways of institutionalising the components through collaboration with relevant and mandated state institutions and agencies. This will be pursued through a second Booster grant application.

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

As mentioned earlier, reports on the progress of work, especially on the impacts of the training, awareness creation and schools quiz competition have been shared with the relevant stakeholders including the GES, District Assembly.

The results will be further packaged into a viable concept to share with government stakeholders at the national level for possible adoption in other mining prone areas.

Further, the team leader has a blog (kingsleybekoeansah@blogspot.com) and a feature story of the project intervention and its impact will be developed and posted on the website.

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 approved on 23rd November 2016 while implementation began in December 2016 and ended in December 2017. This means the project implementation period is about 13 months. As explained earlier, the delay was

mainly due to getting approval from the GES to implement the schools quiz competition, otherwise all other components and activities went on smoothly.

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
Contingency (5% of total budget)	500	500	0	
Cost of stationery and other materials for producing reports for stakeholders	300	350	50	Demands for additional copies of the project report from the District Assembly, Ghana Education Service and the Forestry Commission increased the cost of the production of the reports, additional cost was borne by the agencies as contribution to the project.
Cost of publicity materials (t-shirts, banners, etc.)	500	500	0	
Advanced training for 20 participants and start up support for entrepreneurs	1,150	1,300	150	Increased cost of items for making the start-up kits increased the cost of the training. The difference was taken up by the participants through a voluntary cooperative contribution, as a way of showing their commitment to the programme and ensuring sustainability as well.
Quiz competition cost (including hosting the qualifying rounds and grand finale)	810	810	0	
Cost of using community based radio platforms	600	600	0	
Cost of producing audio awareness creation material	700	700	0	

Transportation of seedlings from site to communities	400	400	0	
Cost of acquiring 10,000 tree seedlings for @ GBP 0.05 per seedling for community forest buffer planting	606	606	0	
Allowance for other project team members (12) @ GBP 2.5 per person for average 20 days	600	600	0	
Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) for project leader and assistant for 60 days at GBP 10/day/person	1200	1200	0	
Cost of fuel (450 gallons (including for community entry meetings, monitoring visits, schools quiz, etc.) @ Ghc 0.5/gallon	225	250	25	Cost of fuel increased dramatically during the period of the project implementation. Difference was borne by contribution from project team.
Vehicle hire (including entry meetings, monitoring visits, schools quiz competition, etc) @ GBP 40/day for total of 60 days	2400	2400	0	
TOTAL	9,991	10,216	225	Notes to budget The exchange rate used is a 12-month interbank exchange rate average of GBP 1= Ghc 5.09

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

The important next steps include the following:

- Share the results/impacts of the project intervention with relevant government stakeholders especially at the national level.
- Develop a concept based on the experience learned from project implementation that can be replicated in similar ecologically stressed areas in the government and engage government and other stakeholders on possible funding options for this.
- Undertake regular monitoring to ensure livelihood actions are being continued and engage options for further developing the value chains from

the alternative livelihood actions and linking that to financial support mechanism to ensure sustainability.

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

The Rufford logo was widely used on the training and start-up kits for the alternative livelihoods training. The Foundation was also mentioned in all radio jingles and awareness creation actions at the radio stations and mentioned in all the reports. The logo was used in all correspondence with stakeholders. It was highlighted during the trainings and awareness creation at the community level that funding for the project is received from Rufford Foundation.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

The project team leader, **Kingsley Bekoe Ansah** through his leadership facilitated the project interventions on the ground, holding regular interaction with other project team members, making contacts with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Education and GES, the Forestry Commission, the District Assembly and the communities. He also gave responsibilities to the rest of the team members based on the agreed work plan from the onset of the project and held regular project meetings to monitor progress.

Assistant project leader, **Cedric Ofofu** facilitated community meetings interacting more regularly with the community focal points and also provided administrative support in organizing meetings at the community and district levels.

The head at the Business Advisory Centre of the NBSSI, **Mr Nsiah** played an integral part of the project through provision of technical backstopping in the provision of the livelihoods skills training, assessment of the market opportunities and penetration of the identified livelihood and products. He supported in the recruitment of the service providers who provided the training to the participants.

12. Any other comments?

The impact of the project and its intervention cannot be underestimated. It came at a crucial moment in the discourse at the national level when there was huge public outcry for illegal small-scale mining and its effect on the environment and the need to provide workable solutions to the challenges. The project, provided practical solutions albeit at the small-scale level, combining awareness, advocacy, influencing public opinion and directing public energies to positive actions with positive effects on the environment, rehabilitating degraded landscapes and enhancing alternative livelihoods as incentives for conservation actions. This will be further elaborated and enhanced in future project interventions in the area, region and nation as a whole.

Enhancing conservation and livelihood support arrangements for securing Atewa Range Forest Reserve

Picture Report



Community members taking through training by field facilitators and experts from the Business Advisory Center of the District Assembly



Start-up kits for alternative livelihood skills training under construction



Start-up kits including rabbits with Rufford visibility



Project team leader presenting the start-up kits to two of the trainees



Left: Project team leader interacting with trainees after presentation of start-up kits. Rights: Project team leader during one of the advocacy radio programmes



Left: Project team leader during one of the radio programmes advocating for the elevation of the status of Atewa to a national park