

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Vilbert Vabi Vamuloh
Project Title	Giving a voice to the voiceless: Collaborative Management of the Lobéké National Park
Application ID	29793-2
Grant Amount	£5950
Email Address	vabivilbert@gmail.com
Date of this Report	January 20 th 2022

1. 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
Community participation in park governance				Members are not satisfied with their participation in the management of the park. There is some sort of an elite capture. Also, the management board has authority over decision making versus being consultative.
Conservation of biological diversity				Communities believe there has been a decline in species at risk such as elephants and bongos. There has also been a decline in medicinal plants used by local indigenous communities for cultural purposes.
Maintenance of livelihood opportunities				Failure to recognise customary rights alienates local communities from the management of community forests, increases poverty and leads to unsustainable exploitation of resources.

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

Covid 19. I got it.

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

The idea of protected areas in the form of wildlife sanctuaries, forest reserves and national parks remain a nightmare to adjacent communities in Cameroon. There are many unanswered questions which linger in the minds of the villages or adjacent communities and continue to embitter them are swept under the carpet by the institutions that preach and "enforce" conservation of this natural heritage in Cameroon. First, failure to recognise customary tenures leads to increased conflicts between local communities and the effective management of protected areas. Second, monitoring groups such as (traditional council, Club des amis de Gorilla (CAG), hunters and gatherers group), are actively reporting illegal logging and poaching but need capacities in wildlife monitoring, tracking and denunciation of alleged illegalities of logging and poaching. Third, forest deforestation and agricultural expansion activities, logging and poaching activities has destroyed cultural values and sites (shrine, sacred sites, water sources, wildlife, medicinal plants and plant species of cultural importance). From the data collected at the level of

each village, it is clear that the local communities need support to protect their cultural and ecological values as well as enhance the governance systems.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.

Information meetings were organised to inform communities and stakeholders of the project and activities. Communities attended planning meetings with other Civil Society Organisation (CSOs): the Lobeke Park Research Club, Club of Gorilla Friends, Club of Chimpanzee Friends, Club of Elephant Friends and some women and youth groups. During this meeting the Association of Traditional Rulers around the Lobeke Park Forest (ACTRIFE) gave their full support to the project.

Communities have witnessed the fragmentation and degradation of the Lobeke National Park and are beginning to understand the need for ecological restoration. Communities expressed a desire to undertake restoration activities to restore sections of the degraded park with the objective of connecting patches of forests to increase the number of endangered species such as elephants and protect their cultural values. Finally, communities are soliciting support for a detail mapping of their territory to identify key biodiversity areas that could be restored and protected. However, the governance system is weak due to the intervention of the administration and some influential elites because of their personal interest.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, there is need to improve the knowledge of decision makers on potential threats to biodiversity and the need for community participation in the sustainable management of the forest landscapes. This could be achieved by working with communities through a participatory mapping process to identify key biodiversity habitats for protection and also identifying fragmented landscapes for restoration. This will also entail mapping wildlife ranges and wildlife corridors.

Positive conservation results that have been documented in communities that have used mapping process to identify their and track the cultural values of their villages to galvanise resources to ensure an effective protection and conservation of the remain cultural heritages documented during their mapping exercise.

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

Through publications, media events and seminars

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

The grant was used from January 2020 to March 2021. This was over the anticipated project duration due to COVID 19.

8. Budget: 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. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Yaoundé - Lobéké	200	200		The research student was also a driver, so I did not have to pay him twice
Lobéké - Yaoundé	200	150	-50	The research student was also a driver, so I did not have to pay him twice
Transportation in Yaoundé	300	200	-100	With COVID 19, it was not possible to meet people until 6 months later. I had virtual meetings with some of the civil society organizations
Feeding	600	1000	+400	With COVID 19, the project took longer than expected
Salary for one research assistant/translator	1250	1250		
Communication	600	1000	+400	Project was delayed by 3 months, so I spent 10 months in Cameroon
Lodging in Lobéké	2600	3000	+400	Accommodation was more expensive as I had used rates from 2015 for the proposed budget
Stationary	100		-100	
Printing and mailing of questionnaires	100			
TOTAL	5950	5800	-150	

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

The next important step is to support the surrounding communities develop maps where they can lead the protection of key biodiversity sites.

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

Yes, during my meeting I acknowledged the funding from the Rufford Foundation.

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

Mr. Njoya Innocent – Assisted with data collection.

Mr. Nkwenti Bertrand – Community member who assisted with translation and data collection

Mr. Epule Boris – Driver and MSc student in wildlife monitoring who also assisted with data collection.

12. Any other comments?