

## Final Evaluation Report

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<b>Full Name</b>	John Gitogo Kimani
<b>Project Title</b>	Building Local Capacity in Conservation of Endangered Grey Crowned Crane in Nyandarua County, Kenya
<b>Application ID</b>	34963-1
<b>Date of this Report</b>	10th June 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
Spearheading habitat rehabilitation and management to address the threats of habitat loss through vegetation control				112 Local community members were engaged in physical removal of invasive weed species and overgrown tussocks. A total of 944 acres of grasslands and 20 wetlands that are known to host and are breeding sites for the crane were rehabilitated.
Promoting climate smart agriculture to address the threat of poaching for meat and egg collection by establishing poultry farms				A training on good poultry practices was held bringing on board 23 farmers. From them, 20 were selected and 20 poultry farms were established. The farmers were supplied with 50 chicks each. There was 85% survival of the chicken after 3 months.
Building on the socio-economic knowledge for designing feature conservation interventions by Social economic survey,				From all the wetlands within the project area that are and were utilised as feeding and breeding sites for the GCC, data was collected from community members, identified opinion towards habitat (grasslands and wetlands) and species (grey crowned crane) conservation as well as alternative livelihood activities options available. The findings show decline in wetland quality and quantity, decline in diversity and population of birds in the wetlands, willingness of communities to participate in conservation and proposes potential sustainable options. This report will be used to inform future conservation interventions
Creating awareness and building local capacity to participate in conservation and protect species and				The project has successfully trained, reached out and/or built capacity to contribute to conservation to more than 2200 residents of the project area through its different

<p>habitat will address threats associated with local knowledge gap This was achieved by organising workshops and meeting with grassland owners and community members, visiting schools, prepare and print crane conservation guide, customised T-shirts and calendars</p>				<p>channels. More than 200 grassland owners and farmers were directly reached out through organising the project's two workshops. School visits reached 1103 schoolchildren and nine teachers. Awareness creation was in collaboration with Crane Conservation Volunteers and Nature Kenya. Branded t-shirts were designed printed and distributed to local communities and team members together with 200 copies of calendars and 200 copies of crane conservation guides.</p>
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**2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.**

**a).** Through this project, a total of 944 acres of grasslands and 20 wetlands were rehabilitated to grasslands with suitable habitat characteristic. These grasslands and wetlands are now demonstration sites for surrounding community members to understand the best habitat for the crane to thrive and the importance of habitat and species conservation.

**b).** The project has contributed to reduction of the need for poaching of adult cranes, and eggs collection among community members through establishing 20 poultry farms targeting community members living adjacent to wetlands where breeding happens; this provided 100 people from 20 households with alternative livelihood beside a training on good poultry management and entrepreneurship.

**c).** As a long-term contribution to the conservation of the GCC and its habitat in the project area, the project constructively engaged over 2000 residents through training and awareness creation channels to different gender and community sections including school going students. This is a key achievement because the project area is majorly privately owned and conservation in private property is voluntary based.

Through engaging communities in the project implementation and designing ways for them to spearhead conservation actions, the project has built community capacity to effectively participate in conservation of the crane and other grassland biodiversity. The approach which has left rehabilitated habitats for the crane in the project area and human population that is aware of threats and opportunities of conservation is a long-term investment to ensure threats to biodiversity are minimised and/or stopped while the residents earn their livelihoods sustainably.

**3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.**

The project did not have outstanding difficulties during implementation. However, we experienced challenges in increasing wetland which are breeding site for gray crowned crane with water covering invasive plant species. We have learnt that we need to come up with a solution to control this invasive species, e.g., through using these plants as biochar to reduce its adverse impact to wetlands.

**4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.**

The design of the project considered the fact that the project area is privately owned and its conservation as well as that of the birds in it solely dependent on the resident communities. Its implementation was keen to that fact in the following ways.

1) By physical control of vegetation and improvement of the habitats used by the crane, 50 community members from different communities were engaged. This acted as training/education sessions for surrounding community members to understand the best habitat for the crane to thrive and the importance of habitat and species conservation.

2) Establishing poultry farms to community members who used to poach for wild meat and collect eggs to supplement their diet created a sustainable lifeline for these members and the most serious threat was addressed.

3) Building community capacity through training and awareness to over 2200 community members through workshops, opportunistic meetings, print media and school outreach was a vital aspect of conservation. This ensured that the local communities who are the grasslands owners and control how wetlands are managed are aware of the biodiversity in the highlands, conservation importance and their part in conservation and have knowledge to implement suitable practices friendly to conservation.

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

Despite the diverse threats facing the GCC, some of which addressed by the project, our long-time objective is to halt the decline of grey crowned crane population and other biodiversity in this project area and beyond. To build on this momentum, we shall:

- 1) Continually mobilise community members to positively influence the management of their grasslands for optimal benefits of livestock and biodiversity.
- 2) Through our main partner Friends of Kinangop Plateau continue creating awareness to residents opportunistically on GCC conservation.
- 3) Continually build our ecological knowledge and social economic status to inform best conservation initiatives in future.

- 4) Have regular monitoring to improve the precision of our data, develop control method and alternative way to use invasive plants species in wetlands.
- 5) Through further funding from partners, establish more eco-friendly enterprises for residents within this project area.

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

The project will share reports and results of the different activities in the following avenues:

- The project team is preparing an article to be published in Nature Net, a national publication that covers conservation interventions within Important Bird Areas in Kenya.
- A comprehensive project report will be compiled including all actions implemented and shared with stakeholders to inform them of the progress, opportunities and gaps. This will also be mailed to all interested groups, stakeholders, individuals and partners.
- The research aspect on community perception will also be shared to the local communities and stakeholders through a feedback forum soon after we have refined our results.
- We shall also produce simple flyers with simplified key findings for community consumption.
- The final reports will also be uploaded in our website to be a resource for future reference.

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

This project is a stepping stone for our conservation work within the Nyandarua. Building on it, we shall strengthen its outcomes by increasing the number of households benefiting from eco based enterprises. This is besides establishing a scheme where beneficiaries of our interventions can grow economically and sustainably. Mainly, the project observes a need for expanding and strengthening the implemented activities to cover all areas of interest in the project area.

#### **8. 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, the Rufford logo was used in the following ways:

- Education and awareness programmes, calendars, crane conservation guide and t-shirts had the Rufford Foundation Logo
- PowerPoint presentation made during the farmers workshop and training held in schools .
- Monitoring and survey data form had the Rufford Foundation Logo.

**9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.**

I worked in collaboration with **Mercy Kariuki** a previous Rufford Small Grant grantee, whom we have worked in various conservation work and research, including "Sharpe's for longclaw" she guided on ground project implementation. **George Ndungu** who works Crane Conservation Volunteers supported the training of local communities on crane and habitat conservation.

**Lucy Ngari** and **Cynthia Waithira** supported in field work, monitoring and school outreach, **Martin Mwangi**- supported in field logistics, school outreach, data collection, analysis and reporting and **Dr. Kariuki Ndang'ang'a** he supported in supervision and guidance throughout the project.

**10. Any other comments?**

The funding by The Rufford Foundation was very instrumental to the conservation of the grey crowned crane and we are confident that its pact to conservation and livelihoods is long-term and will help secure further support for conservation.