

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Hudson Christopher Laizer
Project Title	Saving the wild pollinators from the local extinction: Promoting the conservation of beneficial insects and bird species in Mbeya Range Forest Reserve (Mt. Loleza) in Mbeya
Application ID	40308-B
Date of this Report	14 th May 2024

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
(i) Identification of wild pollinators in MRFR				The project team managed to identify pollinators in the MRFR and the results were used to write a manuscript which is under review.
(ii) Conservation education and public awareness				The project conducted conservation education and raise public awareness about the conservation of pollinators in villages and schools around MRFR.
(iii) Establishment of pollinator and environmental clubs				The project team established pollinator and environmental clubs in two schools.
(iv) Restoration activities and income generating small projects				The tree plantation was partly done due to excessive rainfall that hugely affect this exercise.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

a). List of pollinators of the MRFR

- The project compiled a detailed inventory of pollinator species within the MRFR. This comprehensive list includes bees, butterflies and birds, and the plants they interact with within the MRFR ecosystem. The project team collaborated with the village environmental committees to name all the pollinators collected with the native names. The pollinators catalogue will be essential for future conservation efforts and educational purposes, enhancing the understanding of the beneficial insects within the forest reserve.

b). Establishments of pollinators and environmental clubs in schools

- The project managed to raise awareness on environmental conservation among students through the establishment of pollinators and environmental clubs in primary and secondary schools near the MRFR. These clubs are intended to engage students

in various activities that will help them gain knowledge and skills to advocate for and engage in environmental conservation, thus serve as ambassador for pollinators and environmental conservation within the community.

c). Support the income generating activities by donating beehives and tree seedlings.

The project enhanced local livelihoods by supporting sustainable economic activities such as beekeeping and agroforestry by donating modern beehives and supporting the establishment of tree nurseries. These initiatives aimed to provide communities with the resources to generate income while promoting environmental conservation. The donation of the tree seedlings will further enable the planting of various native tree species that will contribute to reforestation of the natural forest that was partly degraded, and restore the habitat for solitary bees and other pollinators within the MRFR.

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

During the tree plantation and conservation education session in rural communities, we encountered several unforeseen difficulties, due to excessive rainfall this year. Most of the roads were not passable during this time and some of the areas identified for tree plantation were eroded. To tackle these issues, we quickly adapted our strategies by firstly revising the project schedule to include flexible dates with contingency plans, allowing the project team to postpone activities until the rain stopped possibly by end of April or May. Secondly, we were able to secure local indoor venues such as classrooms and village offices as backup locations for meetings and workshops, ensuring that the project activities could continue in some areas.

Moreover, during the implementation of the conservation education sessions, tree plantations and donation of beehives to the targeted communities, the project team encountered unforeseen challenges, notably the interest from communities outside the designated project area. These neighbouring communities expressed their strong desire to also participate in the project activities, driven by the observable benefits and educational opportunities they have seen. To address this, the project team firstly acknowledged their interest and the value they saw in the project, but due to limited resources, they couldn't be taken onboard during this phase. However, the project team assured their inclusion in the next phase of the project, ensuring that all communities that are neighbouring the MRFR get the conservation education and support to activities that will help to conserve the environment.

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

The local communities were involved in all project activities from the designing of the project activities to trainings. The village leaders, environmental committee and representatives from the villages around were involved in identification of pollinators (using their local names), and activities that threaten the conservation of pollinators in MRFR. The students from the schools around the MRFR in general participated in training and in establishment of pollinators and environmental clubs. Also, communities were invited to attend the conservation education meetings that aimed to raise for public awareness on benefits of pollinators in the MRFR as well as in their crops.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, the project team is planning to continue the work particularly raising public awareness on the importance of conserving the MRFR. Also, in response to the growing interest from neighbouring communities and to further support the conservation efforts that are already in place, the project team will draft a comprehensive plan to expand the scope of the project. By integrating these neighbouring communities into the conservation initiatives, the project will help to expand the network of informed environmental and conservation advocates for the MRFR thus enhancing local commitments to conservation activities and initiatives. Furthermore, the project team plan to secure additional funding and resources to ensure that the expanded scope is well-supported and effective, thereby making a more impactful contribution to the overall conservation of the Mbeya Range Forest Reserve.

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

The project team has presented the project results in seminars and workshops at the Universities and schools. Also, the project is planning to publish the findings particularly the pollinators-plant-interactions in open access journals.

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

Looking ahead, the important next steps for this project involve expanding the activities to the neighbouring communities and schools which showed strong interest and desire on the conservation of MRFR. Including these new areas will not only broaden the base of environmental management but also will help to enhance the community-based conservation.

Additionally, the project will form collaborations with local conservation agencies in Mbeya, such as the Wildlife Conservation Society, Green Horizon, etc. These partnerships will provide valuable resources (potentially increasing funding and the technical materials) and expertise to the project. By aligning our efforts with established conservation entities, we can ensure that our educational programmes are tailored to the specific needs of the communities around the MRFR.

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 project team featured the Rufford Foundation logo on all educational materials, including posters and leaflets. Additionally, the logo was printed on t-shirts worn by the project team and leaders of the school pollinator clubs during the implementation of project activities. The beehives donated by the project were also marked to indicate that they were donated by the project funded by The Rufford Foundation.

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

i. Dr. Hudson Laizer: Team Leader

ii. Dr. Filemon Elisante: from The University of Dodoma. Dr. Elisante has a PhD in Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management specializing in beneficial insects such as pollinators and natural enemies. Dr. Elisante was involved in the pollinator's surveys.

iii. Ms. Jenifa Swai: from Tanzania Agricultural research Institute (TARI): Ms. Swai has a Masters in Sustainable Agriculture and experience working with farmers in the Southern Highlands regions. She was responsible for educating and training farmers on good agricultural practices that has no impact to the biodiversity in the MRFR.

iv. Mr. Innocent Kapere: A Community Development Officer with Bachelor of Arts in Rural Development. Mr. Kapere has broad experience working in rural livelihood and communities natural resource management in Southern Highlands regions particularly Iringa, Rukwa and Mbeya. Mr. Kapere was involved in communities' trainings and conservation education.

v. Mr. Danford Meshili: from Tanzania Forest Service (TFS) with experience working with local communities around MRFR. Mr. Meshili provided trainings, technical advice and conservation education to the surrounding communities, tree seedlings planting, and other project activities.

vi. Mr. Silabi Lusekelo and Mr. Enoka Munduka: MSc students in Biodiversity Conservation. They helped in the field data collection and conservation education.

10. Any other comments?

The project has demonstrated significant initial success and holds promising potential for further impact on conservation of the Mbeya Range Forest Reserve. The project team is determined to expand the scope of the project to include more communities and schools, as well as to form strategic collaborations with key conservation agencies in Mbeya and other places.

The project team is grateful for the commitment and the support received from The Rufford Foundation. The funding granted to this project has been crucial in achieving the project milestones from phase I to 1st booster grant. With the continued support, the project can sustain and scale up the conservation efforts, creating a legacy of protecting the MRFR and beyond. This project stands as a good example and a reference to what can be achieved when local communities, conservationists, government agencies and funders come together for a common cause. The project team look forward to the continued support and partnership with The Rufford Foundation in the future.

Photos





