

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants 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	Leonard Manda
Project title	Strengthening collaborative management as a conservation and sustainable use strategy in Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve
RSG reference	56.08.09
Reporting period	April 2010 – March 2011
Amount of grant	£5800
Your email address	graves84@lycos.com or leonard@mzuni.ac.mw
Date of this report	25 May 2011

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
Communities' attitudes toward collaborative management gauged in the project area			Fully achieved	Through consultative meetings, focus group discussions and interviews, communities' attitudes were assessed and verified. Though some individuals were found to be still sceptical about the conservation strategy because their expectations were said not to be fully met, collaborative management on the whole has improved the relationship between the park staff (government authority) and the surrounding communities.
Communities' perceptions toward conservation of natural resources improves over the long term in the project area		Partly achieved		While the communities demonstrated commitment to doing better in conservation issues by way of participating in the collaborative management, it is recognised that people's perceptions take long time to change than the actual build-up. It is therefore expected that with time and more awareness campaigns than were currently done, the situation would improve much more.
Areas of conflicts between communities and the park management system verified and possible solutions identified			Fully achieved	This project provided a platform where both the communities and park staff expressed their expectations, fears, constraints/challenges and possible ways of improving the management system. Through focus group discussions and interviews with key informants, major areas of conflicts which are negatively affecting collaborative management in the project site were brought out and possible strategies for improvement were suggested.

<p>Knowledge on collaborative management enhanced amongst communities and park staff in the project area over the long term</p>		<p>Partly achieved</p>		<p>A limited number of awareness campaigns were conducted in selected natural resources committees (NRCs)¹ per Zone than was planned. Again, only key members from a few selected NRCs were targeted for training on issues of collaborative management and access and benefit sharing. More such trainings and awareness campaigns ought to be organised to raise the profile of collaborative management and values of conserving biological resources amongst the local masses.</p>
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

There were two major unforeseen difficulties/challenges.

a) access to the protected area

At first, we had hassles to get permit to carry out the project in the proposed area. It took us a couple of months to be granted permission. This was largely due to government bureaucracy and management changes at the government authority. But eventually, after some healthy correspondences which included the project brief and planned activities, the permit was granted. It should be mentioned however that notwithstanding the initial hiccup, the park staff (particularly the extension staff in Nyika and Vwaza) were very supportive throughout the course of the project's life.

b) fuel (diesel) shortages and changes in pump prices

Malawi has been experiencing perennial lack of fuel such that for the better part of the project's life, fuel pumps were dry and on a number of occasions fuel was sourced from the black market where the actual price was almost 30% higher than was originally budgeted for. As if this was not enough, the pump price also rose by approximately 13% along the course of the project's life. So, even when fuel was available at the pumps, the percentage increase in the price was higher than was anticipated. This unforeseen fuel shortage and its related price increase not only impacted on our field work but also made the project team adjust project activities, of course without losing focus of the project's objectives.

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

a) Increased commitment by communities to support collaborative management

It came out clearly during the course of the project that before collaborative management was introduced to the project area, there was a hostile relationship between the park management and

¹Organised structural establishments composed of villagers (communities) under the umbrella body of Nyika/Vwaza Association (see organogram at the end of the report) .

the surrounding communities. This was attributed partly to a few misunderstandings that culminate from inadequate knowledge of how best the management regime could be run as well as due to some elements of cultural/traditional values on the part of the communities. Hunting for bushmeat, for instance, is a long time practice from time immemorial in some pockets of the surrounding communities. This project, however, provided a platform where attitudinal differences toward conservation and some pervasive cultural elements were identified and the communities were enlightened on their roles as well as the benefits that they could obtain through their participation in collaborative management. Through representatives from natural resource committees (NRCs), communities committed themselves to closely work with the park staff in support of the objectives of the collaborative management. A few pockets of resistance still existed though at the time of this project.

b) Natural resource committees (NRCs) step up their efforts in sensitising communities on values of resource conservation.

This project has reinvigorated and given natural resource committees (NRCs) the impetus to engage more gear in their efforts to sensitise communities. However, these efforts need to be supported. In addition, there is need to strengthen the links between NRC-NRC, NRC-Zone as well as Zone-Zone.

c) Increased knowledge on collaborative management and values of conserving natural resources amongst the surrounding communities.

Knowledge shared during the course of this project is expected to trickle down to other members of the communities and therefore make the surrounding communities value and support conservation efforts in the area. The process of passing on these messages might however be slow owing to perceived poor communication channels in the area, hence the need to facilitate it by way of organising more training and awareness campaigns.

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

Selected members of the local communities were involved in the design of the approach of getting information on how collaborative management was being run in the area. The choice of focus group discussion, for instance, was suggested during the briefing meetings of the project objectives with the communities. Selected members of the community were also involved in the actual discussions (focus group discussions), training and awareness campaigns.

Increased knowledge on collaborative management and values of conserving biological resources were some of the benefits that communities obtained from this project. In addition, a couple of community members that were involved in the facilitation of focus group discussions acquired some technical skills on how to facilitate focus group discussions. It is envisaged that with such practical skills, these members are better placed to get engaged in other projects or similar activities that would take place in the area.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Definitely, yes: there is a lot of work yet to be done in the area to make the new management practice become more effective. For instance, there is need for more training sessions to cover all NRCs in areas of collaborative management practices, access and benefit sharing and resource assessment and monitoring. In addition, there is also need to raise public awareness on values of

not only natural resource conservation but also sustainable use. Furthermore, there is also need to encourage activities that would promote conservation outside the park boundaries such as agro-forestry.

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

A number of avenues have been identified through which results of this project will be shared. These include:

- a) *Organised talks to different stakeholders:* I am a member of the Wildlife Society of Malawi (WESM)-Mzuzu Chapter. The society meets once every month. As such, it is planned that results of this work will be shared at one of the society's monthly meetings.
- b) *Journal article:* An article based on the findings and lessons learnt from this project is being prepared. The article will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for wider audience.
- c) *Capacity building training:* Encouraged by the findings and lessons learnt from this project, the project team through the Department of Biological Sciences of Mzuzu University has planned to conduct a short training on collaborative management and access and benefit sharing (ABS). This would be a capacity building training targeting, among others, government ministries and departments responsible for conservation work, as well as freelance conservationists, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) working on conservation of biological resources across Malawi. The aim is to contribute to the building of a cohort of collaborative management experts that would ably help in the running of conservation programmes in Malawi. Lessons learnt from this project are planned to feed into the course outline for the proposed training. The training is scheduled for June 2011.
- d) *Final Project Report:* A report describing the major findings and recommendations of the work will be deposited at the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) so that it could be accessed by those that are interested in the area.

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

The project was anticipated to commence in February 2010 and end in January 2011. However, due to some hiccups in getting the permit as mentioned under (2) herein above, the project commenced in April 2010 and went through to March 2011 (12 months).

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
Free Prior Informed Consent (PIC)	625	850	-225	Travel costs proved to be costly than anticipated. This was largely due high fuel costs. This hiring cost was aggravated by the bad shape of roads on the rough terrain.
Consultative meeting	1340	1140	200	Some of the expected participants did not turn up due to difficulties in

				travelling logistics.
Focus Group Discussions with communities and interviews with key informants	1425	1710	-285	Travel costs proved to be costly than anticipated due to unexpected high fuel costs and poor shape of roads.
Workshop on collaborative management and access and benefit sharing	1215	1300	-85	Unexpected high fuel costs resulted into high travelling costs for some participants than was estimated.
Awareness campaigns	1000	700	300	A relatively smaller number of meetings were conducted in selected areas due to limited remaining project funds. This was a result of over-expenditure in the preceding project activities.
Production of Project Report	195	100	95	The project team members had to make sacrifices to find other resources in order to meet costs related to compilation and analysis of project data due to limited available resources.
Total	5800	5800	0	Exchange rate: £1.00 = MK241.00

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

- a) To organise further training sessions and public awareness campaigns on collaborative management practices so as to reach more people in the project area so as to make the management system more adaptive and effective. The thinking is that a few selected individuals from the local community who participated in the previous activities should be supported to facilitate the proposed training sessions.
- b) To partner with micro-finance institutions or non-governmental organisations in the development and implementation of appropriate alternative livelihood strategies and/or income generating activities for communities in the project area. Suggested activities that may be supported include ecotourism, bee-keeping and livestock production.
- c) To establish an education fund that would support selected primary school children so as to make them attain higher education. Although this would have long term impacts, it is envisaged that upon attaining higher education, such children will get employed and, better still, get employed in the park. The ultimate aim is to reduce dependence on the immediate environment for a living. Such young people will also act as role models to the young generation in the surrounding area and become collaborative management ambassadors, sending a message that one could earn a living without necessarily becoming a poacher.
- d) Considering that members of the natural resource committees (NRCs) and the umbrella body, the Nyika/Vwaza Association work on a voluntary basis, there is need to find ways of strengthening these community groups by way of building their capacity and empowering them through income generating activities so that they get motivated and therefore become more vigilant. The thinking is that when members of the NRCs are motivated, they would become real partners and

therefore help in everyday patrols and education in the communities in which they live. This way, the committee members would become more dependent and therefore less tempted to engage in illegal activities themselves.

- e) Convince government to fence common routes used by animals such as elephants and hippos that terrorise the surrounding communities. The human-animal conflicts which result from destruction of people's fields and human life often work against the values of conserving such animals.
- f) Closely work with the government on how best staff could be strengthened so as to increase patrols in the most vulnerable areas. This is seen as the most short-term measure while efforts on the long-term measures to effectively conserve natural resources are being sought.

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

The RSGF logo was used in the questionnaire on key informants and for focus group discussions. The logo was also used during some of the presentations that I made to Ecology students at Mzuzu University and University of Livingstonia (Malawi) on conservation strategies where collaborative management (and particularly findings of this project) featured highly as one of the approaches that are promoted under *in situ* conservation. During the stakeholders' training, materials carried the RSGF logo as well. Throughout the course of the project stakeholders were duly informed that RSGF was funding this project.

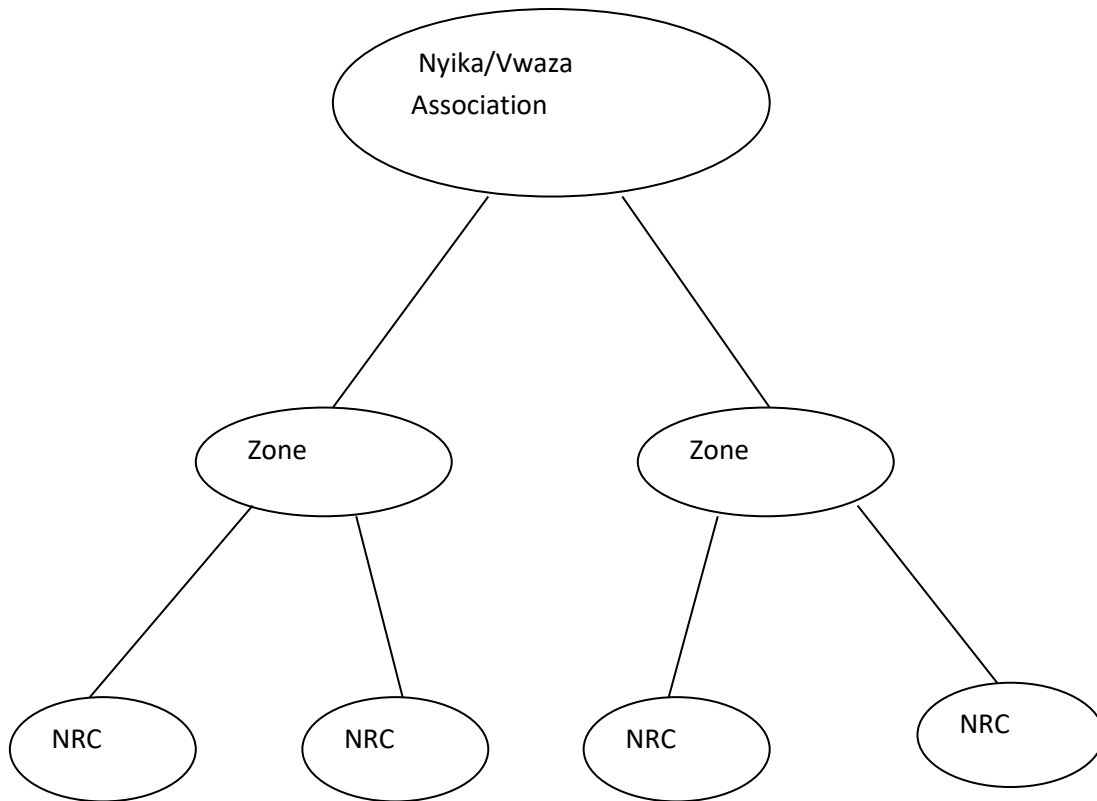
11. Any other comments?

I am grateful to RSGF for funding this project. I have been longing to kick-start a long term project that would see collaborative management become more adaptive and effective in Nyika and Vwaza, and then use lessons learnt to improve the same in other areas in Malawi.

I would like to mention that this project could become a stepping stone for more potential projects/activities not only in Nyika/Vwaza as mentioned under (9) herein above but also in other areas as well. For instance, the capacity building short training which Mzuzu University is planning to conduct has come based on the findings of this project.

You may also wish to know that this project has given me the impetus to contemplate on establishing a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that would be committed to working in and around protected areas in Malawi. The organisation's aim is to promote conservation of indigenous biodiversity and improve rural livelihood, particularly around protected areas and other vulnerable areas such as mountainous regions and peri-urban areas of Malawi.

Organogram for the Nyika/Vwaza Association (a registered Trustee)



Note: NRC – Natural resources committee, composed of villagers at the community level.
Zone – Several NRC congregate at the zone level, which is at the Group Village Headman level.