

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	Osiman Mabhachi
Project title	Facilitating increased community participation in biodiversity conservation in Umgano, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa
RSG reference	68.09.09
Reporting period	April 2010 – August 2011 (16 months)
Amount of grant	£5985
Your email address	osimanm@ewt.org.za
Date of this report	31 August 2011

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

In April 2010, prior to the start of the project, the main objectives stated in the original proposal were refined to ensure a clear thematic and geographic focus. The specific sub-objectives that guided the implementation are stated below:

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Increase conservation awareness through environmental education initiatives targeting schoolchildren and community groups			x	<p>The project was instrumental in highlighting the importance of pro-environmental behaviour among ordinary members of the Umgano community and brought to the fore the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in community development plans. This can be attributed to presentations by the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) project implementers on species and habitat conservation with specific focus on grasslands and wetlands. The project also simplified the role that the community could play in conserving biodiversity in their day-to-day activities. Group tours of the project area also helped community leaders to visit sections of the project area that are crucial for species like ground hornbills and oribi, a phenomenon that would not have happened had the project not been implemented.</p> <p>Environmental education and conservation awareness in schools was partially successful because not all planned activities were implemented during the project duration. However, contacts established are proving to be the foundation of future work by the EWT. The Threatened Grassland Species Programme of the EWT has now taken over the education and awareness programme and will continue to work with the schools and community groups in the area.</p>
Collect baseline information on socio-economic activities that are dependent on direct utilisation of		x		Plans to collect baseline information on livelihood activities that are dependent on direct utilisation of natural resources were shelved after it was noted that a similar study was undertaken in the project area by a team of researchers from The

natural resources				Netherlands during period March - May 2010. The RSG Project Leader however interacted with the enumerators (drawn from youths from the project area) and advised them on the use of participatory techniques during data collection. Results of the study have not been published yet. Once the results are published, they will be used as a basis for future project interventions.
Initiate participatory resource monitoring as an awareness tool and for tracking changes in biodiversity status		x		<p>The process started with a desktop review of key species that could be monitored easily by local stakeholders. It also involved consultation on species that the community normally see in the project area. It was noted that some species classified as Vulnerable on the ICUN Red Data List were not included on the list of key species and these included the grey crowned crane.</p> <p>The next stage, which took longer than expected, involved consulting partners and community leaders on how monitoring could be done. During this phase, transect walks and informant interviews were carried out. It was agreed in March 2011 that there was need to start collect indigenous knowledge on threats to biodiversity and what the local community valued.</p> <p>Cultural aspects associated with species were elicited during a community workshop held in June 2011. Information on recent sightings, ideas from ecologists and community perceptions (cultural) are being integrated into a community-based biodiversity monitoring plan. Despite the fact that project has officially come to an end, the EWT's Threatened Grassland Species Programme will spearhead the launch of the participatory monitoring exercise.</p>
Ensure the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation activities into the community development plan	x			Discussion on revising the community development plan started during the first quarter of 2011. It was however stalled by changes in leadership at district levels following municipal elections in May 2011. Despite the unexpected delay, project outputs will be presented to Ezemvelo

				KwaZulu Natal Wildlife, the provincial nature conservation agency, and Sisonke District Municipality under which the Umgano Community lies. It is envisaged that if the funding application to be submitted to GEF Small Grants is successful, the issue of revising the community development plan will be prioritised.
Contribute to the long-term sustainability of the project		x		Follow-up funding proposal to be submitted to GEF Small Grants being developed. The proposed project is aimed at scaling up the environmental education and conservation awareness, initiating landscape restoration and developing a business plan to ensure that cultural and ecotourism initiatives contribute to the economic well-being of communities. The project presented an opportunity for the EWT to interact with not just community members but other NGOs and government departments and as a result the EWT is now known and accepted by the project beneficiaries. Initiating follow-up activities will not be difficult.

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

When project idea was developed, it was noted that the success of the project would be very much dependent on the active participation of key people stated in the proposal. Notable individuals included Mr Kevin McCann, the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme Manager of Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife and Mr Andre Russouw, the Coordinator of the EWT's Threatened Grassland Species Programme. Unfortunately, both of them resigned from their positions mid-way through the project. Mr McCann had volunteered to lead a team of ecologists in carrying out surveys to update the list of species found at the proposed Umgano Nature Reserve, but this did not materialise.

There were some unexpected delays at the start-up phase of the project. The delay was caused by the fact that the project could only start after the RSG Project Leader had presented the project plan and expectations to a project steering committee meeting. This meeting was only held in June 2010, two and half months after the project was supposed to have started.

The biggest challenge that the project faced was the escalation in costs which was not foreseen when the budget was finalised. Since the RSG Project Leader had no project vehicle, he had to hire field vehicles from other programmes which resulted in extra expenses. Because the costs of hiring the vehicle was high, he had to reduce the number of trips to the project area as the project site is located about 520 km from his base in Johannesburg. This resulted in limited contact time with project beneficiaries and cancellation of meetings.

The Project Leader's other responsibilities as a Community Projects Coordinator meant that he had to travel to four other African countries to provide technical support to community-based conservation projects supported by the EWT's African Crane Conservation Programme. Though he set aside time to attend to the RSG project issues, he would have had more contact time with community members and partners if he did not have other commitments elsewhere.

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

Though at this stage it is rather too early to pinpoint specific positive outcomes that resulted from the implementation of the project, there are interesting and encouraging trends that could translate into outcomes in future. The reason why the outcomes appear not to be clear at this stage is because most of the activities were aimed at changing community attitudes towards the environment and 15 months is too short a period of time for the changes to be apparent. All the same, the following are the preliminary findings:

- a) Interactions with project beneficiaries resulted in new knowledge on the nature and extent of threats to biodiversity being unearthed. Key threats that were assumed to low-key prior to the project include poaching and hunting with dogs. Action to address the threats is now underway as a direct result of the RSG project.
- b) The need for a collective approach and team spirit in dealing with environmental and community development issues will be a major legacy of the RSG project. The RSG Project Leader teamed up with fellow staff members from the EWT with various skills and experience. The EWT team then teamed up with officers from Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife, private consultants and volunteers. A culture of collaboration has now been inculcated among institutions and community members.

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

Local stakeholders that were engaged could be categorised into school children, teachers, community leaders, traditional leaders. Details on how they were involved and how they benefitted are presented in a table below:

Local stakeholder group	How they were involved and how they benefitted
Schoolchildren	Participated in art competitions and benefitted from presentations on environmental topics like biodiversity, culture and biodiversity, wetlands and grasslands. The pupils were also taught how to do environmental projects in groups.
Teachers	Teachers were given the responsibility of organising pupils and explaining some concepts on the functions of the environment to pupils. Presentations by RSG project implementers on various aspects of the environment fulfilled the requirements and expectations stated in the school curriculum.
Traditional leaders	Permission to implement the project in the Umgano area was sought and granted by the chief of the area, Nkosi Baleni. During meetings and workshops, he stressed the need for unity and commitment from community members. He was also instrumental in organising meetings and all workshops and

	planning meetings were held at his homestead. As a custodian of natural resources, the project contributed in fulfilling his mandate and expectations as stated in the South African constitution.
Community group leaders	Community group leaders organised meetings and workshops. They also led teams during transect walks. The community trust leader, Mr Mayford Jaca, was the contact person. He chaired meetings and acted as a translator for those that could not understand the local language, Zulu. The leaders acted as key informants on the dos and don'ts of dealing with the community.
Ordinary community members	Ordinary members of the community attended meetings and workshops. They provided invaluable information on how people interact with wildlife in the project area. They also provided information on key threats to biodiversity.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The EWT's Threatened Grassland Species Programme has officially agreed to take over the project so as to perpetuate the outcomes of the RSG project. Rapid surveys revealed that there are grassland species of conservation concern like the Ground Hornbill, Oribi and the Grey Crowned Crane and as a result the area has been included on the list of sites the programme staff will monitor in the province. Contact with a potential sponsor of follow-up activities (GEF Small Grants) was established and a funding proposal will be submitted during the last quarter of 2011.

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

The approach used in introducing the project to stakeholders was presented at the Annual General Meeting of the African Crane Conservation Programme and the Threatened Grassland Species Programme in September 2010. The meeting was attended by representatives from conservation NGOs and government agencies from four provinces of South Africa namely, Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal, North West and Eastern Cape.

As a contribution to raising the profile of the project, a fact sheet with details on the history, goals, activities, successes and lessons for other community projects will be developed before the end of the year. The information will be distributed to other communities that are interested in the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme in KwaZulu Natal and also in other provinces where the EWT's African Crane Conservation Programme is operating. A poster on the project will also be developed for display during Conservation Week, an annual event where EWT programmes exhibit their work to sponsors, schoolchildren and other conservation agencies.

Plans are underway for an exchange programme which will see officers from African countries that currently have community-based conservation projects visiting South Africa to learn about conservation approaches. The RSG project site will be one of the sites that these officers are expected to visit.

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 implemented over a period of 16 months. The expected project duration as stated in the project proposal was 15 months but due to the fact that some of activities were pending when 15-month period elapsed, they had to be executed after the official end of the project.

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.

Exchange rate used for South African Rand to Pound Sterling = 11.556

Item	Budgeted Amount (£)	Actual Amount (£)	Difference	Comments
Accommodation and subsistence for Team Leader	900	772	128	Spending reduced to cover administrative costs
Accommodation and subsistence for EWT Conservation Leadership Group Coordinator	725	620	105	Spending reduced to cover administrative costs
Transport costs (fuel, oil and bus fare)	1100	1110	-10	
4 Community awareness workshops (meals, markers and flip charts)	575	480	95	Cost of convening meetings less than projected cost at the beginning of the project
2 Training workshops and 1 visioning workshop (meals, markers and flip charts)	475	445	30	
School competitions, nature walks for school kids and quizzes	385	366	19	
Binoculars for biological monitoring x 4 @ £96.25 each	285	260	25	
Production and distribution of booklets on sustainable resource management	120	112	8	
Topographic/vegetation maps, tree and grass identification booklets	120	110	10	
GPS Receivers X 2 @ £85 each	170	199	-29	Garmin GPS Receiver cost more the amount in budget
Stationery and communication	330	275	55	
Awareness materials (posters, brochures, billboards, newsletters)	350	338	12	
Organisational Commission (10% of total project cost to EWT Core Dept)	450	598	-148	EWT commission revised to 10% of total project cost

Project Administrative Costs (African Crane Conservation Programme) – 5% of total project costs	0	299	-299	New regulations introduced in 2010 for projects to contribute to programme administrative costs
Total	5985	5984	1	

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

- a) Biodiversity surveys to review and update list of grassland species found at the proposed Umgano Nature Reserve.
- b) Development of a comprehensive benefit sharing strategy to ensure accountability and equity in the distribution of proceeds from current and future livelihood projects.
- c) Marketing of the area as an eco- and cultural tourism site to potential visitors locally and internationally.
- d) Introduction of a landscape restoration project aimed at reclaiming degraded sections of the project area.

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 Rufford Small Grants Facility logo appeared on the sponsors' page of the Grus Grapevine, a bi-monthly newsletter of the African Crane Conservation Programme, during the period May 2010 – August 2011. It was also included on the official list of sponsors funding the Endangered Wildlife Trust in 2010.

11. Any other comments?

The project generally helped improve my project management skills. I had to opportunity to do expenditure projections, budget monitoring and general stakeholder coordination. The project presented an opportunity to have my first hands-on experience in coordinating field activities in a foreign country.