

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. 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. 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	Lindsey Macdonald
Project title	Malawi – increasing environmental education opportunities for local school pupils at Lengwe National Park.
RSG reference	8559-1
Reporting period	Final report
Amount of grant	£3300
Your email address	lindseywesmbt@gmail.com
Date of this report	27 September 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
Provide a reliable water supply			Yes	See below re delays. However, the water is now working well.
Build toilet facilities			Yes	See below re delays and budget issues.
Purchase the equipment needed to make the hostel functional		Yes		We had bed frames donated and have purchased 12 mattresses, a fridge/freezer and other kitchen equipment has been donated. See below re other work still to be completed.
Painting the hostel	Yes			Because of the delays finishing the high-priority work, the painting could not be organised during last year's school calendar. We plan to do this in the next three months during this school term.

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

- 1) The toilets came well over budget because contractors' prices continued to rise. By the time we received the grant, quotations for the work more than doubled.

Even when a contract was agreed the contractor continued to demand more materials than originally quoted for. This was due to the lack of skill in preparing quotations. Items were missed off the quotation because the contractor had forgotten he needed them until he started building (e.g. the force doors).

We had a system of material checks (signing in and out from the DNPW locked stores) to minimise pilfering. Because of the country's financial situation, prices of materials also went up: cement went up around 30% during building work.

Throughout the last year and even now the country was experiencing fuel shortages, which also meant transport was difficult.

The materials transport issue was sorted by me driving the 250 km return journey at my own expense (around £30 just in diesel), having bought 30 bags of cement in Blantyre, where it is cheaper, then going to the local market to buy the wood and other materials needed.

The price issue was sorted by WESM standing by the original quote and holding the contractors to their word: of course, this meant delays. However, we had to buy in the forgotten materials – otherwise the toilets would not have been complete.

DNPW used a small amount of their limited supply of diesel to transport the bricks (from a nearby village) and sand (from a park river bed) but they required payment for this diesel, which again added to the costs of this item.

- 2) Tisunge staff were a great help in organising some local labour to dig the sand and load the bricks, from a local football club, and also doing a lot of the manual work themselves, for no extra pay.
- 3) Illovo, the sugar company, provides all the water in the national park as part of a commercial agreement with the Malawi Government. We, therefore, had to consult with them about fixing the water supply to the hostel. Delays in their responses (several months') also prevented us going ahead with the piping work. They failed, also, to offer any practical/financial support!

The delays in the priority work meant we missed organising the painting during a school period: I have a team of older teenagers ready and willing. So I will be organising that during this school term.

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

The students' hostel is now usable again and, when it is decorated, it will be a more attractive place for students to stay.

Most importantly, it has working toilets, a good, drinkable water supply and has usable beds and a fridge/freezer so teachers/students can store their food for their stay.

This means we are once again booking group environmental education visits to Lengwe with confidence.

It was unfortunate that a combination of price rises and contractor costs that we have not been able to afford the bedding and curtaining.

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

Through Tisunge, members of the local football team helped us dig out sand for the concrete, receiving a small donation to their club for the work. Local workers were also used by the contractor in building the toilets. Staff from the national park, who live close to the hostel, are donating the chippings and ashes to be used in the composting toilets and are very much looking forward to 'harvesting' the compost.

Of course, the big benefit is to school children and students who can visit the park in more comfort now. In the year June 2010 to May 2011, we at WESM Blantyre organised 116 school wildlife club visits to their local national park: that meant around 4000 young people experiencing and learning about wildlife.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We have worked with Department of National Parks and Wildlife colleagues and those from the Tisunge charity for a number of years. This work will continue, through joint visits to school wildlife clubs and village natural resource management committees, helping them analyse their environment and take action. In fact, in the next month we will be donating tree planting equipment to several villages in a joint project with Tisunge ahead of the rains. This work is to prevent illegal tree poaching within the national park.

It is part of our annual project to donate tree planting training and equipment to 30 groups (mostly school wildlife clubs).

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

Through our regular wildlife clubs newsletter, to encourage clubs to visit the national park now the hostel is more usable, and through our own WESM Blantyre members newsletter.

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

We have achieved the lengthy work within the 12-month time scale. However, we did not anticipate all the delays in the building work nor the lengthy negotiations we had to undertake with Illovo. This has left us with the community painting work, which should be completed before the end of December.

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.

£1 = K240

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Installing 300m of water piping and connectors to hostel	1071	1100	-29	
Composting pit latrines	487	1157.83	-670.83	The time delay in applying/receiving grant meant our original quotation was out of time and builders more than doubled the quotation – all prices (for cement, wood etc) had gone up in the mean time. Important materials (such as for the force doors) had been forgotten in the quotations.
Purchase 12 mattresses	438.26	412.41	25.85	We negotiated a discount from the supplier
Purchase 12 pillows	34.43			Still to be done

Bed sheets and pillow cases and blankets	469.57			Still to be done
Fridge	249	373	-124	The parks staff changed their requirements after we received the grant. A fridge/freezer was more sensible to purchase.
Hot plates	70	0		These have been donated by WESM members
24 pairs of curtains	209			Still to be done
Paint and painting equipment	251.12			Still to be done
Bank charges to receive money		21	-21	
TOTAL	3300	3064.24	236	

This leaves £236 to fund the painting and decorating, buying pillows, sheets, blankets and curtaining material. I may be able to persuade companies to provide discounts. However, I feel the most important item is the painting. So the remaining funds will be spent on that.

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

Firstly, we must finish the work. However, our increased understanding of poaching and illegal activity in Lengwe National Park, as a result of our increased activity with partners there and increased visits to local school wildlife clubs, is that there is a deep-seated long-term problem of community poaching. The easy answer of raising people's incomes through income-generating projects (e.g. cotton weaving, maize mills) has proved not to work in other areas of Malawi in the past.

We feel that a combination of tougher, consistent and independently-monitored law-enforcement within the park linked with community education about the benefits of tourism income may be the best solution. How to achieve this is still under discussion.

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?

Yes, in our newsletters, each time we reported on the work we mentioned that the money had come from the Rufford Fund. As we have limited graphics in our newsletters, we did not use a logo.

11. Any other comments?

It was much easier and the contracting process quicker and more transparent using an established national firm to provide the water solution compared to organising the building work through a local builder.