

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	Shalva Barjadze
Project title	Cave investigations and education of local people for cave conservation in the Chiatura and Tskaltubo districts (Imereti region, Georgia)
RSG reference	9507-1
Reporting period	September 2011 - February 2013
Amount of grant	£ 5706
Your email address	shalva.barjadze@yahoo.com
Date of this report	20.01.2013

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
Seminars at schools			+	We presented detailed information about the genesis of the local caves, their microclimatic conditions, biodiversity, fossil records and the negative impacts that humans have made on these environments.
Excursions in the caves			+	Local school pupils were included in the speleological and speleobiological investigations to study methodologies of the cave investigations and principles for the sound management and conservation of cave ecosystems.
Laboratory treatment			+	Sampled materials were treated in the laboratory conditions according to the standard methods used in speleology, speleobiology and palynology.
Publishing and distributing of the booklets			+	Illustrated booklets on microclimatic conditions of the caves, animal life, organic remains and conservation threats caused by anthropogenic factors were published and distributed among school students of Chiatura and Tskaltubo districts and administration of Imereti Caves protected Areas.

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

There were not any unforeseen difficulties during implementation of the project.

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

1. Local people were educated about the unique phenomena of the caves and necessity for their conservation. Seminars and excursions weakened the influence of anthropogenic factors (pollution and vandalism) in the caves and provoked interest in the disciplines associated with the cave investigation (Geography, Biology and Palaeontology) among local school students.
2. Cave biodiversity, microclimatic conditions and palynological materials were investigated in the disturbed and undisturbed caves of Imereti region.
3. Based on speleological and speleobiological investigations of disturbed and undisturbed caves, anthropogenic factors affecting cave biodiversity and cave ecosystem were detected and afterwards correct management and conservation of the caves was elaborated

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

Local people, especially school students were involved in seminars at schools and excursions in the caves. They studied methodologies used in the cave investigations and participated in cave studies. They received information about the caves and anthropogenic factors that affect cave biodiversity and block conservation actions. School students wished to get bachelor's degree in specialities which are associated with cave research - Biology and Geography.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

By means of this initial project, we started educating local communities about cave ecosystem and their importance. We plan to expand our activities and cover other regions of Western Georgia to protect caves from the influence of anthropogenic factors.

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

The results of this project will be shared with the administration of Imereti Cave Protected Areas for caring about the conservation of the caves. Besides, we will prepare publications based on palynological, speleological and speleobiological investigations and publish them in peer-reviewed journals for sharing the results of the cave investigations with our colleagues.

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

The RSG was used from September 2011 to February 2013. This corresponds to the anticipated length 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.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Laptop	360	360	0	
Pocket Weather Meter with Free UPS, Impeller, Battery	100	100	0	
Chemicals for paleobiological investigation	200	200	0	
One aspirator	20	20	0	
Eppendorf tubes – 200 units	20	20		
Ethanol – 5 L	15	15		
Lunches for pupils during field excursions	480	480		
Travel expenses	300	300		
Minivan rent	750	750		
Fuel for local travel	120	150	30	Fuel price increased.
Lodging	2250	2250		
Per diems	720	720		

One block of printing paper	8	8		
Note paper	5	5		
120 block-notes	84	84		
120 pens	24	24		
Booklet publishing costs	250	220	30	Booklet publishing cost £ 30 less
Total	5706	5706	0	

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

I think that two important next steps should be started:

1. To investigate caves of Samegrelo and Racha-Lechkhumi regions of Georgia for assessing cave biodiversity, microclimatic conditions and palynological remains existing in the caves.
2. To educate local people about the genesis of the local caves, their microclimatic conditions, biodiversity, fossil record, the negative impacts on the caves caused by human activities. It is necessary to decrease the influence of anthropogenic factors and start conservation actions in caves of abovementioned regions.
3. To establish protected territories in Samegrelo and Racha-Lechkhumi regions, like Imereti Cave Protected Areas, in order to allow permanent monitoring of the climatic conditions of the caves, unique speleofauna, organic remains and conservation actions.

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?

Logo of RSGF was used on the front page of booklets. Booklets were published by using the information and photographs obtained during the seminars, excursions and investigations carried out in Imereti region. While giving seminars at schools, the poster of RSGF logo was fixed on the walls of classrooms.

11. Any other comments?

We are grateful to the Rufford Small Grants Foundation, which supported financially our activities concerning the education of local people of Chiatura and Tskaltubo districts (Imereti region) on the importance of the caves, the necessity of cave conservation and the importance of local people's role in reducing human pressure on the karst caves of the Imereti region.