

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Grant Recipient Details

Your name	Nabil Musa
Project title	Riverine Ecosystems Health Project of Iraqi Kurdistan
RSG reference	17258-1
Reporting period	15 Jun 2015 to 15 November 2016
Amount of grant	5000 GBP
Your email address	info@waterkeepersiraq.org
Date of this report	30 November 2016

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
1. Collect and publish in-depth information on gravel mining/dams in the region.		✓		The information we collected came from both the operators/managers (for gravel mine employees and also from the Dukan dam Manager) and local community members. We were not able to get good information from the gov't perspective due to the gov't shutdowns that have been on-going in Kurdistan but operators/managers were able to provide some information
2. Implement an Awareness Program targeting community,		✓		Two films and two factsheets on gravel mines and dams were developed in Kurdish and used as part of the outreach efforts. We also presented a lot of information on the

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
decision-makers & industry to dialogue on these impacts.				project through interviews on local media and through social media. We could do very little outreach to government stakeholders though.

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

We had two main difficulties during the project. Our 1st major issue was due to financial problems at Nature Iraq (NI). They were not able to provide much support or oversight for the project and as Waterkeepers Iraq (WI) was in the midst of formally separating from NI in the fall of 2015 (which was completed in November 2015), we had delays to the work due to a lack of field transportation options. We also did not have access to NI staff and equipment in the Odonata survey and while we had hoped that our transects would provide clear data on the impact of gravel mining and dam construction on river biota (using Odonata as the target species), our surveys ended up becoming simple presence/absence surveys.

Our 2nd major problem was the many conflicts on-going in the region, including the war with ISIS and a breakdown in relationships between the Kurdistan Regional Government and Baghdad as well as between the political parties that operate in Iraqi Kurdistan. This essentially has shut down many government functions for most of the past year and as a result we were never able to conduct proper surveys with government agency employees during our work and in fact, the situation caused activities such as dam construction and even gravel mining to be delayed, halted, or greatly reduced. We were able to talk to the manager of the Dukan Dam to get his perspective of dam construction overall, which generally represents the government perspective.

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

1. The outreach that was done in the affected communities and more generally throughout Sulaymaniyah has been the most important outcome. So much more can and should be done to reach out to local communities who simply are not provided with accurate information on the health of their rivers.
2. The tools that we generated for the project: the two films and the factsheets in Kurdish that we used in our outreach efforts. The films and educational factsheets are:
 - a. Damming our River: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q54tA5581BU>
 - b. Gravel Mining Destroys Our Rivers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlh7u6MLxSA>

3. The case studies, which we have attempted to make simple and accessible to the Kurdish community (and also available on our website in English on our [project page](#) in English and Kurdish) and the checklist of species from the Odonata work is the final outcome of the project.

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

The part of the project that involved conducting interviews and outreach, which was done in both the target communities but also for the general public, provided an educational and awareness-raising benefit. Our films were shown on local media stations such as KNN and KurdSat TV Evening show as well as on these stations websites and on social media sites. We presented our films in a variety of venues, including:

- 1) Sulaymaniyah's Women's Center for about 25 viewers (mostly women) in 24 April 2016
- 2) Training in Erbil in June 2016 for the Save the Tigris & Iraqi Marshlands Campaign to a group of 40 activists from all over Iraq and 3 international trainers
- 3) Classes at the American University of Iraq-Sulaimani for approximately 240 students on 23 June 2016. An additional 100 students at University of Sulaimani also saw the films.
- 4) Other showings occurred in Halabja and Hwaraman.

In addition we showed the films in the two of the communities where we focused our work and had extensive discussions about these issues with community members:

- 1) Outdoor evening show for the Delezha Community, approximately 80 people attended
- 2) Library showing in the village of Goptapa for approximately 30 individuals

We made 35 visits to the target communities for interview, surveys (including 8 Odonata surveys), and events and interviewed 11 individuals in Delezha village and conducted about 10 interviews at Goptapa.

Feedback from people in general was very positive about our film. After viewing the film on dams at an outdoor show in Delezha, one community member and a well-known local poet stated, "I didn't know about the effect of dams. If we'd known we wouldn't have allowed it here." and he read out one of his poems that talks about the beauty of the land that they need to protect.

In Goptapa village, one of the teachers asked me to go back to his school and show the video to all the students in the school. One of the guys from the village wants WI to organize a river festival and show the people how they can do water activities and sport. One of the villagers asked me if he can perform because he was a performer. One of the residents said that every year they have people die in the river because of so many deep holes excavated into the riverbed. He also said that drinking water wells in the area have also been impacted. Farmers who were interviewed and others how saw the films really appreciate that someone is taking notice of what has been going on for agriculture in the area and is seeking to help them.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The political and social situation in the region must stabilize before effective outreach and information gathering from local and regional government can take place. Field research is still possible but the most effective work of the project was the outreach and awareness-raising aspects and these we can and will continue to do. In a related project we developed ten other short films about various environmental topics and we have a new project with the Conservation Leadership Programme to conduct a fish and fish habitat threat assessment for 9 rivers and streams in the Halgurd-Sakran Park area of Iraqi Kurdistan. Our situation remains precarious and funding is very difficult to secure for environmental projects in Iraq but we plan to continue our work for as long as we are able.

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

We will post our case studies on our website and promote them through social media and our network of contacts and organizations. The videos we made as part of the project remain on our YouTube Educational Channel and we will continue to show them along with other films we have made in future, public events. Though our Odonota surveys were limited, we were able to have almost all the species we found identified by Jean-Pierre BOUDOT of the IUCN Odonata Specialist Group. We did not identify any conservation concern species but did note a clear absence of these species in the areas most impacted by gravel mines.

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

We had hoped to complete the project in 12 months, but due to the problems we faced, most work was not able to fully start until the fall of 2015 (though we did conduct some preliminary surveys in the previous summer), and we were not able to finish our activities until the fall of 2016.

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 (GBP)*	Difference	Comments
Staff time (40% of Waterkeepers time)	£4,726	£4726	£0	
Program brochure (1200 brochures)	£679	£811	-£132	Cost of brochures was higher than estimated
Field transportation (fuel & maintenance)	£788	£942	-£154	Fuel costs were underestimated
Field per diems (WI)	£591	£705	-£114	Some additional help was needed in the field
Communication in the field	£158	£191	-£33	Costs for field communication was under-

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount (GBP)*	Difference	Comments
				estimated
Equipment	£394	£319	£75	Over-estimated cost of equipment needs
Documentary Production Costs	£2,626	£2,131	£495	Over-estimated production costs/production was covered by another project
Rent & Utilities	£945	£1,016	-£71	Not able to account for full costs when WI left Nature Iraq's office
Office & misc. supplies	£118	£118	£0	
Additional fees	£92	£239	-£147	This was based on accountant fees and we under-estimated the cost
Sub-Total	£11,117	£11,198	-£81	
Admin (5%)	£556	£560	-£4	
Total	£11,673	£11,758	-£85	Excess expenses covered by WI

*The WI expense accounts are based on USD and the exchange rate used was 1 USD = 0.796596 GBP

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

We hope to pursue the recommendations in our case studies about dams and gravel mining in the region. A lot must wait on a more stable political and economic situation but Waterkeepers Iraq excels at outreach and awareness raising and that is where WI will put most of its efforts for now.

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 logo was used in the films and factsheets that we generated as well as our website page about the project. We mentioned the source of our support in all our project activities.

11. Any other comments?

Thanks so much for supporting us!!! It is very difficult for NGOs of any type, but especially environmental NGOs to survive in the current political climate in Iraq and Kurdistan at this time. Every bit of support we get is very important to us and to our community.

12. I agree to this report being published on the Rufford Small Grants website

Signed (or print name) Nabil Musa

