

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

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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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Samya Basu
<b>Project title</b>	Community capacity building and conservation education to mitigate Man-Elephant Conflict and conservation of Eastern India Elephant Population in West Bengal, India.
<b>RSG reference</b>	10757-B
<b>Reporting period</b>	December 2011 – December 2012
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£11,985
<b>Your email address</b>	samyabasu@hotmail.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2012

**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
Establish a network with: 1. Project Elephant, Govt. of India 2. Directorate of Forests, Govt of West Bengal 3. Central Rice Research Institute, Orissa 4. NGOs, Institutions and Resource Individuals 5. Local TV channels, FM radio, media 6. Vivekananda Institute of Biotechnology, WB	X	X	Y	Apart from the targeted NGOs, institutions we established a network with 'Tropical Biology Association, Kenya', 'Elephant Family, UK' etc. The network was established but as the adjacent Jharkhand, Orissa states also fall within the home range of migratory elephant herds of South West Bengal, we need to spread the network in these states too. The role of some media personnel was not cooperative as they are more interested in news of depredation than mitigation. The Directorate of Forests, Govt of West Bengal helped us by giving access to their data, staff support and ideas.
Conduct a seasonal survey on fodder diversity and availability, water and saltlicks availability, anthropogenic activity pressure to develop habitat management and restoration policy.	X	X	Y	The data was compiled and used to develop habitat management plan. We feel that more sample sites need to be studied in future to develop better management plan.
Enumeration of both the residential elephant and migratory elephant population.	X	X	Y	The elephant population in proposed study area was 118 in 2010 which has three migratory subgroups and few residential groups. We did a population census and according to our result the South West Bengal gives shelter to $\pm 127$ migratory elephants and $\pm 35$ residential elephants.
Initiation of 'ERRS' ('Elephant Reserve Research Station') to maintain year-long data of migratory and residential elephant group composition and their migration route, nature of conflict, precautionary measures taken, habitat condition, procedure of ex-gratia payment etc. The research station is	X	Y	X	The 'ERRS' need more time to work as a complete research station. The temporary office space is not suitable for such station. We need a full-time worker for the station to run the daily routine work. We are planning to set up the main office in Kolkata and some satellite station in study areas.

developing range map, conflict zone map etc. and crop calendar to identify the suitable periods for cash crops and develop other mitigation policies and also work as a liaison between villagers and government.				
Community capacity building was conducted in five sample villages which face a routine depredation by elephant to do capacity building programme on alternate livelihood, crop pattern change, save period of cultivation of cash crops, unpalatable crops like long-awned paddy, chilly, sunflower etc. and manufacturing of low cost RCC bin to store their crops with help from concerned agencies. Villagers were trained to use their mobile phone as an alarm system.	X	X	Y	Community capacity building was a good initiative to mitigate human-elephant conflict. The programme creates a strong bond of faith, dependency and love between the villagers and us. The programme needs to continue in more villages with a larger number of participants and it need to be continued for a longer period.
Conservation education in five human-elephant conflict prone districts and Kolkata through film-show which was followed by interactive slide-illustrated talk on conservation of endangered elephant and Mayurjharna ER for idea sharing on problems and solutions. Photography, painting and literature competition, wall painting with conservation message as part of education programme was also arrange. We developed posters, leaflets, banners, petition signature sheet, chainmail, media feed etc. for public awareness.	X	Y	X	The conservation education programme was successful, but we realise that there is a need to be include more numbers local clubs (not included earlier) along with the regular schools/colleges for film show / slide-illustrated talks etc. The prize distribution for the competitions is pending and will be done in next academic session in January 2013.
Result publication and circulation	X	Y	X	The interim report was published and circulated among the stakeholder and forest officials and the draft final report is expected to publish in a form of book by end of February 2013 (as per the proposal submitted).

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

We faced the following unforeseen difficulties during our project work which are explained below:

- The fodder plantation in forest was not done in the last season (i.e. June-August) due to some unknown reason (the media source says that the reason is lack of government funds). It will definitely hamper the habitat management policies in near future. Now it is required to initiate the fodder plantation programme shortly to continue the habitat management activities. The elephant habitat are mainly dominated *Shorea robusta* and highly fire prone in winter but the forest department not able to create a fire-line to date.  
It is not possible for a project team to initiate such activities instantly. Though we have collected fodder plants from nurseries and distributed those to villagers, students to plant those outside the far away from village but the success was not satisfactory. We are planning to keep a fund for fodder plantation to reinitiate the programme in next year. But we could not solve the problem of fire-line as it is done by casual labours appointed by forest department against £2 per day.
- The long-awned rice varieties production was started experimentally but the production in the lateritic soil is much less than the expected production. We are now working on the alternate cash-crops which can be a better alternative for the farmers. We have also experimentally started the 'backyard vegetable garden' programme for them.
- The ex-gratia payment for loss of crops, huts, life etc. became irregular from last 8-10 months. At least the minimum treatment cost for the hospitalised injured persons was not paid/reimbursed by the government. The farmers receive ex-gratia payment for crop damage after a lengthy period which is almost after the next harvesting season. These problems make the villagers angry and the mob damages two forest offices during the project period. Initially we also faced public agitation, rude behaviours from villagers as they considered us as government staffs.  
We have altered our project work sequence to avoid this hazard. We initially did secondary data collection, took interviews and did basic community capacity building programme. We also avoid staying in forest rest houses and stayed in the villages. These activities helped us to earn their confidence and faith. The remaining duration of the project we got immense support and help from the villagers.

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

- 'EleFriend', the first elephant conservation research and education trust in West Bengal and the 'Elephant Reserve Research Station' to maintain human-elephant conflict data, conflict zone map, knowledge sharing etc. was formed during the project tenure. We feel this initiative will help the researcher and policy makers to develop conservation management plan.
- One of the focal points of the study area of RSG I, RSG II and Booster Grant was Jhargram Division of West Midnapore district which was high human-elephant conflict prone zone earlier. But from 2011 it has no incident of human casualties and the rate of conflict reduced drastically.  
The involvement of villagers in community capacity building programme on alternate livelihood is one of the most important outcomes of the project. The programme helped us to earn faith of the villagers and they are interested on NTFP production and marketing (e.g.

medicinal plants, mushrooms, and ornamental fish). This training programme needs more attention and support to continue.

- The earlier 'Zone of Influence' was determined and declared in 2002. The present project re-evaluates the new 'Zone of Influence' after 10 years and recommends that new areas from two districts (Birbhum, Burdwan) should be included on priority basis.

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

The local communities were another major component of the project. There is a competition for natural resource between the elephants and the villagers. Our earlier studies show that most of the humans killed by elephants during collection of NTFPs or grazing of cattle. We intend to reduce the dependency of the villagers on forests and help them to learn about the alternate livelihood development, crop pattern change, save period of cultivation of cash crops, unpalatable crops like long-awned paddy, chilly, sunflower etc. and manufacturing of low cost RCC bin to store their crops. The villagers took part in training programmes on NTFP production (e.g. medicinal plants, mushrooms etc.)

They also get an opportunity to express their views, ideas through the project personnel which was forwarded to the higher authority of forest division.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Definitely, we have a future plan to continue the work. The current project creates an expectation among the villagers, and they showed their interest in capacity building programme. We will continue the 'Community Capacity Building Programme', 'Conservation Education Programme' and 'Elephant Reserve Research Station' for a long-term success of the project. The study needs to be done in entire home range of south-west Bengal and an initial study should be started in elephant reserves of east-central landscape which are connected to the south-west Bengal elephant population. It is needed to upgrade the 'ERRS' (Elephant Reserve Research Station) to maintain the data and continue the research. We will also set up a 'Quick Response Team' in high conflict zone (identified during RSGF project) to save human life, property and elephants by action and coordination.

The east-central landscape of India (south-west Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chattisgarh) consist of nine elephant reserves including our Mayurjharna ER. The total area of these elephant reserves is 17092.30 sq. km., but only 4797.93 sq.km area is protected. These elephant reserves are connected with each other by corridors or migration routes. The project area needs to be extent in the elephant reserves of east-central landscape which are within the home range of south-west Bengal elephant population.

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

During the project period the updates was shared with policy makers, forest department officials, government agencies like project elephant, leading NGOs and institution. The findings and the management policies were circulated among the stakeholders also for their comments.

Apart from the targeted the Wildlife Trust of India also asked for some information from the project team which has been sent to them. The Tropical Biology Association invited a write up on the project to publish in their blog and The Elephant Family, UK also collected information from the project team.

A detailed report will be published in the form of a book (both hard copy and soft copy) in February 2013 and will be circulated to: i) Principal Chief Conservation of Forests, Directorate of Forests, West Bengal; ii) Principal Chief Conservation of Forests, Wildlife and Biodiversity & Chief Wildlife Warden, Wildlife Wing, Directorate of Forests, West Bengal and all forest offices which manages the elephant habitat in south-west Bengal. Apart from them the report will be circulated to the 'Project Elephant' and other institutions, NGOs related to elephant conservation.

The project report with special emphasis on management of HEC and elephant habitat will be presented in the meeting of State Wildlife Advisory Board, West Bengal.

## 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 December 2011 to 1<sup>st</sup> week of December 2012.

### Comparison between the anticipated or actual length of the project

Anticipated length of the project	Actual length of the project	Comment
Initiation: December 2011	Initiation: December 2011	The activities according to the proposal have been completed but the prize distribution programme was not done in December as the schools are closed due to final examination and annual holiday. This will be done in January 2013. The anticipated date of publication of project report is February 2013 in the submitted proposal. The process of publication is going on and the report will be published on time.
Completion: December 2012	Completion: 1 <sup>st</sup> week of December 2013	
Report publication: February 2013	Report publication: February 2013 (due)	
Anticipated length: 13 months	Actual length: 12 months 01 week	

**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.**

**Local exchange rate: £ 1 = INR 77**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
<b>Project Personnel:</b>				
Principal Investigator @ £100 pm x 14 months = £1400	£1400	£1400	Nil	-
Co-Investigator @ £50 pm x 12 months = £600	£600	£600	Nil	
Field Assistant @ £20pm x 12 months = £240	£240	£240	Nil	
Nature Educator @ £12.5 pd x 60 days = £750	£750	£630	(+)£120	Nature educator has worked 52 days instead of 60 days. Because we conducted the awareness programme in more than one schools in same day in urban areas.
<b>Transport:</b>				
Car hire @ £10 per day x 168 days = £1680	£1680	£2016	(-)£336	Local car hire cost was £12 per day instead of £10 per day due to fuel price hike in India.
Local transport @ £15 per month x 12 months = £180	£180	£180	Nil	
Visits to CRRRI @ £45 per trip x 2 trips = £90	£90	£112	(-) £22	The railway fare was also increased during this period.
<b>Accommodation and Meals for project personnel:</b>				
Accommodation @ £30 pm x 12 months = £360	£360	£190	(+) £170	Accommodation was provided by the villagers against a nominal cost.
Meals @ £55 pm x 12 months = £660	£660	£567	(+) £93	The meal cost was reduced as we preferred home stay options.
<b>Equipments for awareness programme:</b>				
LCD Projector = £572	£572	£572	Nil	
Projection screen & Sound System = £100	£100	£143	(-) £43	Actual price of the projection screen and sound system were higher than the estimated cost.
Laptop = £330;	£330	£330	Nil	
<b>Equipments for field survey:</b>				
HDD Video Camera for documentation = £506	£506	£506	Nil	

Spotter flashlight @ £70 per set x 2 sets = £140	£140	£140	Nil	
<b>Audio – visual Resource Materials:</b>				
Documentary film on project work = £225	£225	£150	(+) £75	The editing work of documentary film is going on and it is expected to be ready by month of February'13. We have balance fund for the film production. The remaining £75 is due payment for the video editor and film makers.
Slide-illustrated audio-visual presentation = £42	£42	£42	Nil	
<b>Printed Resource Materials:</b>				
Petition sheets, Posters, Booklets & Leaflets = £285	£285	£285	Nil	
Cable TV and FM radio publicity = £215	£215	£130	(+) £85	Though we did the awareness programmes through local Cable TV channel advertisement. But FM radio programme was not done as the major study area was outside the coverage area of the FM channels.
Banners, Stickers, T-shirts etc = £115	£115	£115	Nil	
<b>Community capacity building &amp; conservation education:</b>				
Community workshop on man-elephant conflict mitigation practices @ £40 x 25 villages = £1000	£1000	£1000	Nil	
Meeting with representative of stakeholders, forests department, resource agencies etc. @ £50 x 2 sessions = £100	£100	£140	(-) £40	Meeting with representative of stakeholders, forest staffs and resource agencies was arranged thrice instead of proposed two sessions.
<b>Conservation education:</b>				
AV show & interactive session in sample villages, schools and colleges; wall painting; arrangement of photography and literature competition @ £20 x 60 units = £1200	£1200	£1122	(+) £78	The villagers and forest department gave us logistic support which helped us to save some funds.



Prizes for photography & literature competition @ £5 x 60 units = £300	£300	£225	(+) £75	The prize for the competitors was purchased but due to tight academic schedule the prizes will be distributed in new sessions i.e. January 2013.
<b>'Elephant Reserve Research Station':</b>				
Office rent & maintenance @ £30 pm x 12 months = £360	£360	£360	Nil	The total money was spent in 09 months instead of 12 months as the ERRS was initiated after 03 months.
Publication of project report and dissemination of result	£215	£150	+£65	The project report will be published in a form of book and the draft has already been sent to the stakeholders and forest officials for comments. Balance amount will be paid to the printer after publishing the book.
<b>Communication cost:</b>				
Telephone and Internet = £250	£250	£250	Nil	
Printing of letterhead, making of stamps etc. = £30	£30	£46	(-)£16	The printing cost was higher than the estimate as envelop printing with logo was included later.
Postal charges and miscellaneous expenses = £40	£40	£22	(+)£18	We have £18 for remaining postal charges to post the project report and till date the project miscellaneous expenses is nil.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£11985</b>	<b>£11663</b>	<b>£322</b>	The balance amount i.e. £322 is mainly for the pending payments of report publication, documentary film making and prize distribution.
<b>*Apart from the RSGF funding we have raised £217.94 (approx) by consultancy service, nature study tour of college students etc. The amount has been deposited in the account of 'EleFriend' to continue the ERRS (Elephant Reserve Research Station) for next 06 (six) months which time is needed to receive any further grants.</b>				

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

At this moment it is very important to continue the 'Community Capacity Building Programme', 'Conservation Education Programme' and 'Elephant Reserve Research Station' for a long-term success. It is important to do fundraising programme to continue the above said programme.

Secondly the similar study needs to be done in entire home range of south-west Bengal and an initial study should be started in the elephant reserves which fall within the home range of south-west Bengal elephant population. The entire data will be compiled in ERRS.

Finally, we are planning to set up a 'Quick Response Team' in high conflict zone (identified during RSGF project) to save human life, property and elephants by action and coordination.

**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 all the materials produced during the project tenure which includes letterheads, envelopes, stamps, banners, Stickers, t-shirts, petition sheets, posters, booklets, leaflets, slide-illustrated audio-visual presentation, cable TV advertisement, documentary film etc.

The RSGF got publicity in local (Directorate of Forests, Govt of West Bengal; local TV channels, FM radio and media; Vivekananda Institute of Biotechnology, WB; schools; colleges and NGOs), national (Project Elephant, Govt. of India; Central Rice Research Institute, Orissa, Govt. of India; Wildlife Trust of India etc.) and International (Tropical Biology Association, Kenya office; Elephant Family, UK) level.

**11. Any other comments?**

The RSGF project is the only elephant conservation project in south-west Bengal as it is difficult to work in the area due limited access, logistic problem and extremist activities. We are now in good position as we earned the trust of the local people. At this moment our priority is to continue the 'Community Capacity Building Programme', 'Conservation Education Programme' and 'ERRS or Elephant Reserve Research Station' for a long-term success. We are also initiate fund-raising programmes to run the ERRS.