

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	Shankar Chandra
Project title	Establishing an Asiatic Lion Interpretation Centre for villages located near the Kuno sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh
RSG reference	13790-1
Reporting period	October 2013-June 2014
Amount of grant	£5964
Your email address	chandra.shankar@gmail.com
Date of this report	12 th July 2014

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
Establishing an Asiatic Lion Interpretation Centre for villages located near the Kuno Sanctuary, M.P.			√	
Create resource material focusing on the Asiatic lion, to be used with school children and the local community			√	
Spread awareness in the villages on the edge of the Kuno sanctuary about the Asiatic Lion		√		Ongoing in collaboration with the Adharshila schools
Spread awareness about potential sources of human-lion conflict and ways to avoid these conflicts		√		Ongoing in collaboration with the Adharshila schools and Samrakshan Trust
Train a cadre of local youth to become nature guides with specialised knowledge of the Asiatic lion		√		Ongoing in collaboration with the Adharshila schools and Samrakshan Trust

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

None. In fact, I have been particularly pleased with the project's reception by the local people and its outcomes.

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

a. Creation of resource material and formulating outreach modalities: We have produced and distributed booklets, posters, panels (for permanent display), cloth bags and calendars. Through these, we have succeeded in communicating historical, cultural and ecological knowledge about the Asiatic lion through infographics, visuals and text in the local language (Hindi). In the medium and long term, these will serve as popular modes of familiarising the local community with the mega carnivore and communicate to them the importance of re-introducing it in the Kuno sanctuary. The project has also developed creative ways of using this resource material with activities that involve the participation of teachers from Adharshila School and focus on spreading awareness among youth and children.

b. Deeper understanding of the area and building community contacts: The project has led to a greater understanding of the historical and ecological specificities of the landscape among members and volunteers of Samrakshan Trust and the Adharshila Schools (run by the Adharshila Education Society). I have successfully established community contacts in at least 20 villages and identified many individuals who may form an integral part of the project in the future.

c. **Expanding the project at the landscape level:** I travelled comprehensively in the Kuno conservation area (which is twice the size of the wildlife sanctuary) along with local volunteers, identifying potential locations for eco-tourism as well as spaces that are culturally important for people who had been displaced from the sanctuary. The knowledge will be used to develop ecotourism opportunities that are alive and sensitive to people's memories of the landscape previously inhabited by them.

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

The project was carried out with active participation of the local team members of Samrakshan Trust and Adharshila Education Society. It worked closely with local people through the children who attend the Adharshila Schools. I also identified and worked with individuals who are interested in ecotourism-based livelihood opportunities and can be further involved and trained in this direction. These include individuals who already work with the Trust, teachers and older children in Adharshila schools, and villagers displaced from the sanctuary.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The awareness programmes of the Lion Interpretation Centre will be taken to other government and private unaided schools in the area in order to reach a larger number of students and teachers. It should be noted in this regard that the lion-based publicity material (bags, calendars, posters) is still available and teachers who had been trained will continue to use it with children over the next 6 months to a year. In the process, further layers will be added to this resource material in terms of additional information about the Asiatic lion and knowledge of other species and local habitat.

Going beyond the focus on a single species, through the Lion Interpretation Centre I hope to expand environmental outreach and ecotourism activities at the landscape level. In the next phase of the project, I wish to develop habitat-centric resource material focusing not just on lions, but on the wider ecology of the Kuno landscape. I wish to use citizen's memory and mapping techniques to develop this material, so understand and document local knowledge about use of natural resources, local history and local knowledge about flora and fauna in the region. This information, developed in a participatory mode, will then feed into developing sustainable and locally beneficial ecotourism in the region.

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

- a. Pictures and narratives about the resource material and its use among students have been shared regularly through the Adharshila School Facebook page and other social media platforms that have a strong outreach within India and in other countries.
- b. Calendars and bags (more than 1000) have been distributed not only among student and the local community, but also among other stakeholders and specialists working in the field of conservation in Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and elsewhere.
- c. There is a plan to set up a website for the ecotourism venture and spread it through social media.

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 completed over 9 months, as against a projected timeline of 8 months. The project was carried out in three phases, consisting of development of material, training and implementation. In the first four months, resource material was prepared by curating information from various sources. This involved consulting experts specialising in the behavioural ecology and natural history of the Asiatic lion and translating all the information into an accessible and educational format. The panels, posters and booklets that were created for outreach and education focused on the past and present habitats of the Asiatic lion, its presence in our cultural history, architecture, and explained the morphology, hunting styles and reproductive patterns of the species. The 5th month was spent in training 22 Adharshila schoolteachers in communication and advocacy techniques, in order to enable them to use this resource material with children.

In the final phase lasting 4 months, activities designed with the theme of Asiatic lion (like colouring, painting and quizzes) and other awareness programmes were rolled out for children in 40 villages around the Kuno sanctuary. These outreach activities have directly benefited more than 650 students at the Adharshila schools and have generated tremendous enthusiasm among villagers for participating in future lion-related activities.

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
Consultancy fee for the communications expert and his team members	2410	2407	3	
Creation of resource material for the Interpretation Centre (translation, design, editing, printing etc.)	2410	2563	(-)153	
Field expenses of the communications expert and his team (travel, boarding and lodging, hiring local team members)	301	283	18	
Institutional overheads (office space, computer time, electricity, telephone and internet, stationary)	482	382	100	
Training of the Adharshila team in use of the resource material	301	320	(-)19	
External audit	60	60	0	
Total	5964	6015	(-)51	

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

1. Expansion of the lion interpretation centre's activities to government schools in the Vijaypur subdivision.
2. Developing a new programme focusing on eco-tourism, with a focus not just on lions but on other flora and fauna of the region and on the outdoor skills of local Adivasi people.

3. Developing alternative eco-tourism packages to suit different types of visitors (this can include homestays, outdoor camping options, long-stays and other formats) to provide local people with a stake in conserving the area's natural heritage.

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 displayed prominently in all resource material like posters, panels, books. We were unable to display it on the cloth bags for reasons of cost-effectiveness. The contribution of RSGF was duly acknowledged while conducting the training sessions and awareness programme of the Lion Interpretation Centre.