

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	Abu SMG Kibria
Project title	Ecosystem services in biodiversity conservation and human wellbeing: evidence from Veun Sai-Siem Pang Conservation Area, Cambodia
RSG reference	15993-1
Reporting period	January 2015 to December 2015
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	abu.kibria@anu.edu.au
Date of this report	February, 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
Estimating the value of major ESS of the forest			Yes	The value of the ecosystem services (ESS) includes nine different ESS. To understand the total value of all the services, a large and sophisticated research project required to be run.
The effects of ESS on community wellbeing and forest conservation			Yes	Lack of proper attention on community wellbeing during designing the community based ecotourism project was apparent.

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

Challenges:

- Problem with visa: I have faced a problem to receive a visa for the whole project period. A small segment of immigration policy of Cambodia has allowed me to get a visa for only 1 month with a chance of further extension. Hence, I was in huge stress to finish as much work as I could within 1 month. After completing a part of the research within 1 month time, I returned to my country and few months later re-entered in Cambodia for another month. This way I have visited Cambodia for three times and finished my fieldwork successfully.
- Problem with facilities: The field site in Veun Sai was very much remote. It took whole 2 days to reach the site from the capital Phnom Penh. Moreover, the road from Banlung City to base camp was terribly bumpy and dusty. We had no electricity supply, proper food and bathing facilities etc. To buy necessary supplies we had to travel through the forest for an hour.
- Problem with communication: There was no electricity, mobile signal and internet at the site I lived while conducting fieldwork. I had to make a tough journey for an hour by motor bike to receive mobile and internet connection. Once a week I used to come out the base camp and communicate with relevant personnel.
- Problem with language: The inhabitants of the field site were indigenous people who cannot speak English at all and majority of them barely speak the mainstream Khmer language. Only one man could speak both Khmer and English, but unfortunately that person was engaged in teaching at a primary school. It was difficult to get a translator to conducting the interview, as a person outside the locality would not be trusted by the indigenous people. Then a NGO in that area assisted me employing an officer for interviewing the people.

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

- We estimated the total annual contribution of Veun Sai-Siem Pang Conservation Area (VSSPCA) was US\$301.19million. Primary contribution was carbon sequestration

(US\$121million/yr) followed by soil-fertility improvement, soil-erosion reduction, environmental purification and recreation. By analysing the published articles and reports on VSSPCA we explored the area had generated valuable academic and non-academic knowledge on natural resources. This forest had also created enormous network among scientists and different organizations worldwide. Many cultural richness including 'animism' of the indigenous people were forest originated.

- People were found continuing to live with illegal logging and hunting even after joining the community based ecotourism (CBET) project. They mentioned that there was no other way except collecting provisioning services to live everyday life in such a remote area. It was observed that almost all of them (97%) were involved in illegal logging and hunting. Only 20% of them mentioned that they were occasionally stopped by the rangers. When the rangers chase them while performing in illegal activities, they usually run away or negotiate with the rangers by offering small bribe.
- We have analysed wellbeing by studying basic materials of life, health and sanitation, freedom choice, and security. After five years of commencement of CBET project changes in wellbeing of local people was found statistically insignificant. The slow improvement of their life is due to lack of proper attention to sustainable wellbeing of indigenous people in project design.

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

The survey was designed to explore the value of the forest and effects of ecotourism project on indigenous people's wellbeing. Our team took lunch with the indigenous families during the field work which generated some income to some families. In the long term the results derived from the research would assist the NGO to improve the ecotourism project and thereby improve local wellbeing.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The data collected are enough to serve in fulfilling the objectives of the project. Therefore, we do not have plans to continue the work.

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

The results will be disseminated by the following ways:

- Thesis: a doctoral thesis will be submitted at ANU (Australian National University) where chapters will be written by analysing the data obtained from this research.
- Academic publication: an article written on the value of the ecosystem services of current study area has already been submitted to a prestigious academic journal.
- Conference: results obtained from the current research have also been submitted for oral presentation in 'Ecosummit-2016' due to held from 29th August – 2nd September 2016 in Montpellier, France.
- Report to local NGO: a report also will be provided to Conservation International, the NGO assisted during field work, to consider for improving the current ecotourism project.

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

This project ran from January 2015 to December 2015. The fieldwork was very challenging; hence, it took 1 year just to finish the study per se. I needed 2 more months for data entry, analysis and reporting. Moreover, preparing a movie clip based on the fieldwork which took time as well because I had to get assistance from media software experts.

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
Airfare	930	2,840	-1,910	Visa for 1 year was not granted. I had to leave the field site after 1 month and re-enter tow times more for a month each time with new visa.
Accommodation in PNH to preparing for travelling to field site)	74	140	-66	I had to stay several days more than the plan.
Vehicle rent Phonm Pei- Veun Sai Siem Pang	124	130	-6	For making safe journey I had to use a bit expensive bus.
Food at field site	700	300	400	I took food with the base camp staff and occasionally at the restaurant
Accommodation at field site	1,450	0	1,450	I could manage free accommodation at the guest house of NGO (Conservation International)
Per diem for field translator	300	200	100	A local translator was found who charged less.
Translation for written documents	155	0	155	Necessary documents were written in English.
Photocopy and print	93	50	43	The charge of photocopy and print was lower in rural area.
Gifts for informants (snacks, sometimes lunch/dinner etc.)	50	50		
Visa	250	100	150	Each time one month visa was granted.
Gifts for the interviewee (snacks, soft drinks/water, chocolate etc)	62	70	-8	People other than interviewee also sometimes has be offered gifts/snacks etc.
Digital camera	124	124		
Others (scale, pen, notebook etc.)	124	124		
Vaccinations & medicines (malaria, Japanese encephalitis, rabbis etc.)	374	701	-327	Vaccination in Australia was expensive.
Internet and communication	190	200	-10	
Total	5,000	5,029	-29	

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

Community based ecotourism project must include the specific guidelines how to improve the wellbeing the local people. The requirements for improving local wellbeing ought to be explored before implementing such programme. Like most other community based programme the studied project has also hypothesised that if participants could earn money they would stop illegal logging and hunting wildlife. But this is a small step forward; there are many other elements could increase happiness of indigenous families and many of those do not necessarily demand big budget.

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?

An article has been published on the 'On Campus' magazine published by the ANU (The Australian National University). This article is available at: <http://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/phd-student-wins-ecosystem-grant-for-international-research>. I have also shared this link on social media to inform people about the Rufford Grant. I will use the logo during oral presentation at Ecosummit 2016 conference in Montpellier, France. This logo will also be used on the cover page of the report to Conservation International, Cambodia.

11. Any other comments?

RSGF can introduce a small fund for students to attending an international conference to present the research results. This may give better coverage of RSGF to the world scientist and donors.