

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford 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	Moushumi Basu
Project title	"Managing Man Tiger Conflicts & Conserving Tigers In Indian Sunderbans By Restoring Mangrove Bio Diversity With Community Participation"
RSG reference	16486-1
Reporting period	December 22, 2014 – December 22, 2015
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	basu.films@gmail.com
Date of this report	December 22, 2015

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
A. Efforts to check man tiger conflict in the 22 target villages.		Yes		Detailed door to door survey done by community members on man tiger conflict in our target 22 villages. (Survey report attached with detailed final report). The villages most prone have been taken in the first lot.
B. Reduce biotic pressures in the tiger habitat and create more inviolate space for tigers. Following activities have been undertaken for the same -		Yes		For this livelihood options are being generated in the villages to reduce entry of local communities in tiger habitat.
1. Nursery development for mangrove plantation		Yes		Tiger widows engaged in seed collection from tidal waters. Two nurseries developed for plantation work undertaken in the first lot of seven target villages.
2. Plantation for community mangrove forest		Yes		Based on the availability of land and cases of man tiger conflicts, first lot of seven villages- Patharpara, Annpur, Tipligheri, Duttagram, Hamilton Mouza, Parasmani & Rajatjubilee selected by the community for developing community forest.
3. Mangrove Guarding & Cleaning of plantation sites			Yes	The planted saplings are being protected by the community members from being eaten away by cattle. The plantation sites/ nurseries kept clean with removal of plastic bags, thermocol plates and other throw away usually littered by tourists. Such waste clog the soil, deterring the growth of seeds and saplings and reducing their chances of survivability.
4. Development of community ponds with restoration of aquatic ecosystems			Yes	Based on the availability of naturally occurring aqua systems in the villages, six community ponds were desilted by the villagers with manual dredging.
5. Awareness drives on tiger conservation and			Ongoing process	Street awareness campaigns are organised. Awareness meetings are

reducing human pressures in tiger habitat.				also organised. Where members of Sunderban Wildlife & Rural Development Society. Villagers are explained on the necessity of reducing human pressures on the tiger habitat. This is not only good for tiger conservation but is also essential to protect their lives. Further restoration of mangrove ecology not only generates traditional livelihood for them but also helps in mitigating impacts of climate change. Sunderban is also a hot spot for climate change.
C. Mitigate impacts of climate change. Incursion of strong tidal surge in the villages from Bay of Bengal		Yes		The community forests are still in the process of growing up. Once they are full grown within a year, they will protect the earthen embankments which border the villages to prevent the incursion of tidal water.
D. Restoration of the native practice of Folk Medicine		Yes		Though this does not concern livelihood for villagers in a big way, but it pertains to their well-being. With the development of community mangrove forests at least four or five folk healers in each of these villages will be involved in their traditional occupation, for treatment of the villagers. As fees, the villagers will pay them in kind as rice/ vegetables / even cash based on their capability.
E. Survey reports on Mangrove plantation and Livelihood options generated			Yes	These reports form our underlying assessment of not only the ground situation but also reflect our progress in work while determining our future course of action.

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

Sunderban is vulnerable to vagaries of nature. There are sudden bouts of rains, cyclones or tidal storms in the villages. During such intermittent periods, our work had to be stopped for a while, but all this did not affect our long term goals.

In the initial stages of holding inception/ awareness meetings with local communities on the basic objectives of the project, local activists kicked up a debate. They argued the villagers were entitled to community forest rights under Forest Rights Act - 2006, so why should they be dissuaded from entering the tiger habitat?

We however tried to convince them saying a major purpose of the project was also to save human lives in the fringe villages by reducing man tiger conflicts. We further impressed upon them that the activities of the project related to restoration of mangrove ecosystem also fulfil the provisions of UN Convention on Biological Diversity and generation of traditional livelihood.

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

1. Creation of about 19.5 hectares of mangrove plantation in 7 villages. They are in different stages of development. Normally it takes about 12- 18 months to develop and generate livelihoods for villagers. Since the local communities here are largely forest fishers and honey collectors. Both these options of livelihood will be provided by the community forests.

2. Creation of six community ponds in the vicinity or within the mangrove plantation sites is promoting fishery in the target villages. While the forests are still growing, these ponds are developing into viable units for culture of crabs, prawns and other commercial fish, generating sustainable sources of livelihood for the villagers. Based on the traditional knowledge of the villagers, fingerlings of various species are being introduced in these water bodies and harvested. Further, these community managed water bodies are supplementing water for irrigation, thereby opening up agriculture as a livelihood option for at least some families with land in the target villages

3. Reduction of Biotic Pressure in tiger Habitat - The above livelihood options generated through the pilot project has reduced/ will reduce the entry of villagers in the forest. As per our survey report (attached with the final report) an estimated 375 persons earlier dependent on tiger habitat for their livelihood in the five villages could be / will be diverted from there to get their livelihood from community mangrove forest and community ponds. This has/ will eventually reduce man tiger conflict.

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

Local communities are involved at every stage of project implementation. To begin with the core committee members of local community organisation were explained the basic objectives of the project. Henceforth through meetings and awareness campaigns in the respective villages, the organisation members discussed the various activities of the project with the local community. They were made to realise that the project was not for just tiger conservation but also to prevent further loss of lives in their villages by generating sustainable sources of livelihood for them. Once convinced the villagers are actively implementing the project activities. They realise that they are developing a lifetime treasure of community mangrove forest and community ponds, which will not only benefit them but also their future generations through various means of sustainable livelihood.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, certainly. The work supported by RSG is a part of our long-term programme which needs to continue both for conservation of tigers and saving human lives in the villages. The local community in the beneficiary villages are getting convinced that **IT IS** possible to survive without entering into the tiger habitat. Hence the need of the hour is to continue this work in more number of villages with generation of traditional and sustainable sources of livelihood through community forests and

ponds. This will also set an example for the other forest villages beyond our present target area. After all for the villagers too it is risking their lives in having to enter the tiger habitat for their livelihood. Hence, given the choice, they would rather prefer to leave the habitat space inviolate for the tigers.

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

The results of our work including survey reports prepared by us will be shared with the other grass root organisations, through workshops and meetings. We are/ will also share this with the forest department at various levels besides local environmentalists and journalists.

On special occasions as International Tiger Day on July 29, International Mangrove Day on July 26, World Environment Day on June 5, and other similar occasions as, we will especially show case our project activities at the local level as well as at the level of state forest department. Our archive/ slide of still pictures, various survey reports besides awareness programmes prepared by the local villagers will be presented on these occasions.

Further, the local children with their families and parents are being encouraged to create programmes with the theme - "Mangroves for Man & Tiger". They are preparing songs, skits, dances, drawings etc. to propagate the objectives of our project in various cultural programmes and events, thereby spreading awareness on our work.

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

The grant was used over a period of one year from December 22nd 2014 to December 22nd 2015, as envisaged in the project.

We began our work from the last week of December 2014 with inception meetings, door to door survey on man tiger conflicts and finalising our first lot of target villages till February. Our activity of mangrove seed collection began with the onset of spring from February 2015 and continuing till end of April 2015. During this period, mangrove trees are in full bloom and develop propagules / seeds for dispersal by tidal waters.

Prior to arrival of monsoon, we got our mangrove nursery ready with the saplings for plantation work. Plantation of mangrove saplings commenced with the onset of monsoon from June 2014. During rainy season, the tides are at their peak and help in the growth of halophytic mangroves. Our plantation work continued till October 2015, prior to the beginning of winter, when the level of tide gradually reduces. The community ponds were also dug up for the release of fingerlings of various species of fish during monsoon between June 2015 to September 2015, when their development is optimum. Awareness campaigns and cleanliness drives were conducted round the year.

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 British £ sterling = 102.60 INR

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Mangrove Seed Collection	250	380	130	
Maintaining Mangrove Nursery	780	850	70	
Mangrove sapling plantation	650	780	130	
Mangrove Protection/ Guarding	300	300		
A. COMMUNITY MANGROVE FOREST (TOTAL)	1980	2310	330	
Desiltation of 6 Community Ponds	1285	1285		
Introducing Fingerlings/ Developing Fish Culture & Duck Rearing	483	502	19	
B. RESTORATION OF COMMUNITY PONDS (TOTAL)	1768	1787	19	
C. AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS (TOTAL)	1083	1149	66	
D. MISCELLANEOUS (TOTAL)	230	252	22	
TOTAL (A + B+ C+ D)	5061	5498	437	We managed to raise this extra money by staging cultural programmes, folk theatres etc. in the villages. Local artistes also performed in tourist lodges.

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

Our major step ahead is to maintain the continuity of the work at all cost. The villagers are convinced of the efficacy of the project and it is important to carry out our objective to as many villages possible.

We are presently chasing a tall target of 22 villages of which we have been able to work in 9 villages. As per our survey, 250 ha of chor has to be covered by community forests. Further, at least 10-15 community ponds are targeted to be dug up in these villages.

We also want to try other options of livelihood in the days to come. For instance, some of our tiger widows claimed to create "wealth out of waste". In other words, they can make items of daily use from the colourful throw away plastic packs. We would want to take up such activities on a more organised level.

The place has a history of rich folk culture. Teams of professional folk artistes can be developed in these villages, which can help augmenting sources of livelihood.

We would want to organise more awareness campaigns so that more number of villagers voluntarily come forward and accept the given options of livelihood, leaving the tiger habitat for the big cats. Further involvement of younger generation in particular is necessary in these drives.

**10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project?
Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?**

Yes certainly, we felt proud to use the RSG logo in all our survey work, besides the detailed project report we have prepared to highlight our work. As the project leader, I have attended workshops by other grassroots environmental organisations where I have used these findings/ reports / pictures of our various year long activities expressing acknowledgements towards RSG. In the process, RSGF has received good publicity. Some of my conservationist friends are very excited on the outcome of our project and plan to apply to the Rufford Small Grant for furthering their various conservation work.

11. Any other comments?

RSGF has played very crucial role in the lives of the local communities, by kick starting this pilot project with its grant. Tigers are critically endangered where survival of every tiger in the wild holds significance. And one major way to conserve these magnificent species is to create inviolate space for them. Hence, as community based grass root conservationists we feel satisfied and grateful to RSG that we have been able to contribute to tiger conservation at large in our own humble way.