

## 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

---

Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Nova M Sangma.
<b>Project title</b>	Wildlife Conservation Education and Awareness in the Baghmara Balpakram Landscape, South Garo Hills District, Meghalaya, India
<b>RSG reference</b>	45.03.08
<b>Reporting period</b>	August 2008- July 2009
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£6,000
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@samrakshan.org">info@samrakshan.org</a> , <a href="mailto:balpakram@gmail.com">balpakram@gmail.com</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2010.

---

**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
Influence key government functionaries in favour of conservation, particularly to get them to desist from hunting.		√		We underestimated the challenge that this objective posed. Engagement with this group requires an approach and skill set that is vastly different from the one for the projects remaining two objectives. While we had the resources for objectives 2 and 3, we felt that we were not able to do full justice to this objective.
Alter attitudes of citizens of Baghmara town (adults as well as children) to reduce removal of wildlife for pet keeping and hunting.			√	Primarily, hands on education programme concentrated in Baghmara during the project period. Particularly, the programme has addressed the student community of the Baghmara. Participation in various cultural and religious programmes within district was a key strategy of reaching out people and spreading wildlife conservation messages.
Generate support for conservation among religious leaders and preachers.			√ *	* This objective was not a part of the original proposal. However, as we progressed with the project, we made mid course changes based on lessons we were learning through the process of project implementation. Through such adaptive management we brought this objective on board and were able to achieve it.

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

The project threw up a large number of unforeseen situations; this required considerable mid course changes and adaptive management. The single most significant situation that arose was the emergence of the church as a target of intervention and as a partner in the conservation education enterprise. We had to create fresh material in order to service this constituency. This also required us to change our approach and to make it more appropriate to the outlook of church leaders. We undertook research to familiarise ourselves with parts of the Bible that have conservation messages and framed our outreach to church leaders in that light.

The planned outreach to government departments proved singularly difficult to achieve. With hindsight, it is clear that this segment should be addressed once the project is somewhat older and

has picked up the necessary experience. Eventually we chose not to invest too much time with this segment, specifically since we had already an additional segment (the church) to work with.

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

1. The church in South Garo Hills taking up conservation issues and issuing directives to pastors and assistant pastors to take up conservation messages in their sermons and preaching was a key outcome. This project has thus been able to cause a ripple effect that will affect a much larger number of people than the ones that have been directly touched by the project.
2. In the project area, the issue of hunting and taking animals (and birds) as pets is no longer seen as a casual event. People have become aware of the illegality of this activity and the impact that this has on birds and animals.
3. The project has created capacity within the Samrakshan team to continue and to upscale the conservation education programme. The project has enabled us to test various tools of conservation education and as a result we now have a well-developed plan to continue the conservation education activities.

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

The entire project was executed with local communities' resident in the Balpakram Baghmara landscape. The project directly interacted with 434 students of four different schools in Baghmara town – Bethel Academy, Pioneers' Higher Secondary School, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya and Don Bosco School. In addition, through participation in the ABDK Sobha and the Atong Festival, the project has reached out to an additional 2,000 members of the local community living in the landscape.

The project has given the people of the Balpakram Baghmara landscape a fresh perspective on their unique natural heritage. Slowly but surely it is beginning to cause a turnaround in the manner in which local community members view wildlife. This has been possible through the two RSG sponsored projects as well as other activities undertaken by Samrakshan in the region. Children are a large segment of the population that hunt using catapults and take birds and animals as pets. They have been significantly affected by this project. This gives us the confidence that we are building future conservation stewards through this programme. Further, the sterling work done by the local NGOs of the region in resisting illegal mining is another example of the way in which the project has enabled the community to build capacity to understand and appreciate conservation issues and to take action to preserve their natural heritage.

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

This work is now being up scaled and a whole new dimension is being added to it – capacity building and training of local NGOs and individuals to nurture them into conservation stewards. This will ensure sustainability of Samrakshan's work and also enable a much larger number of issues to be addressed than is possible by Samrakshan alone. This approach has already been tested in case of the anti-mining campaign and it is clear that there is an untapped potential among the NGOs of the region to be moulded into a strong conservation force. In addition, the

---

anti-hunting and the anti-pet keeping messaging will also be expended to other *akings* in the landscape. This education effort will expand in tandem with the habitat conservation effort. In fact, the plan is for the conservation education action to support the habitat protection work.

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

We share our reports with a large range of audiences across the globe via email and post. We share report and information through our regular monthly newsletter (Green footprint).

We are also redeveloping our web site in order to disseminate the results of our work through the website.

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

The activity of the project starts in August 2008 and continued till July 2009. The project completed within a year. The proposed timeline of the project was for one 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. Exchange Rate £1= INR 74.45 (Date 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010) – source – [www.x-rate.com](http://www.x-rate.com)**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Staff time (Staff time for grant recipient @ Rs.10,000 per month for 12 months) (10,000 X 12)	1612	2344	(-)732	I hired few hands with me towards helping me out in some of the activities performed under the project.
Teaching and communication material for regular conservation education activities (Stationery, communication equipment and other resource material, fuel for generator for screening wildlife films)	1914	1184	(+)730	
Special conservation education events (Events like wildlife week, environment day and animal welfare fortnight, events in weekly markets)	1007	905	(+)102	
Exposure visits for grant recipient (Cost of travel, boarding – lodging during visit and costs associated with the visit for 2 visits to two different places/organisations) (15,000 X 2)	403	407	(-)4	
External evaluation (Cost of travel, boarding and lodging, honorarium for external consultant @ 20,000/- per visit	269	252	(+)17	

for 1 visit) (20,000 X 1)				
Workshop with District Officials and Council Members (Including stationery, refreshments for participants, banners, posters, travel expenses for four workshops)	201	<b>161</b>	(+)40	
Overhead expenses (Recurring overhead costs like communications, printing, postage, computer time @ 5,000 per month for 12 months) (5,000 X 12)	806	<b>1162</b>	(-)356	
Contingencies (Unplanned expenditure in course of the project) (15,000 X 1)	201	<b>290</b>	(-)89	
	6413	<b>6705</b>	(-)292	

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

Conservation education is a crucial complement to the habitat protection work we do in this landscape. While we have made progress with communities in the villages, Baghmara town is a serious source of hunting and trapping. Therefore, Baghmara needs serious conservation education attention with clear messaging on legal aspects. We will be taking this up in the next round of work. In the villages, we plan to continue conservation education with particular segments of community - with hunters and with village leaders.

At the same time, as mentioned earlier in this report, the capacity building of local NGOs is going to be another key component of future work. This will be towards developing these NGOs as conservation champions in this region and thereby catalysing much greater action than would be possible by a single entity (Samrakshan) alone.

### 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?

Yes, we used RSGF logo in our reports as well as in banners advertising various events organised as part of this project. This can be seen in the activity specific reports sent to RSG from time to time.

### 11. Any other comments?

We are grateful to the RSG for their support and cooperation in the execution of this project. RSG and the administrator Jane Raymond in particular have been very considerate in helping us implement this project, located as we are at a place that remote and difficult to access. Jane's patience with our delays in meeting reporting requirements has been exemplary and we are grateful for this consideration.