

## Project Update: December 2009

The project is progressing in the following schools:

- Ananda Ashram Balika Vidyapith, Kolkata.
- Children's Foundation, Kolkata.
- Metropolitan Institution (Main), Kolkata.
- Sarengabad Jajneswari Pathsala Girl's High School, Kolkata.
- Baksara Surendranath Girl's High School, Howrah.
- T.N High School, Durgapur.
- Sagarvanga Government Sponsored High School, Durgapur.

We are pleased to announce two important developments:

- The ongoing survey conducted by Sarengabad Jajneswari Pathsala Girl's High School reveals that the habitat of the Water Monitor is under threat from a large private housing project and a Government Sports Complex. We have brought this to the attention of the Department of Environment and a directive has been issued to protect the habitat while conducting the projects.
- A poster presentation of the project which was made at the Living Knowledge 2009 Conference at Belfast held from 27 to 29 August 2009 won the first prize.

**Conserving the Urban Biodiversity of West Bengal through action projects by middle-school students**

With the increasing trend of urbanization in the developing world, there is a need to step up efforts to conserve urban biodiversity. Diti Mookherjee and her team from Association for Social and Environmental Development (ASED) are demonstrating how middle school students can be involved in preserving the urban biodiversity of West Bengal, India.

**The Project**

- Core Groups of 25 students of Grade 7/ Grade 8 and 2 teachers trained on biodiversity observation and recording through slide illustrated talk, nature games and booklet, local field trip, visit to a Biodiversity Hotspot.
- Core Groups choose a school based project, provided technical and networking inputs by ASED team.
- They spread the message of conservation among other students, teachers and community.
- Local plant biodiversity study, planting and/or maintaining a school garden including medicinal plants.
- Awareness among local people.
- Networking with schools, Forest Department and NGOs.
- Advocacy

**Achievements**

- Presently working with 4 schools in Kolkata, 1 school in Howrah and 2 schools in Durgapur.
- 700 middle school students trained since 2004.
- School projects on:
  - Survey on the status of the endangered Water Monitor (*Varanus salvator*) and campaign to preserve its habitat.

**Challenge**

Sustainability of school projects after ASED intervention is over.

Survey conducted by Sarengabad Jajneswari Pathsala Girl's High School revealed that the habitat of the Water Monitor is under threat from a large private housing project and a Government Sports Complex. This has been brought to the attention of the Department of Environment and a directive has been issued to protect the habitat while conducting the projects.

Sponsored by **Rufford**

Association for Social and Environmental Development  
1 A & 2, Golf Club Road, Kolkata 700 029, Phone: 91-33-2324200  
Website: 91-66511-13372 E-mail: aased@aseed.com