

## The Rufford Foundation Final Report

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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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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<b>Grant Recipient Details</b>	
<b>Your name</b>	Zhereeleen D. Meneses
<b>Project title</b>	Diversity, Ecology and Conservation of Orchids in Western Samar, Philippines
<b>RSG reference</b>	17825-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	September 2015 – September 2016
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5000
<b>Your email address</b>	zhereeleenmeneses@gmail.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	November 3, 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
Conserve natural orchid population of Western Samar		√		The subsequent meetings with local communities and people's organisation presented and stressed the importance of conserving native, endemic and threatened orchids of the province. With these, awareness was raised among local people who used to collect orchids from the wild. Moreover, a local orchid rescue/nursery was established by a partner PO in the area. The objective for orchid conservation was only partially achieved since some areas in the province with security issues were not visited and sampled for orchid assessment. However, the team is very hopeful that the IEC materials will very well substitute the absence of local meetings/conservation awareness seminars in some areas.
Contribute to scientific knowledge			√	This project sponsored by The Rufford Foundation is the first comprehensive and baseline study on the diversity and ecology of orchids in the area. A scientific paper produced from this project is on its way for publication to inform a wider set of readers. At a local scale, officials of the Samar Island Natural Park approved this study and recognise its contribution to the protected area's set of biodiversity information. Moreover, the local community are the primary benefactors on the awareness campaign that the project brought about.
Involve the local people			√	Throughout the field work, the local people and local community

			<p>organisations were tapped to participate in the project. In most instances, they were brought in the field for actual orchid and landscape assessment, collection and deposition of representative orchid species to their rescue center, as well as actively participating in seminars, lectures and meetings for IEC. The local people were also provided additional income throughout the project's duration since they were hired as forest guides, climber, boatman and the like.</p>
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**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

In some instances, fieldwork was postponed due to unfavourable weather conditions which entailed prolonged stay in a certain locality. Sometimes, we would find ourselves stuck in the forest because strong winds and heavy rain makes it dangerous to walk down mountain trails. However, times like these were turned into experience-sharing and discussions on the recent situations in the field guides' locality making them more welcoming to us. Thus, when meetings were scheduled, more participants actively share their insights and comments on orchid conservation. Another instance is the difficult accessibility and high-risk areas in certain land-locked municipalities which are identified as orchid-rich habitats. In such cases, the team coordinated with both the military personnel as well as the local community in order to have a "window-period" to access their forests.

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

First, the project provided an updated inventory, assessment and ecological study for both epiphytic and terrestrial orchids in the area. A total of 90 orchid species were identified, 30 of which are new records for western Samar and Samar Island itself; one orchid genus was identified to be a new genus record for the Philippines. Ecological study also suggests that the diversity and abundance of orchids are significantly affected by forest disturbances.

Secondly, information and education campaigns and seminar-workshops were conducted where the concerned environmental stakeholders and the local communities were made aware of the current status of endemic, native and horticulturally-significant orchid species in the area. The importance of conserving

wild orchid population as well as preserving its niche was emphasised during such activities.

Lastly, a local orchid nursery was established. This nursery housed endemic orchids, native, horticulturally-significant species and those that were rescued from felled trees or converted areas. With this, threatened species in the area are conserved for later re-introduction to the wild.

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

Members of the local community actively participated in seminars and meetings regarding orchid conservation, establishment of the local orchid nursery and even during reconnaissance and fieldwork (rescuing endemic and native orchids from felled trees).

The importance of orchid conservation and its sustainable use was introduced to the community through information and education campaign. Moreover, in cases where the household sells native orchids, they were made aware on the economical and ecological value of the orchids that they were tending.

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

Yes, this conservation initiative is planned to be continued. A series of meetings with the partner peoples' organisation is currently being done with regard to this matter, and the researchers as well as the local community and organisations are looking forward for the continuation and expansion of the orchid conservation in their area. The team, together with the partner POs are setting follow-up meetings this coming December 2016 in order to come up with another seminar-workshop which will now focus on the possible conduct of aseptic culture of native orchids.

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

A scientific paper will be published tackling the specific results of the project. Moreover, a pictorial guide was already produced thru this project's initiative. This was distributed to local communities already, however, there is a plan to reproduce this and to provide copies to nearby state colleges and educational institutions in the locality so as to spark interest in studying Samar's rich natural heritage.

**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 Rufford Foundation grant was used for 1 year which covered the proposed entire duration of the project. The funding was fitted for the execution and operation of the project as well as in the procurement of the equipments and supplies necessary for the project's fulfilment. It was also used during the seminars for the information and education campaign agenda of the project as well as in the production and reproduction of paraphernalia/materials used in the conservation and awareness campaign.

**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	303	303	0	
Lodging	303	303	0	
Food allowance	379	379	0	
Land Transportation	152	152	0	
Labour and Allowances: includes field guides, labourer & 1 science research assistant compensations	800	1000	-200	In some areas that are only navigable through rivers, the researchers hired a boatman to get to the orchid-rich sites.
Printing and processing of paraphernalia	200	200	0	
Seminar-Workshops for IEC & presentation in scientific meetings	610	610	0	
Orchid Nursery Materials	800	528	272	Reallocated to compensations for guides/boatman.
Camera, lens and flash	372	372	0	
Handheld GPS device	303	303	0	
Herbarium Supplies	200	200	0	
Information Packages	350	400	-50	Additional materials for information packages were used especially on the production of additional IEC materials as requested by the community and

				concerned stakeholders.
Contingency Fund	250	250	0	
<b>Total</b>	5022	5000		

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

I believe that a maintaining the orchid nursery and mainstreaming conservation are the next important steps. Monitoring and maintenance are very much needed so that our conservation initiatives will not be put to vain. This will also welcome other scientific studies in other aspects of the province. Moreover, I think that publishing specific scientific findings and ideas is also very important to add to the existing information of the protected area.

**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, The Rufford Foundation Logo was used in IEC materials/paraphernalia produced for this project. It was also used during community meetings, seminars with the local people's organisation and other concerned stakeholders, as well as in the project presentation to the Protected Areas Management Board (PAMB) governing the concerned project sites.

**11. Any other comments?**

Our team is very much grateful to the RSFG team for the opportunity to conduct this conservation project. The Rufford Foundation's systematic way of addressing concerns starting from grant application; to fund distribution up to providing reminders is very efficient and helpful in the completion and fulfilment of this project's conservation objectives.

As a researcher and conservation advocate, I am very much pleased that The Rufford Foundation supports conservation initiatives, especially in areas where immediate actions must be done. I hope that this endeavour will continue so that every interested conservationist will be inspired to take part in protecting, conserving and managing our finite resources.