

Final Evaluation Report

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Zhereeleen D. Meneses
Project title	Capacity Building for the Conservation of Orchid-Rich Habitat of Samar Island, Philippines
RSG reference	24569-2
Reporting period	March 29, 2018 - May 30, 2019
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	zhereeleenmeneses@gmail.com
Date of this report	May 30, 2019

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
1. Use the orchidaceous species of Samar as flagship for conservation.				The identified threatened orchids for the selected sites were used as flagships for conservation. The Protected Area Management Board of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources approved the permanent monitoring plots after knowing that those areas are home to endemic yet highly threatened orchids.
2. Produce laminated brochures, pamphlets and posters for communication, education and public awareness initiatives on the conservation of orchids.				These materials were produced and distributed to local peoples' organisations, community and regional offices of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Region 8 and the headquarters of the Samar Island-Protected Area Management Board.
3. Conduct seminar-workshops catering to the conservation orchids and its habitat.				The seminar-workshop and lecture series were conducted where the participants were informed about the status of orchids and Samar Island's forests, taught how to do conservation planning, and at the end of the series, they were also able to come up with conservation and local management plan for their respective areas.
4. Establishment of Monitoring plots				The establishment of monitoring plots were already approved and endorsed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources region 8 wherein permits for the documentation and delineation of areas as permanent

			<p>monitoring plots for diversity and ecological studies were also approved by the governing body. These areas were already delineated on ground and the documentation was 75% done already. Fieldwork was temporarily postponed last January 14, 2019 due to tensions between the military and local leftist group.</p>
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The security issue in the area delayed some of the fieldwork that needed to be done. With the fieldwork postponement, the team immediately coordinated with the Samar Island Protected Area Management Board. Major fieldwork was re-scheduled on June 2019 although I have been constantly coordinating with the team members in Samar. In fact last February, one of the members again joined the first quarter meeting of the Protected Area Management Board held in eastern Samar. The team proceeded as soon as the “go” signal was once again given. On top of this, the team will again deliver another set of materials for its Communication Education and Public Awareness initiatives on June 14, 2019 bearing the logo of the Rufford Foundation. This is on top of the delivered materials since more community environment office and local state university are interested with the project’s conservation initiatives.

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

Outcome 1: Orchids as flagship for Conservation. The project used the endemic, native and highly threatened orchid species of Samar Island to encourage the conservation of identified orchid-rich habitats in the area. Though Samar Island has the largest contiguous forest in the country, its forest cover is rapidly decreasing due to influx of human activities. Along with this forest cover loss is orchid species loss. Now that the governing body recognised the need to conserve these precious orchids, their identified forest ranges were also being protected.

Outcome 2. Communication, Education and Public Awareness Campaign Initiatives. The local people/residents play vital role in the success of any conservation projects since they are the one directly using or interacting in the ecosystem. The seminar series informed the peoples’ organisations on the importance of allotting areas for conservation and protections purposes. They were also able to appreciate the significance of conserving finite resources and the areas where these resources are found.

Outcome 3. Permanent Monitoring Plots. Our greatest gift to the next generation of researcher, students, naturalists and our very children is green, clean and habitable

environment. These monitoring plots will serve as testament of Samar's endemic orchidaceous species. It will allow the local people and other budding researcher to have in depth studies in the forests' natural systems and the organisms found there and an appreciation of the *in situ* conserved orchid plants.

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

Learning workshops were conducted which specifically catered to the local communities. The pictorial guides, conservation campaign materials and orchid brochure also helped them to understand the advocacy since it is written in the Filipino language. At the end of the seminar series, they were not only informed of the present status of the orchids and their area, they were also able to formulate their own concept map of local conservation and they were able to do a local conservation and management plan for their respective areas.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, the team plans to extend its conservation efforts in the eastern and northern portions of Samar Island. For the first two projects supported by the Rufford Foundation, the effect of educating the locals through seminar series as well as the establishment of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation projects allows for the protection and wise use of the economically valuable yet highly threatened orchidaceous species. If this initiative will continue, the team hopes that the number of threatened, endangered and critically endangered species listed in both the national red list of the Philippines and the IUCN red-listed species will be lessened. The team also look forward to the mass propagation of critically endangered and endangered species and their re-introduction to the wild in the next series of projects.

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

A scientific publication will be done so that the academia, local government sectors and other researchers will be informed of this conservation effort and Samar Island's diverse yet highly threatened flora. In a recent training workshop where representatives of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources attended, some of the threatened orchidaceous species in Samar Island were introduced. It is important to reach and educate as many people and concerned groups as possible to make the conservation initiatives a success. Last year, the project supported by the Rufford Foundation was also presented in the RSG grantees' conference organised in Hanoi, Vietnam which allowed for the further dissemination of information to the Southeast Asian researchers.

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 for a period of 14 months as compared to the 12-month plan. The additional 2 months of extension was due to unforeseen temporary postponement of fieldwork last January 2019.

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
Meeting with local People's Organization and Partner Schools: Levelling-off and Information drive to/with DENR, PAMB, LGU & stakeholders (students, POs, etc.)	571	600	+29	There are several rounds of meeting with the PO and DENR which accounted for the additional cost.
Information Packages: Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) initiatives materials, and hand-outs and lecture notes on trainings and seminars for the locals	786	800	+14	Additional copies of information packages were reproduced as requested by the People's Organization (PO). Additional copies were also given to the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) and to the office of the Protected Area Management Board of Samar Island Natural park (SINP).
Laptop: 1 unit of laptop which will be used for the processing of the information packages, presentations during the training series for the students, and storing of all the project-related data	542	516	-26	A slightly cheaper laptop unit was purchased so that the funds can be re-allocated to production of CEPA materials.
Laboratory supplies: includes denatured alcohol, cardboard, mounting boards and related supplies for the processing of the voucher specimen for trees and other plants within the monitoring plot	300	315	+15	This is due to price increase/changes.
Monitoring Plot supplies: includes materials needed to make cairns (landmark for the 4 corner-boundaries of the	295	300	+5	This is due to price increase/changes.

permanent monitoring plots), signage, and steel frame for the signage				
Labour and Allowances: 2 field guides/worker, 3 laborers and 1 research assistant	626	626		
Land Transportation: Trips to respective sites (including van rentals and boat rentals for site transfer)	286	286		
Food: Meals during the actual fieldwork and during actual trainings (for the trainees)	429	435	+6	This is due to additional food cost during actual fieldwork.
Lodging: The most economical accommodation on or nearby site	429	429		
Air fare (Manila to Samar, vice versa): Economy flights to the nearest airport (for the proponent and project)	450	471	+21	There are slightly higher airfares as compared to the projected airfare thus accounting for the difference.
Contingency Fund	286	222	-64	The difference was re-allocated to other materials that were needed during the conduct of fieldwork and in the processing of specimen and CEPA materials.
TOTAL	5000	5000		

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

The team believes that there should be continuity of the said project and the possible extension to other neighbouring sites within the Samar Island Natural Park. This would entail the extension to the areas whose forest cover are not yet previously surveyed and have not yet received any information and education initiatives. Also, we are looking forward to mass propagations from orchid capsules and seeds, their culture and later re-introduction to the wild.

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

Yes, the Rufford Foundation logo was used in all the materials that were produced in relation to this project. Furthermore, the Rufford Foundation was acknowledged during presentations in lectures/learning workshops. The Rufford Foundation Logo was also used in meetings with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and people's organizations, and in presentations related to permit acquisitions and completion reports presented.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Mr. Danillo Miralles – chairman of the local people's organization in Paranas, Samar. He co-organized the learning-workshops held in Samar.

Eugene Lorence R. Logatoc – a biologist who helped in the survey and establishment of monitoring plots. He assumed the role of **Ms. Ailene Alcalá** who was not able to join us in the fieldwork.

Protected Area Superintendent **Zenaida Baisa** – she is affiliated with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and she assisted in the acquisition of Permits, Prior Informed Consent and permit to proceed for the said study.

12. Any other comments?

On behalf of the project's team members, the local peoples' organisation and the participating Department of Environment and Natural Resources Offices, we appreciate and recognise the Rufford Foundation's support for the conservation, documentation and advancement of knowledge both of academia and the local communities. We are hoping for a strengthened research and conservation outputs with the teaming of the academe, research institution, the environmental sector and conservation advocates such as the Rufford Foundation.

