

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. 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. 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	Shimona Annoor Quazi
Project title	Evaluating biodiversity in agroforests, secondary forests and teak plantations in northeastern Bangladesh.
RSG reference	8422-1
Reporting period	September 2010 to March 2011
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	shimona.quazi@gmail.com and shimona@hawaii.edu
Date of this report	December 15, 2011

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
Biodiversity survey: vegetation			✓	This involved tree, seedling and sapling measures. Took longer than expected because we were not allowed to camp or stay at any site and were required to always have a local person from that area with us on every visit.
Biodiversity survey: monsoon avifauna		✓		This was only partially completed due to scheduling, health and personal problems of the avian surveyors who I contracted to do the survey. Partial data not yet analysed.
Biodiversity survey: winter avifauna			✓	I then was able to contract two different birders for the winter survey. They had easier schedules to work with and finished the survey very satisfactorily.
Canopy light			✓	This was measured every time, only problems were if it rained! Tripod base plate was lost in the last week.
Soil sampling			✓	Soil probe worked very well, but needle broke 4 days before the last field day!
Data analysis, writing		✓		Ongoing. I am aiming to defend my dissertation in March 2012, return home in June, share my results and get feedback from villages then.
Follow-up and feedback		✓		In July 2011, I was able to return to two of the sites and share my early findings.

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

Surprisingly, my fieldwork challenges were not related to the study site or the topic itself – we used fairly simple methods and I already knew what to expect in terms of working with local communities. The main problem I had was the one I least expected – finding field staff who had some science background and were willing to face normal field conditions. I worked with university student field assistants. Some were wonderful to work with, professional, and stayed with my team the whole time. Others were part-timers from the city who were less invested and felt that certain tasks (like nailing tags into trees) were beneath them or were disappointed that our accommodations were so basic. I attribute this to different work ethics, and the fact that forestry fieldwork in Bangladesh is rarely as extensive as this project. I resolved this by hiring more students from the villages where we worked, which worked out very well for all of us. When we needed people with more technical skills, I took more time to lay down rules clearly and dispel all assumptions!

I also ran into problems with a former field assistant who borrowed quite heavily from my work for his own projects without informing or acknowledging me. This is far from unique in developing countries, and I intend to be more pro-active about it. For this reason, I will not divulge any details of my results for public access before publication and sharing with the local communities.

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

- (a) Getting a large and very robust dataset for a part of my country that is studied often, but rarely with an appropriate sampling design and rarely in sufficient detail.
- (b) Developing great working relationships with the villages involved, their leaders, and the young people there. I am very excited about sharing the work back with them and developing management plans with them.
- (c) Learning more about team management. I have worked with many teams before and have run my own environmental consultancy with students as well. I was exposed to and learned how to handle a team of people who were very different from my previous project groups.

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

The study analyses a local forestry practice and compares it to other forest types, and so my work was very closely involved with the villages that practiced this type of forestry. Because they are an ethnic minority who are typically rather isolated from outsiders, and because I and most of my team belong to the ethnic majority, it took a long time to build rapport and feel trusted to the point that we could even step into their agroforests. I was very fortunate to be able to work with these people, and their wellbeing is my priority.

So far, the only tangible benefits to them are that we hired some of the young people from their villages to work with me in the field. One of them gained some practical skills that might help him later (using a compass and GPS, recording data), as he is interested in working on more biodiversity studies if he can. We donated an old computer to their local indigenous people's youth group, so that students can learn basic computer skills. The third tangible benefit is still to be developed, and it is the most important – coming up with short- and long-term management plans for the agroforests and the surrounding areas. I hope to begin this in summer 2012.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, as mentioned in Q4, the final stage of this work is to develop short- and long-term management plans for the agroforests and the surrounding areas in collaboration with the local people. I hope to begin on this in summer 2012. In addition, one of my former students is beginning a cat survey in my study sites next month. This data will be added to the existing set to give a further indicator of biodiversity in the three forest types. I am also searching for other proxy measures for biodiversity that can be sampled more quickly, e.g. beetles, butterflies and charismatic faunal species. There are also a few other research questions that we were unable to address previously, that I would like to investigate in the future.

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

In addition to peer-reviewed publications in conservation journals, I will be doing oral presentations to the local communities later in 2012. I will also prepare a more formal report to the Forest Department of Bangladesh after consulting with the villages to determine what information is sensitive and how it should be dealt with.

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

I received the actual cash from RSG in early December 2010 and continued the work till early April 2011 (4 months). However, we used the money to pay outstanding expenses from September 2010, so the actual period covered by RSG was 7 months, or 1 month longer than what had been anticipated in the project timeframe and budget.

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
Soil Moisture Probe, Delta-T Systems Theta	697	700	+ 3	shipping costs
Field Laptop, Asus Eee PC 1005PE, or Comparable	248	0	- 248	not bought – received free laptop as a prize
Field Staff, Sept 2010 to Feb 2011	2030	2243	+ 213	staff changes + 1 extra month
Lodging, 3 Persons, Sept 2010 to Feb 2011	900	1047	+ 147	adjusted for 1 extra month
Meals, 3 To 6 Persons, Average September 2010 To Feb 2011	960	1120	+ 160	adjusted for 1 extra month
Transport: Intercity and From Field Station to All Sites, 6 Months	900	805	- 95	staff changed so travel costs decreased
Communications: Phone, Internet, Courier for 6 Months, PI Only	150	96	- 54	switched to a cheaper provider
Expendable Supplies, Estimated (Stationery, Batteries, Stakes, Photocopy Etc)	115	54	- 61	less needed towards project's end
TOTAL	6000	6065	+ 65	

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

I am currently finishing my dissertation, but the next step is to return home and rewrite my work to a format that is easier to share with the local people. I will then present it to them, get their feedback and begin drafting a management plan with them. A concurrent goal is to publish the

results in international journals. Then I will share the findings and the draft management plan with the co-management arm of the Forest Department, with an aim to bringing the state authorities and the local communities together to work out the details of the management plan. The last stage is implementation, which I have less control over but would nonetheless like to see in the next three to five years, if not sooner. In the meantime, I will keep working in forest conservation with local communities.

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?

So far, I have only presented my preliminary results to two of the villages where I worked, and this was nearly all oral with some basic visual aids. These were very informal meetings and I did not have any handouts or banners. I have recommended the RSGF to other colleagues both at home and in neighbouring countries doing conservation work and continue to do so. I will soon be presenting my work at my university and at meetings, so I will acknowledge the support of RSGF then and in my written reports. In my follow-up workshops I will have more printed materials and posters so I will use the logo as appropriate

11. Any other comments?

As the results come out, I am finding some really interesting patterns that have important implications for conservation at these sites! I want the local communities to be able to make decisions first for the lands they manage, and so I'm really looking forward to sharing it with them later next year. In the end, it was the village elders and the young children who inspired me the most. The elders taught me so much and were so patient with all my no doubt silly questions. They still have a lot to share. And the youth there were a joy to spend time with. None of this work would have been possible without their help and I'm eager to give them a tangible product that is useful to them. In my preliminary meetings to share results I got a lot of great feedback, but I'm also aware that in some of the villages they are very tired of "research for the sake of research" and would like to see some practical results. That is what I'm hoping to deliver. It would be great to take this work further, so if that is what people want then I will apply to RSGF for another grant.