

## 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>	KAVITHA A
<b>Project title</b>	Biodiversity conservation through education programs in the Kanakapura region of South India.
<b>RSG reference</b>	8767-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	18 Months
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£6,000
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:akavitha79@gmail.com">akavitha79@gmail.com</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2012

**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
Establishing biodiversity gardens in five forest fringe schools.			√	Five biodiversity gardens have been established with around 300 seedlings of native plants including bird butterfly medicinal plants. Vegetable gardens with seasonal varieties have also been included. Vermi-compost pit and rainwater recharge pits have been established.
Village resource mapping			√	Village resource maps have been done for five forest fringe villages where around 110 students in the age group of 12 to 13 were involved and the communities in all the five villages have helped them by providing data and the traditional knowledge about the tree species.
Introducing children to the technical, scientific aspects of birdwatching and educating them on the ecological importance of birds. Perform an assessment of the prevalent knowledge of birds and their significance, across different generations.			√	Students from the same five villages participated in the bird watching visits to three different landscapes like agricultural land, water body and forest fringe and document the bird diversity. They interacted with the local communities to understand the decline or change in the bird density and diversity due to change in land use and land cover, importance of birds in the ecosystem.
Developing outreach materials like posters, charts, handbook, slides, power point presentations		√		We showcased PowerPoint presentations on relevant topics such as importance of planting native plants, forest conservation and restoration etc., through institutional in-house expertise and shared it with the local schools. Field based training programs like establishing vegetable garden and vermin-compost pit were done with the help of a local NGO Green foundation. We organised informal sessions with the

				<p>schools in their classrooms and shared their work with teachers together. Further outreach materials like posters and small handbooks on the trees and birds found in the region couldn't be completed due to lack of time and resources.</p>
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**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

We had difficulties with the school timings since most of our work involved school students, we really have had to find time other than their school timings but we managed to carry out the work during weekends and holidays.

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

Established five biodiversity gardens in the forest fringe schools, which after few years will be providing shade to the students and habitat for many insects, birds, butterflies etc.

Village green books among five villages documenting the tree diversity, is another important outcome of the project where students interacted with their elders to understand the use and importance of trees. This documentation would help the Karnataka state biodiversity board for their biodiversity registers.

The best out put was to see the student's commitment to the documentation and share their enthusiasm. Despite their domestic and school obligations, they were fully interested to actively participate at every single opportunity. To see the students enjoying viewing the birds and trying to identify them using binoculars, they have identified and documented the birds in three different landscapes. They have reconfirmed those with the experts and also with their elders.

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

Local people have played a major role in this programme. They have been involved from the beginning of the project. While implementing the biodiversity gardens in the school, the school development and management committee consisting of the local panchayath member, few parents of the students and teachers have given inputs and support during the establishment and they would be responsible for the protection and management of the gardens with the students and teachers.

Local community gave invaluable information on use availability and their present status of conservation of trees in the village. They also gave detailed information on the regional bird diversity. They came together during the informal town hall gathering and interacted with kids identifying and knowing the change in the tree and bird diversity in and around the villages.

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

Yes, the project has shown that given the right platform and training, the grassroots level interest in conservation and deeper understanding of their surroundings is warmly welcomed and keenly observed. Though they are surrounded with great diversity of vegetation etc, lack of resources and opportunities have not encouraged the rural children to get interested in this. I am interested in continue this work and expand to other schools and bring more people into the programme. I have been doing conservation education work for 10 years among forest adjacent communities and I personally would like to initiate more engaging interest amongst the students and teachers for this programme. Now that it has begun, it is a logical thing to continue and delve deeper into their interest. This would also enable appreciation for their surroundings from the local people in this transformational age.

Future thinking would be to:

1. Train few students each from these five villages who have shown keen interest in the entire project to impart further knowledge and training program through our institution
2. Engage local community in developing handbooks and other resource materials to make it more informative and user friendly
3. Follow up on our earlier work and coordinate to include fresh batch of students and doing in other forest fringe schools.

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

We have started to create a small video documentary from our work which shall be showcased on the institutional websites as well as sharing with the communities that worked on the project. We also like to share this documentary as a presentation to schools. We are in the process of completing it and should be able to finalise soon.

The effective results from the work will also be published in journals and popular websites.

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

I had planned to finish the project within 1 year, since it involved the community and school students it took 6 months extra, with school holidays, exams etc. We were also dependent on weather changes. The rainy season pushed us back with our plans too and we could do the planting program only after the seasonal rains.

## 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
Per diem (£95 per moX18 mo)	1700	1700	0	
Local travel/fuel/hiring	800	800	0	
Accommodation	300	300	0	

Food	350	600	+250	
Field assistants	610	610	0	
Establishing nurseries and gardens (Seeds, polybags, constructing vermicopost pits, Ground water recharge pit)	800	900	+100	
Village resource mapping (Seedling production & distribution)	450	450	0	
Purchasing binoculars for bird activity	250	0	-250	We utilised the binoculars which we had brought for other education programs and utilised this money for the food expenditures for the students and village community during data gathering and meetings.
Developing outreach materials	220	150	-70	Utilised a part of it for the contingency as we required more materials in the field to carry out this activity.
Exposure visit	120	120	0	
Publications / output	100	0	-100	Utilised this money in establishing biodiversity gardens as seedlings, water recharge pits and compost pits cost more than budgeted.
Contingency	300	370	+70	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6000</b>	<b>6000</b>		

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

We would want to extend this project to more schools in different regions. We have initiated this in a very small region and it would be more engaging to expand to several sub divisions. We expect and would like children to monitor and record the change in biodiversity (new birds, butterflies, insects etc.,) with Village green book want kids with the help of community to monitor the change in tree density and monitor birds and document them systematically which can then be made available on open access portals. This needs to be done on a more periodic basis.

We intend to utilise the local knowledge gained by the students to monitor and record the biodiversity changes in the surrounding areas such as birds, butterflies, insects etc. This is a process we want to engage for another 2 years to see the matured results. Since the students are in the age group of 12 to 13 years, it will help to engage them directly and implement the forecasted actions.



**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?**

RSGF has received local, national and international publicity. Many volunteers from corporate sectors had been involved in several stages of data collection and the university students from abroad have had an exposure to visit to these schools to see the project implementation. Two students from Oregon State University, USA were involved in the initial documentation of the project implementation.

The project received great enthusiasm and feedback in our institutional discussions and talks. The rural students seldom get an opportunity to study / understand their local biodiversity and importance of the species etc systematically though they are the guardians of the surroundings. In view of this, it is pragmatic to think that further encouragement and active involvement of the students and the local communities would immensely help in conservation and awareness. We wish to expand this to several schools and have an interschool exchange program. In view of this we would request for further support to continue and impart skills and knowledge at the grassroots level.