

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	Prakash Bhandari
Project title	Sustainable Utilisation based Conservation of NTFPs through Community Institutions in Chamba District, Himachal Pradesh, India
RSG reference	9622-2
Reporting period	September 2011 to December 2012
Amount of grant	£5950
Your email address	bhandari.ps@gmail.com
Date of this report	21-3-2013

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
Build awareness, consensus and capacity of community members of five Forest User Groups			✓	In addition to this we have conducted separate awareness meetings in nine places on the issue of over extraction of Nag Chatri (<i>Trillidium govanianum</i>).
Setting up of village level institutions			✓	In all new five villages Forest User Committees were formed with participation from all the community members.
Formulation of NTFP management plan			✓	Conducted household and vegetation surveys and prepared NTFP management plans for all five villages with involvement of women and marginalised section
To work with Forest Department to implement these plans		✓		Interactions and meetings held with different forest officials of Chamba and Churah forest divisions and NTFP management plans were submitted to the Forest department officials. The villages in Chamba districts have been included under "Greening of India", a Central government sponsored scheme.
Initiate the process of federating all 12 FUGs at suitable level		✓		Discussions were held with different Forest User Groups and a plan were prepared how to federate them and at what level.
Register them under PFM Rules and assist them in developing institutional mechanisms.	✓			Still above plans have to be passed by Forest User Groups and then these will be submitted to the Forest Department for further action.
To introduce sustainable harvesting mechanism in Kut Butoa		✓		Training has been done but still plants has not reached at harvesting stage

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

In this project period we planned to work actively with the State Forest Department and much of the project activities and their success was dependent on the initiative and response of the department. As 2011-12 was an election year in Himachal Pradesh due to which there were frequent transfers of forest officials it was difficult to maintain a continuous dialogue with the department and somewhere down the line the project was not able to achieve the desired results.

This year Nag Chatri (*Trillidium govanianum*), a rare and endangered plant, which has no previous history of extraction from this region was extracted at an unprecedented scale from the wild (http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-06-10/india/32155715_1_nag-herb-complete-ban). As the market rate was high (Rs. 2000-2500/kg of roots) and the resource base was good,

almost all villages carried out the extraction of this plant. We conducted a series of awareness camps on the adverse impacts of over extraction on the plant.

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

1. In 10 villages we conducted awareness and training programmes on sustainable harvesting of NTFPs and development of NTFP nurseries.
2. Replenished 5 ha area with plantation of NTFPs species like *Valerian Jatamansi*, *Picrorhiza kurooa*, *Jurinea macrocephala*, etc.
3. Development of two village nurseries, which are being successfully maintained and managed by Forest User Groups and were collect and distribute seed of Valerian jatamansi for other areas.

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

Local communities were involved in most of the project activities like demographic, socio-economic and vegetation related surveys. Participation was ensured in training programmes on sustainable harvesting of NTFPs and NTFP nursery development. For the development of nurseries communities were remunerated in the form of labour wages and in future also, these communities stand to benefit by selling the stock raised in the nurseries and from harvesting of the NTFPs planted in their forest areas.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, this kind of initiative needs to be implemented for at least 15-20 years for the impact to be visible to the public outside the target area. We intend to expand the work in other villages where there are strong possibilities for such kind of initiative because of high community dependence and need.

However, before expanding this work to other villages we would like to take a break from community outreach activities and focus instead on our weaker area, which is, networking and developing linkages with the government agencies and other non-governmental organisations. This is a critical step in expanding this work in order to be able to make it sustainable. The need of the hour is to advocate for structural mechanisms to check the continuous threats to high altitude NTFPs because of the failure government policies.

Field-based activities and community mobilisation work is intensive and time consuming in difficult mountain terrains and there is little time and resource left to follow through with networking and arranging meetings with state officials or travelling to visit other organisations.

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

Networking with other organisations working on similar issue. We are doing a short study on NTFP trade in the state with support from Convention Centre for Development, Durg Chattisgarh, working towards fair trade of NTFPs.

1. Meetings and discussion with the government departments and non-government organisations.
2. Writing articles on threat to high altitude NTFPs status.

3. Conducting awareness meetings/camps in other areas also.
4. Organise a dialogue on NTFP conservation with the organisations/individuals/ government officials working on this issue.

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

RSG was used from September 2011 to December 2012. Due to heavy snow in 2011 we couldn't work for 3 months, so we have to extend the project period by 3 months.

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
Honorarium - Coordinator	1955	1955	0	
Honorarium - Field Officer	1225	1225	0	
Travel and local conveyance	490	559	-69	As the project period has increased by 3 months the due to which more trips have been made
Printing and Stationery	205	185.5	19.5	
Office Rent	230	230	0	
Communication and Internet Charges	200	186	14	
Exposure visit and NTFPs Nursery Trainings	1100	1028.5	71.5	Reduce in food expenses bill
Support to existing NTFP nursery	300	331	-31	Increase in daily wage labour cost
Equipment support	245	250	-5	Increase in the price of camera.
TOTAL	5950	5950	0	

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

1. Continue and accelerate the expansion work in new villages with support from the government departments and non-government agencies.
2. To initiate advocacy work with government regarding threats to the status of high altitude NTFPs and action needed to protect them through writings and meetings.
3. To build awareness amongst medicinal plant collectors in a larger area through organising awareness camps on sustainable harvesting and conservation of NTFPs.
4. To build a network with other organisations working at the state and country level on fair trade of NTFPs and do a survey and studies to check the viability of these kinds of initiative.
5. To build an alliance with government departments and to find suitable partner organisations in the state to spread the work at larger scale.
6. To work with media to provide visibility to the initiative.

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?

Yes, in all our training and awareness camps we have acknowledged RSGF as the supporting agency in the text of these banners and recognised the support of RSGF in development of nursery.

11. Any other comments?

RSG's support has been very critical in bringing the initiative to this level. In order to take it to next level I require some more groundwork in terms of networking and exchange of ideas. I hope to utilise 6 months to a year for this purpose before applying for a fellowship for the next phase of the project.