

## 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Diti Mookherjee
Project title	Programme to conserve the urban biodiversity of West Bengal with school students
RSG reference	45.08.08
Reporting period	January 2009 to June 2010
Amount of grant	£10,667
Your email address	<a href="mailto:asedkol@gmail.com">asedkol@gmail.com</a>
Date of this report	7 July 2010

**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
Consolidate the school projects on biodiversity conservation of the five Kolkata schools and try to initiate a process of withdrawal in the schools that have exhibited a degree of sustainability of the school projects.		Yes		We were able to consolidate school projects in three schools in Kolkata. Out of these, two schools will be in a position to sustain their school projects with some guidance from us. One school in Kolkata needed greater guidance in their project work and we provided it in this phase. One of the schools that we worked with earlier in Kolkata did not show interest in continuing with us in this phase, so we took up a new school in Howrah.
Work more intensively with the two Durgapur schools to improve their projects and try to create more awareness about biodiversity among the people of Durgapur.		Yes		We were able to work with one school in Durgapur and improve their project. The second school dropped out of the programme due to non-cooperation from the school authorities. Initially a Biodiversity Fair was planned for Durgapur. However, due to the fall in the value of the Pound Sterling, we received considerably less money than was budgeted for. So instead of the Biodiversity Fair we held a Workshop in Durgapur on "Biodiversity of West Bengal –its status and challenges" on 8th January, 2010 organized in collaboration with Forest Department, Government of West Bengal. 200 students and teachers as well as Government officials participated in the workshop.
Increase networking and sharing among the seven schools in the programme		Yes		Sharing among the schools was done during the Project Sharing Workshop. However, the schools have not conducted any sharing activities by themselves.
Promote networking with government and other agencies.			Yes	We have been able to create very good networking with the Department of Environment, the West Bengal Biodiversity Board, Forest Department and eminent environmental NGOs in West Bengal. A poster presentation on the project was made by Diti

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
				Mookherjee at the Living Knowledge 2009 Conference at Queen's University, Belfast and it won the first prize.

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

One school in Durgapur, Sagarvanga Government Sponsored High School, dropped out of the project. This school had worked with us in previous phase of the project. In this phase, the Headmaster changed. We held a preliminary discussion with the new Headmaster, who agreed to continue with our project and submitted the necessary papers for the same. We conducted a slide illustrated talk in the school. After this the Headmaster would not give us time to do anymore interventions in spite of repeated requests by us and meetings with him. We had to finally stop working with this school. At this stage there was no time to take up the project in a new school.

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

1. Awareness about urban biodiversity and its conservation has increased among the core group students and teachers. Students who are not in the core group are showing interest and want to become core group members. Teachers, who are not part of the core group, are showing interest in the project. In this phase of the project we have trained 150 students. Since 2004, when we started the first RSG project up till now, we have trained over 700 middle-school students.

2. The following school projects are being conducted:

- a. The students from Sarengabad Jajneswari Pathsala Girl's High School are continuing a status survey of the water monitor lizard found in the locality of their school.
- b. Ananda Ashram Balika Vidyapeeth students are recording biodiversity inside the school campus. They have also recorded the biodiversity in the Chintamani Kar Bird Sanctuary, Narendrapur, which is close to their school. They have merged their school project with their regular Eco-Club activities.
- c. Metropolitan Institution (main) has recorded the biodiversity present on trees around their school. The school has merged their school project with their regular Eco-Club activities.
- d. Children's Foundation and Durgapur T.N. High School have recorded the biodiversity found around their school.

3. The ongoing survey conducted by Sarengabad Jajneswari Pathsala Girl's High School revealed that the habitat of the water monitor (a Schedule I animal under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972) is under threat from a large private housing project and a Government Sports Complex. We brought this to the attention of the Department of Environment. A visit was made by the West Bengal Biodiversity Board (under Department of Environment) officials, our team and the housing project personnel to the area. The private housing project has been asked to modify their plans to protect the water monitor's habitat within their complex.

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

In some areas many local people are observing our field activities and wanting to know about the project. They are sharing their knowledge about what the trees and animals are found in their locality or used to be there in the past. Parents of students are trying to learn about the biodiversity. Students of Metropolitan Institution (Main) generated local awareness by distributing booklets on global warming to their guardians and to the public around the school. This was done through the Eco-Club of which the core group students are members.

Students of Ananda Ashram held an awareness programme where they invited the parents and local people and shopkeepers during the Environment Week in 2008.

Sarengabad Jajneswari Pathshala Girls' High School took a lot of information from the locals while collecting data for their project. This process helped to build a relation with the locals.

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

We plan to continue this project in the present schools and also take on new schools. We have gained valuable experience by working with the present schools. We wish to develop a model for biodiversity awareness and conservation with school students that can be used by any school that is interested to work on this issue. We wish to test our model in more schools and find a way to reach out to a large number of schools in future. We have documented our present process in the Process Document. A Project Evaluation was done and the evaluators have recommended that "the next step will be to broaden and deepen the concept of biodiversity and relate it more intimately to student's own life and environment".

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

We have been keeping the Department of Environment abreast of our project through regular interactions. A Senior Environment Officer of the Department of Environment and the Senior Research Officer of West Bengal Biodiversity Board (a unit of the Department of Environment) were guest speakers at the Project Sharing Workshop held in Kolkata.

The Forest Department was a collaborator for the Biodiversity Workshop held at Durgapur. We associated with the Paschim Banga Vigyan Mancha (a state level science club that manages over 500 Eco-clubs in West Bengal under the National Green Corps Programme) which invited members of the Eco-Clubs to the workshop.

We regularly interact with various environmental organizations and keep them informed about our project. We have also collaborated with some of these organizations for various events and we will share the results of the project with them during interactions.

The students, teachers and school authorities discuss the project with their peers and family and the results of the project spread through this medium.

We have produced a booklet in Bengali on “Fascinating Biodiversity of West Bengal”. This has been distributed to all the core group members, school authorities and other concerned government officials, academics and organisations.

I attended the Living Knowledge 2009 Conference at Queen’s University at Belfast from 27 to 29 August 2009 where I made a poster presentation of the project. Participants from various countries all over the world viewed this poster.

The results of this phase of the project will be included in the ASED Annual Report and will be posted on the ASED website. The ASED website also mentions the link to the Rufford website and this project.

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

The RSG was used during the period January 2009 till June 2010. This was the actual length of the project that was planned. We have made some savings of funds (as given below). With this remaining fund, we would be able to continue with the project for another 4 months. We will provide more inputs to the school projects and will try to organize a few inter-school project visits. We will also be working to improve the project methodology to increase and deepen the impact.

**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	£1 = Rs. 80 Budgeted Amount	£1 = Rs. 80 Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
<b>Transport</b>	1540	1127	413	Since one school in Durgapur dropped out there was saving. There were lesser visits for the school projects than planned and we were not able to organise inter-school core group visits.
<b>Resource Materials, Certificates</b>	791	719	72	Since the booklet in Bengali followed the same format as the English one made in the previous phase of the Project, there was some saving.
<b>Sharing Workshop</b>	450	343	107	The core groups of Durgapur could not attend the workshop so there was saving in their board, lodging and travel costs.
<b>Biodiversity Fair in Durgapur</b>	1875	443	1432	Due to fall in value of the Pound Sterling, when we received £9241, calculating at £1 = Rs. 80. This was £1426 less than what we had budgeted for. Due to this, with the permission of RSG, we conducted a one-day Biodiversity

Item	£1 = Rs. 80 Budgeted Amount	£1 = Rs. 80 Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
				Workshop at Durgapur instead of the planned 3-day Biodiversity Workshop.
<b>Boarding &amp; Lodging</b>	120	14	106	Since we only covered one school in Durgapur for most of the project period, there was no need for overnight stay at Durgapur.
<b>Documentation</b>	438	340	98	The agency that we fixed for the video documentation could not give us all the sessions that we planned with them thus there was a saving in costs.
<b>Fees for Project Team</b>	4015	3513	502	Savings in fees due to i. Only one activity in one Durgapur school. ii. Lesser visits than planned for school projects. iii. One day Biodiversity Workshop instead of 3- day Biodiversity Fair.
<b>Project Evaluation</b>	500	389	111	Logistics cost less than planned as for most of the visits, the evaluators accompanied the project team. Also there was no overnight stay in Durgapur for the evaluators.
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>	938	938	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10667</b>	<b>7826</b>	2841	

Note: When we received the funds on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008, the **amount received**, calculating at £1 = Rs. 80, was **£9241**.

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

We wish to continue with this project and include more schools. Within the project methodology, we wish to include orientation and regular group interaction with the teachers of core groups and other interested teachers. We also wish to experiment with working within the school curriculum in a few schools. The school system under the West Bengal Education Board has made Environmental Education mandatory since 2006. In every school, Classes 6 to 12 devote 1 or 2 sessions in a week for Environment Education. The teachers often do not have sufficient knowledgeable of the subject and lack ideas for the project work which needs to be done. In some schools we could conduct our project with an entire class of students during their Environment Education sessions. If this is successful, the scope for replication increases manifold. This will also be a better method of working with the schools that are finding it challenging to give time for the school projects.

**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?**

- We used the RSG logo for the slide-illustrated talk given to the students at the beginning of the project.
- We produced a booklet on the “Fascinating Biodiversity of West Bengal” in Bengali carrying the RSG logo.
- We used the logo on the banners of the Biodiversity Workshop in Durgapur and Project Sharing Workshop in Kolkata and mentioned that the project is funded by RSGF.
- We used the RSG logo on the participation certificates given to core group members.
- The core group members and school authorities have been told that the programme is supported by RSGF.
- We acknowledge RSGF in the ASED brochures and annual report.
- We have provided a link to the RSG website and our project on the ASED website [www.asedkol.org](http://www.asedkol.org)
- We used the RSG logo on the poster presented at the Living Knowledge 2009 Conference in Belfast.

**11. Any other comments?**

I am very grateful to the Rufford Small Grants Foundation trustees for giving me the opportunity to conduct this project, which is gaining impetus. I look forward to this support to continue so that I can reach out to many more students and teachers in urban West Bengal with the message and methodology of urban biodiversity conservation. I also wish to develop this project model so that it can be replicated in other parts of the country.