

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	Jeewan Jalal
Project title	Restoration of orchid's degraded habitat through people's participation in Gori valley, Western Himalaya, India
RSG reference	77.09.08
Reporting period	March 2009- March 2010
Amount of grant	£11,550
Your email address	jeewansinghjalal@rediffmail.com
Date of this report	18.04.2010

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objectives	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
i). Initiation of ecological restoration of degraded riverine forests and promotion of afforestation of suitable host tree species.				Two major sites, Lumti and Bansbager were selected for restoration programme. Both sites, though very rich in orchids, are also very disturbed due to anthropogenic pressures.
ii). Community involvement in the plantation and monitoring of the plantation.				Popular host species were planted with the help of local communities and volunteers and these two sites were also monitored for fire and grazing.
iii). Orchid rich pockets will be established as orchid conservation areas (OCAs).				Lumti and Bansbager were the two areas that were established as orchid conservation areas and the good news is that the forest department is now managing Bansbager.
iv). These OCAs will be managed with the help of local communities through participatory approach.				Local communities were trained to manage these OCAs and our volunteers too help the locals as and when required.
v). Awareness among local community through capacity-building workshops and educational programmes.				A series of sensitization workshops were conducted in different villages in the valley and as per the project proposal, all the necessary educational and awareness materials were prepared.

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

As such there were no unforeseen difficulties during the project except for some stumbling blocks during the monsoon season such as due to the landslides in the Gori valley, all means of access were completely cut off from the main road and our team members stuck in tight situations. Many times, such difficulties plant hurdles in our restoration and plantation programme. The climate during these times is not supportive either. Sometimes, we have to stop our conservation programme in between during the monsoon days but resume as soon as things get manageable. Most of us are used to harsh conditions and hence we would not term these as unforeseen difficulties. But there was one such incident that should be mentioned. We have lost our great volunteer late Mr. Durga Singh due to sudden heart failure. He was such a devoted worker of orchid conservation and he loved working for nature till his last moments got to him.

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

The following three are the most important outcomes recognized through this project:

- i. Two orchid rich sites (Lumti and Bansbager) were identified and established as orchid conservation areas (OCAs). These two sites hold a good population of orchids. Approximately 45 orchid species occur in both orchid conservation areas. These two OCAs are situated near the roadside and between villages. Due to immense anthropogenic pressure and grazing by cattle, the orchid species and their host trees were heavily affected. With the help of our TCV (Team of Conservation Volunteers) and village communities, we started to monitor them and gave protection to these orchid species and later many species were relocated and rehabilitated in these two OCAs.
- ii. Another important outcome is plantation and restoration of the orchid rich area. We have selected the most important host species for orchids viz. *Toona ciliata*, *Engelhardtia spicata* and *Quercus leucotrichophora*. These selected species were planted in the above-mentioned OCAs. Wherever open spaces we found, we started plantation. We have also started protection of naturally growing host sapling (baby host tree seedlings).
- iii. Forest department has adopted one of the orchid conservation areas named Bansbager and they have already started fencing the whole area. They have stationed a forest guard for the protection of the area from fire and grazing. This is, by far, the most important outcome of this project. Through our conservation mission, we have handed over 40 species to the forest department and these species were introduced into the Himalayan Botanic Garden's Orchidarium situated in the Nainital district and here these species were planted and propagated. Three Postgraduate students of Kumaun University were also trained in orchid identification and conservation.

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

Local community members were involved in the entire conservation programme. We selected our volunteer team from different villages. The idea behind this selection was to give some kind of honorarium to these volunteers as all of these people come from very poor families. Two field assistants were also hired and paid for a complete year. All the vehicle support whenever needed was taken from the locals. The instant benefit to the community may not be visualized through this project but there has been definite improvement in the awareness and knowledge amongst the local community towards the orchid conservation project.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, I would like to continue the work involving the local community. In fact during our last 3 years of continuous conservation programme, a whole lot of improvement has been seen among the village communities. Many youngsters have come forward and have shown interest in how to utilize this natural wealth to the benefit of their people. At present, the state government plans to develop many areas for ecotourism. So in the near future, the Gori valley will be one of the centres that can be developed for orchid based ecotourism. We have already taken an initiative to develop this valley as an ecotourism locale so that the local villagers can acquire some revenue based on this environmental treasure and in turn they would have to give them ultimate protection and

participate in propagation. Such types of interrelated schemes will definitely provide benefit to both the orchids as well as the local community. I am extremely worried about the future of this valley because the upper part of the valley has been proposed as the site for the construction of a dam for electricity generation. The motor road, which passed through the valley, is being widened by the dam construction agency, which is resulting a huge destruction of host trees. The fragile mountains of the valley are very prone to landslides and hence, this is another threat to the orchids in the valley.

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

The results of the present work are being shared with the local NGOs and university. Also, information on the present work will be disseminated through print media as well as by publishing articles in the national and local newspapers both in English and the local languages. Results are also shared with the local forest department with regard to the present work along with the future plans. A copy of the report will be sent to the state forests authority with a request for consideration of establishment of Orchid Conservation Area and develop these areas as an ecotourism spot. During the project duration, the Project Investigator has already delivered conservation talk in the Punian’s Corbett Fall Resort organized by Wildlife Institute of India, to the M.Sc. students of Kumaun University, Nainital and a poster entitled “*Community Initiative Weaves New Hope for Orchid Conservation*” was presented at the National Conference held in Mumbai. The conservation efforts were greatly appreciated and lauded by the panel as well as the audience of science students from various colleges all over India. A sound message was passed on through the poster. As a result, many students have conveyed through phone calls and other means of communication that the community participation idea was practical and result-oriented and hence, they too would like to follow suit in their own small scale at their native areas.

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

The proposed project activities were for a period of 1-year duration. The first 3 months were spent in identification of the riverine forest patches for host species plantation. Four teams of volunteers (10 members in each) were selected for effective plantation of host species. A list of suitable host species was prepared and their saplings were purchased from forest nurseries and private nurseries. During the rainy seasons (4 months), these plants were planted in the selected orchid conservation areas. Two months were utilized for awareness programmes as well as conducting workshops and training session keeping the future in mind. Two months were utilized for getting results from all the plantation sites. The last 1 month was utilized for summarizing the final report to the funding agency. The proposed work time was appropriate if it hadn’t been for the few weeks during the monsoon when we faced some obstruction due to landslides.

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
1. Salary of 10 volunteers for host trees plantation @ £ 15 x 10 persons x 10 months	1200	1500	-300	In proposal we have proposed 8 volunteers but during the work we need two more so that the budget was little bit went up.

2. Equipment, stationery, and expendable materials (digital camera, GPS)	2000	1800	200	
3. Per diem for the project leader @ £ 5 /-300 days	1500	1500	-	-
4. Salary for 4 field assistant @ £ 80 x 10 months	400	800	-400	Due to work load two more field assistants were hired
5. Education materials (Posters, leaflets, stickers, banners) and honoraria for volunteers	2500	2500	-	-
6. Base camp expenditures- Hiring house and maintenance	800	800	-	-
7. Hiring vehicle and travelling expenses	1500	2000	-500	Due to increasing fuel rate the budget went up
8. Contingencies and unforeseen expenses	100	300	-200	
9. Report writing	500	300	200	
10. Overhead cost 10%	1050	0	1050	Money was utilized for other heads
TOTAL	11550	11500	50	

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

In the interest of the long term conservation plan for orchids and their protection, it would be best if the state government declares this valley as an orchids' community reserve. The valley holds lots of potential for ecotourism, trekking, wildlife - based ecotourism and beautiful landscapes. We have to focus more on awareness workshops and restoration programmes. In the next phase, we plan to build a NGO network so that together we can work on various aspects in the valley and then formulate a long-term plan for the valley. We also plan to develop a Gori valley website to disseminate the potential of this valley so that people can know more about Gori valley as well as visit the valley so that the ecotourism will develop to its full potential.

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. RSGF logo was used for all the awareness materials. Small articles were published in the local and national newspapers. After reading our article on web Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London approached us and one of their representatives visited the valley in the month of May 2009. Two more of their representatives are expected in June 2010 to see the orchid potential of the valley.

11. Any other comments?

We observed several positive changes in the attitude of the local communities towards orchids. It feels like an achievement to state that now they understand the potential of the orchid wealth to a great extent. They also have understood that as we conserve orchids, we also help mop up a whole lot of undesirable changes made by man, animal or calamities to the beautiful Himalayan environment around them. Many villagers have been approaching the local Government representatives to insist on the development of ecotourism in the valley. Regional Forest Department has already taken steps to protect a couple of orchid rich areas. Further long-term support towards community involvement for orchid conservation is a dire necessity, which will help such conservation works from time to time and will ensure that more people will get involved and the younger generation too will come forward without hesitation. Once the local communities wilfully comprehend the potential of the orchid wealth, they will definitely step forward. They will explore their future livelihood options in this valley through orchid based ecotourism. The mission will attain a divine level when almost every common Himalayan man not only understands our mission but also passes on the knowledge and urge of nature conservation to his next generations.