

The Rufford Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford 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.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Abu Saleh Mohammod Rejuan
Project title	Community based volunteer management to mitigate human tiger conflict in the Bangladesh Sundarbans
RSG reference	15413-1
Reporting period	4th July 2014 to 4th July 2015
Amount of grant	£2,345
Your email address	rejuan08@gmail.com
Date of this report	16th July 2015

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
To understand the factors that encouraged the local people to be involved in volunteer team			X	<p>This research identifies motivating factors which drive the local people to be a member of the Villager Tiger Response Team. The motivations are saving tiger, non-financial incentive (i.e. honour), and financial incentive (i.e. job and money). Data were collected between July and September 2014. During this time, 98 semi-structured interviews were carried out with the VTRT members of 30 different teams belonging to four administrative ranges. Of these 30 teams, 19 teams were old teams and 11 teams were new teams. Among the interviewees, 72 VTRT members were belonging to old teams and 26 VTRT members from new teams. The age of the interviewees varies from 19 to 67. The teams and the members were selected considering the human tiger conflict prone area and the availability of the VTRT members.</p> <p>To understand the view of the local people about VTRT’s motivation and their acceptability within the community, 12 FGDs were conducted in four ranges of the Sundarbans. Three different locations from each range were selected for the FGDs. Each FGD consists of 7-8 people, which includes local elites, businessmen, teachers, tiger victims (people who were injured by tiger attack or lost their livestock to tiger attack), family members of the people killed by tiger attack, forest resource users and Forest Department staff.</p>
Understanding the management of				This research identifies volunteer recruitment, supervision, training,

volunteers (VTRTs)			X	<p>appreciation and incentives process by the managers.</p> <p>Meetings were carried out with the VTRT managers at WildTeam to understand their management process and their future plan with these volunteers. Meetings were conducted with the VTRT managers during the fieldwork to know how they have formed the VTRTs and convince local people to work as volunteers for mitigating human tiger conflict. Two meetings were carried out at WildTeam field office. During the meetings the following topics were covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The development process of the VTRTs. -Selection or recruitment of the VTRTs. -Management process of the VTRTs. -Trainings provided for the VTRTs. -Financial or non-financial support provided for the VTRTs. -Barriers. -Sustainability plan for the VTRTs.
To understand the barriers of volunteer management			X	<p>The research identifies the barriers that impact on the activities of the volunteers. These barriers are manifested in social, economic and managerial factor.</p> <p>Data were collected during interviews with VTRTs, FGDs and meeting with VTRT managers.</p>
To explore the ways to make VTRT sustainable			X	<p>This study identified some requirements that may help to make these volunteer teams sustainable. The study suggests that government involvement, registration, providing livelihood options, logistics, socio-economic benefits are needed for their sustainability.</p> <p>Interviews with VTRT members, FGDs and meetings with managers were conducted to explore the possible ways of making these volunteer teams sustainable.</p>

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

We encountered several problems in the field while collecting data. Firstly, data were collected between July and September 2014 which is the monsoon season in Bangladesh. During monsoon, it is difficult to travel in this area by road. Boat is the convenient option for travelling. In the initial plan we had an option to rent boat for travelling and accommodation. But honey collection and fishing season start from April in the Bangladesh Sundarbans. So boats were not available at that time to rent, as these boats were busy for fishing or honey collection. We had to choose alternative option by hiring motorbike for travelling and rent hotel rooms for accommodation. Secondly, some of the volunteers and villagers were in the forest for honey collection during our data collection. So we had to spend more time to collect interviews and conduct FGDs than planned.

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

1. Village Tiger Response Team (VTRT) is the first community based volunteer team that is working for wildlife conservation in Bangladesh. In this context, the volunteer management in wildlife conservation is a newly added management practice for Bangladesh. This is the first in-depth research on management of the VTRT. Moreover, beside human-tiger conflict, other human-wildlife conflicts also exist in Bangladesh, such as human-elephant conflict. Human-elephant conflict occurs in the south eastern and northern region of the country. To reduce the human-elephant conflict in Bangladesh, government and conservation NGOs are developing mitigation approaches. They are also engaging community volunteers to mitigate human-elephant conflict. So this study may help them to understand conservation volunteer management in Bangladesh.
2. This study explores the motivations of the VTRT members to join the teams as volunteers. This study found that the motivations (saving tiger, financial or non-financial incentive) of the members of the old teams (formed more than 5 years ago) were random. However, the members of the new teams (formed within last 5 years) significantly joined the VTRT for saving tiger. This is a positive indication for the sustainability of the VTRTs as despite of not getting enough financial or non-financial incentives the new VTRT members have joined these volunteer teams for tiger conservation. This study also identifies the barriers of volunteer management and the reasons of dissatisfaction of some of the volunteers. So this study may help the managers to initiate more affective approaches to motivate these volunteers.
3. This study identifies some requirements that may help to make these volunteer teams sustainable. The study suggested that government involvement, registration, providing livelihood option, socio-economic benefits like; loan, logistics support may help to make these teams sustainable. So this study will help the managers or other

NGOs who intend to engage community people as conservation volunteers in Bangladesh.

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

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. The main goal of the study was to make the VTRTs sustainable. This study explores the management of conservation volunteers in the Bangladesh Sundarbans and identifies some requirements that may help to make these volunteer teams sustainable. The study suggests that government involvement, registration of the VTRTs, providing livelihood option, socio-economic benefits such as loan, logistics support may help to make these teams sustainable. But for the managers of these volunteers, it is a great challenge to arrange all of these requirements. The future plan is to develop a project to create livelihood option or to provide facilities to the VTRT members to make them sustainable.

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

The results of the study will be shared with the VTRT managers- WildTeam and also with the IUCN Bangladesh who are developing community based volunteer teams to mitigate human elephant conflict.

Moreover, I have a plan to publish my study in peer reviewed journal so that conservation managers can get an idea about conservation volunteer management in Bangladesh.

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

As anticipated the Rufford Foundation grant funded the project for 12 months from July 4th 2014 to July 4th 2015. The funds were successfully used during this timespan.

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.

£1 = BDT 118

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Boat rent £24/day x 45	£1080	£1240	£160	Travel cost by boat for data collection 1 Boat for 5 days=£140 (Boat rent £28/day) 2 Motorbikes for 31 days=£620 (Motorbike rent £10/day) Travel cost, Dhaka- Sundarbans- Dhaka, Bus, 2 persons, 2 times=£80 Data collection, 4 ranges, Hotel rent, 40 days, 2 persons=£400 It was fishing and honey collection season in the Bangladesh Sundarbans during field visit. Boats were not available for hiring. We could rent boat for 5 days for travelling and for rest of the days we hired motorbikes. And we rent local hotel room for accommodation. RSG Spent=£1240
Fuel (diesel 270L x £.56, patrol 50L x £.8, mobil 8 x £12.8, kerosene 60L x £.8)	£342	£70	£272	Fuel (Diesel, Mobil, Patrol, Kerosene), for boat, 5 days=£70 Boat were hired for 5 days RSG Spent=£70
Food cost £1.8/day/person x 45 days x 4 people (researcher+assistant_boat man+cook)	£324	£320	£4	Food, 2 persons, 40 days RSG Spent=£320
Salary of the research Assistant, £116x2	£232	£348	£116	£116x3=£348 Data collection started in July and ends in late Septembers. Research assistants were given salary of 3 months. RSG Spent=£348

Snacks for interviewees	£100	£330	£230	Snacks for interviewees=£150 Snacks for 12 FGDs=£120 (Each FGD consists of 7-8 participants) Snacks, Meeting with forest staff, 6 meetings=£60 It was month of Ramadan and some of interviewees and FGDs participants were fasting. We offered extra snacks to the fasting participants. RSG Spent=£330
Printing questionnaire, stationeries, printing T-shirts	£50	£40	£10	RSG Spent=£40
Total		£2348	£3	RSG Spent=£2345

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

Life around the Bangladesh Sundarbans is not easy due to the socio-economic condition, limited facilities to health and medical care and frequent natural calamities. However, despite of having these hardships and tiger encountering experiences, I have found that, 80% of the VTRT members joined the team for saving tigers as the only or one of their main motivations. The interest of the VTRT members for saving tiger is an important component for the sustainability and management of the team, and also for tiger conservation. From the analysis, I also found that the work of the VTRT members have influenced other people in the community to join the VTRTs for saving tiger. However, the expectations of the VTRT members have not met for a large proportion (62%) of them, and if their expectations are not met the sustainability of these teams will be uncertain and the management will be difficult.

The VTRTs were formed to take actions during emergency situation when a tiger is in the village, which includes managing crowd and to chase the tiger back to the forest. However, beside their assigned work the VTRT members are involved in other tiger related activities due to social liabilities; for example retrieving dead body from the forest. Moreover, the community people inform the VTRT members about illegal fishing, woodcutting or wildlife poaching, as to the villagers the VTRT members are easier to reach than the forest department staff, and they feel comfortable to report about a clandestine activity to their community people than to a forest staff. However, there is a distance between the VTRT members and the forest officers and the corruption of some of the forest staff creates problem for the VTRT members if they report about illegal activities in the forest. This situation may demotivate the volunteers. So for the managers, it is important to create acceptability of the VTRT members to the Forest Department through proper official procedures.

I have found that, sometimes the VTRT members are involved in other additional activities by their managers such as, participation in social awareness campaign, seminar, rally and organisation's events. The volunteers do not receive any incentive for their extra time and effort. Involving volunteers apart from their assigned work creating extra burden on them and that requires incentives in the form of money or other benefits. The ignorance of their managers may demotivate these volunteers.

Achieving sustainability for any volunteer team especially in conservation field is a major challenge. In volunteer organisation, usually volunteers work for few years, gain experience and move to other place, but in conservation recruiting new volunteer is not easy as it requires training and experience. Moreover, the conservation organisations sometimes may not have big budgets for it. To keep the volunteers in the team, they require incentives. In this study, I found that the managers of the VTRTs explained the concept of volunteerism while developing the teams and as a management strategy provided predominantly non-financial incentives to the team members. The main strategy of the managers is to create the local hero image among the team members. It is a good strategy, as for managing volunteers non-financial incentive is a good component but to motivate the volunteers the managers need to provide some incentives. However, providing only the social status or heroic image to the VTRT members is not enough for their sustainability as it fades away if there is no tiger attack for some time. The lack of livelihood or income source is also a factor that makes difficult to motivate the volunteers with local hero image. However, all the team members do not get the chance to save a stray tiger, as tiger does not enter to all the villages with the volunteer team.

Providing financial incentive or salary will not be a practical solution for VTRT management as it will contradict with the concept of volunteerism. Moreover, direct payment to the VTRT members may create competition and conflict between the VTRT members and the other villagers. Social benefits can be arranged for the VTRT members such as, tax holiday, free or cheap access to medical facilities, and priority training session on improved livelihood.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The RSGF logo was used in the t-shirts of research team. The team used these t-shirts during data collection in the Bangladesh Sundarbans. Additionally, before starting every interview and FGD, research team mentioned that this research is funded by the RSGF to all the participants. The name of RSGF was mentioned in the acknowledgement section of the MSc dissertation submitted to the University of Roehampton, London. The name of RSGF will also be mentioned if my study is published in any peer reviewed journal.