

Project Update: May 2008

Empowering People/Media for Rhino Conservation project supported by Rufford Small Grant for Nature Conservation (RSG) has successfully completed its six months. Project was started from October 2007. The project was conducted with the co-ordination and support of Federation of Nepalese Journalist (FNJ) branch of Bardia. It has formally committed to support the project.



This program headed towards its goal of 'To improve rhino-human relationship in Bardia National Park'. Project has been primarily focused to intensify the discourse on conservation issues, strengthening co-ordination among stakeholders and media people.



Project has capacitated and mobilised buffer zone CBOs for the rhino conservation. Previously, they used to shy away from the conservation related activities fearing negative response from people and also because they had less knowledge on various aspects of conservation. 15 CBOs members from buffer zone area were provided TOT on conservation education. Subsequently, they conducted training sessions for other CBOs members and were inspired to organize awareness raising activities

in their respective community.

Project has conducted the workshops with chairpersons of buffer zone user committees. Regarding the issue program has been planned with all chairpersons of buffer zone user committees of Bardia National Park. On the programme they have realized own weakness and committed to improve it. They have even emphasized to amend the existing rules, regulations of the park and give more authority to BUCs.

Workshop with science and environment teachers was very effective. Workshop programme has been conceived among 18 science and environment teachers of BNP core buffer zone area school to share and bolster current practices on conservation education and to make future headway. The workshop has been crucial to promote conservation education through schools. Top educational and park authority of Bardia have pledged to render the support.

Similarly media people are encouraged for the significant and determined coverage of the conservation issues. Conservation journalist network has been established. Establishing network of conservation journalists can provide a forum to share their efforts, problems and can provide

berth for the organized attempts to raise the issue. The network can create national pressure on issue of conservation.

Conservation Information Centre is establishing in five VDC offices. Materials supported from the local, national and international organizations on conservation have been kept in the centre.

During those programs, extensive discussions were held on pitfalls, imperatives of conservation and yielded conclusion towards the way ahead. These activities intended to leverage concerted and co-ordinate efforts ultimately to bolster the conservation practice and avoid backlogs of conservation.

The status of the project activities

<i>Projected activities as per planning</i>	<i>Status</i>
Training of trainer (ToT) to selected CBOs members	<i>complete</i>
Workshop with buffer zone committees	<i>complete</i>
Discussion with VDC chairpersons	<i>upcoming</i>
Discussion with environment and science teachers	<i>complete</i>
Establish a network of conservation journalists	<i>complete</i>
Information desk on VDCs office	<i>on going</i>
Journalists tour to different buffer zone and protected areas	<i>upcoming</i>

Project outputs:

- Community based organisations have been empowered and involved in rhino conservation activities
- Science and environment teachers of buffer zone area of BNP have performed intensive discussion and made recommendations to promote school conservation education and they have been provided extra inputs on conservation issue.
- Chairpersons of Buffer zone User Committees have committed to allocate more budgets on conservation activities.
- Conservation Journalist Network have been motivated on significant coverage of conservation issue