

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	Kuenzang Choden
Project title	Building research capacity of school children on conservation of White Bellied Heron (<i>Ardea insignis</i>) along Phochu valley, Punakha, Bhutan.
RSG reference	Kuenzang Dorji, Researcher, UWICE Phurba Lhendup, WWF, Bhutan Sonam Wangdi, REC, Thimphu
Reporting period	31 December 2016
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	kchoden@rec.org.bt
Date of this report	19.12.2016

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
Revived nature club programme in Bjjokha Lower Secondary School				
Strengthened conservation initiatives and community educations				
Train nature club members on basic ecological and social research				
Understand the local people perception on White Bellied Heron (WBH)				Social data collection is completed, however data analysis and report write up is on-going

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

The project was implemented successfully without any difficulties and hindrances.

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

3.1. Revitalised the nature club and built strong alliance between nature club members and scout members on conservation awareness program. 32 nature club members and 60 members of scout were trained on biodiversity conservation research.

3.2. Educated 500 people living along Phochu valley on importance of white bellied heron and conservation threats. 92 students (both nature club and scout members) have walked from villages to villages covering 16 villages. Student pleaded local people to stop six major activities that threaten white bellied heron. The activities are felling of trees, mining, intentional disturbance, fishing, and forest fires and free grazing.

3.3. Local people perception on WBH assessed. More than 50 local people were interviewed to assess their knowledge on WBH. People living along the valley expressed concern over WBH population decline and beside the threats the students pleaded and agreed to minimise at their best, rafting/boating services along the river was reported to be greatest threats to the bird. People voice a need for ban or strong regulation on rafting/boating.

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

Local people and the school children are backbone of the project. Local governor, village representatives, religious personnel and elder citizens were involved to discuss and identified the conservation threats to WBH. Local people also cooperated and supported all form of conservation awareness programme conducted by school children. They were involved as respondent to assess their perception on WBH conservation and educate other family members who miss the campaign.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

If Rufford continues to support, I inspire to proposed similar project in Harchu, Wangdueprodrang where local people depend on fish for their livelihood. The project will seek support Harachu School children to educate their parent on impact of fishing for WBH survival and develop alternative solutions for their livelihood.

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

The result of project will be translated to Dzongkha (National language), prepare in form of poster, pamphlets, and brochure and distributed during the local government meeting to ensure wider reach. The poster will be put on at strategic location where local people mostly gather.

I have planned to present the results in few selected schools located adjacent to white bellied heron habitat. I have also a plan to make all project related results and information accessible online.

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

The grant was used in third and last quarter of project period i.e. September, October and November 2016. Most of the project activity particularly education program has occurred during this period. Due to local government election, project activity which involves community people and meeting were not permitted as per the law of the Kingdom of Bhutan. So the activity was postponed to third quarter.

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
Professional fees for Expertise	400	425	-25	
Per Diem for Researcher, Coordinator, Students, Stakeholders	1000	1000	0	
Cost for data collection (porter & pony charges, food supply)	500	600	-100	The daily wages revised as per financial rules, so the expense has escalated.
Field Equipment (GPS, Telescope, Binoculars, Camera, Laptop, Field Gears, T- shirts)	1200	1180	20	
Cost for Training/Workshops, Educational Visit and Consultation and awareness Meeting	1000	1025	-25	
Travel (Vehicle Fuel)	500	500	0	
Operating Cost (Communication, Printing)	300	200	100	
Miscellaneous	100	50	50	
Total	5000	4980	20	

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

Having involved in conservation-education for many years and subsequent upon successfully implementing this project, I strongly feel the need to understand migration pattern of the white bellied heron which would provide information on threats on WBH at their wintering grounds.

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?

Yes, the Rufford Foundation logo was used in all document and materials developed for the project. The logo was mostly used in poster, presentation, gift and t-shirt. The t-shirt with logo was worn by students in other school activity which received high level of publicity. Even the designer and printing press were aware about RSGF after designing and printing several posters, t-shirts.

11. Any other comments?

Biodiversity Conservation is life time dream of Bhutanese fellow members. We are grateful to RSGF for supporting numerous conservation projects in Bhutan. We look forward for the similar and continuous support.