

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 Dorji
Project title	Religious Advocacy for Highlanders to advocate conservation awareness on survival of small mammals: Prey-base of <i>Grus nigricollis</i> in Phobjikha, Wangdue, Bhutan
RSG reference	19497-2
Reporting period	July 2016-June 2017
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	kdorji@uwice.gov.bt
Date of this report	5.7.2017

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
Sensitise religious personnel on importance of small mammals				
Change perception of local people towards small mammals				It is indeed not realistic to report 100% change in people perception as it is all about understanding peoples' mindset. However, local people residing in the valley were well-informed about importance of small mammal conservation and ethics of eco-friendly farming.
Document diversity of bats species				Could capture five bat species using mist nets and locally made harp trap. Use of mist nets and harp trap was not a real success for open valley habitat. The bat detector help us to detect presence of two species with similar frequency

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

Since the project is community-based and more related to social aspect, nothing much of difficulties were faced during the time of execution.

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

The most important outcomes of the project are:

1. Expanded the small mammal conservation message beyond conservationist and local communities. The religious personnel and highlander herders who are somehow neglected in term of awareness campaign were well informed about the importance of small mammal conservation. On advantage note, the conservation science was embedded with religion to ensure sustainable flow of conservation message to general public through both formal and informal preaching.

2. Corrected negative mindset of 2000 farmers and 25 herders to value small mammal as important as other charismatic species like tigers and snow leopard. Now people of the valley know direct impact of chemical use on small mammals and the environment (soil, water, wild animals). This particular project was first in Bhutan to educate people on importance of small mammals (rodents). So, local people were amazed to know small mammals also plays vital role in maintaining ecosystem and they also deserve equal protection and conservation concerns.
3. Inventoried bat species of the valley to ensure complete list of small mammals of the valley. Have captured and identified five species of bats using mist nets, harp trap and bat detector. Local people were also educated on conservation importance of bats which has been till date view bat with fear repulse them. The project help them to understand how important and valuable bats are in ecosystem.

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

Local people of the valley are fully engaged for the meeting during religious advocacy. People got to learn more about the conservation and balance conservation development. With support from the project, the people were paid minimal sitting fees as per the government rule. Along with the conservation awareness campaign, local people were privilege to listen to high level religious preaching from religious personnel. The project has benefitted the local people economically (fees), personally (knowledge) and mentally (spiritual wellbeing enhanced).

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment Research strives to focus on neglected species particularly the small mammals including bats. We anticipate to document all species of small mammals in all ecological belt of the country. Conservation awareness on small mammals would be key component of the work to inform people on role of small mammals in ecosystem.

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

My nature of job as researcher and lecturer has added advantage in terms of sharing results. Any research data and results were used for teaching both pre-service and in-service students. Further, I represent small mammal focal person and I present all research work on small mammals during seminar, workshops. I even participate in symposium organised by NGOs (RSPN, Bhutan Ecological Society, Clean Bhutan, Green Bhutan) and present the results to enhance the reach of conservation messages on small mammals. A year, after our office will be publishing a guide book on small mammal of Bhutan including bats which would further enhance the reach of results to wider audience.

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 fund was mostly used in first 6 months as most of the activities were concentrated in first 6 months. The bat survey went on through all seasons.

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
Sensitization Workshops	800	775	75	
Equipment and Instruments	1200	1250	150	The proposed budget fail to include shipping charge
Religious Advocacy	1700	1650	-50	
Per Diem for religious person	500	550	50	
Vehicle	400	350	-50	
Camp Shifting Charges	300	325	25	
Administrative cost	100	80	-20	
Total	5000	4980		

The exchange rate at the time of fund transfer was £1 equals to BTN 94.5

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

The important next step would be the formation of small mammal conservation group in the country to ease the reach and coverage. So far, few biologist are keen to study small mammal due to lack of knowledge on their importance and less support from donors.

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

Yes, Rufford logo was used in all material produced in relation to the project. Rufford Foundation has gained higher publicity in Bhutan not only in conservation field but also in education, agriculture, engineering and tourism. All educated lots know about Rufford Foundation.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Name of the member	Organization	Role
Thinley Samdrup, Abbot	Gangtey Monastery	Lead in religious advocacy assisted by Ugyen Tshering, Lhakpa, Gelongla, and Tshering Penjor.
Dophu, Local Governor	Gangtey Sub district Centre	Approved meetings and issued orders to village representatives to mobilize meetings
Sangay Dorji, Village Representative	Gangtey Sub district Centre	Mobilize the participants and record keeping
Rinchen Dorji, Forester	Nature Study Centre	Assist bat survey and organize awareness campaign
Damber Singh Galley, Forester	Forest Division, Wangdue	Assist in Bat survey and advocacy
Karma Dema, Forester	Natural Resources Development Corporation	Assist in Bat survey and advocacy
Yeshi Wangdi, Agriculture Officer	Geog Extension Office	Create awareness on negative impact of chemicals. Record the annual issue of pesticides and chemicals

12. Any other comments?

The foundation should consider the application from Bhutan on case by case. My suggestion would be to streamline the applicants through referees. Referees should be one national, one regional and one international. The foundation should support if the applicant is MSc student with letter from the university.