

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	Dr. Pranav Trivedi
Project title	Living with snow leopards: wildlife conservation through education and capacity building amongst indigenous communities of the Spiti Trans-Himalaya, India.
RSG reference	Pranav Trivedi 23.02.07
Reporting period	May to November 2008
Amount of grant	UK £ 5,000 (Pound sterling five thousand)
Your email address	pranav@ncf-india.org
Date of this report	January 28, 2009

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
Himalayan Nature Clubs (HNCs)			√	All 20 HNCs formed, with registration forms duly filled and signed by school authorities, activities started with teacher workshops and nature education camps in most.
Youth Awareness Clubs (YACs)			√	All 10 YACs formed and registered with NCF/SLT.
Training workshops			√	All three workshops (two for teachers and one for youth) completed successfully.
Nature education camps			√	Ten camps conducted instead of five as we did not raise adequate funds for conducting the proposed nature trail activity, this needed more time allocation partly influencing the other activities planned.
Nature trails	√			This activity was first seen as an entry point activity for HNCs but we could not procure funds for this so we had to cancel it and included more schools in Nature Education Camps. Despite limited resources, we could do it for 11 out of 20 schools during 2007-08.
Children's workbook		√		This and the two products below were held up due to unavailability of one of our key team members (<i>see below under unforeseen difficulties</i>). Now, it is at the pre-production stage with text ready, illustrations underway and expected to be ready for production in April 2009.
Teacher's guide		√		Pre-production stage, text is ready, illustrations commissioned and underway, will take two months for production by April 2009.
Slide show		√		Pre-production stage, text is ready, we are in the process of collecting

				and organising photographs, developing some animation and recording the voice-over. Production will be completed by May 2009.
Posters based on paintings			√	This product is funded by other agencies as well as NCF/SLT but since it was part of the overall pilot project, we've included it here. The posters have been printed and distributed.
Posters on high altitude food chains			√	First print-run completed. We will club their distribution with that of workbooks and teacher's guides.

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

There were many such instances which arose that were unforeseen, but I list three major ones here since it was relatively difficult to tackle these.

1. The high-altitude region, where my project was implemented (mostly above 3,600 m) is climatically harsh, challenging and unpredictable in terms of weather. We essentially have six to seven months (April to October) when any work of this nature and mobility is possible in this region. This means that a one-year plan anywhere else becomes a two-year plan here by default. This was something that we did not comprehend well before starting the project. Unexpected snowfall during early October 2007 and a heavier fall during September-October 2008, so we had to cancel/postpone some of our planned activities. The transport failed us often and since private vehicle was not always possible due to constraints on funding, we had to comply with the dictates of the situation. We countered this difficulty largely by alternative arrangements including postponement and reorganising of the outdoor modules as well as roughing it out on a couple of occasions, thanks to the brave and capable field team that we have in Spiti. But this put pressure on our already delicate timelines. However, since this was our pilot programme, we took this as a very important learning.
2. One of the key members of our team Ms. Pavithra Sankaran got selected for a Master's Degree course on Science Communication and had to go to UK for almost a year. Product development was thus held up from planning to design and production stage. We explored for alternatives but found it difficult to get someone appropriate within the given time. Despite this setback, we could produce food chain posters in time. Children's workbooks, Teachers' guide and CD preparation was delayed. The products are at the pre-production stage now.
3. Organising outdoor activities in the region is challenging due to frequent inclement weather and difficulties of transport, communication and logistics. Almost 10 people (including our field staff) are required on the camp site to run our outdoor activities smoothly. Our field staff and other youth are farmers and herders by occupation. Their Buddhist communities have collective decision-making processes for farming related matters

(sowing/harvest/winning) to which all have to comply. Further, any urgent meetings called for religious/cultural purposes (with heavy penalties for not attending meetings) have to be attended by them. Without their co-operation and involvement, it is not possible to organise these activities. This coupled with inclement weather even forced us to cancel the outdoor camps on one occasion. We countered this issue by rotating the staff which attended to these events/meetings and even paid fines on some occasions.

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

- **Establishment and functioning of local level institutions to spread awareness:** Through this pilot project, we have created local institutions for sustained environmental awareness generation in the form of 20 Himalayan Nature Clubs (HNCs) in rural schools and 10 Youth Awareness Clubs (YACs) in villages/clusters in the Spiti Valley. This is the first time that such a mechanism has been established in this region. About 500 children, 50 teachers and 150 youth from roughly 30 villages have become direct beneficiaries of this intervention. This has enabled us to reach nearly half the villages of Spiti Valley. We have initiated the HNC activities in almost all schools through Nature Education Camps and/or Teacher orientation/training Workshops.
- **On ground conservation action/motivation:** Ten nature education camps saw participation of close to 300 children (age 10 to 14) and almost 30 teachers. The written feedback shows a high degree of assimilation of positive values, emotions and knowledge indicating a change in their overall awareness levels about local wildlife, landscape and their conservation. In one instance, a group of students in our field base, Kibber village (where we also conducted the camps), were so motivated and proud of their village pasture that they spent almost the entire winter there exploring, recording wildlife and improving their knowledge. This association was observed by villagers as well as some of our staff and a research student who interacted with them. They actively sought our storybook “Nono, the Snow Leopard”, read it in turns and returned the copies. This group has provided us very valuable written feedback on how Nature Camps turned them on. We received casual, informal feedback from a number of parents (mostly village youth and elders) about the camps and how excited and interested children have been for this activity. Members of the Youth Council, Kibber (and YAC, Kibber) actively volunteered for the camps and in one instance, we had the chief (*Pradhan*) of the village council visit us for a day at the campsite. Three school principals also stayed at the campsite watching the proceedings with interest and even participating. The state Forest Department has already extended its support for this activity and we may be able to hold more programmes in the coming years with their support. The greatest milestone for this activity was when **Dr. George Schaller** stayed for a full camp’s duration at the campsite with children sharing his rich knowledge and experience and motivating them all along.
- **Capacity enhancement of local field staff:** Through various education and awareness activities, the capacities of our field staff and other youth in Kibber village have been enhanced in conducting environmental education activities. Such activities, especially camps and workshops also helped us in identification of motivated teachers from local schools. Our field coordinator from Ladakh visited the campsite at Spiti, interacted with our local field staff and is now in the process of implementing a similar programme in Ladakh. He has formed HNCs in more than 10 schools and three YACs. This pilot project thus helped us

expand our reach and strengthen our interventions in two regions – Spiti Valley and parts of Ladakh.

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

- **Direct beneficiaries:** Two generations of local community, youth and children, have already been targeted directly by our interventions. A third group, parents, are also partly involved as children share their experiences home and many parents know about our interventions now. So, in essence we have been able to reach nearly 500 families – a sizable part of the local community. These learners and indirect beneficiaries are already involved or going to be involved in our community-based conservation programmes such as livestock insurance schemes and better herding practices. Several of the youth are going to be involved in documentation and monitoring of wildlife populations.
- **Livelihood and voluntary involvement of local community:** As shown earlier, all our outdoor activities required involvement of at least 10 people on site. Apart from our field staff, few youngsters who worked during these activities were paid honoraria for this work, while some just gave their time (one or two days) voluntarily. In general, most of our education activities received a lot of help (voluntary and otherwise) from local people everywhere and we felt that they were partly able to perceive the importance of such activities. Our local field staff has earned a new identity within their community that is linked with their wildlife-related knowledge and skills.
- **Capacity enhancement:** The capacity of our field staff, other rural youth and schoolteachers in planning and implementing environmental education and awareness activities was enhanced through this project. Their knowledge, skills and confidence all have increased in this area as borne by their oral and written feedback. This would be very helpful in sustaining these initiatives in the region and also empower the local communities with appropriate human resource.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

This pilot project was conceived with a view to strengthen and facilitate our decade old ongoing work in research and community-based conservation in the Indian high altitudes. We are now in the process of consolidating this work in Spiti this year and hope to establish and implement HNC and YAC calendars in schools and villages respectively. The YACs will get more active with assignments of wildlife documentation and monitoring exercises. These local institutions are also likely to play a key role in the preparation and implementation of management plans under the recently commissioned Project Snow Leopard. With at least one Annual Event for Environmental conservation for all schools having HNCs and all YACs, we will facilitate better sharing and networking in our efforts. Nature education camps, nature trails and teacher/youth workshops are now part of our annual activity calendars. Ultimately, we are also looking forward to train at least four good conservation educators (two each in Spiti & Ladakh), who will take this programme forward in these areas. We have learnt a lot on both success and failure fronts from this pilot project that we have used to expand to Ladakh during 2008. We have already established more than 10 HNCs and 3 YACs, including one YAC consisting of Post-Graduate students of Botany and Zoology of the University in Leh in Ladakh, the state of Jammu and Kashmir. As we move along, we will document the success through relevant assessment techniques and share it with the larger conservation community.

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

We intend to share the results in two major ways: through direct sharing by presentation of papers in conferences/workshops and through articles in print media and peer-reviewed journals. In year 2008 itself I have shared the results in several fora which I will continue doing this year too. Some of the initiatives already taken in this regard are given below:

- Paper titled “Living with snow leopards: using conservation education to strengthen community-based conservation in Spiti Valley, Indian Trans-Himalaya” presented at the International Conference on Range-Wide Conservation Planning for Snow Leopards at Beijing, China during 9-11 March 2008.
- A presentation titled “Role of education in snow leopard conservation” was made at a meeting of the representatives of country organisations and partner organisations of Snow Leopard Trust (SLT) (China, Mongolia, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and USA) in Beijing, China during 1-6 March 2008.
- A paper titled “Rekindling child-nature links in the Himalayan high altitudes” was presented at a workshop on “Learning for life – Conservation education in our work and world” - a skill share workshop for practicing environmental educators, programme coordinators and applied researchers held at Bangalore during 18-19 December, 2008.
- Contributed an article titled “Rekindling the children-nature link: Nature education camps in the Himalayan high altitudes” in a special magazine brought out on the occasion of Wildlife Week with the theme “Wildlife: Melting like ice?” brought out by the Himachal Pradesh State Forest Department.
- Have shared the learning and experiences in the Annual meetings of Nature Conservation Foundation, inspiring young researchers to include and implement conservation education components in their respective studies.
- Informal sharing and presentation of the outcomes and interventions during several meetings and discussions with NGOs and individuals.
- The final report will be sent to several organisations and individuals involved in conservation activities in the region as well as other parts of the world.
- At least one paper will be published in a peer-reviewed journal based on the project’s learning and impact.

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

One and a half years compared to one year that was the proposed period. Some components are still under process, so it may be close to two years.

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 (total)	Requested from Rufford	Actual Amount	Difference (Total-Actual)	Comments
1. Training workshops (two for teachers + one for youth)	1,050	500	1,087	-37	This is a marginal difference.
2. Nature education camps	1,500	750	1,796	-296	This corresponds to the increase in number of camps (10 from proposed 5) due to cancellation of nature trails. So, we worked on reducing overheads and other costs by planning camps without breaks in between preventing a proportionate rise in budget, yet enabling more children to experience nature
3. Nature trail	500	0			We did not obtain any funds for this item and had to cancel the same.
4. Children's Workbook	1,250	600	ca. 250	1,000	Unfinished product, receipts only for text inputs and part payment of illustrations.
5. Teachers' Guide	500	500	ca. 200	300	Unfinished product, illustrations and text part cost only.
6. Slide show	750	500	200	550	Unfinished product, advances for development of the AV material.
7. Posters – painting based*	1,000	0			* Entirely supported by agencies other than Rufford, mainly by NCF/SLT.
8. Posters food chain (1,000 copies each)	1,450	1,150	746	704	Total 1,000 printed in the first batch (instead of 2,000), we'll print the next batch once our modules are operational in Ladakh and Sikkim.

9. Nature Clubs	500	500	242	258	We have kept this amount to buy books/resource material for them. These will be given to them during 2009.
10. YAC (establishment, servicing etc.)	500	250	253	247	- Same as above -
11. Per Diem	400	250	197	53	---
12. Honoraria*	500	0			* Items not covered by Rufford Grant
13. Staff time, overheads*	1,500	0			- do -
14. Travel*	1,500	0			- do -
TOTAL	12,900	5,000			Grant Received: GBP 5,000 @ 80.12 INR (total – INR 4,00,600)

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

1. Consolidation in Spiti to involve all three target groups actively and sustaining this momentum. Sustained activities and use of resource material through HNC and YAC Annual Plans and regular annual events for outreach and public involvement
2. Expansion in Ladakh by 2010 and later in Sikkim.
3. Link this component with livelihoods and eco-tourism in Spiti and Ladakh to strengthen our ongoing community-based conservation work.
4. Inclusion of YAC members/teachers in the to-be-implemented Project Snow Leopard's Village Level Committees that would plan and implement the strategy at the local landscape level.

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, the certificates given to all participants of nature camps and training workshops had the RSGF logo and all products prepared so far also carry it. All products under preparation will also have this logo along with those of other donors/partners. All presentations clearly acknowledged and highlighted the major donors/supporters (one of which is RSGF). The products have been distributed far and wide and the logo has travelled to all these institutions/individuals.

11. Any other comments?

THANKS for the support that enabled us to engage in spreading awareness about wildlife conservation in these remote and challenging mountain environs and hopefully make a difference! In the process we have learnt a lot and gained better understanding of operationalising on-ground conservation in Spiti.