

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
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Project Title	Living with Giants: Addressing prequels of elephants' conservation in Central Nepal
Application ID	26254-B
Grant Amount	9990 £
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1. 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
Elephant research activity in Dhanusha District				Genetic analysis is not done. The samples are stored at the Central Department of Biotechnology, Kirtipur, Kathmandu in refrigeration and genetic analysis will be done soon.
Elephant Response Team				At two places, this project created an Elephant Response Team. They were trained with elephant deterrence methods and were provided with torch lights, handheld crowd control mike, ropes and small solar torches. Also, we also created two tree towers (30 m tall) to guard crops from elephants and warn villagers during elephant intrusions.
Gajraj Scholarship				Scholarships were provided to eight students whose fathers were trampled by elephants in the project area for 2 consecutive years. One scholarship was given to a child of poor Tharu family. Tharu are the primary communities who take up Mahout job and also Tharu people have been taking care of elephant from unknown ages.
Elephant Information App				Preliminary works were done. The bulk SMS alert mode system was also prepared but after that Covid hit the nation ceasing everything. The remaining fund was directed to help the local communities with basic needs (rice, lentil, salt, beaten rice, and cooking oils,) who shares spaces with the giants. The communities we worked with were daily wage labour and government cease to movement hence their source of income was stopped hence, these family were supported. So, this objective was

			partially achieved.
Livelihood Opportunities Training and Awareness calendar Toolkit			<p>Mushroom farming training, offseason vegetable farming, soap and detergent making training were conducted in the project area.</p> <p>Also 1000 human elephant co-existence calendar was printed in Nepali language which were distributed in the project area.</p>

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

The medical condition of the principal investigator and Covid-19 pandemic were two unforeseen difficulties which came up during the project period. The PI got operated with spinal surgery at lumbar and sacral region which lengthened the project period because as per the doctor suggestion, sufficient rest had to be taken after post-surgery. After 1 month of surgery, Covid-19 hit the nation, during which the Government of Nepal curbed the movement within country. So, the team had no other option than to wait and follow the government's decision to evoke on pandemic movement. Workshops, community meeting were strictly not to be done during pandemic, so we completed only after government made a decision to evoke the pandemic protocols.

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

Elephant research activity- Dung samples were collected from three different regions to find out the source population of the trapped elephants in Dhanusha-Sindhuli complex. Samples were collected from buffer zones of Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Parsa National Park and Dhanusha-Sindhuli complex. The samples are stored at Central Department of Biotechnology under refrigeration. Very soon the genetic analysis will be done.

RRT setup and Strengthened- Two Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) were created and trained to lead the community during chaotic elephant crop raids, house raids and other situations. They were also provided with various tools which will be useful during elephant intrusions even in the night. These RRTs will get continuous tool support and training in coming years to make them stronger.

Scholarship Distributed and Calendar produced- We distributed scholarships for children whose fathers were trampled by elephants far away from national parks. The communities living near to the national park are more likely to be included in governmental scholarship programme because they get information regarding this but the official forgot that elephants have a large home range so there are lots of victims in the corridor. So, this project really helped the family who was a real victim of this elephant conservation. Also, one scholarship was provided to Tharu family children who takes elephant care taking job as their pride. 1000 calendars were

produced from this project which was distributed to different communities. That information sharing calendar are great output of this project.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.

During research activity, local communities were hired as local guides who helped with sample collection. The knowledge of data collection protocols and studying methods were shared with the guides as well the communities we stayed with. Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) were formed at two places comprising youths of the local community. The youths were very happy to know the various methods and relieved after receiving the deterrence materials. The peoples from the communities took part in photo session which were required during calendar preparation. The communities shared their knowledge of different problems with wildlife beside their love towards the creature. Lots of stories of elephants were discussed at tea stalls and the project team made aware about different misconceptions regarding elephant behaviour. We are still monitoring the situations and standing by the communities, so they are happy. An old cow herder said "At least, these guys are standing with us in distress in respect to that researcher who just came to collect data and vanished". Out of the box, we created protocol of action, during crop raid which was not planned earlier. Now, they are filing compensation of their loss in district forest office. So, although it was not an objective, but we did it as it came in the way. Local municipalities were happy after our presentation and promised to assist and provide compensation from local budget.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, I have plans to continue my work with the elephants. The human elephant conflict in the project area is increased in these days so, activities stepping upon this project finding are my future plans. The project "Living with giants-phase II" is planned and for that, undoubtedly, this project needs financial support from the The Rufford Foundation.

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

We had shared this project results with the community we worked with in later visits after the project work. They are better acquainted with the elephant intrusion area. The calendar which we produced was the product of compiling secondary data selecting the best practices of human elephant co-existence from around the world and was distributed to community peoples, schools, co-operatives offices, private firms and tea stalls in the community for larger audience perception. The genetic analysis report findings will be shared as an article in peer reviewed journal. The elephant conflict data will be presented at relevant workshops and seminars. The final report will be submitted to Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC).

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

The grant was used over the whole project period. Medical conditions of the PI and Covid-19 pandemic lengthened the anticipated time. The PI was on medication and under rest due to his acute spinal problem which was finally operated so this lengthened the project timeline by almost 9 months. After that, the covid pandemic caused the project timeline to be extended more than a year. The grant was used for first 3-4 months where preliminary activities were completed. After that, the grant was used during samples collections works and finally, the rest amount was used after covid to complete other objectives. Actually, no one can foresee the health condition, so it suddenly came through. It was a harsh time. Neither covid was planned, so this project just got stuck for about 2 years.

8. Budget: 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. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Transportation	351	300	-51	
Food and lodging	1166	1200	+34	Dung samples had to be collected for the second time due to some technical issues.
Assistant's Allowance	377	400	+23	
Researcher Allowances	1111	1000	-111	Helped the community during covid pandemic for their basic need
Awareness toolkit calendar	120	540	+220	Designing cost was high which we didn't expect for 14 pages calendar with hard cover.
Livelihood opportunities training	170	530	+370	
Elephant information app	540	540		Basic materials were given to community.
Gajraj Scholarship	1481	1000	-481	For about two years, we provided during the project period. It has been in government data.
Elephant Response Team	981	900	-81	

Elephant Research activity in Dhanusha District	3703	4000	+297	We had to collect the dung samples as the protocol of collection was compromised.
TOTAL	10000	10410	+420	NBRCC has paid the difference amount.

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

Communities are the first-hand victims of human elephant conflict so it's a tireless mission to make people and elephant survive side by side. But we have to do that. Due to some infrastructural development works, elephants are being trapped in the geographical regions where in earlier years not last more than a month. But elephant are rearing calves explaining that they are recolonising those areas which is bad as well as good news. Bad for peoples due to sudden spike in HEC incidents because they were not habituated of long stay of elephant in their surrounding and good for conservationist because they are flourishing. Story must be told, and we are taking this for our next steps. Out of box things must be tried.

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

We published 100 promotional t-shirts, 1000 human elephant co-existence calendars, Rufford logo was used in human elephant co-existence calendar, project promotional vests, alternative livelihood training sessions, and in workshop during Rapid Response Team formation. Different stakeholders of this project were curious about funding agency and had queries regarding the working themes. Physical things like calendar reached to 1000 houses, public places with at least five-fold direct viewers The foundation received lots of publicity during different project works. Genetics works are not done yet, so paper is not written. When it is done, the information of funding agency and acknowledgement to Rufford organisation will be done.

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

Sonam Bhattarai- She did some data collection works in earlier days and they she flew to US for further study, so we had to replace her with Sangeeta Shrestha. Kiron Paudel, Subhash Singh got admitted to Master's program in forestry studies so they couldn't accompany in the project.

Sangeeta Shrestha- She was a local M A student who really helped lot with data collection works.

Junu Nepali – She was the leader trainer for agricultural related alternative livelihood opportunities trainings. She trained community members of two places with mushroom cultivation and off-season vegetable farming.

Lalan Jha – Lalan was the trainer of soap and detergent making training. According to the request of the community people we conducted this training.

Surya Bahadur Theeng- He was the local leader for projects works in Thori regions and helped with dung samples collection from Parsa National Park region.

Tika Ram Phuyal- He assisted with everyday works in community meets and livelihood trainings.

Pratik Chandra- He is an IT engineer who helped me with making app.

Birendra Kumar Mehta- He assisted with dung samples collection from eastern area of the project geographical area.

Yem Lal Lama- He was the local guide in collection of dung samples from Dhanusha District.

Revati Raman Chaudhary- He helped with the preparation of calendar by translating the English to Nepali i.e., local language.

12. Any other comments?

The project got lengthened due to covid-19 and medical condition. Covid-19 devastated the usual schedule so we are extremely sorry for the delay. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Rufford Foundation for funding this project. Lots of things must be done for elephant conservation in Nepal, hence we will require continuous support from Rufford organisation.