

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Caka Karlsson
Project Title	From Classroom to Community: Engaging Nigerian Children in Vulture Conservation and Combating Traditional Beliefs
Application ID	43279-1
Date of this Report	27 June 2025

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
Foster a lasting shift in mindset among Secondary School 2 students to eliminate traditional beliefs contributing to the severe decline in vulture populations.			X	<p>Our preliminary results indicate that 67% of the students demonstrated a shift in mindset regarding vultures. Prior to the intervention, students commonly associated vultures with negative descriptors such as "dangerous," "ugly," and "bringers of bad luck." Following the awareness program, however, their perceptions shifted significantly, with students using positive expressions such as "vultures are good because they clean the environment," "sanitisers," and "nature's cleaning crew," reflecting a more favorable attitude toward the species.</p> <p>We surveyed in total 660 children. Each child received an individual copy of the vulture booklet, resulting in the distribution of 770 copies, including those provided for the additional program conducted in Ekiti State. Furthermore, each participating school was given four copies of the booklet to be kept in their library.</p> <p>In addition, two pilot programs were conducted prior to the main intervention. These pilots served to test the structure of the program and the associated questionnaires. The students who took part in these pilot sessions also received individual copies of the booklet,</p>

				<p>and the two pilot schools each received four library copies.</p> <p>In total, over 830 booklets were distributed.</p>
Examine whether educating students about vultures generates a spill-over effect on their parents.			X	<p>A clear shift was observed between the pre-program questionnaire and the follow-up questionnaire administered one month after the intervention. Notably, 60% of parents reported that their child had been discussing vultures at home, despite not having done so prior to the program, indicating a potential spill-over of information and interest from students to their families.</p> <p>We surveyed one parent per child, resulting in a total of 660 participating parents.</p> <p>Because the programme had to be repeated in Ekiti State, an additional 110 children—and, by extension, their parents—took part. During each vulture-awareness lecture, we also invited student from neighbouring classes to attend whenever their teachers permitted. Although these pupils were not included in the formal survey, we considered it prudent to share the presentation with them since we had already travelled to their schools. In at least five states, pupils from other classes sat in on the lecture, and it is reasonable to assume that some subsequently conveyed what they learned about vultures</p>

				to their parents. When these indirect beneficiaries are combined with the participants from the two pilot studies, we estimate that it is likely that the program has reached roughly 1,000 parents.
Examine whether intergenerational learning led to a shift in parents' traditional beliefs about vultures.			X	A total of 58 percent of parents exhibited a neutral or positive attitude toward vultures following the program. This suggests a meaningful shift, with many parents using favorable language that emphasized the value of vultures being alive rather than dead.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- a) A Vulture awareness program can alter students' perceptions towards vultures.
- b) Nigerian students shared the knowledge they gained about vultures during school-based awareness programs with their parents.
- c) Parents appear receptive to information shared by their children and may adjust their perceptions of vultures accordingly.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

The major challenge encountered during the project was implementing the program in Ekiti State. We discovered that there had recently been incidents of kidnapping along the route to this location. Given that I am white, we assessed that my presence would increase the security risk for both myself and the rest of the team. As a result, we decided to appoint a local research assistant to carry out the program in this state on our behalf. Unfortunately, the assistant misunderstood key aspects of our protocol, leading to inconsistencies in data collection that were too severe to allow for the inclusion of the sampled data from this region. Consequently, we instructed the assistant to identify two new schools and re-implement the program. However, by this time we had exhausted our supply of vulture booklets, donated by PACE, which plays a vital role in the awareness program. Although PACE agreed to send additional copies, they experienced printing issues which delayed delivery by several months. When the materials finally arrived, it was the end of the academic semester, and we had to postpone the program by an additional month to align with the school calendar. This sequence of events significantly delayed the overall timeline of the project. A key lesson learned from

this experience is the importance of providing detailed written instructions rather than relying solely on verbal communication.

We were not yet able to establish conservation clubs in the secondary schools. Establishing conservation clubs and employing a dedicated leader to manage each club at the state level involves significant financial costs. As a result, we have been exploring more cost-effective strategies to initiate and sustain such clubs. During the most recent phase of the project in Ekiti State, the idea emerged to create a WhatsApp-based vulture conservation group. While this approach may not replicate the structure of a traditional, in-person conservation club, it offers a feasible alternative for establishing a virtual club that can be managed at no additional cost. Now that the program in Ekiti State has concluded, efforts to implement this virtual vulture conservation club are set to commence.

4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.

Children in 14 schools (originally planned for 12, with two additional schools added due to challenges in Ekiti State) participated in the vulture awareness program and received an educational booklet about vultures. Our findings indicate that not only did the children benefit by gaining knowledge about vultures, but their parents also acquired information, both through their children's education and by reading the booklet provided. We actively encouraged the children to share the knowledge they acquired, such as the important role vultures play in preventing the spread of disease, with their families and broader communities.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

There's a plan to continue the work, especially to replicate it in other vulture strongholds across Nigeria. We only covered 6 out of 36 states in Nigeria. Observing the impact and replicating it in the next strongholds will be a great service toward the conservation of vultures in Nigeria.

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

Firstly, we plan to submit a manuscript presenting our findings to a peer-reviewed scientific journal, most likely *Tropical Conservation Science* or *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*. In addition, we aim to share our results at relevant academic and conservation conferences, as well as on our project's website. We also intend to reach out to other NGOs in Nigeria and across Africa that are involved in vulture conservation to disseminate our findings and foster collaboration.

As part of our Publicity and Communication plan, we successfully implemented radio outreach in each participating state. A field assistant was responsible for conducting the radio program in their respective state, as their knowledge of the local language enabled them to effectively reach a broader audience. However, in Plateau state our team member Michael Manja Williams conducted the radio program since he knows the local language in Plateau state.

While our original proposal indicated that we would use the radio platform to present the results of the program, upon further reflection, we recognized that data

analysis would require additional time. Consequently, we determined that it would be more impactful to focus the broadcasts on the importance of vultures, alongside information about the awareness program itself. This adjustment allowed us to more effectively challenge and potentially change negative traditional beliefs about vultures among a wider segment of the population.

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

We believe it is important to share these findings across Africa and to highlight the Intergenerational Learning (IGL) method as a credible and effective approach for addressing traditional beliefs. In particular, our results emphasize the value of providing educational materials, such as booklets, to families. These resources can reinforce the information children share with their parents, lending additional credibility to the children's messages and supporting broader conservation goals.

8. 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?

In all our presentations, we consistently included the Rufford Foundation logo on our PowerPoint slides to acknowledge your support. Additionally, we shared our project website during these presentations, where the Rufford logo is also prominently displayed.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

Caka Karlsson served as the team leader of the project. She was responsible for initiating and planning the project, leading its implementation in collaboration with Michael Manja, conducting and coordinating the awareness program, as well as being responsible for data entry and analysis.

Michael Manja was involved in the initiation and planning of the project. He coordinated communications with the participating schools and jointly conducted the program alongside Caka Karlsson.

Dr. Samson contributed to the project through assisting with the methodology of the project and data analysis.

Mr. Sunday served as the project driver.

Additionally, in each of the participating states, we engaged the support of 12 local assistants who aided in the implementation of the program.

10. Any other comments?

The numbers presented are preliminary results. The coding and analyses are currently under review by an expert in the field, and as such, the numbers may be subject to change. Nevertheless, the positive trend indicating the success of intergenerational learning is expected to remain consistent, regardless of potential adjustments to the data.