

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Swechhya Shrestha
Project Title	Creating Local Protectors of Fishing Cat through Alternative Income Generation
Application ID	44985-2
Date of this Report	13 th July 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
Promote alternative livelihood through bio-enzyme production		√		<p>Despite receiving training and being introduced to an innovative alternative income source, the local community faced challenges in selling the product locally due to poor packaging and it remained for household use only.</p> <p>Altogether, 20 participants were involved, and they were provided with all materials along with snacks. The neem plant, on the other hand, was gathered from the nearby locality.</p> <p>Two of the participants reported that they had attempted to market the product; however, the response from potential buyers was minimal. Furthermore, the use of a mineral water bottle without labelling as packaging contributed to a lack of consumer trust. The social enterprise expert emphasized that appropriate packaging would require additional budget allocation to facilitate quality testing, despite the bio-enzyme exhibiting acceptable physical characteristics such as odour and colour.</p> <p>There is a scope of home based production of bio-enzyme. Home-based production presents considerable potential for scaling up bio-enzyme initiatives, particularly within community settings. Since the production</p>

				<p>process requires relatively simple techniques and minimal investment, it can easily be managed at the household level using locally available raw materials. Similarly, the sales could be improved by introducing affordable, standardized, and eco-friendly packaging solutions at the household level, the credibility and appeal of the product can be strengthened.</p> <p>Dealing the following challenges:</p> <p>Packaging Issues: Use of repurposed, unlabeled bottles reduced consumer trust despite good product quality.</p> <p>Financial Constraints: Limited budget restricted investment in standardized packaging, labeling, and quality testing.</p> <p>Marketing Challenges: Low consumer awareness and understanding led to minimal sales.</p>
Raise awareness through outreach and education			V	<p>The fishing cat February were very well celebrated among the local community.</p> <p>A program of art and poem competition was organised where 9 schools participated. The students were motivated to contribute in the conservation.</p> <p>We approached 9 schools and requested 10 participants from each; however, not all schools were able to provide the full number. Some schools had only 8 or 6 participants, resulting in approximately 70+ students being reached.</p> <p>Some schools were located at a considerable distance, and not all of them had access to a</p>

				<p>school bus or van. Additionally, three of the participating schools were newly included due to distance constraints.</p> <p>The installation of two information boards was completed as planned. Notably, both boards were placed at new sites in prominent locations, effectively promoting fishing cat conservation.</p>
Promote conservation through hotels and public vehicles.			V	<p>Public vehicles and hotels were utilized as platforms to promote fishing cat conservation. Posters and informational materials were displayed inside public buses and vans, reaching daily commuters and travellers with conservation messages. Similarly, hotels in a nearby tourist area were engaged to showcase educational posters to guests, helping spread awareness among both local residents and visiting tourists.</p> <p>300 posters were printed. A total of 200 posters were distributed through various outreach activities, including the Fishing Cat February celebration, community awareness programs, and engagement with local government officials. In addition, posters were distributed directly to local residents, helping to inform them about the project and the presence of fishing cats in the area. Students (Project assistants) who participated in project activities also received posters for educational and study purposes. 100 are saved for future works.</p> <p>14 vehicles and 14 hotels and locals shops.</p>

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

- a) The project site was a new site. People were not aware of importance of fishing cat existence in the area. The main outcome is people understanding the existing of fishing cat and its conservation importance through training program, information boards and other project activities of awareness and outreach.

- b) Two of the locals and four forestry students were deployed during the project period. The locals got an opportunity to develop their capability in conservation activities and was able to aware community for the conservation of fishing cat. The forestry students were motivated to conduct research on fishing cat in the future.

- c) The school outreach program resulted in increased awareness and interest in fishing cat conservation among students. Through interactive sessions involving art, poem discussions, students developed a better understanding of the species and its ecological importance. Teachers also reported heightened curiosity and engagement in the topics. The program not only educated young minds but also inspired them to share conservation messages with their families, extending the impact beyond the classroom into the wider community.

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

The community showed initial interest and enthusiasm, sustaining consistent engagement proved difficult due to their irregular availability and competing livelihood priorities. Limited literacy and technical understanding also affected their ability to fully grasp certain conservation concepts and practices of bio-enzyme production standards.

Similarly, language barriers posed a significant challenge during the project implementation. While efforts were made to communicate effectively, many Patharkaths community members were more comfortable speaking in their local dialect, which differed from the language used in training.

To address this, local facilitators and translators were engaged wherever possible. He was explained everything first and the programs were conducted in his presence.

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

The project benefited the local community by introducing an alternative, eco-friendly livelihood through bio-enzyme production. This not only helped reduce dependence on unsustainable practices like wildlife hunting but also empowered community members with new skills and economic opportunities. Training and hands-on involvement in conservation activities enhanced local capacity, especially among underprivileged groups, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility toward biodiversity protection.

Additionally, awareness and outreach programs such as school programs, fishing cat February celebration, information boards, and other public awareness campaigns significantly improved understanding of the Fishing Cat's ecological importance. Students, teachers, and community members became more engaged in environmental issues, creating a ripple effect of conservation awareness. The involvement of youth and local participants also laid a foundation for future conservation efforts, research opportunities, and stronger community stewardship.

A pre-FGD was conducted with 20 participants in the presence of the presidents of the two wards at the respective sites. However, the post-FGD could not be carried out as planned due to peak plantation and wedding seasons in June, which affected participation. Consequently, the focal person was contacted to obtain the necessary information. The main outcomes indicated challenges in selling the bio-enzyme, some trainees not continuing its production after the project, and the vessels provided being repurposed for other uses. Besides, that the information boards are in good condition.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

I have definite plans to continue the fishing cat conservation work, especially since this is a new site with many conservation challenges to address. Moving forward, my primary focus will be on strengthening collaboration with the local community, government authorities, and fish farmers. By engaging these key stakeholders, I aim to build a strong foundation of awareness and ownership around fishing cat conservation.

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

I plan to share this result through social media and with my colleagues through Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance (FCCA) platform.

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

The next important step would be networking with fish farmers along with community and government. Working closely with the community will help promote sustainable practices that protect the fishing cat's habitat, while cooperation with local government will support integration of conservation priorities into policy and management. Involving fish farmers is very crucial to balance livelihood needs with habitat protection, ensuring a harmonious coexistence. This inclusive approach will help create long-term, effective conservation outcomes at the site.

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?

Yes, the Rufford Foundation logo was used in all the materials like information boards and merchandise. The four forestry students were interested for the foundation grants.

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

Name	Designation	Roles and Responsibilities
Ms. Aditi Subba	Project Advisor	Provide strategic guidance; review project activities; support in aligning conservation strategies; advice on capacity building and stakeholder engagement.
Mr. Mewa Lal Chaudhary	Field Coordinator/translator	Oversee on-field operations; ensure smooth implementation of field activities; act as main liaison between field and central team; manage logistics. He also supported as a translator
Mr. Naresh Chaudhary	Communication & Coordination Focal Person	Facilitate communication between field and desk teams; assist in logistical coordination and troubleshooting.
Mr. Ram Banjade	Project Assistant (Forestry Student)	Assisted in preliminary survey, support fieldwork as needed.
Mr. Utsav Rayamjhi	Project Assistant (Forestry Student)	Assist in field activities, and community mobilization; support awareness programs and logistics.
Ms. Sanju Dhungana	Project Assistant (Forestry Student)	Support community engagement, awareness campaigns, and assist in event organization and

		communication efforts.
Ms. Lalita Tamang	Project Assistant (Forestry Student)	Support community engagement, awareness campaigns, and assist in event organization and communication efforts.

10. Any other comments?

The project team extends sincere gratitude to the Foundation for the valuable opportunity to work with a community where conservation efforts are critically needed.

We regret the not sending updates during the project period, which resulted from overlapping academic obligations of the principle investigator. Nonetheless, all relevant photographs of project activities have now been submitted via email.

Furthermore, we respectfully request guidance on the process for returning the unutilized amount of £400 from the project budget.

ANNEX – Financial Report

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