

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. 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	Pabitra Jha
Project title	Assessing Human Elephant Conflict (HEC) status in Sarlahi, Nepal – A guide for formulating potential mitigation strategies
RSG reference	8554-1
Reporting period	January to March 2012
Amount of grant	£5774
Your email address	pabitrajha@yahoo.com
Date of this report	17 th March 2012

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
Identification of types of HEC and their actual causes			Fully achieved	
Documentation of recent HEC events		Partially achieved		Though there was no proper documentation of HEC events/incidences in the area, the information on recent HEC events like crop damage, property damage, livestock injury/killing, human casualty could only be obtained from the discussion with the local people and some existing government and media records. However, not only the local people but also the government officials and the media persons were found reluctant to talk about retaliatory killing/injury of wild elephants in the area.
Identification of gaps in existing HEC related policies and legal-frameworks			Fully achieved	
Documentation of information on indigenous HEC mitigation measures and their effectiveness			Fully achieved	
Recommendation of future HEC mitigation strategies		Partially achieved		HEC mitigation measures that are being practised at present in the area are only of temporary nature. Those measures though have been effective in keeping the wild elephants away from their locality for a time being and mitigating HEC temporarily, have not been effective in mitigating HEC permanently. This has caused difficulty in recommending a clear future HEC mitigation strategy from the observation of the study area only.
Preparation of short audio-visual on HEC			Fully achieved	

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

Lack of proper documentation of HEC events was an issue in itself. And to the project team's surprise, talking about retaliatory killing of wild elephants was almost like a taboo in the study area. Everyone, from the local residents to the local media persons to the government officials at district and central level, were reluctant to talk about the incidences of retaliatory killing of wild elephants. Consequently, the project team could not come up with any clear information on retaliatory killing of wild elephants though there were some unproven talks about an incident of retaliatory killing of wild elephant few years back.

Relatively wild elephant's movement in Sarlahi was delayed in 2010/11 which doesn't match with the planned period of footage capturing in this project. Consequently, delayed process of documentary making was found one of the difficulties occurred during project period. Several field visits were done to capture footage of human elephant conflict incidences in Sarlahi but it was not sufficient. Thus, footage of human elephant conflict incidences from other areas of Nepal was also included in the documentary.

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

- a. HEC status in Sarlahi was assessed and recent HEC events were documented, which showed that:

Not all the Village Development Committees (VDCs) in Sarlahi rather 23 VDCs in the northern part of the district, where the remnant of dense forests of Charkoshe Jhadi (generally translated as "four miles of bushes"). The continuous stretch of dense forests extending from the east all the way to the west along the southern plains of Nepal - the Terai - that existed prior to 1950s was popularly known as Charkoshe Jhadi. Charkoshe Jhadi have lost its identity due to rapid deforestation by migrants from the hills and from across the border coming to live in the fertile lands of Terai following malaria eradication in 1950s can still be seen, are the ones affected by HEC. Those 23 VDCs are namely, Karmaiya, Rajghat, Hajariya, Dhungrekhola, Shankarpur, Murtiya, Harion, Ghurkauli, Janakinagar, Atrauli, Sasapur, Netragunj, Haripur, Pidari, Jabdi, Lalbandi, Patharkot, Narayankhola, Parwanipur, Kalinjor, Ranigunj, Ishworpur, and Bhaktipur.

Crop damage, property damage, livestock injury/killing, human casualty and retaliatory killing/injury of wild elephants are major types of HEC in Sarlahi.

HEC is one of the serious issues in Sarlahi. The severity of the HEC is highlighted by the fact that during the last 10 year, 7 individuals (one each in 2008 and 2009; two in 2002 and three in 2007) have been brutally killed by the wild elephants in the area.

It is not wild elephants that have moved into the human settlements rather it is human that have encroached wild elephants' natural habitats. This competition for space and resources (local people still rely heavily on forests for fodder, fuel wood, timber and sometimes also for the food) between the wild elephants and the human is causing those above-mentioned types of HEC.

HEC mitigation measures like setting fire, making loud noise (beating drums or tins or shouting in groups), worshipping as per religious belief and setting fence around the field that are being practiced at present in the area are only of temporary nature. These measures though have been effective in keeping the wild elephants away from their locality for a time being and mitigating HEC temporarily, have not been effective in mitigating HEC permanently.

- b. The local people who had limited information about the more organised and permanent ways of mitigating HEC (only one out of 172 respondents have heard about the electric fencing and surprisingly none have heard about repellent crops) were informed about need of taking organised actions to mitigate HEC and were also informed about the electric fencing and planting repellent crops which have been found effectively in mitigating HEC to some extent in other areas of Nepal. Besides, the local people were also informed about the existing directives of providing compensation/relief fund to the victims of Human Wildlife Conflict i.e., Directives for providing compensation/relief fund for the damages caused by wildlife 2009 in Nepal. Only seven out of 172 respondents were found aware about the existence of any such policies in the area.
- c. A documentary of 25 minutes (available both in Nepali and English) including footages of recent HEC events (though only few) was prepared as a part of this project and was publicly screened in Sarlahi and in Rufford Grantees Workshop organized at Kathmandu 13-14th Jan 2012. DVDs of the documentary have been distributed among relevant stakeholders.

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

The local people were very much cooperative to the project team throughout the project period. Their participation in the participatory elephant mobility mapping, semi-structured questionnaire survey, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion was commendable. The participation of local people during the public screening of the documentary was overwhelming. Despite the cold weather the screening was done in the ground of Shree Panch Kumar Secondary School on 29th Jan 2012, more than 150 people were present during the screening of the documentary in Janakinagar VDC.

This project has been successful in bringing the scattered information on HEC in Sarlahi together and in documenting them. The local people came to realise the need of collective actions to fight and cope with ongoing HEC. The local people have become aware about the more organised and effective HEC mitigation measures that are being practiced in other areas of Nepal e.g., electric fencing and planting repellent crops. The local also became aware about the existing directives on compensating victims of Human Wildlife Conflict.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

For sure, the project team has plans to continue this work in the area. As already mentioned earlier, HEC is a serious issue in Sarlahi and at present, majority of local people are unaware about the more organized and effective measures for mitigating HEC. Thus, the project team is planning to form VDC level HEC mitigation groups in Sarlahi and organise awareness raising activities in the area through those groups. Besides, the groups will also be capacitated to efficiently fight and cope with ongoing HEC. The team also thinks that establishment of a HEC relief fund at the local level will undoubtedly

help the victims to recover from the damages that are likely to be caused by HEC in near future. For this the project team will undoubtedly need financial support from the organisations like The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

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

The documentary that has been prepared as a part of this project will be made available for public screening at relevant workshops and seminars. If possible, an effort will be made to broadcast the documentary from one of the national media.

The findings of the project will be compiled into the form of a brief report and will be distributed to the relevant stakeholders in Sarlahi and Department of Forest in Kathmandu.

The findings of the project will be developed into the form of article and an effort will be made to publish in one of the relevant national/international journals.

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

Activities	Proposed schedule (Time in month)	Actual time it took (in month)	Comments
Preliminary survey	Aug 2010	Oct – Nov 2010	Due to late approval of Rufford Grant, it was approved only in Sept, 2010
Field data collection	Sept – Nov 2010	Dec 2010 – May 2011	Due the busy schedule of the government officials, it took longer than the expected time to arrange meetings for the interviews with the Parsa Wildlife Reserve authority and the Director General of Department of Forest.
Data analysis	Nov 2010 – Jan 2011	Jul – Sept 2011	
Documentary making	Sept – Oct 2010 & Apr – Jul 2011	Apr – Oct 2011 for filming and compiling footage Nov – Dec 2011 for editing and preparation of final DVD	Actually, capturing the footages of recent HEC events was a big challenge. Due to limited budget and time frame the project team could not station the documentary team for the whole project period in Sarlahi. Thus, extra efforts had to be made and more time had to be spent to acquire the footages from other sources.
Report writing & final submission	Jan – Jul 2011	Jan – Mar 2012	

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
Remuneration	1306	1306	0	Though project team had to spend some more days in the field were not paid extra remuneration.
DSA	940	1034	-94	DSA was provided for extra working days.
Accommodation	752	625	+127	The local people were generous enough to accommodate the project team in their houses for free.
Travel cost to Nepal	940	940	0	
Other transportation	274	100	+174	The project team rented the bicycles for movement within the project area. This saved some transportation expense.
Stationery (Notebook, Pen, Printing, etc)	94	100	-6	
Communication	188	150	+38	Free skype calls were used as far as possible to save some communication expense
Reporting & Binding	301	301	0	Expense not made yet. So, the budget deficient is expected to be covered from this expense
Documentary preparation and Broadcast	705	977	-272	Extra efforts had to be made and more time and resources had to be spent to acquire the footages from other sources.
Administrative cost 5%	275	275	0	
Total	5775	5808	-33	1 £ sterling = 106.42 (taken from the project application)

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

- Formation of VDC level HEC mitigation groups in Sarlahi.
- Organising HEC awareness activities through the HEC mitigation groups.
- Capacitating the groups to efficiently fight and cope with on-going HEC.
- Fund raising for establishing HEC relief fund at local level to support HEC victims in future.

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?

The RSGF logo was used in the documentary prepared as the part of this project. This will, for sure, publicise the RSGF among the viewers of the documentary. Besides, the logo will also be used in the report that will be distributed to the relevant stakeholders in Sarlahi and Department of Forest in

Kathmandu. Above that, the RSGF will be acknowledged for its financial support in the article that the project team is planning to publish.

11. Any other comments?

Human and wild elephants have been in constant struggle in Nepal already for long time and several studies have been undertaken to assess the gravity of such conflicts and purpose way forwards to mitigate such conflicts. But it is sad that Nepal still lacks even basic information on elephant mobility within the country. The project team, thus, anticipates support from the organisation like the RSGF in its next step to prepare participatory elephant mobility map of Nepal.