

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	Kim Notin
Project title	A Steppe to Sustainability
RSG reference	12371-1
Reporting period	February 1 2013, January 31, 2014
Amount of grant	£5899
Your email address	notin@takh.org
Date of this report	January 30, 2014

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
Increase Khomyn Tal herders' income from sustainable livestock activities by: expanding felt and baby camel wool businesses, exploring feasibility of camel milk business, producing homespun camel wool			✓	<p>Felt handicrafts: we sent out our first print catalogue to shops at zoos with Przewalski's horses worldwide, and we set up an online boutique on the "A Little Market" marketplace. Felt sales doubled in 2013, compared to 2012 (2614 euros and 1279 euros, respectively).</p> <p>Baby Camel Wool: compared to the previous 3 years, more herders participated in the collection and sale, which increased our 2013 harvest considerably (478 kg of raw wool, yielding 216 kg of washed, de-haired wool). We have two new clients in France and three new potential partners in Ulaanbaatar.</p> <p>Camel Milk Business: we met with a Tunisian soap maker who makes soap from dromedaries. We presented the idea to Khomyn Tal's Women's Community Council, who like the idea but were unable to start two new projects this year.</p> <p>Handspun camel wool: we purchased nine "Made in Mongolia" spinning wheels, provided training to the Women's Community Council and sold all the yarn they spun in France. The women spent the 2013-2014 spinning the one-third of the 2013 baby camel wool harvest. This yarn will be sold in France in 2014.</p>
Study, create and facilitate a organisational model for herders to take on greater responsibility		✓		This year we gathered information and tried to motivate the herders to form a camel herders' cooperative. We first discussed the idea individually with each herder in Khomyn Tal, then met the community representatives and governors of the neighbouring communities, analysed the wool from

			<p>the neighbouring communities to ensure that their wool matched Khomyn Tal's fine wool, and invited herders from a successful yak wool cooperative to present to the herders of Khomyn Tal and neighbours. These discussions led to great interest on behalf of the herders to collaborate with neighbouring camel herders to be better organised, and therefore be able to enter into a formal partnership with Association Takh.</p> <p>In October 2013, we sent a letter to the governors of each community explaining that by forming an official organisation, our partnership with them would be more clear and efficient. We decided that they should make the first move to create this organisation, and we are awaiting their decision. It is possible that rather than forming a cooperative, the baby camel wool business will fall under the auspices of the Khar Us Nuur National Park Buffer Zone Council (see following objective) or the Women's Community Council.</p>
Draft conservation contract with camel herders		✓	<p>In the spring, we met with each family in Khomyn Tal and presented the idea of conservation contract which would reward herders for engaging in Przewalski horse conservation. While we did not discuss any specific conditions, we were pleased to have helpful suggestions and a unanimously positive response. A contract was not drafted, because the decision was made to give this responsibility to the Khar Us Nuur Buffer Zone Council (see Q2 below)</p>

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

As described above, we had expected to draft a conservation contract between Khomyn Tal herders and Association Takh. Fully aware that this takes considerable time, we felt that our 10 years of work in the community would allow us to discuss, agree upon and draft a contract in 1 year. However, upon discussion with herders and Association Takh staff members we decided that the contract was one aspect of future conservation work in the community, and that all future conservation initiatives (especially those outside of the Przewalski's horse release site) might be best implemented as part of the Khar Us Nuur Buffer Zone Council's work (Khomyn Tal is in the Buffer Zone). Therefore, we turned our attention to facilitating the reinstatement of this Council, which had not met since 2009. The Council, (comprised of herders, National Park staff and one Mongolian staff member from Association Takh) met in July 2013. The conservation contract is included in their action plan.

Another unforeseen difficulty was a sudden change in the president of the Women's Community Council, the NGO in Khomyn Tal that produces and sells the felt products, hand spun camel wool and who would be our partner in any other new community development initiatives. Several months of work were lost due to a lack of leadership, which means that beginning a camel milk business was not feasible.

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

1. Purchasing nine spinning wheels, made by a Mongolian craftsman, and organising the subsequent training helped to revive the Women's Community Council and brought in women that had not previously participated in other activities. The wool was spun and sold in France, and currently the women are busily spinning 70 kg of baby camel wool. Our research here in France leads us to believe that selling the yarn online would be feasible and lucrative, which could result in further encouragement of camel herding in Khomyn Tal, a key conservation objective in the future. Having cultivated new partners in France and Mongolia, we hope to further grow the baby camel wool business.
2. Creating our first print felt catalogue and an online boutique represent important growths in this small business, even if the immediate economic gain is small. It has forced us to carefully and clearly plan the production of felt products with the Women's Community Council, set up quality standards, and find ways to ensure on time delivery. These skills will undoubtedly be important as we expand our livestock-based conservation enterprises.
3. As part of the objective to better organise camel herders so that we can form a clear and solid partnership, we invited representatives from the Arkhangai Yak Herder's Cooperative to Khomyn Tal to speak at our annual Herders' Forum. This cooperative of 200 herders sells nearly 1 t of baby yak wool to France each year thanks to their collaboration with *Agronomes et Vétérinaires sans Frontières*. Providing the opportunity for herders to exchange ideas, reveal possibilities and share their challenges and successes motivated the Khomyn Tal herders to have a vision of what would be possible for our small camel wool business. The fact that the presentation came from other Mongolians, rather than foreigners, made the experience all the more valuable.

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

This project's focus was on the local community and increasing their income without degrading the steppe. The baby camel wool collected in 2013 will yield approximately 5100 euros in profits to the herders once the sale in France is complete. Their estimated profit from selling the same amount of wool on the Mongolian market is 1023 euros. The felt products brought in just over 2600 euros for 26 women.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The advances made this year helped to inform Association Takh's 2014-2016 strategic plan, which has three main objectives, one of which is to more tightly link Przewalski's horse conservation and community work in such a way that the Khomyn Tal herders benefit economically from the Przewalski's horse conservation efforts. Specifically, we will work with the Khar Us Nuur National Park Buffer Zone Council to negotiate and sign a "Living Gobi" conservation agreement in which herders agree to pasture monitoring and domestic horse management in exchange for efforts to improve and develop sales of their livestock products. In order to offer economic incentives that match the conservation actions we are asking the herders to undertake, we will work with a consultant to develop a business plan for the livestock products and, potentially, adventure tourism.

We will continue to facilitate organizational capacity building for current and new herder organisations (Women's Community Council, Buffer Zone Council, future Camel herders group) with the goal of having the camel herders organized to ensure traceability of baby camel wool, financial transparency of sales, and upfront commitment to provide camel wool, and quality control of raw wool. It is critical that this organization is created and lead by its members (not Association Takh). The spinning wheel project will certainly continue, as the women refine their skills and the market for this product in France is explored.

Lastly, the winter camel race and festival was wildly successful, the herders greatly appreciated this event which likely added to their pride and motivation to continue developing camel-based activities. We hope to make this an annual event.

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

Another of our key objectives for 2014-2016 is communication and outreach, which will take several forms: a book that summarises our main results and lessons learned from our 20 years of work, improving our website as a means of reaching the general public and developing online sales of our livestock products, and being more reactive and proactive in developing conservation colleagues. In terms of the results of this project our summary book will include our advances in connecting conservation and development, the online store and other marketing outlets will highlight our livestock products and the development of the conservation contract, and our collaboration with in-country colleagues such as *Agronomes et Vétérinaires sans Frontières* and the Snow Leopard Trust in Mongolia will continue and benefit from the lesson learned from this project.

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

The project took place from February 1st 2013 – December 31st 2013, which coincides to the anticipated length of the project.

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
Trainer, yarn and business skills				
Petrol 2 roundtrip visits, trainer to KTL	171	151	+20	
Yarn trainer salary and training materials	288	266	+ 22	
Teacher per diem	55	55		
Initiating new camel projects and camel coop				
Staff and herder visit camel wool cooperatives, camel wool and milk processing factories	122	136	-14	
2 trips to visit camel herders, meet and collect wool (Durvuljiin, Dorgon, Chandman soums), petrol	150	124	+26	
Purchase of nine spinning wheels (one per sector of village)	1008	1165	-157	
Veterinarian visit/training re: camel skin, and other, diseases				
Petrol to visit herders individually and present at bag meeting	92	151	-59	
Yarn, felt and wool transport and paperwork				
2 flights UB-Khovd, send felt and yarn to France, camel wool to factory	240	0	+240	Flights to Ulaanbaatar were not necessary, as the felt and camel wool paperwork and shipment were directly from Khovd
Vehicle maintenance costs (collecting wool, visiting herders and coops, etc)	192	193	+1	
Shipment of wool, felt and yarn to France	375	79	+296	The wool was transported from Ulaanbaatar to Khovd by car, and then was sent to France after the end of the grant period.
Paperwork for wool (customs, sanitary certificate) in Mongolia	53	58	-5	Used for felt products paperwork
Customs paperwork and receiving	179	285	-106	Camel wool paperwork costs,

fees in France				including taxis to a number of offices, airport, etc, were higher than expected and other costs (such as pressing the wool into 70 kg balls) were unforeseen
Transport goods KTL to Khovd	68	68	0	
Catalogue				
Graphic artist and printing cost	248	364	-116	Costs greater than expected
Postal cost	191	76	+115	Postage to European countries was less than presumed, less catalogues were mailed than planned
Winter Camel Race Community Event				
Food	246	476	-230	the khomyn tal community fund could not help support the event, and thus we covered all costs
Personnel				
Community Development officer, Khovd and Khomyn Tal (40%)	1532	1524	+8	
Camel project assistant, Khomyn Tal (30%)	689	681	+8	
Total	5899	5852	+29	

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

In general, transferring on-site responsibilities and logistics to Mongolian partners is vital to the sustainability of our local conservation and community develop work. We are a small-scale, long-term organisation that can tailor our capacity-building initiatives to local conditions. Our vision is to build a network of Mongolian partners and provide capacity building to our Mongolian staff so that the work of our French team (in terms of developing added-value livestock activities) focuses on the end of the value chain, such as marketing and communication. To move toward this objective, we will partner with and, when needed, facilitate the work of two key local institutions, the Khar Us Nuur National Park Buffer Zone Council and the Women's Community Council, so that the conservation aspects of our community development work fall under their charge.

In order to create a conservation agreement, we must build conservation enterprises that provide an income that justifies herders' participation in the agreement and are economically self-sufficient. This requires greater efforts in communication, market development and product improvement. To move in this direction, we plan to develop a business plan in collaboration with an outside consultant.



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?

In addition to adding the logo to our website, the RSF logo was used in the following printed materials: felt catalogue, trilingual Takh Association brochure, newsletter for horse adoptees, and annual report.