

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Raman Kumar
Project Title	Improving public awareness to promote conservation of keystone species and their habitat in human-modified landscapes: hornbills in Western Himalayas
Application ID	21874-2
Grant Amount	£4981
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Date of this Report	8 March 2022

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
Awareness programmes in rural and urban schools				Nature awareness sessions were conducted in local schools in Dehradun, Nainital and Haridwar districts of Uttarakhand. However, the number of schools reached was 14 (against a target of 50). This incomplete execution was due to a combination of a delay in beginning the sessions, and subsequently because of schools being shut down due to Covid. However, we were able to conduct several online workshops for schoolteachers and nature educators. We expect to resume contact sessions with schoolchildren in April 2022 when the school fully reopen after the pandemic restrictions are eased.
Setting up children's activity centre				We successfully set up a Children's Library and Resource Centre focussed on nature awareness in Gairdikhata village (Haridwar district). The centre has been equipped with books, poster displays, and also binoculars that the children can use for their nature-based activities. The running of the centre has been handed over to the local Van Gujjar community, who have begun using it for conducting literacy and education programmes.
Developing Hindi translation of children's storybook 'The Secret Garden'				The Hindi language version of the children's book on figs and hornbills (i.e., The Secret Garden - that we'd produced from the earlier Rufford grant) was successfully translated, designed and printed. This is now being distributed as part of the resource kit for nature education in various other awareness programmes in Uttarakhand state.
Developing and designing activity				Although we started with the conceptualisation of potential activities

workbooks				aimed at awareness about the hornbill-fig ecological relationships and outlining relevant audio-visual material was started, these could not be completed. However, we used some of the project funds towards production of a bilingual (Hindi/English) pocket guide to birds of Uttarakhand in Hindi. This publication has been highly commended and is being used in various educational programmes. We are presently in the process of taking this forward on a broader scale under a larger project that we are carrying out on content development for environment education in Uttarakhand schools.
Audio-visual material development				
Public events and nature walks				We conducted nature walks in National Wildlife Week for schoolchildren and the general public. Online open access webinars were also organised during 2020, especially during the lockdown period.
Monitoring trees using citizen science				We attempted to orient schoolchildren towards regular monitoring of trees. However, due to the pandemic-period school closure, this attempt could not result in continuity. Nonetheless, one dedicated cluster of children in Gaindikhata cluster did participate enthusiastically in the nationwide SeasonWatch programme. They also ranked among the country's top groups in the Tree Quest event.
Collecting ecological data on hornbill nesting and foraging				The project did succeed partially in generating relevant data on fruiting trees through participating in SeasonWatch. Similarly, information on birds (including hornbills) was also produced via participation in eBird. However, this attempt did not progress to the next level wherein we were expecting to obtain primary data on hornbill foraging.

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

1. As in case of the previous leg of the project, we again faced inordinate delay in getting government clearances to receive the overseas-based Rufford grant. Hence, the project schedule had to be updated. This led to the mismatch between the time available and personnel commitments to the project. Also, most of the proposed sessions with schoolchildren had to be moved to the following academic calendar. All these factors resulted in disturbing the timeline of project execution.
2. The latter part of the project period was severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The closure of schools coupled with reduced availability of personnel resulted in deferment and/or cancellation of the project's proposed activities.

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

1. *Setting up of library and resource centre* – A Children's Library and Resource Centre for nature awareness was successfully set up in Gaindikhata village (Haridwar district). It was stocked with books (purchased and donated), poster displays, reference material and equipment (binoculars, field guides). It has become a 'seeding' centre for encouraging rural children's participation in various nature-based activities and conservation initiatives. Post setup, the running of the centre is being taken care of by the local Van Gujjar community. The centre has also begun to serve as a hub for literacy and education programmes.
2. *Producing and printing the Hindi storybook on hornbills and figs* – As was felt in the previous leg of the project, any rural-based education programme requires material in the vernacular language. An important outcome of this aim was that we were successful in translating and printing the storybook *The Secret Garden* based on the hornbill-fig ecological relationship. The Hindi version, under the title *Rahasyamay Bageecha* is now being distributed as part of the resource kit for nature education in various other awareness programmes in Uttarakhand state. It has also been used as a resource by the Uttarakhand Forest Department for their environmental awareness programmes.
3. *Efforts to establish Eco-Clubs in state-run schools* – Building upon the experience from this project vis-a-vis planning and conducting environmental awareness for schoolchildren, our organisation has been motivated to upscale the effort by encouraging the Uttarakhand Government to establish eco-clubs in all state-run schools (over 16,000). We are working to set up a collaboration with the Departments of Education and Forests to engage in capacity building of teachers to impart environment education to schoolchildren. In this endeavour we gained a lot from experience drawn from the Rufford project, which has helped build valuable rapport with the state government. A public event marking the Wildlife Week was organised

where discussions were held with the government representatives about how to make eco-clubs meaningful and effective.

4. What do you consider to be the most significant achievement of this work?

Besides creating a skill set for implementing environmental education activities and producing material in vernacular, the most significant achievement of this work has been the fact that the local community has come forward to take independent responsibility of managing and running the library and resource centre.

5. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.

Besides creating a skill set for implementing environmental education activities and producing material in vernacular language, a key benefit of this work has been the fact that the local community has come forward to take independent responsibility of managing and running the library and resource centre. They are now also utilising the centre as a multi-purpose venue to host various literacy and education programmes.

6. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. This has served as a springboard for a larger/broad-based programme targeted at nature education for schoolchildren, particularly in state-run schools. As described above, this project has helped efforts to establish eco-clubs for schoolchildren in government schools in Uttarakhand.

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

The educational materials developed, particularly the storybooks (Hindi and English) and the pocket guide to birds, have been made openly available on various platforms. We expect this to set the stage to fill the deficiency of nature education material in Hindi. As mentioned above, these publications now form a key component of resource kit for nature education used by various governmental and non-governmental organisations for awareness programmes in Uttarakhand state.

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

Although the project activities were scheduled to commence in September 2017, the requisite permissions from the government to receive the grant funds could only be done by July 2018. The delay meant that the entire schedule had to be readjusted, leading to only partial attainment of several of the project's objectives. The duration, too had to be extended to accommodate the constraints of the academic calendar for schools. Lastly, the pandemic caused a long-term closure of schools and seriously affected routine working, leading to even more delays.

9. 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
Awareness modules for schools	2844	1118	-1726	Delayed start of the project and highly reduced school sessions owing to Covid.
Development of awareness material	1187	2936	+1498	With due permission from Rufford, the budget was reallocated for developing extra copies of the publications.
Children's Activity Centre -	625	672	+47	Designer consultant charges were included.
Public events	200	113	-87	Workshops for educators could not be conducted as planned.
Contingency	125	397	+272	Bank charges and auditors' charges for processing formalities for foreign funds.
Total	4981	4981		

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

We plan to continue to resume contact sessions with schoolchildren in April 2022 when the school fully reopens after the pandemic restrictions are eased. We also plan to conduct the workshops that could not be held during the project period. We are also in the process of assisting the state government with content and resources to make the state eco-club programme effective.

11. 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?

The two prominent publications, the children's storybook (in Hindi) and the pocket guide to birds (bilingual), duly acknowledge the support of Rufford and carry the Rufford logo. The role of Rufford is also acknowledged in public events, training sessions, and webinars.

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

Main team	Role
Raman Kumar	Coordination, project management, translation, conducting awareness sessions with schoolchildren and educators.
Soumya Prasad	Assistance in coordination and project management, advice on content, conducting sessions with schoolchildren and educators.
Taukeer Alam	Resource person, local support, setting of resource centre, sessions with schoolchildren and educators, carrying out citizen science activities.
Rajesh Bhatt	Resource person, sessions with schoolchildren and educators.
Ashish Raut	Resource person, sessions with schoolchildren and educators.
Other associates	Role
Anita Varma	Design and layout of storybook for children
Arun Elassery	Advice on content development, planning workshops for educators
Ramnarayan K.	Planning workshops for educators
Mohan Joshi	Assistance in sessions with schoolchildren
Naveen Chandra	Assistance in sessions with schoolchildren
Neha Negi	Advice on design, layout and artwork for resource material

13. Any other comments?

We faced major difficulties in receiving funds due to the stringent procedures of the government. While larger organisations have the requisite wherewithal for handling foreign funds, it is extremely difficult for smaller organisations like ours to carry out the necessary procedures. It would help small organisations and individuals tremendously if Rufford has a branch office in India so that the complicated process involving receiving foreign funds is simplified.