



Bats in Bangladesh attract conference award

In August Nurul Islam, a One Health Epidemiology Fellow (wildlife health) of Massey University, New Zealand, attached to Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control & Research (IEDCR), Bangladesh, presented a paper at the 3rd International Southeast Asian Bat Conference in Sarawak, Malaysia, supported by an AuthorAID travel grant.

'My presentation was focused on community capacity building and conservation education in Bangladesh supported by Rufford Small Grants by Rufford Foundation (13131-1). Bat conservation and research in Bangladesh is a neglected issue and we are trying to boost up the ground level conservation activity,' he explains.

Bangladesh has 33 species of bats, three fruit bats and 30 insect bats, as well as the Indian flying fox. As Islam discussed in his conference presentation, some bats are infected with the Nipah virus, which causes encephalitis in humans and this can be passed from bat to human by contaminated raw date palm sap. As a result, the country has also seen mass awareness and public health education about the risks of bats. However, as Islam's presentation discussed, bat ecological roles are neglected, resulting in a negative impact on public perception of bats.

Islam and colleagues surveyed 300 people in the affected region and found that only 13 per cent saw bats as needing conservation



An Indian flying fox

attention, despite previous studies linking the increase in disease to deforestation and lack of bat habitat. His research aims to address this challenge and educate about the benefits of bat conservation.

Islam's presentation was well-received at the conference

and he was awarded the prize for best oral presentation. 'It was an exciting moment to receive the best oral presentation award from peer bat research scientists in the international forum. The international recognition will help me to boost up my research profile in near future,' he says.

region and the priorities of local researchers.

Language issues

Not surprisingly for such a large and diverse region, there are many challenges.

At a recent workshop for editors of Mongolian journals on or considering the Mongolia Journals Online platform, for example, a key concern was language for

peer review. The journals on the platform – and the platform itself – are in Mongolian but this language and its dialects are only spoken by 5.7 million people around the world. As a consequence, the pool of potential reviewers is small.

Khoa Mai Anh, a researcher in animal nutrition and feeding at Thai Nguyen University, Vietnam, also highlights language challenges for researchers in his country. He was a co-facilitator in

South Asia is a diverse region with many languages, cultures and particular challenges

a recent workshop training trainers to conduct AuthorAID research writing courses in the country.

'The main challenges faced by researchers in my country and so in the region are the lack of access to the sources such as the availability of good articles for references,

funding, the appropriate journals which most likely accept their manuscripts. And I think the limiting factor that contributes to these problems is the English language skill, which means that good ideas are not impressed upon funders or publishers because of

From mentee to mentor: the story of one medical researcher in Pakistan

Farooq Rathore is an assistant professor and consultant at the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, CMH Lahore Medical College and Institute of dentistry in Lahore, Pakistan. He describes himself, 'like many other doctors working in the developing regions of the world,' as 'enthusiastic, eager to learn and keen to share knowledge.' What he needed, he realised was support and guidance to start his

journey in the right direction.

Finding such support was important for Rathore as 'a young resident in rehabilitation medicine trying to make sense of the huge amount of data which we gathered in the aftermath of the deadly 2005 Pakistan earthquake.'

He learnt about INASP's AuthorAID project, which provides online and face-to-face training in research writing and publication for researchers; a

mentoring scheme to match early-career researchers with those who are more experienced in their research; grants to help researchers attend conferences; and a wide range of resources on the website.

'I registered on the website and started connecting with like-minded researchers from developing countries and experienced mentors. I started sending out invites to my colleagues, many of whom

registered on AuthorAID and still continue to benefit from its resources. I signed up for the weekly emails which helped me keep updated about the activities going on at AuthorAID. In addition I started browsing the resource library regularly. This not only helped me in getting answers to many questions I had, but also helped me polish my medical writing and scientific communications skills.'