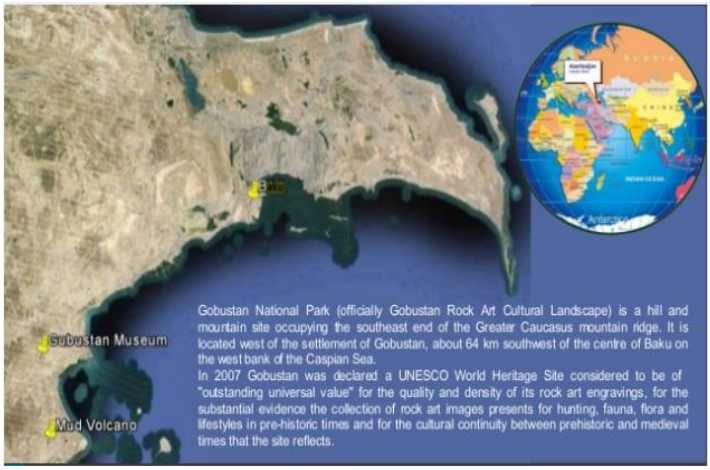
INCREASING CAPACITY FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION: Long-Term Integrated Research and Conservation Education Program, Azerbaijan

At the foot of the Caucasus Mountains, 60 km from the capital Baku, the *Gobustan State National Pa*rk is a nationally important desert/semi-desert located west and south-west of Baku. The desert and semi-desert plant communities in the *Gobustan* area represent the most ecologically important habitats but climate change increasingly affecting this local vegetation.

With funding from Booster Grant (Rufford Small Grant For Nature Conservation (2015-2016)) Azerbaijani scientists continue a project on increasing capacity for biodiversity conservation in Gobustan, Azerbaijan.

The Project includes Long-Term Integrated rare vegetation research as well the Conservation Education Program.

Locating plant heritage



This project is being carried out by scientists from Institute of Botany of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences and specialists in Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing.

Project Leader: Yelena M. Gambarova
Project Mentor: Adil Y. Gambarov
Project members: Rustam B. Rustamov, Maral H. Zeynalova

Project objective

The overarching Project goal is to strengthen rare vegetation conservation through the development of long-term integrated research and conservation education program. The term program refers to a collection of information, lessons and activities that are put together to make a conservation education program.

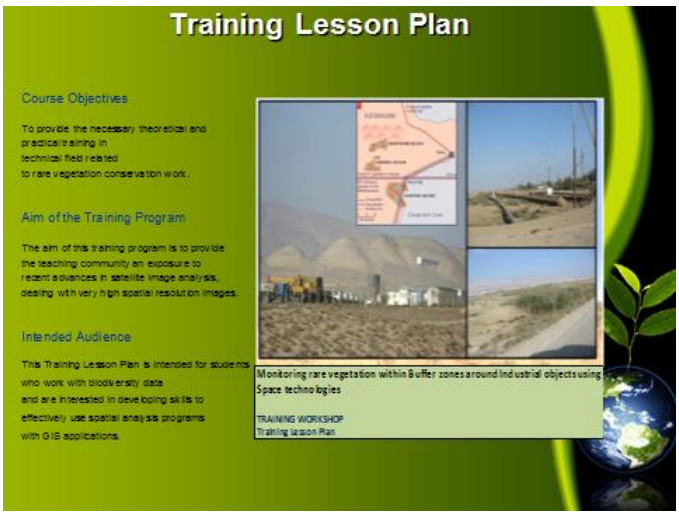
The function and viability of rare vegetation communities can be improved through the application of "buffer zones", by minimizing external threats and encouraging land-use management in adjacent areas. A structured course with biodiversity monitoring scheme for rare vegetation within “buffer zones” were developed and delivered.

Activities

1. **Designing conservation education program**
   a. Design a capacity building strategy;
   b. Identify target audience;
   c. Conservation educational program development tool

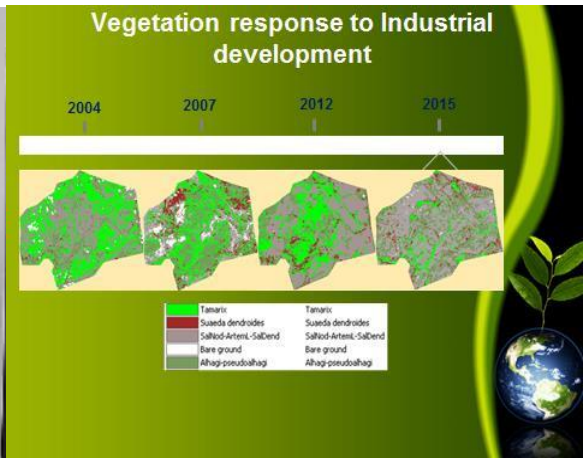
2. **Training materials development**

We developed the Lesson Plan, User Manual, Test Scripts and Presentation. These materials were provided to Target audiences, including teachers because many teachers have great interest in the subject “Remote Sensing in Nature Conservation”, being motivated to integrate this topic into teaching, provided that the curriculum is considered.



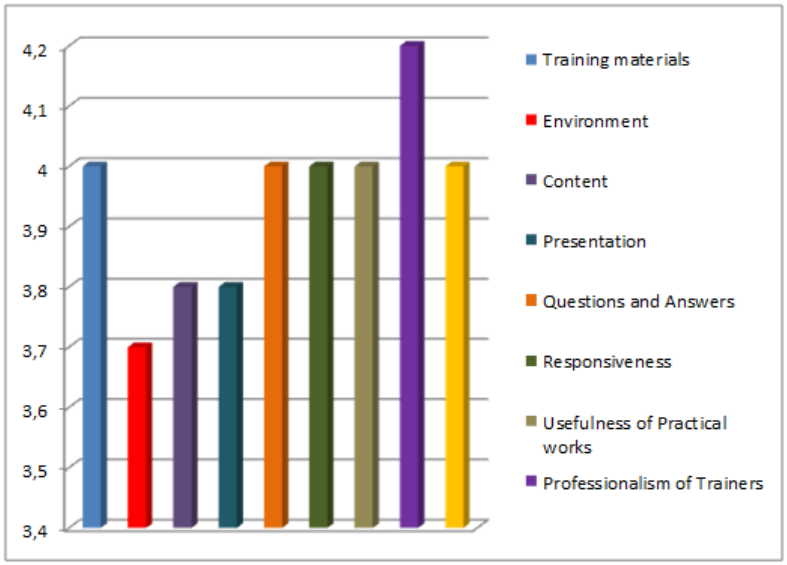
3. **Training workshop implementation**

Out Team conducted training through a two-day workshop “Open Education Initiative - “Open Education Initiative - Space for our young generation”. Its goal was to make use of space technology to create awareness of conservation among students. GIS database established and used to identify, prioritizes and provide a foundation for land-use planning and understanding the threats to rare vegetation. Map production of changes in rare vegetation over the years was implemented.



4. **Monitoring and Evaluation workshop**

The monitoring system of the project outputs has included quality control of the outputs through questionnaires.



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Yelena Gambarova is Leader of *Project* team. The *project* **"***INCREASING CAPACITY FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION: Long-Term Integrated Research and Conservation Education Program, Azerbaijan*" is funded by the *Rufford Small Grants* Foundation.

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