

Report of Habitat Ecology Learning and Teachers for Tigers Assessment Workshop

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The "Habitat Ecology and Teachers for Tigers Assessment workshop, organized by Zoo Outreach Organisation and in collaboration with Wildlife Conservation Society, USA, was held from 24-28 April, 2006 at Karl Kubel Insititute, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. Seventeen participants from six countries namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and India apart from two resource persons from WCS USA took part in the workshop.

The objective of the five-day programme was to provide education and outreach personnel with an interest in public education with experience in a variety of content areas and hands-on techniques related to effective conservation education for protected areas, zoos, schools and other sites. The goals were to assess progress accomplishments, evaluate and adapt Habitat and Ecology Learning Programme, introduce UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) and Teens for Planet Earth – assess relevance in Asia, make some fruitful plans for collaboration.

During the workshop WCS's educational manual, *How Nature Works*, was used to provide examples of how to create activities and materials for diverse audiences. Some days of the workshop was devoted to working together in groups to adapt the *How Nature Works* manual for use in participants' home sites. Special sessions were also done with a focus on: 1) how to evaluate the impact of programmes to increase their effectiveness; 2) how learning takes place and learning theory relevant to planning effective programmes and 3) strategic planning for education programmes.

On the first day of the workshop Tom Naiman, Director, Curriculum Development and International Education, Wildlife Conservation Society in his introductory remark explained the objectives of the workshop and briefed the background and history of the education materials developed by WCS particularly the HELP manuals. Nalini Mohan explained the contents of the workshop. On behalf of Zoo Outreach Organisation, Marimuthu welcomed the participants. The participants introduced themselves through two activities – "Name chain" and "Sound off".

In the first session of first day Nalini Mohan took a very interesting and interactive session on "How the brain learns and its relevance to environmental education" with various props and examples. In the afternoon participants were given time to share their experience with others of their own education activities in their respective places.

On the second day, the session started with group activity to analyze and adapt lessons in the HELP manual and prepare a presentation in groups for assigned units. All the participants were allotted their portions and groups were formed much before the workshop to facilitate easy working. The groups were given time to present their views so as to adapt those units suitable for South Asian context. This was followed by HELP Unit presentation from 1-3. Coordination within a team is very much essential to be

successful in their effort. To understand this the "Hawk and the Pigeon" game was played before the group activity.

The third day the session started with HELP Unit presentation from 4-7 units and later on all the groups discussed extensively on various other aspects to bring out a version suitable for South Asian audience. In continuation of it Tom Naiman gave a wonderful presentation on "Teens for Planet Earth Program" that is being run by the education division of Bronx Zoo. He also talked about UN decade of Education for Sustainable Development. In the late evening of the day, participants continued with their presentations.

The fourth day was a field trip. All the participants were taken to Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala, which has a small population of tigers. The team while entering the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu got the chance to see a Leopard. The wildlife warden Mr. Shrawan Kumar Verma, IFS of the Sanctuary was with the team throughout the day and he took the participants around the Sanctuary. The group was lucky to see many wildlife and also some of the undisturbed forest.

On the fifth day Nalini Mohan talked about "Education Evaluation Methods". She talked various methods of evaluation and demonstrated how to do the evaluation also. To continue with that Daniel handled a session in order to evaluate and to get a feed back from the participants about the education materials developed by Zoo Outreach Organisation. A brief period of time was also allotted to get ideas from the participants about developing education materials on various themes suitable for various audiences. This was done in three groups and at the end all three groups presented their ideas.

The five-day programme ended with an evaluation and issue of certificates to the participants.

Participants :

Amit Eknath Chavan, **Nature Information Centre, BNHS**; Sonam Choden, **Education Officer, Department of Forests, Bhutan**; Gawsia Chowdhury, **Programme Officer, Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh**; Jayanta Das, **Large Mammal Conservationist, Wildlife Areas Development and Welfare Trust Guwahati, Assam**; B. A. Daniel, **Scientist, Zoo Outreach Organisation**; Jinie Dela, **Freelance Education and Conservation Consultant, Sri Lanka**; Kundhavi Devi, **Auroville**; Simanta Kalita, **Co-ordinator Centre for Environment Education, Assam**; S. Mamatha, **Mysore West Lions Sevanikethan School, Mysore**; Musnarizal Abd. Manap, **Educational Officer, Zoo Taiping & Night Safari**; A. Manimozhi, **Biologist, Arignar Anna Zoological Park**; R. Marimuthu, **Education Officer, ZOO**; Payal B. Molur, **Go Wild Workshops**; Anand Pendharkar, **SPROUTS**; Shimona Quazi, **ECO Consultants, Bangladesh**; Rachna Shah, **Conservation Education Officer, Central Zoo, Nepal**; Ugyen Tshering, **Education Officer, Environmental Education Focul Person, Nepal**

Resource Persons:

Tom Naiman, Director, Curriculum Development & International Education; **Nalini Mohan**, International Teacher Trainer, Education Division, Wildlife Conservation Society, New York, USA