

Monthly Report of EPRC

(First Month)

1) **Project Title:** Empowering People for Rhino Conservation (EPRC)

2) **Time Period:** August 1st- September 1st

3) Objectives of the month:

As per the proposed planning, following were the objectives of the first month:

- a) To set up office, procure and orient staffs.
- b) To inform and co-ordinate local and national stakeholders about the program.
- c) To select the project covering five bufferzone VDCs of Chitwan National Park.
- d) To conduct a focus group discussion.
- c) To establish rhino clubs.
- d) To conduct school talk programs in rhino clubs.

4) Performed Activities:

S.N.	Activities	Performed Time	Remarks
1.	Office Set up, staffs procurement and orientation.	Ist week	
2.	Appraisal to local and national stakeholders.	IInd week	
3.	Selection of project covering five VDCs.	IInd week	Selected VDCs are Megghauli, Jagatpur, Kumroj, Kumarwanti, Kolhuwa
4.	Establishment of rhino clubs in schools.	IInd-IVth week	Five rhino clubs have been established.
5.	Focus Group Discussion	IInd week	
6.	School talk programs	IInd-IVth week	School talk programs have been conducted in three schools.

5) Description: As per the planning made for the first month, activities were performed accordingly. At first office staffs were appointed on the merit basis. Field staffs were selected on certain basis such as inhabitants of bufferzone area, from indigenous groups and having experience on community based activities. After selection, they were apprised of mission and methodologies of the project. Similarly, separate office was set up to ensure efficient and timely function of the project.

Five bufferzone VDCs of Chitwan National Park were selected which were most vulnerable towards rhino poaching but have dearth of conservation oriented programs comparing others. Among them three were from Chitwan district (Megghauli, Jagatpur and Kumroj) and two were from Nawalparasi district (Kolhuwa and kumarwarti).

Before launching the program at the field level, information was given to concerned governmental and non-governmental organizations about the program. Among them Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), Chitwan National Park (CNP), WWF country office (including field office Chitwan), IUCN country office, National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), District Forest Office, Bufferzone Council of Chitwan National Park, District NGO Co-ordination Committee Chitwan are the prominent.

Focus group discussion was conducted on 11th August at Laukhuri of Megghauli VDC targeted to indigenous people whose family's members are convicted for the rhino poaching activities. Megghauli VDC is highly poaching vulnerable area. Indigenous people of that area are mostly impoverished and illiterate and are being found involved in rhino poaching. The conflict between park and people in that area is also at boiling point. Hence, focus group discussion was initiated to motivate the local people for conservation and to help reduce conflict with park. Forty one local people have participated in the program including family members of seven imprisoned individuals who were convicted in rhino case.

In the program, EPRC team apprised the participants about mutual relation between park and people and prevailing laws about poaching related activities. The participants were also provided opportunities to narrate their experiences on park-wildlife experiences.

From the focus group discussion, it can be concluded that indigenous people are not against conservation but proper and adequate initiatives are not taken to motivate them.

Rhino Clubs were established in five secondary schools. The names of the schools are:

- a) Sajhapur Secondary School, Megghauli-4, Chitwan
- b) Shree Secondary School, Patihani-8, Chitwan
- c) Shree Kapiya Secondary School, Kumroj-8, Chitwan
- d) Shree Kumarwarti Secondary School, Kolhuwa-5, Nawalparasi
- e) Shree Saraswoti Secondary School, Kumarwarti-6, Nawalparasi

The schools were selected on following basis:

- i) Similar types of clubs not established before so as to avoid replication.
- ii) If established then not active now.
- iii) Intensity of rhino-human conflict in school covering areas.
- iv) Interest of the students and teachers towards the club.

For the establishment of the rhino clubs, EPRC team has first provided written information to school's principal about the motives of the program. Being the school of bufferzone and poaching prone areas, they have expressed needs of such clubs and also emphasized on involvement of students for rhino conservation. EPRC team has further discussed with school' principal along with environment and science teacher about the planned activities and functional modalities of the rhino clubs.

In each school, students of class 8, 9 and 10 were focused to be involved in rhino clubs. It has been done from the view that they have more or less information about conservation through their curriculum and also have understood to some extent about rhino-human conflict and poaching activities. With the co-operation of the school team, the students were informed about the rhino clubs, and its planned activities. Students from indigenous and minorities groups are especially initiated to involve in rhino club.

After the establishment of the rhino clubs, EPRC team members have apprised the selected body about the functional modalities of the clubs. Rhino Clubs have held first meeting of the club soon after its formation and decided on basic norms regarding periodic meetings and roles & responsibilities. They have shown interest to gradually add the general membership of the club.

Aftermath of club formation, school talk programs have been conducted in three schools with the help of rhino clubs. The students of class 8, 9 and 10 have participated in the program. Rhino Club members have assisted in the arrangement for the information and management of the program.

With the consensus of school's principal, time was requested for the talk program. In talk program, school's principal, environment and science teachers were also invited. EPRC team members furnished the knowledge and information about the conservation and rhinos to their level. They were informed about the status of rhinos in the world, situation of Greater One Horned Rhinos in Nepal especially in Chitwan National Park, rhino poaching. Students have been informed about the reasons to save the rhino. Handouts were also distributed to the students.

During school talk programs, students were asked to render the knowledge they possessed about the rhinos. Some students have questioned about the reason of rhino attack towards human and crops, cause for the rhino poaching and the ways to subside it. Principal of the schools and teachers have also added to on the needs of rhino conservation. Some students have stressed on needs of mainstreaming conservation education in the curriculum, albeit as optional subject.

(Separate activities reports are also included)

6) Outputs: Following outputs have been achieved from the first month program.

- a) Official requirements have been fulfilled for EPRC project office.
- b) Knowledge on rhino conservation and rhino-human relationship has been enhanced through rhino clubs formation, school talk programs and focus group discussion.

Activity Report on Focus Group Discussion At Meghauri

- 1. Activity:** Focus Group Discussion
- 2 Date:** 11th August 2007
- 3. Venue:** Meghauri VDC-1, Laukhuri, Chitwan

4. Background:

A focus group discussion was held at Meghauri VDC-1, Laukhuri, Chitwan where the magnitude of park and people conflict is comparatively high. Discussion was targeted to Kumal indigenous group which have blame of high involvement on poaching. Indigenous people of this VDC are highly vulnerable on poaching and its related activities. Meghauri is 25 KM far from the district headquarter Bharatpur. It has around 17000 population where 60% are indigenous tribes prominently dominated by Kumal, Bote Majhi and Tharu. Conservation education and awareness program is not adequately implemented on those community. That is why EPRC have chosen the place and group for the program. The purpose of the program was to reduce the park and people conflict and to gradually increase motivation towards conservation.

Meghauri is also one of the most wildlife suffering bufferzone area of Chitwan National Park. Among nine wards (in Nepal every VDC is further divided into nine wards), ward no. 1, 2 and 3 are affected immensely and ward no. 5 and 7 partially by the rhinos of nearby national park in terms of crop, livestock depredation and physical attack. Since long, villagers have induced queue system for night watch from the Machan (tower) so that they can inform others about the rhinos arrival and can hound out through human noise and torches.

CNP has convicted 25 individuals of Meghauri VDC on being indulged or assisting poaching. Among them more than 75% belongs to the indigenous groups which are mostly illiterate and impoverished.

5. Objectives :

The objectives of focus group discussions were to :

- a) provide opportunity to narrate their experiences about park-people-wildlife circumstances.
- b) know their attitude and feeling towards rhino and its conservation.
- c) motive them on rhino conservation, to aware on benefit of conservation, repercussions of poaching and to apprise them on prevailing laws.

6. Methodology :

The program was conducted with the local co-ordination and support of Prabhat Kiran Sewa Samaj (PKSS), a CBO based on that locality. It has formally committed to support the project. The EPRC project team member and the activists of PKSS approached to the target group member three days ahead of the program and informed about the program. The venue was selected on local primary school which was at the central accessible venue for all the participants. Though the participants were from different wards, majority were from 1, 2 and 3 no. and were mostly illiterate.

The president of PKSS, Mr. Chabilal Neupane started the program with the relevancy and contents of the program. The project co-ordinator of EPRC Mr. Deepak Acharya explored on the objectives of the EPRC and the focus group discussion.

The family members of imprisoned or fled alleged rhino poachers belonging to Kumal indigenous group were specially requested for the program. In the program, family members of seven imprisoned poachers participated. Interestingly, two family members had handover their son and husband respectively to the park .

The program was scheduled on three phases. At first phase, participants were offered one by one to narrate their experience and practice on park-wildlife induced circumstances. Similarly, the family members of imprisoned alleged poachers put forth the realities, sufferings, stigmatization and desires.

At the second phase, the participants shared on their perception and attitudes towards the conservation and rhino issues. Lastly, the participants were made aware on the benefit of conservation, needs of rhino protection and prevailing laws on poaching.

The participants have shown eagerness to express their views on several aspects of conservation and rhino issues. According to them, they are never been invited to share on these issues though it highly relates to them. They said their problems and grievances have never been heard by the concerned authorities. Participants requested organizers (EPRC) to relate their voices where it will be deemed. Most of the participants stressed on conservation education and awareness program to Kumal community and reiterated their role on conservation shouldn't be disparaged.

Local community leader and ex-ward chairperson (people representative) Mr. Karna Dhowj Adhikari was specially invited on the discussion and he further stressed on needs of conservation and urged participants to keep refrain from any sorts of anti conservation activities and poaching assistance.

The participants of Kumal indigenous group have intense grievances towards the park official and even a public for being bad-tagged them as 'poachers.' Surprisingly, some

participants said they did not have knowledge that involvement in poaching directly or indirectly is a serious crime .

The imprisoned family members blamed park authority for lengthy juridical process. They asserted that investigative process should be swift and time span needed for final verdict should be defined so that they should not have to live with dilemma and mental torture.

Indigenous people have entrenched conviction that regulation, act and activities of the park are not pro-public and park want to impose it at through any means.

During the program, the project team convinced the participants to seek amicable solution of the problem. They were apprised that the endorsed regulations and laws (on which they are unsatisfied) are prepared by the team including people representatives and if felt necessary it can be amended through dialogue with the concerned parties.

7. Significant voices :

We have included here the selected voices of participants including imprisoned family members, their perception about human-wildlife relation, rhino conservation and related matters in their own words.

“I forced my husband to surrender”

a) DurgaMaya Kumal (*Meghauli-2, Sisawas*) : I have never participated in this type of program. I am pleased to share my experiences. I take this as an opportunity. I am Durga Maya Kumal, 45. My husband Buddhi Bahadur Kumal is at Bharatpur jail since six month on the allegation of rhino poaching. I had never known my husband was involved in poaching till park official sent warrant letter to my house. Subsequently, my husband fled to India and remained there approximately for a year.

During that period, park staffs and army forces used to come at our house and threatened us to show the hideout of my husband. They even thrashed and misbehaved with my 20 years old daughter and put pistol on her forehead. How could I bear that ? Park staffs did not try to convince me rather threatened. Is that behave suit for government staffs ? But once when I made contact with my husband, I forced him to surrender.

As my husband was a boatman, I did not believe he did a poaching, but he could have unknowingly assist poachers. My husband confessed he guide a group and informed them about rhinos prime habitat of the locality. He got Rs. 30,000/- (US \$ 461) from that group.

On this ground of mistake, I had hope he would not be languished longtime in a jail and would be released soon. We, husband and wife, together went to national park office and he surrendered. But its more than half a year and his case is still pending, park officials say it is in process. Up to when we have to wait in this quandary. If my husband did

against laws, he should be punished, but up to when we have to wait and only wait for final verdict. I said publicly, I would made my husband to refrain from poaching if he get release.

We are poor and our agricultural land did not make us survive for a year. Had my husband been with us, we should not have struggle hard to get two time meal.

“We want conservation related awareness”

b) Shanti Kumal (Meghauli-2, Parsabajar) : My husband Toplal Kumal, 40 years old was a night guard of Temple Tiger lodge. He has worked there for 20 years. Previously, he was labour of the tented camp, later he was appointed to care baby rhino reared by the lodge itself. Park staffs nabbed him five months ago from the lodge while he was in duty with uniform and Khukuri (weapons of guard).

Since then he was in Bharatpur jail on rhino case. As my husband told me, Raju Shrestha who was earlier detained in rhino case, blamed my husband as his associate.

After arrest, we went to park office and did inquiry. They assured he will be released within a week but he was sent to jail.

My husband said he had taken NRs. 20,000 (US \$ 308) in two installments as a loan to support in a house maintenance from the Raju shrestha (the person who blamed). Sometimes we have conversation about rhino. I told my husband not to indulge in those activities because we know the laws are harsh. He used to respond positively too. We never had enough money to survive. If he had been a poacher, we should have enough for survival. I am second wife of my husband and have seven children. How could I rear them ?

Park officials did not torture us but we are becoming more poorer by the judiciary process. We did not know about it . Once we provided NRs. 5000 (US \$ 77) to the lawyer who was introduced by the local leader of our community Jaya Mangal Kumal. Lawyer again asked for NRS. 10000 (US \$ 154) to defend the case, but we could not afford furthermore and aftermath didnt know about the case.

I am interested to get aware on nitty-gritty of conservation so that we should not have to endure sufferings.

“I experience first sharing program”

c) Shova Shrestha (Meghauli-3, Jitpur) – I thank the organizer on being arrived here to exchange feelings with us. My son Raju Shrestha, 32, is imprisoned since five months in rhino case. I am women representative of ‘Bardah bufferzone community forest’ too.

Park officials and army surrounded our house two times in search of my son. He fled to India for 10 months after the park officials called him for investigation. I forced him to return and handover in front of the park officials and bufferzone council members. This was the first case in CNP in which a mother herself handover her warranted son.

My son confessed with me, once he went with a poacher groups but was not involved in poaching. I know his deed worth to be punished but when his investigation will be completed ? Our sons, brothers, husbands are not animals to be tied without proper justification.

Park administration always turned deaf ear to our voices. They even didnot respond us. I havenot expected this sort of behaviour while surrendering my son. My belief towards the park, bufferzone council are faded away now. For the sustainable conservation, the relation between park and people is indispensable. Conducive environment should be made to enhance co-action.

We did not have any means to share sufferings and no one to share with us. This is the first program held in this area where we have shared our attitude towards conservation and feelings.

I support these types of programs. Being a member of bufferzone community forests, I urge other organizations to implement awareness programs. These types of programs can hit the vulnerable people and can help to mitigate conflict between wildlife-people, park-people conflict.

“I am ready to own up responsibility of my husband”

d) Sita Kumal (Meghauli-2, Parsa bajar) : Two years ago, my husband Surya Bahadur Kumal, was arrested by the army from the house in midnight. Since then he is at jail, but his crime was not decided yet.

We did not have land. We have six children and my husband used to do labour works. After his imprisonment, our woes are further compounded. Me and my children too are compelled to work on other lands to get atleast minimum survival.

I fear if my husband will languish in jail for ever. No one hear to us, neither define the crime. I am ready to own up responsibility of my husband that he wouldnot be involved in any poaching activities in future. I did not believe he was involved in poaching previously because he didnot have more than his usual wages. If he did something wrong or against laws, I am confident it is unknowingly. We are illiterate and could be deceived easily. Is being poor and living near the park is a curse to us ?

If my husband wants to change himself, why he shouldnot be given chance ?

“We are not against conservation”

e) Pamfa Maya Kumal (Meghauli-1, Laukhuri) : I didnot know my husband, Sukram Kumal, was indulged in poaching. Park authorities did not issue warrant letter or made inquiry on it. Our son work in India, hence my husband went India to meet with son. While returning, my husband was arrested in Chaubiskothi, Bharatpur 14 months ago. I didnot know whereabouts of my husband then. I approached with Jyotishi (astrologer) to know where he was. Jyotishi suggested he might have arrested. On further inquiry, I came to know, husband was imprisoned on the rhino poaching case. But I did not believe he was really involved in poaching. He might have compelled to accept the crime by the torture of park and security forces.

He often used to enter the park areas and community forests to get forestry needs and park resources. I did not know more than that.

Before the arrest, I did not know the laws and punishment made for poaching, but now I know little, the laws are harsh. We want to know more about conservation, but who will render us ? We did not even have chances to share our sufferings, problems and feelings. We are not against conservation and are ready to contribute but we should notbe tortured. We hope you have come here to help us.

“Our community needs awareness”

f) Batuli Kumal (Meghauli-1, Laukhuri) : Five months ago, security forces raided our house at midnight. They took away our guest in the confusion he was my husband. But when they know, they released a guest and arrested my husband. They assured me they will not torture or misbehave with my husband and will be released the next day after short inquiry. We did not dare to go CNP office the next day. After some days, I came to know he was transferred to Bharatpur jail from the park custody.

I am illiterate, impoverished, did not know much and hence cannot face with park authorities to know the realities of my husband. Villagers said my husband was arrested for rhino poaching and I feel harassed. Our village and community avidly needs awareness and conservation education program to avoid this type of circumstances. I hope you will act as bridge to solve our problems.

“Who will hear to us ?”

g) Sita Kumal (Meghauli-2, Parsa bajar) : My husband, Bir Bahadur Kumal, was arrested two years ago, while he was in work. Some local enemy might have blamed him as a poacher and he was arrested. He was simple house labour. We have five small children. I have immense trouble to eke out living.

My husband case was still pending and I did not know legal procedures. Who will hear to us ? We did not have any guide who will apprise us about legal process and educate us on conservation.

“Interaction between park-people extremely lacks”

h) Karna Dhowj Adhikari (Community leader, ex-ward chairperson) :

The rules and regulations of parks and bufferzone didnot encompass feelings and aspirations of bufferzone people. National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973, its amendments and bufferzone regulation 1996 should be largely rectified .The bufferzone people are not against conservation but where is the initiatives to make them conservation oriented. Their crops are decimated by rhinos, park staffs show aggression to the villagers, they are victimized more on their small fault. Allocated budget for compensation didnot carry even 10 percent of damage. There is not direct interaction, discussion between park and people. The distance and antagonism between them is growing day by day.

Kumal community are being regularly bad-tagged as ‘rhino poachers’ and they used to suffer more than other community. If Kumal community is vulnerable for rhino poaching, why government and non-government sectors keep silence to hear and motivate them on conservation. It should be a grave concern of related organizations to aware, advocate and motivate the critical population towards the conservation. Wide scale of conservation education and conflict mitigation program will definitely turnaround the prevailing situation.

Around 15 persons of three wards (1,2 and 3) of Meghauri VDC are convicted by the park for being involved in poaching. Seven of them are imprisoned while others were at large. The cases are protracted for long period. Neither they are released nor the case ends.

I will not say local people are being jailed without any cause but the level of their crime should be identified and should be punished accordingly. Most of them have to suffer more than their deeds. This tendency generate nothing except vengeance against park and conservation. If the situation perpetuates, after five years male members will be difficult to find out here.

“Aware the People”

i) Chabilal Neupane (President, Prabhat Kiran Sewa Samaj, CBO, Sukranagar) :

Bufferzone people should be awared on their rights and responsibilities on conservation. Natural resources should be allowed to consume but with conservation-friendly modality. There are two major stumbling blocks of conservation. Firstly, conflict between park and people and secondly inadequate conservation education for grassroot people. If initiations are taken to tackle with these things, conservation problems will be alleviated gradually.

8. Output: The discussion tests the interpretation and understanding of the participants on the conservation and rhino issues and to some extent redress their conviction. Out of 41 participants (except project team and local supporting CBO activists), 37 were from poaching vulnerable Kumal community including 18 female.

According to participants, this is the first sharing and sensitization program on conservation that reached at their level. Hence, it is expected that the essence of rhino conservation will be disseminated to many through the participants. The participants stressed on following points :

- a) We realize conservation is necessary for all. Rhino conservation will benefit us.
- b) We need conservation education and awareness programs.
- c) We will try to refrain our community and prison-released individuals from poaching.
- d) We commit to actively participate and support in rhino conservation programs.
- e) We are ready to resolve problems and conflict.

9. Conclusion :

From the views of the participants, it can be concluded that indigenous people are not against conservation but proper and adequate initiatives are not taken to motivate them. They stressed on dire need of information, knowledge about conservation aspects, park rules and system. They want to share their problems, sufferings and seek mutual solution of the problems but did not have enough means and opportunity to express.

10 . Recommendation :

- a) Conservation education and awareness programs should be in direct access of vulnerable community.
- b) Urgent initiations should be taken to mitigate conflict between park and people. Interactions and dialogue should be enhanced among the grass root people, park, bufferzone council and related stakeholders,
- c) Park staffs should inform Imprisoned family members about judiciary process and final verdict should be given sooner as possible.
- d) Compensation process should be transparent and amount should be justifiable.

List of Participants

S.N.	Name	Address
1	Shankar Kumal	Meghauli 1
2	Bishnu Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
3	Bal Krishna Kumal	Meghauli 1
4	Sukram Kumal	Meghauli 1
5	Baburam Kumal	Meghauli 1
6	Lal Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
7	Purna Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
8	Karna Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
9	Aaitram Kumal	Meghauli 1
10	Durga Maya Kumal	Meghauli 2
11	Indra Maya Kumal	Meghauli 2
12	Rudra Kumar Shrestha	Meghauli 3
13	Shova Shrestha	Meghauli 3
14	Srijana Kumal	Meghauli 2
15	Ram Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
16	Shanti Kumal	Meghauli 1
17	Mangali Kumal	Meghauli 1
18	Batuli Kumal	Meghauli 1
19	Suk Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
20	Pampha Maya Kumal	Meghauli 1
21	Dolakhi Kumal	Meghauli 1
22	Deu Maya Kumal	Meghauli 1
23	Sita Kumal	Meghauli 2
24	Shanti Kumal	Meghauli 1
25	Karna Dhowj Adhikari	Meghauli 1
26	Som Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
27	Jit Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
28	Ram Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
29	Bir Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
30	Basanta Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
31	Purna Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
32	Som Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
33	Maite Kumal	Meghauli 1
34	Bir Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
35	Tul Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
36	Mangali Kumal	Meghauli 1
37	Biba Kumal	Meghauli 1
38	Suk Bahadur Kumal	Meghauli 1
39	Amar Kumal	Meghauli 1
40	Sita Kumal	Meghauli 1
41	Shanti Kumal	Meghauli 1

Activity Report on Establishing Rhino Club At Meghauri

- 1. Activity:** Establishment of rhino club in school for rhino conservation awareness
- 2 Date:** 15th August 2007
- 3. Venue:** Sajhapur Secondary School, Meghauri-4, Chitwan, 28 km far from the District head quarter Bharatpur.
- 4. Participants:** Students of class 8, 9 and 10.
- 5. Objective:** To establish a rhino club in a school.

6. Methodology: Meghauri is the poaching prone bufferzone area of Chitwan National Park comprising 60% indigenous Bote, Kumal population. The school covers most vulnerable area for poaching. Fore mostly, written information was provided to the Principal of the school about the planning to establish rhino club in the school. After his approval and commitment for co-operation, students of class 8, 9 and 10 were informed about the rhino club. All the students of secondary level were gathered and team members of EPRC comprising project officer Mr. Nirmal Aryal and field assistant Mr. Dolraj Neupane explained them about needs and objectives to establish rhino club. They further elaborated on planned activities to activate the club and expected contribution from the students. Students were excited to contribute for rhino club. They consulted and unanimously chose the working committee. They decided to name the club as "**Sajhapur Rhino Club**". Students made the principal of the school Mr. Lilanath Neupane as the advisor of the club.

Thirteen member working committee has been formed as following :

President:	Deepak Chapagain (class-9)
Vice President:	Laxmi Tiwary(class-9)
Secretary:	Umesh Dhakal (class-10)
Asst. Secretary:	Manisha Malla (class-9)
Treasurer:	Santosh Basnet (class- 10)
Members:	Harikala Bhattarai (class-9)
	Taranath Parajuli (class-8)
	Shanti Basnet (class-8)
	Muna Pangen (class-8)
	Shiva Bhandary (class-8)
	Ajit Mahato (class-10)
	Prem Bhusal (class-9)

Kabita Bhusal (class-10)

7. Output: The committee members held their first meeting. On the very first meeting they decided to forge functional relationship with EPRC. They decided to hold regular meeting. They have expressed interest to conduct different types of school level competition on conservation.

8. Feedback: In general, students were happy and acknowledged EPRC for assisting in establishment of rhino club. They showed their interest on conservation works but sought support to strengthen the club.

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Activity Report on Establishing Rhino Club At Patihani

- 1. Activity:** Establishment of rhino club in school for rhino conservation awareness.
- 2. Date:** 21st August 2007
- 3. Venue:** Shree Secondary School, Patihani- 8, Ganganagar, 15 km far from the district headquarter, Chitwan
- 4. Participants:** Students of class 8, 9 and 10.
- 5. Objective:** To establish a rhino club in school.
- 6. Methodology:** The school was chosen because it lies in the buffer zone area of Chitwan National Park and school covering areas have been regularly suffered by rhino and other animals of near by park. After receiving information about the program to establish rhino club, principal Mr. Ek lal Bhandari deputed science teacher Mr. Shanta Ram Mahato and population teacher Mr. Tika Ram Ghimire for needed assistance.

With the assistance of the teachers, students of secondary level were gathered and EPRC team apprised on objectives of forming rhino club. Along with crosssharing session, students came forward and nominated their names to join the clubs. Students have chosen the working committee as following:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| President: | Krishna Adhikari (Class-9) |
| Vice president: | Rewati Sitaula (Class-10) |
| Secretary: | Pradeep Sapkota (Class- 10) |
| Asst. Secretary: | Renuka Tamang (Class-9) |
| Treasurer: | Apsara Baral (Class- 8) |
| Members: | Indra Dawadi (class-9) |
| | Diwas Gautam(class-8) |
| | Anjana Ranabhat (class-8) |
| | Kalpana Thapa (class-9) |
| | Harishchandra Ojha (class-10) |
| | Bima Mahato (class-8) |
| | Bishal Subedi (class-8) |

Sabina Mahato (class-9)

They decided to name the club as "Ganganagar Rhino Club". Students put the names of Principal Mr.Eklal Bhandari as a patron and teachers Mr. Santaram Mahato and Mr. TikaRam Ghimire as the advisor of the club.

After the selection of the body, EPRC team apprised on functional mechanism of the club, roles and responsibilities to be abided by the members, its relation to the school and EPRC. EPRC further elaborated on planned activities and expected contribution from the students.

7. Output: The committee members also held their first meeting. On the very first meeting, they decided to forge functional relationship with EPRC. They decided to hold regular meeting. They have expressed interest to conduct different types of school level competition on conservation.

8. Feedback: Students were seem curious about the clubs activities. However, some students said it might take long time to change the entrenched attitude of bufferzone people against rhinos and wildlife as they suffer continuously.

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Activity Report on Establishing Rhino Club at Kumroj

- 1. Activity:** Establishment of rhino club in school for rhino conservation awareness.
- 2. Date:** 27th August, 2007
- 3. Venue:** Shree Kapiya Secondary School, Kumroj-8, Kapiya, Chitwan, 23 km far from the district headquarter, Bharatpur.
- 4. Participants:** Students of class 8, 9 and 10.
- 5. Objective:** To establish a rhino club in school
- 6. Methodology:** The selected school comprises the bufferzone areas which have lesser community conservation programs including school oriented activities though the area is full of poaching threat. 60% population are indigenous Tharu who were least awared on conservation.

The principal of the school was informed about the program through written letter and verbally by EPRC team members. Principal Mr. Ghanshyam Poudel was elated from the program as it was first conservation related and students oriented program approached in that school so far. Under the special initiation of the principal and science teacher, students of grade 8, 9 and 10 were gathered and EPRC team apprised them of the objectives of forming rhino clubs, its functional mechanism and planned activities.

Many students expressed interest to contribute in working committee of the rhino club. After the consensus of students, "Kapiya Rhino Club" was established. It has 13 members as following:

President:	Sabitri Pathak (class-9)
Vice-President:	Saroj Dhamala (class-8)
Secretary:	Sunita Thapa (class-9)
Vice-Secretary:	Laxmi Humagain (class-8)
Treasurer:	Raj Kumar Adhikari (class-9)

Members: Durga Sapkota (class-10)
Saraswati Dhakal(class-8)
Sita K.C. (class-8)
Parwati Upreti (class-9)
Basanta Thing (class-9)
Rabi Rimal (class-8)
Gokul Upreti (class-9)
Ram Nepali (class-8)

7. Output: Though the village is situated near Chitwan National Park, it was the first practice related to conservation at the school level students in this area, as the principal said. So the members of the committee became much excited. They held their first meeting, declared to conduct regular meeting and organize different awareness creating programs in their school and locality for rhino conservation.

8. Feedback: Students were very encouraged about the rhino club. They have promised to involve in rhino club and conservation activities with full vigor.

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Activity Report on Establishing Rhino Club at Kumarwarti

- 1. Activity:** Establishment of rhino club in school for rhino conservation awareness.
- 2. Date:** 22nd August, 2007
- 3. Venue:** Shree Saraswoti Secondary School, Kumarwarti-6, Gochada, Nawalparasi, 12 km far from the highway.
- 4. Participants:** Students of class 8, 9 and 10.
- 5. Objective:** To establish a rhino club in school
- 6. Methodology:** Saraswoti Secondary School, Kumarwarti is located at the distance of 12 km from the Danda of East-West Highway. This school was selected because more than 50% of the population is indigenous group, primarily Tharu and Bote. Tharu and Bote members of the community have been imprisoned on poaching related activities. Moreover, there are not any conservation related school clubs in that particular school.

For the program of establishing rhino club, Mr. Nirmal Aryal (project officer) and Field Assistant Miss Shanti Thanet were deployed. Mr. Bishnu Prasad Adhikari, president of Anti -Poaching Youth Awareness Campaign (APYAC) have also contributed for selecting and co-ordinating at local level.

At first students of class 8, 9 and 10 were provided information about the objectives of establishing rhino club in their respective classes along with the Principal Mr. Kashi Ram Pathak and science teacher Mr. Umakanta Bhattarai. Monitor of each section of the classes have submitted the names of interested students. With the mediation of school principal, the name of the club has been entitled as "Saraswoti Rhino Club". Members of working committee have been concluded as following :

President:	Sandesh Kandel (class-9)
Vice-President:	Laxmi Pandey (class-9)
Secretary:	Rina Thapa Magar (class-10)
Vice-Secretary:	Rajendra Gautam (class-10)
Treasurer:	Sujan Dhungana (class-9)
Members:	Govinda Nepali (class-8)
	Sandeep Shrestha(class-9)
	Buddhi Ram Mahato (class-8)
	Dula Mani Thanet (class-8)
	Binod Bote (class-7)

DhanaMaya Gurau (class-9)
Manju Kumal (class-9)
Namita Dhungana (class-10)

Among these names, six are from the indigenous and minorities groups. After the formation of the club "Saraswoti Rhino Club", the working body was apprised on roles and responsibilities to be played, planned activities that have to be implemented by the support of club etc. President of the club Sandesh Kandel requested to induce the program as soon as possible so as to retain the enthusiasm of the club members and students.

7. Output: Students have related their experiences towards rhinos, movement of suspected persons in the past (what they have heard from the parents). They seem curious on rhino conservation and motivate towards the issue.

8. Feedback: Students have requested for frequent knowledgeable inputs and regular activities of the club.

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Activity Report on Establishing Rhino Club at Kolhuwa

- 1. Activity:** Establishment of rhino club in school for rhino conservation awareness.
- 2. Date:** 29th August, 2007
- 3. Venue:** Shree Kumarwanti Secondary School, Kolhuwa-5, Chanauli, 16 km far from the highway.
- 4. Participants:** Students of class 8, 9 and 10.
- 5. Objective:** To establish a rhino club in school
- 6. Methodology:** The covering area of Shree Kumarwanti Secondary School is contiguous to the Chitwan National Park and it is 16 Km far from the Danda of East-West highway. The community people of that area rely much on the park resources. Rhinos have frequent movement in this area. Tharu, an indigenous group, dominates the population by approximately 55%. Though the school area is adjoined with park, school lacks conservation related activities. Members related with Anti-Poaching Youth Awareness Campaign (APYAC) have assisted to maintain co-ordination between EPRC and school.

The principal of the school Mr. Thakur Prasad Khanal was apprised on the motives behind the establishment of the rhino club and its projected activities by the EPRC team members. Students of class 8, 9 and 10 were gathered and informed about the rhino club. Students have asked about the objectives and activities of the club. EPRC team members and APYAC members have attempted to answer their queries. Interested students have forwarded the names for the involvement in the rhino club. Amidst the presence of school principal Mr. Khanal, past president of school management committee Mr. Hari Ram Mahato, president of APYAC Mr. Bishnu Prasad Adhikari, the club has been named as "Kolhuwa Rhino Club" and working committee has been selected comprising 15 members, as following :

President:	Yam Narayan Thanet (class-9)
Vice-President:	Nisha Mahato (class-8)
Secretary:	Tirtha Raj Parajuli (class-8)
Vice-Secretary:	Pavitra Gaire (class-8)
Treasurer:	Motiram Mahato (class-9)

Members: Goma Mahato (class-10)
Man Bahadur Mahato (class-10)
Sharada Ghimire (class-8)
Om Prakash Dhakal (class-10)
Basanti Pariyar (class-10)
Jog Man Mahato (class-7)
Bal Kumari Mahataniya (class-9)
Bishnu Nepali (Class 8)
Bhawana Bishwokarma (class 9)
Aashish KC (class-8)

Out of 15 members, 10 members are from the indigenous and minor groups.

After the formation of the club, the working body was apprised on roles and responsibilities to be played, planned activities that have to be implemented by the club. Working committee held the first meeting after the formation. Most of the members of the committee have stressed to distribute the general membership of the club so as to increase its access and supporting hands.

7. Output: Students motivation towards the club is overwhelming. Unlike other rhino clubs, it has two more members (i.e. 15) as additional two students have shown reluctance to withdraw nomination. The profound commitment and motivation of the students towards the club is laudatory.

8. Feedback: Students have requested for regular programs for the clubs and continuous guidance from the EPRC, school and related organizations.

Activity Report on School Talk program At Meghauri

- 1. Activity:** School talk program on rhino conservation
- 2. Date:** 19th August, 2007
- 3. Venue:** Sajhapur Secondary School, Meghauri-4, Chitwan
- 4. Participants:** 36 students (12 from each 8, 9, & 10 classes) including science and environment teachers.

5. Objectives:

- a) To strengthen students knowledge on rhino conservation.
- b) To motivate students towards rhino conservation.

6. Methodology: The principal of the school was requested to provide time for the school talk program about rhino earlier. Since, students of class 8, 9 and 10 were the target students. Newly formed rhino clubs members assisted on informing students about program and arranging the program venue. EPRC team members consisting project officer Mr. Nirmal Aryal and Field Assistant Mr. Dolraj Neupane facilitated and assisted the program. Science and environment teachers were also requested to attend in the program.

After gathering of the students, they were firstly asked questions on rhino, conservation, ecosystem, importance of wildlife etc so as to get acquainted with their existing knowledge. They replied whatever they have known about it. EPRC team apprised the students on needs and importance of rhino conservation, status of rhinos in the world and particularly in the Chitwan National Park. They were convinced on how bufferzone people are being privileged from rhinos from the tourism perspective, ecosystem value of the rhinos and so forth. Being natives of bufferzone, the students seem keen interested on the topic. Their queries were very pertinent. At the end, handouts entitled "Rhino & its conservation" was distributed to all participants which was prepared by EPRC for the school level students.

7. Output: Though the conservation education is included in the school level curriculum to some extent, students were curious to learn more on conservation and rhino conservation because rhinos are part of their life. They have expressed that their knowledge have been increased .

8 Feedback: Students have suggested it will be more fruitful if they will be regularly educated and involved in sensitization programs.

Activity Report on School Talk program At Patihani

1. Activity: School Talk program on rhino conservation.

2. Date: 24th August, 2007

3. Venue: Shree Secondary School, Patihani-8, Chitwan.

4. Participants: 60 students,(20 from each classes 8, 9 & 10)

5. Objectives:

a) To strengthen students knowledge on rhino conservation.

b) To motivate students towards rhino conservation.

6. Methodology: Field Assistant of EPRC Mr. Dola Raj Neupane was the facilitator of the program. With the support of School Principal Mr. Lilanath Neupane and president of newly formed "Sajhapur Rhino Club" Deepak Chapagain, students of class 8, 9 and 10 were gathered in a classroom. But it was utterly impossible to conduct talk program with 60 students at once. Hence, with the consent of school's principal, students were separated in two groups and two programs were conducted separately.

To know their existing knowledge about conservation, they were first asked some questions on rhino, conservation, ecosystem, importance of wildlife etc. They replied whatever they have known about it. But at the meantime, some students raised questions on what are the reasons to save rhino? EPRC team apprised the students on needs and importance of rhino conservation, status of rhinos in the world, status of Greater One horned Rhino in Nepal and particularly in the Chitwan National Park. They were convinced on how rhinos and wildlife are contributing in ecosystem and in promotion of livelihood of bufferzone people.

School covering area suffered more from the rhino attack. Hence, students were found more eager on reasons behind rhino attack on human and crops. They were also made aware on reasons and the ways to mitigate it. Being natives of bufferzone, the students seem keen interested on the topic. At the end, all participants were distributed handouts entitled "Rhino & its conservation" which was prepared by EPRC for the school level students.

7. Output: Students were curious to learn more on conservation and especially on rhino issues. They have also made commitment to spread knowledge to their elders and villagers about co-existent phenomenon of human and wildlife. They also added that they

are able to show street plays, dance, folk songs to create awareness among their community.

8. Feedback: Students suggested their small voice for conservation alone might not be effective and emphasized on continuous mentoring and guidance. So, they have expected strong support from school administration and supporting agencies.

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Activity Report on School Talk program At Kumroj

- 1. Activity:** School Talk program for rhino conservation.
- 2. Date:** 31st August, 2007
- 3. Venue:** Shree Kapiya Secondary School, Kumroj-8, Kapiya, Chitwan.
- 4. Participants:** 75 students (25 from each class 8, 9&10) with 2 teachers related to the Science and Environment.
- 5. Objectives:**
 - a) To strengthen students knowledge on rhino conservation.
 - b) To motivate students towards rhino conservation.

6. Methodology: School administration and newly formed "Kapiya Rhino Club" were earlier consulted about the planning of school talk program. Owing to the students numbers, school and EPRC team decided to divide the students of class 8 ,9 and 10 into two groups and separate classes were taken. Classes were conducted amidst the presence of science and environment teachers. Members of Kapiya Rhino Club provided support for informing students and arranging seats.

As in earlier schools, students were asked some questions about conservation and importance of rhinoceros to know their existing knowledge. Most of the students replied that they have only seen rhino but they did not know about its importance. EPRC team members explained the students about significance of rhino for maintaining ecosystem, for promoting tourism and creating opportunities for livelihood. They were informed on status and types of rhinos in the world, status of Greater One Horned Rhinoceros in Nepal and Chitwan National Park. Being a poaching prone area, students were apprised of poaching trends, prevailing laws on poaching. At the end, handouts entitled "Rhino and its conservation" were distributed which was prepared by EPRC.

7. Output: While comparing students of other schools, here, prior knowledge of the students have been found relatively lesser. Their existing knowledge have been below the par. However, they were interested and curious to hear about the significance of rhinos and have raised many questions such as "why rhino is more focused for conservation than others, what will happen if rhinos extinct" etc.

8. Feedback : Though the village is in buffer zone, nominal programs of awareness for rhino conservation have been implemented so far. More than 60% villagers are from indigenous group (tharu, darain, majhi). Most of them are illiterate and directly rely on jungle for livelihood. Students expressed on the needs of sensitizing local community

about conservation for which they are ready to contribute. Members of "Kapiya Rhino Club" have also suggested to invite community people during club activities.