

Report on Intensive Educator Skills Training on Wildlife Teaching

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Wildlife conservation education is increasingly becoming popular and practiced by a wide range of educators from different sectors of the society such as teachers, NGO, Nature lovers and individuals involved in wildlife conservation. It is known that rote learning is widely followed in most of the education system in South Asia, particularly India. However, it is proved that people learn better if they use as much as senses as possible and thus active learning is proved to be a successful teaching methodology.

Many of the ZOO and SANIZE members are engaged in wildlife teaching utilizing the education materials developed by ZOO. In order to bring in more impact and to introduce active learning tools for their audience a three day *Intensive Educator Skills Training on Wildlife Teaching* featuring a variety of species and issues was organised at ZOO office from 25 -27 June, 2008. Selected 16 educators from three south Indian States along with teachers from Coimbatore City took part in the training.

The objectives of the training were to provide educators with effective, easy-to-use teaching tools featuring wildlife which they can apply to any topic in their class rooms and to provide an effective source



of activities, teaching strategies to reach children and evaluation tools to assess their efficacy and providing information about various other local/global conservation initiatives. Fulfilling these objectives will help the wildlife educators to impart teaching using active learning tools to ensure effective delivery to a varied audience.



During these three days a total of 11 indoor activities, 7 outdoor activities, 4 games, 3 each of assessment tools, energizers, planning and 6 presentations by participants were carried out.

In the workshop participants were focused in three mammals namely tiger, bear and primate.

For a successful completion of the training all these activities require full participation and cooperation from all members of the workshop and hence it is very much essential that people learn each other and their interest. To facilitate this, a game was played where each person was given a card with an animal name printed on it. Their job was to make

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the specified animal sound and make pairs with similar animal and collect the details of the partner and present before others. It revealed that the forum had 5 school teachers, 4 NGO educators, 4 Research Scholars and 3 PG students.



Assessments are done to get some idea about how far we have succeeded in imparting knowledge to our students. Here two new assessment tools were tried and others techniques were introduced. Those two were

Mind mapping and Attitude assessment. These assessments are to be done before and after the workshop so that we can compare the knowledge about the subject that they had before the training and knowledge gained after the training. The attitude assessments tell us whether their attitude has been changed after the training.

While starting the training the members were divided into three groups and it was done by an activity using animal cards. The same set of cards were used to shuffle the group when ever necessary. The training did not focus on one animal as we used to do. It was made clear to the participants that they would be learning teaching tools and for that activities will be done using tiger bear, and primate as examples. They were also made clear that the tools can be applied for a variety of fauna modifying the content of it suitable.

To start, with the participants were given some basic information about these three animals. That will include five different subspecies of tiger, four different bear species found in south Asia with a focus on Sloth bear and two different species of Hoolock.

The basic information taught through activities were taxonomy, past and present species distribution, dramatic decrease in habitats and population as a result of human behaviour, history of a species in modern time (time line), animal behaviour such as jumping, leaping, comparing human weight with animal body weight and length, use of animal body parts and predation, feeding ecology of animal, bear dancing; animal biology and ecology such



as hunting behavior, habitat loss; how scientist study wild animals in the forest, census techniques; animal influence on human culture; conservation initiatives in India and South Asia, understanding the problem while implementing conservation projects, impacts etc; and how scientists work to gather and take decision to save a species.

These information were imparted through a variety of activities such as games, drama, field exercises



including height and weight measurements, distance covered over time, drawings and colouring, simple mathematical calculations, making and using props for various activities, demonstration on census techniques, map reading, song writing, play writing, discussions, mock conference exercise, etc. At every point of time the participants were encouraged to modify the activities for their species of interest.

A variety of games such as Resource Roundup; Observation game, Spots & Stripes, Colour Challenges, Finger challenge, Dancing bear, and Hawk and the Pigeon were played to teach these concepts. Energizers such as bear walk, writing on the air, tiger stretch were tried every now and then to boost up their energy level.

Intermittently from the second day of the training, participants were asked to give a brief presentation about their education programme.



After all these training on teaching tools it is important that they learn to plan and organize a programme at their location. Some basic needs are education material and a good agenda. A variety of education materials developed by ZOO were introduced to all the participants. The materials will include: Frogs Rock ! On the Amphibian Ark! - Adore Amphibians in 2008 year of the Frog, South Asia, Monkey Manners Drama Kit, Chiroptera Drama Kit, Daily Life Wildlife Conservation and Welfare, Hoolock Gibbon, Go Gharial ! Go back to survival - Helping Herps, Bats & Rats - Many species of Bats & Rats are good & useful wild animals, essential to Ecosystems, Just bats ! About bats !, Primate Primer, Helping Herps - Freshwater turtles, tortoises and terrapins, Good zoos practice Zoo Animal Welfare, Teacher Training Toolkit for Wildlife Welfare.

They were also given an option to become a member of SANIZE. Being a member of SANIZE, they receive all communication from the ZOO about the availability of education materials that they can order free of cost and plan education programme during special occasions. A session on planning short time, half a day, 1-3 days and one year programme was conducted and the groups prepared a detailed plan including budget. This gave them a good idea about planning an education programme at their locality using ZOO education materials. The interaction during this session provided answers for their questions.

ZOO always ask for a report about their programmes that they organise along with photo

graphic evidence to know how well the packets that they received were utilized. This also helps us to report to the sponsors of the packet. The basic information required are the total number of participants, target group, date and venue, content of the programme, activities tried during the programme, highlights about the tool kit and comments if any, comments about the tool kit and acknowledging the sponsors.

At the end of the third day of the programme, all participants did the Mind mapping exercise using the same subject. A comparison of the Mind map developed on the first day with that of the third day gave a clear picture about the knowledge that they gaining in those three days. The post workshop brain map developed by the participants had many new concepts and sub concepts compared to the one prepared on the first day.

It is the practice of ZOO to ask for commitments from the participants that they could practice what



they learned with in the next six month time or early. The following are the commitments of the participants: Sindhiya - Adopt play way method to conserve the wildlife (make awareness among the students); Using the materials and for the subjects this method is used for the students; G Manjunath - Two teachers training program to 60 school teachers in Antapur district; Six schools awareness camps on wildlife welfare to 300 school children; P. Vidhayini - Create awareness about the wildlife to



my class mates, friends, neighbours and other school and college students; To contribute myself by any research and not to buy the animal products; R.P. Dhiyaneshwari - Create awareness about wildlife to my college students; Educate the school



children about wildlife conservation strategies; P. Karthika - Taking immense pleasure not to keep myself which utilized here, but sharing the experience to my friends and creating an interest among them; Covering full interest about the wildlife conservation among different people and educating them to school children; Viji and Kavitha - Organise a programme during Wildlife week celebration; Vinny R. Peter - Wildlife week celebrations- education programme for school children; World conservation day, world wetland day; Shaik Hussain - Organizing Awareness programmes; Creating habitats for smaller living creatures; K. Cyril Rufus - To inculcate awareness about Indian wildlife and its concerned issues to school college students and community; To work on deteriorating issues of wildlife and environment and suggest cutting edge technological solutions to solve the problem; M. Kirthiga - By not using any of the animal products, by saving the animals if they are in trouble. To follow the rules and regulation of laws; By using all the materials, contents to motivate and making the school children



aware of the Wildlife; Praveen. M - Will conduct training programmes on wildlife, daily life wildlife, tiger training workshop for school children, teachers and clubs; Conduct a session on zoo behaviour and awareness programme on habitat loss of species which are highly endangered to the public.

At the end of the workshop all the participants received CDs containing educators manual, games, guidelines, wide variety of power point presentations, and literature. All participants were awarded a certificate of participation.

Here are the critical comments made by the participants:

G. Manjunath, International Animal & Bird Welfare Society, Guttur, Andhra Pradesh - Thank you very much to given me an opportunity to participate in the 3 days work shop on " Intensive Educator Skills Training on Wildlife Teaching" at Coimbatore. The workshop was excellent. Limited participants with



worthy subject. I participated many workshop and trainings in my 10 years Animal Welfare field. I have never seen this type of economical and worthy workshop.

In this workshop, I gained knowledge on wildlife species and learned so many games to entertain the students and the audience. We did many exercises, chart preparations, energizer, dramas, debate and presentations related to wildlife issues and also details of ZOO educational pockets and how to really utilize the materials and about sponsors.

Dr. B.A. Daniel and Marimuthu gave excellent presentations on these days on all related wildlife issues and taught many games and dramas. Every participant understood their teaching methods very easily. We also interacted with all persons. All ZOO staff gave their full cooperation in this workshop.

We got comfortable accommodation and healthy

food for three days. And also got very good educational materials, masks, detailed colourful bat photographs, education manual CD and our training photographs CD and a beautiful participation certificate. But I have a little unhappy that I could not see the Madam Sally. I once again thank you very much for your opportunity.

Shaik Hussain, CCMB, Hydrabad - The Training what I got from you was really excellent and I will definitely put my all efforts to work towards conservation with all my new teaching methods. In future if any help can be done by me please let me know I would feel happy to do for conservation.

Praveen M, Eco Venture, Trivandrum - I would like to thank Daniel, Marimuthu and ZOO for giving us such a wonderful opportunity to be a part of the training programme. We learned a lot about wildlife and its major threats and we realised that, we, humans are the major threat to our wildlife. Definitely I am going to spread the message through workshops and seminars on the same

topic. Will update you regarding the same. Really thank you once again for such a wonderful training.

P. Karthika, Thiagarajar College, Madurai - I have never attended such a workshop, it was an amazing experience for me and from this workshop I learnt more information regarding wildlife conservation especially details about tiger, bear and primates. I also recieved brilliant ideas which will be useful for my future programme. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to attend this programme.

P. Vidhayini, Thiagarajar College, Madurai - The memories of three days training was excellent and etched in my mind. I felt the way of themes presented was very intellectual and entertaining. I had an opportunity to learn many things practically for which i have to thank the organization. I participated in games through which I learnt the real facts about the wildlife conservation. If this method is implemented in schools, children will learn eagerly.

