

WORLDWIDE TRAINING

GLOBAL INITIATIVES EMPOWER LOCAL ACTION

By Randall C. Kyes, Ph.D., Director, Global Field Training in Conservation Biology, University of Washington Research Professor



Courtesy Randy Kyes

Dr. Kyes gives a presentation about indigenous wildlife for young students in China.

I'VE BEEN ASKED MANY TIMES,

what is the single most important resource in the fight to conserve our world's biodiversity? The answer is simple: local people. Their future, their survival is dependent on their environment. They have everything to gain by insuring the conservation of their environment — and if efforts fail — they have the most to lose. And, if they lose, we all lose. As such, we need to be sure they have every tool available to guarantee success. The critical tools, of course, are education and training.

Twenty years ago, I along with my colleagues from Bogor Agricultural University conducted our first annual field course in conservation biology for local university students and professionals in Indonesia. This initial training program was a success and has since evolved into a global mission.

Over the past 12 years, Woodland Park Zoo has supported the Global Field Training in Conservation Biology (GFTCB) Program, a WPZ Partner for Wildlife. During that time, the program has grown from a single annual field course in Indonesia to 10 annual field courses in eight countries including Bangladesh, Nepal, Mexico, Thailand, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, and India,

with plans for new field courses in Laos, Brazil, and the Ukraine in the coming year.

The field courses epitomize international collaboration, and I am honored to work alongside some of the most dedicated scientists and educators in the world. Our goal is to help foster the next generation of global leaders who are capable of implementing the programs needed to ensure the future of their countries' important natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity worldwide. Our field courses provide participants with an introduction to key topics in conservation biology, experience with field study methods and the skills needed to work in biodiversity conservation. In each field course we try to highlight the unique biodiversity in the region, often flagship species that are critically endangered such as snow leopards in Nepal, orangutans, Sulawesi black macaque monkeys and red-knobbed hornbills in Indonesia, elephants in Thailand, Bengal tigers in Bangladesh, and mountain gorillas in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

As we move forward with our global training program, our courses will focus increasingly on the complex relationship

“The long-term success of any conservation program depends in large part on the ability of the local people to take leading roles in the conduct of those programs.”

– Dr. Randy Kyes

between environmental health and global health at the human-environment interface.

To date, we have conducted 60 field courses for over 900 participants from 83 institutions (universities, national parks, government forestry offices, non-governmental organizations, zoos, and others) representing 14 different countries. We are now working to create a web-based “Global Field Study Alumni Network” composed of field training alumni in an effort to bring them together and to help track their continuing support of conservation.

Each field course concludes with the participants hosting a community outreach education program for elementary school children. The outreach is designed to engage the children from local villages and help promote environmental awareness and a sense of commitment to the conservation of biodiversity in their region. This past summer, we completed our 13th annual Field Course in Conservation Biology at the Tangkoko Nature Reserve in North Sulawesi, Indonesia. We had 10 participants including seven university students, one ranger, and two members of a local conservation organization. During the second week of the

Continues on page 14

BURKE MUSEUM



The Owl and the Woodpecker
 Photography by Paul Bannick
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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The great thing about having a Woodland Park Zoo membership is that you can come to the zoo rain or shine, and stay as long or short as you would like. Even though the winter weather in Seattle can be less than ideal for kids to play in, Woodland Park Zoo has many exhibits to seek shelter in during your winter visits!

Just because it's cold and rainy out doesn't mean that you can't come and visit us at the zoo! In fact, we created a "rainy day tour" specifically because of Seattle's famous rain! Here's a list of exhibits that allow you to escape the wet weather and enter other worlds:

To download a Rainy Day Tour map, visit www.zoo.org/rainydaytour

JOIN US!

Be in touch with the latest happenings at the zoo through our social media outlets. Become a fan on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, read in-depth features on the Zoo Blog and view fun and informational videos on YouTube. There's something for everyone! Find direct links at www.zoo.org

MEMBERSHIP CONTACT

For questions, contact us at membership@zoo.org; call 206.548.2400; read the Member Blog at www.zoo.org/memberblog



**WORLDWIDE TRAINING
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Continued from page 6

course, following my lecture on community outreach education, the two young women from the conservation organization said to me, "We remember the outreach program from when we were in elementary school."

I was stunned. As it turned out, when these two women, Feronika Manderos and Rani Lambainang, were third and fourth graders (in 2001), they participated in our very first educational outreach program at the local elementary school in Batu Putih. They remembered details of the outreach program, in particular the conservation art contest we held. In fact, Feronika received third place in the contest for her drawing of a female red-knobbed hornbill. They told me how much they wanted to win the first-place prize that year: a Woodland Park Zoo t-shirt!

Knowing the mark this outreach activity left on these young women and how they have continued their commitment to conservation into adulthood reaffirmed for me the importance of our global field training program. Even more inspiring, these young women will continue to live and spread these conservation lessons as they pursue their future endeavors, Feronika hoping to become a local tourist guide at Tangkoko and Rani working to obtain her teaching certificate to teach elementary school in her village.