



WFN

WHITLEY
FUND FOR
NATURE

**30 YEAR IMPACT
ASSESSMENT**

OUR MISSION

The Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) is a fundraising and grant-giving nature conservation charity offering awards, recognition and training to support the work of proven grassroots conservation leaders across the Global South.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- 1 Find, recognise, and fund grassroots conservation leaders working across the Global South.
- 2 Champion and repeat fund impactful winners.
- 3 Support the growth of conservation solutions.
- 4 Raise awareness of winners' work, and how we can all make a difference to conservation.

WFN's niche is
**IDENTIFYING⁷ MID-CAREER⁴ INDIVIDUAL³
GRASSROOTS⁴ LEADERS⁴ and giving them
PROFILE⁹, RECOGNITION⁵ and FUNDING.⁶
They do this through INSPIRING³ audiences at their
AWARD CEREMONY³
and building a strong personal RELATIONSHIP⁵ with and between
the winners.**

A sector review was conducted in 2018 to examine the role of WFN and identify its perceived niche. 15 semi-structured interviews were carried out independently with individuals from the NGO sector. When asked to describe WFN's niche, participants accurately described the charity's purpose in

line with its mission and objectives. While many mentioned funding, they clarified what makes WFN unique is its ability to identify and raise the profile of conservation leaders.

*Size of words and number in superscript reflects the frequency these terms were used to describe WFN's niche by interview participants.

GRANTS FOR CONSERVATION ACTION

WFN GIVES THREE TYPES OF GRANTS THAT ENABLE GRASSROOTS CONSERVATIONISTS TO SCALE UP THEIR WORK AND PROTECT THREATENED WILDLIFE.

30 years ago, WFN became a pioneer in the sector as one of the first charities to channel funding to locally-led projects in the Global South. We support courageous changemakers who are collaborating with communities in their home countries to conserve wildlife and habitats. Our rigorous and renowned application process identifies inspiring individuals with staying power, who combine the latest science with tenacious leadership and a collaborative approach. Through our laddered funding, we provide conservationists with a sustainable means of scaling their impact.

CATALYSING SUCCESS

WFN helps to catalyse conservation progress by incubating winner talent and offering support to develop their skills and confidence as leaders. During the Awards week, WFN provides winners with training and networking opportunities to help them leverage their success.

“Most conservation grants are modest and short-term, but we need to tackle decadal plans. Looking back at 30 years of WFN success, and a model that does not let go of the conservationists’ hands, fills me with hope.”

**CLAUDIO SILLERO,
1998 WHITLEY AWARD WINNER**

“

The Whitley Awards have given oxygen to many of us who were on the verge of giving up. It has allowed us to raise our voices and make visible not only biodiversity issues, but also many solutions built from the local to the regional, and even scaling to the political level.

**FERNANDO TRUJILLO,
2007 GOLD AWARD WINNER**

WHITLEY AWARDS



The charity's flagship prizes, Whitley Awards are won competitively each year following a worldwide search. Applications are assessed by an expert panel, and winners receive £40,000 in project funding over one year. In addition, the awards provide profile, new connections and training – all tools that winners can use to better protect the natural world.

CONTINUATION FUNDING



Continuation Funding is available to Whitley Award alumni. These follow-on grants, worth up to £100,000 over two years, enable winners to expand effective projects, respond to changing needs, and collaborate with other conservationists. We also offer dedicated grants to directly support projects delivering nature-based solutions that address climate change and biodiversity loss hand-in-hand.

GOLD AWARD



Each year, a past Whitley Award winner receives our top prize, the Whitley Gold Award, to recognise their outstanding contribution to conservation. Gold Award winners are international advocates for biodiversity, pioneering large scale, collaborative projects and acting as mentors to new Whitley Award winners. The prize is worth £100,000.

COMMUNICATION



Whitley Award winners receive ongoing PR backing in addition to media training in print, radio and broadcast, and professional speech coaching. This helps them to effectively communicate their work to an international audience and capitalise on the media spotlight following their win. Winners also report an uptake in media interest within their home countries, often leading to front page coverage in national and regional newspapers.

PROJECT DELIVERY



WFN provides online and in-person training in some of the core operational and technical skills necessary to the delivery of successful projects, their monitoring, and evaluation. Alumni can also apply for small bursaries to upskill or collaborate. In addition to ongoing career-development support, winners gain access to pro-bono legal help from the Thomson Reuters Foundation, bolstering their capacity to handle issues on the frontline of conservation.

NETWORKING



We hold events for winners to network with contacts they could partner with in future to cultivate success – including potential funders, collaborators, journalists, their country Ambassadors and members of UK and international conservation NGOs. Beyond the Whitley Award ceremony week, where winners form strong bonds with their cohort, WFN hosts in-country training, focused on encouraging south-south collaboration and peer-to-peer learning across the winner network.

30 YEARS OF WHITLEY AWARDS

1993

The Whitley Trust's first conservation grant receives coverage in the Independent newspaper:

'It's not a very fashionable cause at the moment,' Mr Whitley explained.

1994

The first Whitley Award, worth £15,000, is awarded to marine conservationist Amanda Vincent of Project Seahorse.



1998

The Rufford Foundation joins the Whitley Awards programme, sponsoring two major awards.

1999

The Rufford Foundation and Whitley Awards scheme together establish the Rufford Small Grants to provide upcoming conservationists with funding opportunities.

In April, HRH The Princess Royal becomes Patron of the Whitley Awards.



2000

The Whitley Laing Foundation is created as a stand-alone charity and sets about the task of raising further funds for conservation.

2001

The Whitley Award for People and Environment is introduced following support from WWF-UK.

Launch of Continuation Funding grants programme, supporting previous Whitley Award winners to scale up successful conservation solutions.

2002

Claudio (1999 Whitley Award winner) and Suzana Padua profiled by TIME Magazine as Green Century Heroes.



2003

The first ever Friends Award is given, following generous support from individuals.

2004

The Whitley Laing Foundation has grown in size, and gives away an annual total of more than £1 million for the first time.

WFN's dedicated Friends Committee is established by Trustee Catherine Faulks to champion individual gift giving.

2005

The charity officially becomes the Whitley Fund for Nature.

Sir David Attenborough joins as a Trustee.



2010

Total funds awarded since 1994 passes £6 million, supporting the work of over 120 conservationists in 70 countries.

The first symposium for Whitley Gold Award winners is held: Conservation In The 21st Century – The View From The Frontline.

2011

WFN celebrates 10 years of partnership with WWF-UK.

2012

The amount raised by WFN since 1994 passes £10 million.

Randall Arauz, 2004 Gold Award winner, and his NGO, PRETOMA, play a key role in Costa Rica's ban on shark finning.

2013

Work by 2005 Whitley Award winner Charudutt Mishra and partners leads to the governments of all 12 snow leopard range countries signing a milestone agreement to enhance the species' global protection.



2014

Carlos Vasquez Almazan, 2012 Whitley Award winner, is instrumental in Guatemala declaring the Sierra Caral – one of Central America's largest and most biodiverse remaining cloud forests as a protected area; the country's first in 7 years.

A new mammal species – Erika's tuco-tuco (*Ctenomys erikacuellarae*) is named after 2007 Whitley Award winner, Erika Cuellar, who helped to discover it.

2015

The landmark Paris Climate Agreement is adopted at COP 21.

The UN creates 17 Sustainable Development Goals and aims to achieve them by 2030. Pablo Borboroglu, 2010 Whitley Award winner, is instrumental in ensuring that a goal towards the conservation and sustainable use of oceans is included, leading to the creation of SDG 14: Life Below Water.

2016

The Whitley Fund for Nature raises a record annual total of £1.9m.

Jon Paul Rodriguez, 2003 Whitley Award winner, is elected Chair of the Species Survival Commission – the first person from outside of Europe or North America to hold this influential title.

2017

WFN's Ambassador programme is launched, with Alastair Fothergill, Tom Heap, Kate Humble and Lord Robin Russell formalising their longstanding and generous support of the charity.



2018

WFN celebrates its 25th Anniversary, holding the Hope Gala at the Natural History Museum which raises an additional £1 million for conservation. 2012 Gold Award winner Rodrigo Medellin welcomes 12 winners on stage during his keynote speech.

An independent assessment of WFN and its winners' impact is conducted, proving the effectiveness of the charity's approach in driving conservation impact and catalysing careers.



2019

Vivek Menon, 2001 Whitley Award winner, and his team establish India's first network of 'Green Corridors' allowing safe passage for Asian elephants across human landscapes.

UK Parliament declares climate change emergency.

2020

WFN launches a specific funding stream to support nature-based solutions to climate change.

The Whitley Awards Ceremony is held virtually for the first time, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



2021

Over £1 million awarded through Continuation Funding for the first time, supporting 15 previous winners.

Launch of WFN NextGen to build a network of young people who are passionate about conservation.



2002 Gold Award winner Laury Cullen and his team have planted over 1.4 million native trees towards Brazil's first and largest wildlife corridor, sustaining endemic species and boosting local incomes.

2022

The charity's first in-person Regional Winner Training is held in Kenya, bringing together WFN's Africa-based winners as part of its new Winner Network Development Programme.

WFN reaches a grant-giving milestone: over £20 million awarded to over 200 conservationists across 80 countries.

2022 Gold Award funds PARTNERS Principles, seeing past Whitley Award winners come together as part of a global strategic framework for community-based conservation training.



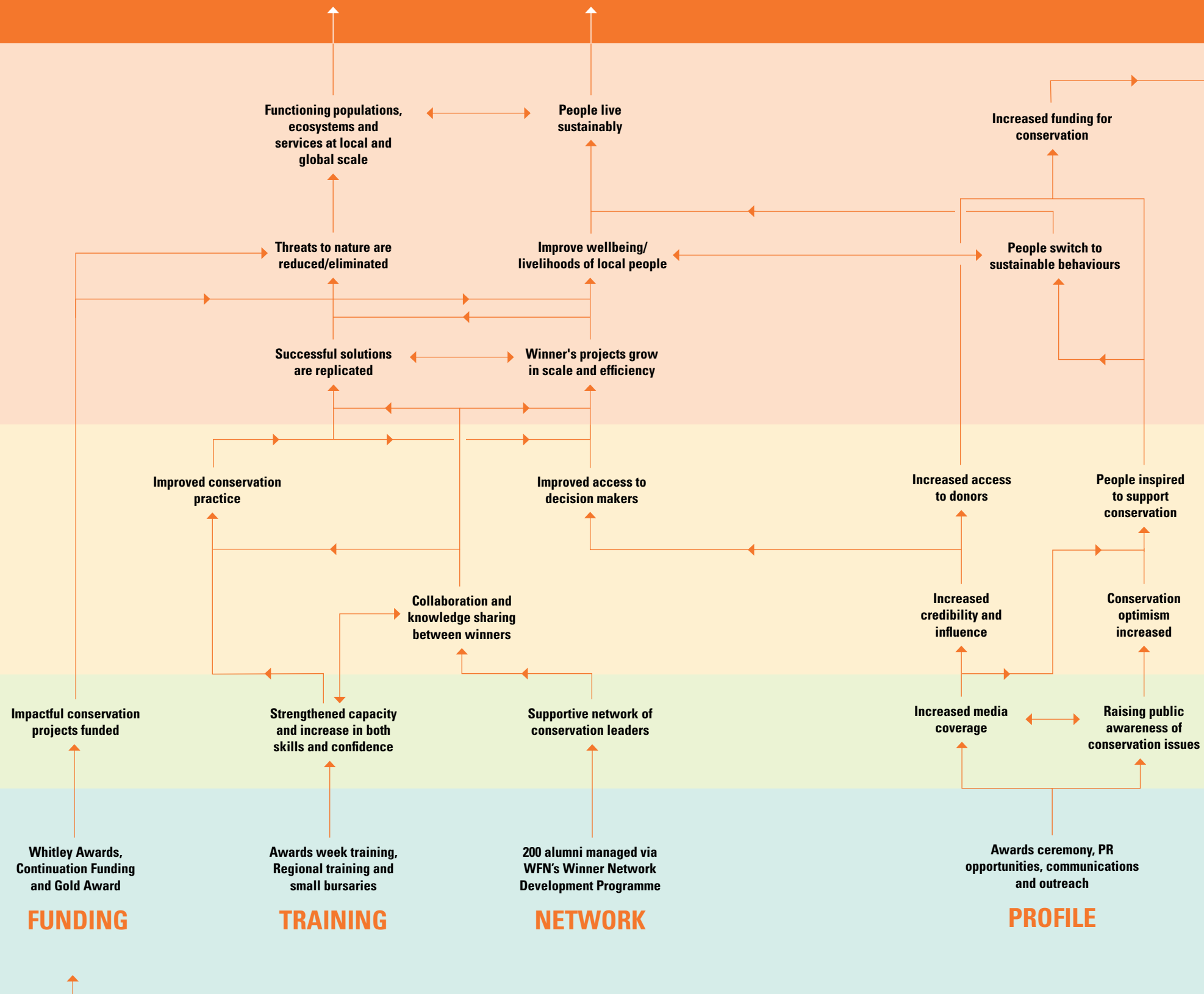
Two major COPs see the creation of a Climate Loss and Damage Fund and the landmark Global Biodiversity Framework.

2023

WFN celebrates its 30th Anniversary with the 'Partners for Planet' Whitley Award Ceremony and 'People for Planet' Summit, culminating in the launch of the Ethical Conservation Movement.

THEORY OF CHANGE

COMMUNITIES AND WILDLIFE THRIVING TOGETHER ON A HEALTHY PLANET



IMPACT

LONGTERM OUTCOMES

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

OUTPUTS

ACTIVITIES

MEASURING IMPACT

FIVE YEARS AFTER THE FIRST WFN IMPACT ASSESSMENT, WE COMMISSIONED A FOLLOW-UP INDEPENDENT EVALUATION TO MARK THE CHARITY'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2023. THE ASSESSMENT FOCUSED ON TWO AREAS: THE IMPACT THAT WINNING A WHITLEY AWARD HAS ON WINNERS THEMSELVES AND THE IMPACT WFN ALUMNI HAVE HAD ON WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SINCE WINNING THEIR WHITLEY AWARDS.



Evaluation Survey

Our 2023 evaluation consisted of a survey of all 195 active WFN alumni as well as a counterfactual snapshot of near-winners. The 2023 evaluation was developed by independent consultant Dr Hunter Doughty in collaboration with the WFN team and with the advice of Dame E.J. Milner-Gulland, Tasso Leventis Professor at the University of Oxford. 73 WFN alumni completed the survey.

+ Impact of winning a Whitley Award

The survey was made up of two parts, the first focusing on the personal and professional impact of winning a Whitley Award on recipients. This part of the survey was anonymous and was only completed by those who have won a Whitley Award (not those who have received historical Associate or Runner Up Awards).

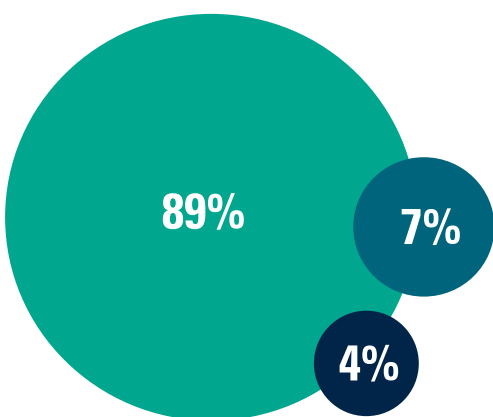
+ Impact on People and Biodiversity

The second half of the survey focused on self-assessed progress towards conservation outcomes and impact in the years since receiving funding from WFN. This part of the survey was not anonymous so we can track the impact per project over time. We combined this data with results from similar surveys conducted in 2013 and 2017.

Counterfactual

Finally, Dr Doughty undertook a counterfactual survey, contacting near-winners from 5, 10 and 15 years ago to examine their own subsequent progress in the absence of winning a Whitley Award. Five responses were received.

AWARDS OVER TIME



30 BY 30: WFN HAS RAISED
£30 MILLION
SINCE ITS FOUNDING 30 YEARS AGO

INCOME USE

Charitable activities	£26,935,000
Support & Governance	£2,200,000
Fundraising	£1,325,000
TOTAL	£30,460,000

AWARDS GIVEN TO
214
CONSERVATION
LEADERS
IN OVER 80 COUNTRIES

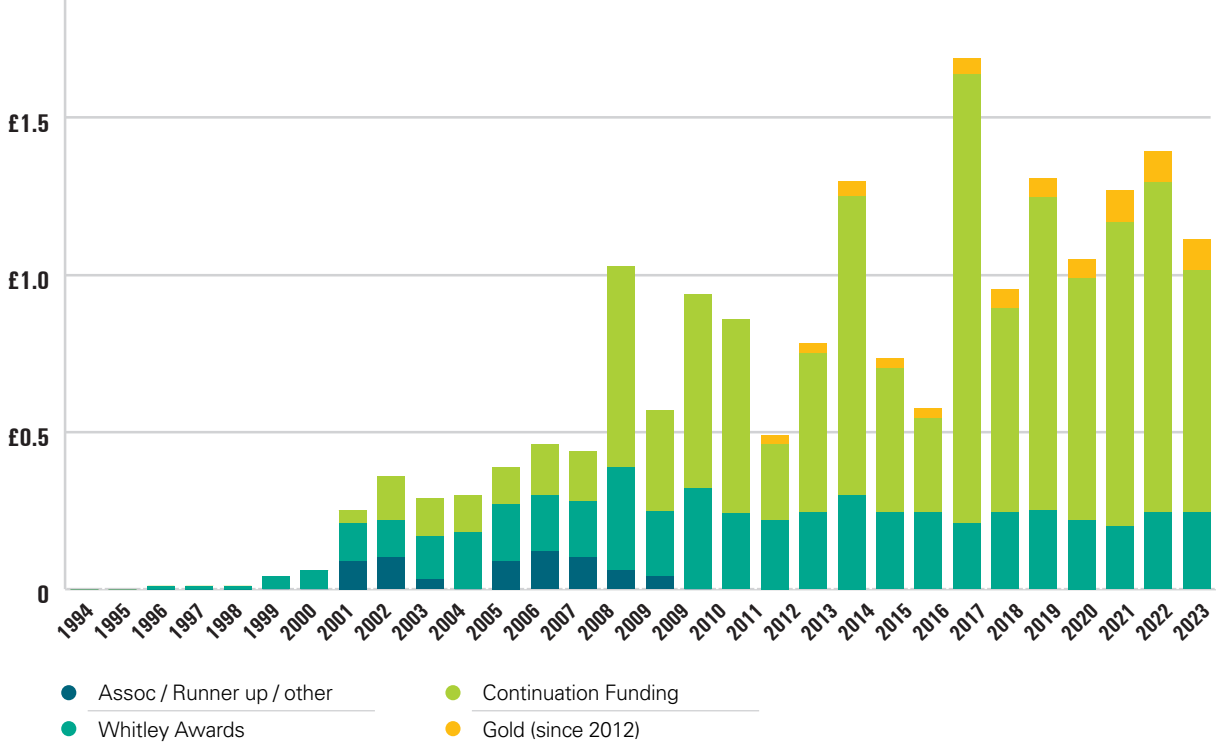
Over £21m in funding awarded, with 60% channelled via WFN's Continuation Funding programme providing longer term support to conservationists.

GRANTS BETWEEN 1994-2023

Continuation Funding	58%
Whitley Awards	30%
Other satellite grants	8%
Gold Award	4%

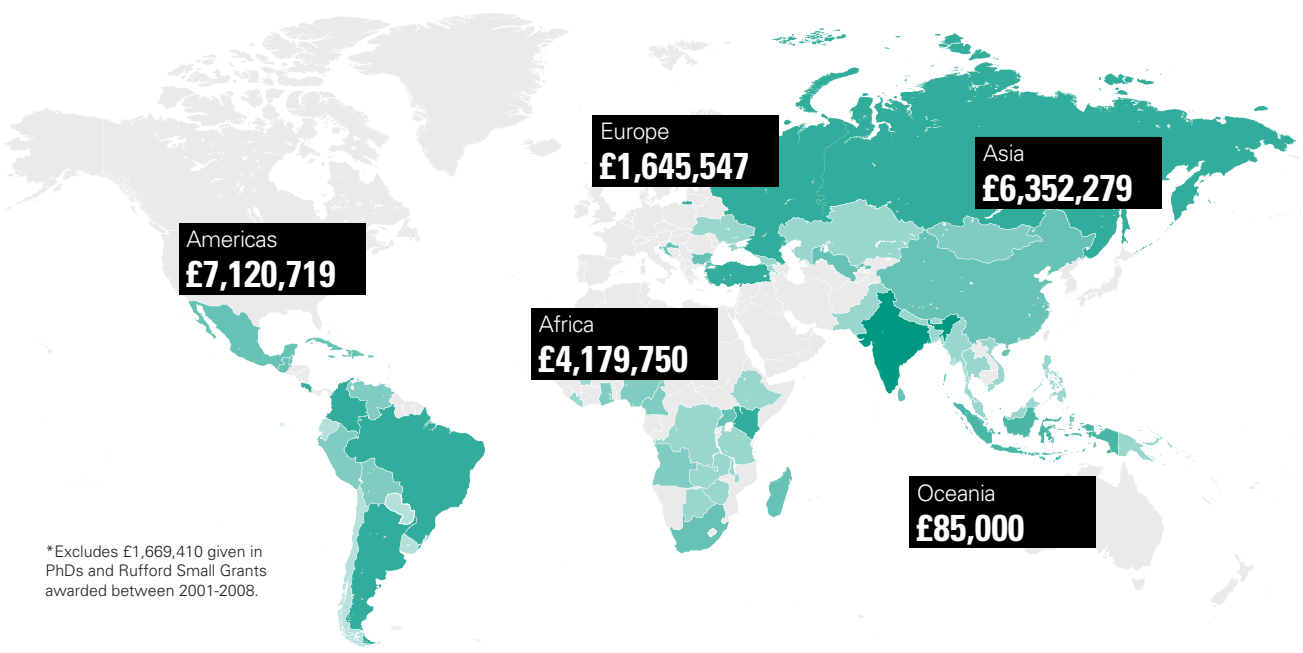


GRANTS GIVEN OVER TIME (1994-2023)



OVER **£21M** AWARDED IN CONSERVATION GRANTS

GRANTS BY REGION

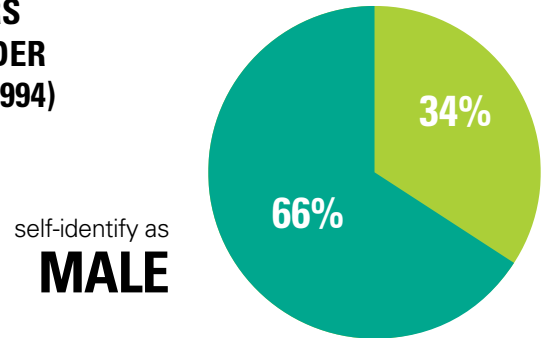


*Excludes £1,669,410 given in PhDs and Rufford Small Grants awarded between 2001-2008.

GRANTS BY HABITAT TYPE



WINNERS BY GENDER (SINCE 1994)



self-identify as **FEMALE**

*Over the last five years, 469 applications were submitted to the Whitley Awards, of which 67% identified as male, 31% identified as female and 2% did not specify. At WFN, diversity, equity and inclusion are key to our values, and we are actively working to evolve our practices to create an accessible, inclusive and empowering application process for all gender identities.

IMPACT ON PEOPLE AND BIODIVERSITY

WFN ALUMNI TACKLE A RANGE OF THREATS FACING WILDLIFE AND ECOSYSTEMS AROUND THE WORLD. THEIR WORK SPANS MARINE, FRESHWATER AND TERRESTRIAL HABITATS. SHARED HERE IS A SNAPSHOT OF THEIR COLLECTIVE GLOBAL IMPACT REPORTED ACROSS A NUMBER OF KEY AREAS, LINKED TO A SUITE OF TOOLS AND APPROACHES USED TO TACKLE CONSERVATION ISSUES.

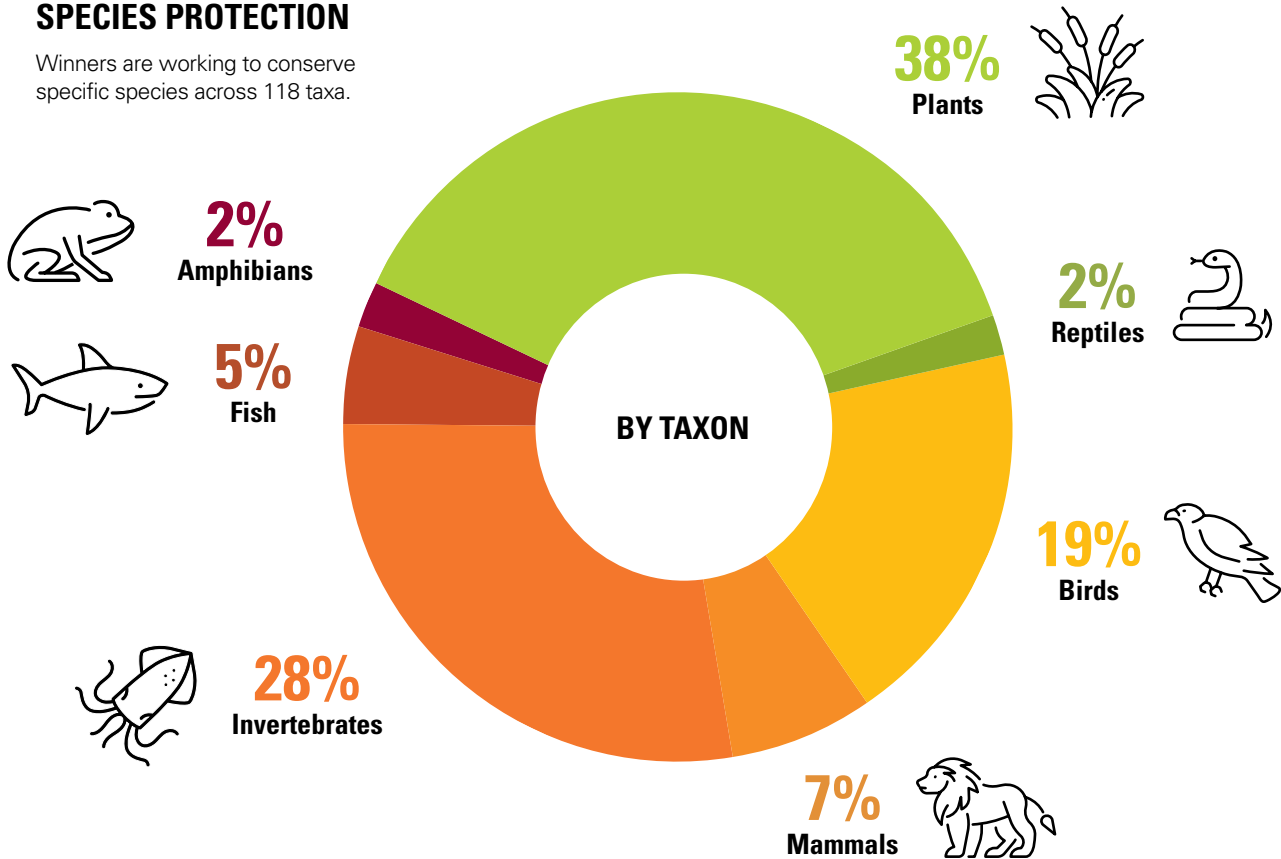
METHODS

Quantitative questionnaires were sent to all Whitley Award winners in 2013, 2017 and 2023. In the surveys, which were not anonymous, we asked respondents to report self-assessed indicators of conservation outcomes and impact in the years since winning a Whitley Award. The results here are a cumulation of the results from these three surveys.



SPECIES PROTECTION

Winners are working to conserve specific species across 118 taxa.



THREAT REDUCTION

At the heart of conservation is the need to reduce, control or mitigate threats to species and the environment. When surveyed, alumni indicated which major threats their project was working to tackle.

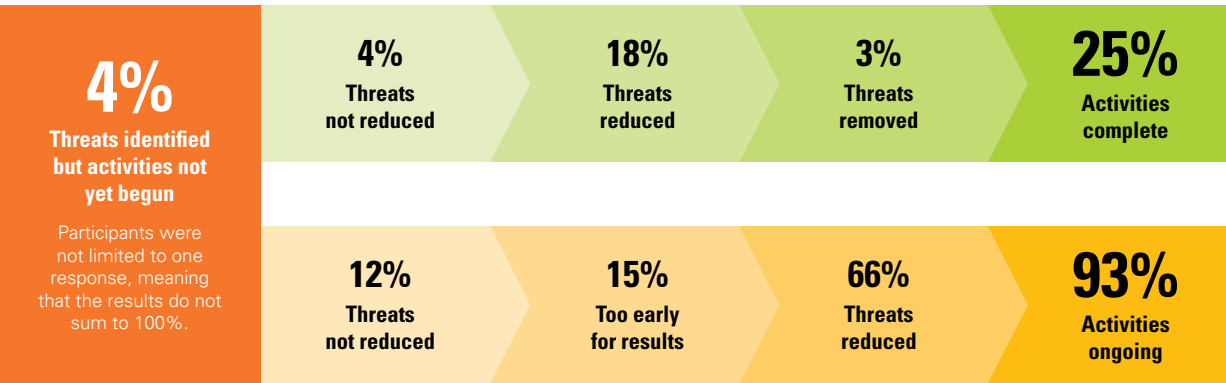
The top four were:

1. Reducing unsustainable use of biological resources (e.g. deforestation, hunting, fishing, trade)
2. Mitigating the negative impacts of climate change and severe weather
3. Controlling threats associated with agriculture and aquaculture
4. Decreasing human encroachment and disturbance of wildlife and habitats



of participating winners reported their project activities have resulted in reduced threats to target ecosystems and wildlife.

Many winners have made a lifelong commitment to conservation. In recognition that change doesn't happen overnight, they were asked to place their project along a pathway to impact.



WILDLIFE POPULATIONS

Of those measuring wildlife population trends, winners reported the following trajectories in their study sites, which highlights the ongoing need for conservation efforts to reverse wildlife decline:



ALUMNI REPORTED
THE FOLLOWING
SUCCESSFUL OUTPUTS
PERTAINING TO THE
AREAS OUTLINED BELOW:

CHANGING BEHAVIOUR

92% OF
PROJECTS

evidence positive behaviour
change as a result of activities.

Common behaviours
projects targeted were:

HUNTING/POACHING
LIVESTOCK/FARMING
FOREST RESOURCE USE
HABITAT RESTORATION

RESTORATION

757,590 HECTARES
OF HABITAT
RESTORED

900K
MANGROVES
PLANTED

&

OVER
15M
TREES
PLANTED

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY



63K

people have
benefitted from
training in new/
improved skills via
winner projects.

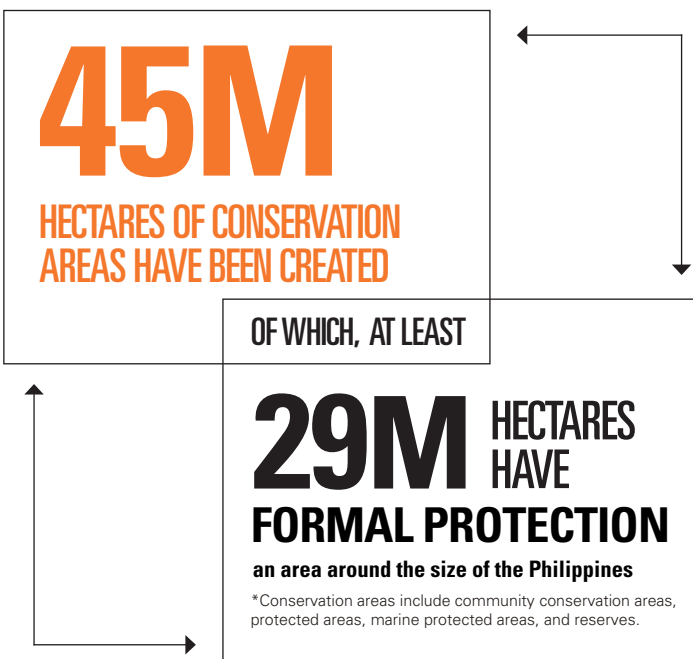
ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION

WFN funded
projects cover
an area of

OVER **725M** HECTARES

Supporting the scale up of activities has been a key focus
of WFN's grant giving. Since receiving a Whitley Award,
winners have been able to expand their projects to cover

AN ADDITIONAL **60M** HECTARES



CLIMATE CHANGE

WFN's flagship project focusing on
nature-based solutions – IPÊ's 'Corridors
for Life' – has restored approx. 2,500 ha
of Atlantic Forest in Brazil.

with offset potential of
847,000
TONS OF CO₂ EQUIVALENT

By 2025:

they aim to have
increased this to

1M TONS
OF CO₂

Our cohort of 14 NBS-focused winners are working to measure
and enhance carbon sequestration across a range of habitats,
including forest, grassland, mangrove, and peat-swamp.

INFLUENCING POLICIES

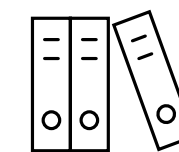
201
POLICIES

adopted or changed to
improve environmental
protection as a result of
winners' work.

79%
of respondents
have influenced
within-country policies.
*Policies under revision

25%
have influenced
international policies.
*Policies under revision

RAISING AWARENESS



OVER
4M

people reached
through direct
education activities.



AN ESTIMATED
1.4B

people reached through
media spotlight and social
media platforms.

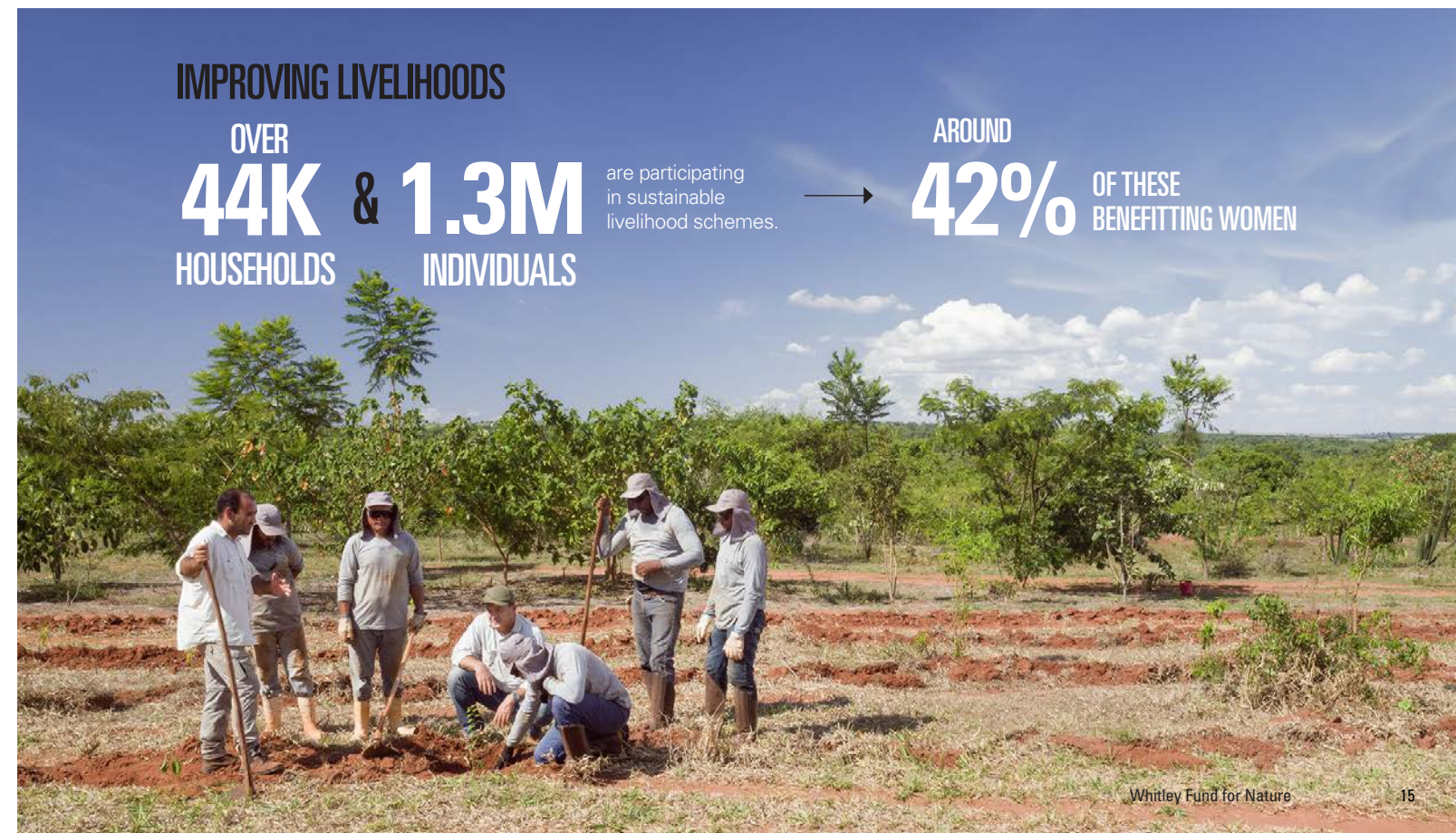
IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS

OVER
44K & **1.3M**
HOUSEHOLDS INDIVIDUALS

are participating
in sustainable
livelihood schemes.

AROUND

42% OF THESE
BENEFITTING WOMEN



WINNER NETWORK DEVELOPMENT



“The training really made me believe that there is hope and future in what we’re doing

EKWOGE ABWE, 2013 WHITLEY AWARD WINNER

THROUGH A THRIVING, ACTIVE AND SUPPORTIVE NETWORK OF WHITLEY AWARD ALUMNI, WFN AIMS TO MAXIMISE CONSERVATION IMPACT BY FACILITATING SOUTH-SOUTH COLLABORATION.

WFN's Winner Network has become one of the charity's strengths and key areas of focus, rooted in the importance of listening and responding to winners' needs and supporting collaboration across the peer network – with a vision to bring about long term, positive conservation outcomes as a collective.

The Winner Network Development (WND) programme facilitates cooperation, training, and knowledge-exchange activities across a network of more than 200 Whitley Award alumni spanning 80 Global South countries. Winners are connected through regular correspondence, peer-led training, collaborative projects funded through Continuation Funding and the Whitley Gold Award, and exchange visits, where they can share information, experiences, and encouragement to drive collective conservation impact.

The programme facilitates knowledge sharing through regional and thematic groups chaired by Winners themselves. By creating a safe space where alumni can exchange wisdom, share success and learnings between peers, the programme aims to foster an active group of conservationists poised to scale up innovative solutions that are proven to work, and provide much needed support when things aren't going as planned, thus allowing leaders to pivot amid challenging circumstances.

THE PROGRAMME HAS THREE CORE GOALS:

1. Build connections to create a supportive and resilient network of winners
2. Strengthen capacity across the Global South, including through peer-to-peer approaches
3. Promote collaboration to increase the scope and impact of winner projects

REGIONAL WINNER TRAINING

In 2022, we held our first in-person Regional Winner Training at Mpala Research Centre in Kenya, bringing together 14 Africa-based winners for a week of learning exchange, networking and idea sharing based on their stated needs and own experiences. Our second training week took place at IPÉ in Brazil in August 2023, with 13 winners in attendance – many of whom represented 20 or more years of experience in their field. We're excited to take our regional training to winners in Asia in 2024, before cycling round once more.

These in-person training opportunities enable conservation solutions to be replicated around the world, increasing the impact of conservation projects, improving biodiversity protection and enhancing the efficacy of those spearheading ethical community-led programmes.



of winners participating in the survey said winning a Whitley Award increased access to other conservationists internationally.



of winners stated that they gained knowledge, skills, or advice from other members of the Winner Network.



of participants said they felt very or somewhat connected to the Winner Network.



of respondents felt WFN's network provides more value relative to other networks.

NETWORK IN ACTION

THE FOLLOWING CASE STUDY REPRESENTS THE IMPACT THAT BECOMING PART OF THE WFN WINNER NETWORK CAN HAVE ON ACCELERATING THE SUCCESS OF COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROGRAMMES.

CHARUDUTT MISHRA & SHIVANI BHALLA

Charu Mishra has spent 25 years working to increase protection for snow leopards across all 12 of their range countries, with the vital support of local people. A pioneer of community-based conservation, Charu believes that people and wildlife can lead a harmonious co-existence, but top-down conservation has historically led to the marginalisation of communities.

An estimated 130 million people have been displaced by conservation globally; these actions, along with restrictions on traditional access and natural resource use, have resulted in local opposition to conservation efforts in many parts of the world.

With funding from WFN and other organisations, Charu published the PARTNERS Principles in 2016; a more inclusive framework for practitioners sensitive to human rights and well-being who are trying to achieve conservation in ethical and inclusive ways, but lack training in community engagement, or access to the necessary tools.

The PARTNERS Principles provide a strategic framework for community-driven conservation through Presence, Aptness, Respect, Transparency, Negotiation, Empathy, Responsiveness, and Strategic support values. The framework is applicable across continents, and was recognised as “outstanding conservation practice”



at the 15th Meeting of the Convention of Biological Diversity Conference of Parties in 2021.

The Principles are based upon Charu’s extensive experience, which includes the establishment of largescale community wildlife reserves; conflict mitigation, through innovative livestock insurance programmes implemented nationally; and the creation of sustainable green economies including snow leopard-friendly cashmere. Rolling out this framework globally could eliminate the need for others to learn through trial and error and would ensure a proven, standard approach.

Charu won a Whitley Gold Award in 2022, to help improve the practice of nature conservation across continents by supporting a cadre of conservationists – including WFN alumni – as trainers and advocates of PARTNERS Principles-based strategies.

SCALING UP THROUGH THE WFN NETWORK

In 2022, Kenyan conservationist Shivani Bhalla joined six other Whitley Award alumni in Kyrgyzstan for PARTNERS Principles training. Subsequently, Shivani received a 2023 Gold Award to build upon this initiative.

Shivani has dedicated her life to promoting coexistence between people and lions in northern Kenya. Founding Ewaso Lions in 2007, Shivani and her team have spent nearly 20 years addressing lion decline across an area covering more than 4,500 km². Their work recognises that community leadership is crucial for sustained solutions, ensuring involvement from all levels of the local Samburu community; from targeted programmes for children, to stakeholder roles for warriors and women, and engagement with elders. Through Ewaso Lions’ efforts, the Samburu landscape is now one of the only regions in northern Kenya where lion numbers are increasing outside of protected areas, with the return of prides in recent months.

With her 2023 Gold Award funding, Shivani is developing an open-source framework, dubbed ‘Part 2’ to the PARTNERS Principles training. Offering up Ewaso Lions’ model to improve others’ conservation practice, Shivani and her team are sharing the framework across international channels, catalysing a movement that aims to bring just conservation approaches to scale.

THE ETHICAL CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

The successive nature of these projects, which lay out clear pathways for conservation practitioners to build skills within their own teams, demonstrate the ripple effects and collaboration that WFN seeks to foster through its Winner Network Development programme. As international biodiversity targets to protect 30% of the planet by 2030 are implemented, conflict between marginalised communities and conservation practice will only increase if communities are not seen as part of the solution.

In conjunction with the Whitley Awards’ 30th anniversary, and WFN’s People for Planet’ Summit, Charu, Shivani and other Whitley Gold Award winners will launch their Ethical Conservation Alliance and invite conservation leaders from across the globe to join the movement.

Alongside existing members of the alliance, which represents 25 countries (including multiple Whitley Award alumni), new members will work to collaboratively create toolkits and deliver training programmes that support the involvement and leadership of local and indigenous communities with conservation practice across the world.



Charu Mishra (far left) leads PARTNERS Principles training in Kyrgyzstan, 2022, for six past Whitley Award winners, including 2023 Gold Award winner Dr Shivani Bhalla, third from right. A statement regarding the need to promote ethical conservation was issued by this group and others in the Alliance, and it was referenced by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in their official address at the 2022 United Nations Biodiversity CoP15 in Montreal.

IMPACT OF WINNING A WHITLEY AWARD

AS WELL AS PROVIDING FUNDING, WFN ACCELERATES THE SUCCESS AND INFLUENCE OF WHITLEY AWARD WINNERS BY HELPING TO RAISE THEIR PROFILE. WITH ALUMNI FREQUENTLY REPORTING THAT WINNING A WHITLEY AWARD CHANGED THEIR LIVES AND WAS A PIVOTAL MOMENT IN THEIR CAREER, WE SOUGHT TO DIG DEEPER INTO THE EFFECT A WHITLEY AWARD HAS.

Success in delivering conservation outcomes is a product of many contributing biological, social, economic and political factors at both the national and international level. WFN seeks to bolster winners' capacity to be effective across these spheres.

When asked to describe the personal effect winning a Whitley Award had on them, the top four themes were that it:

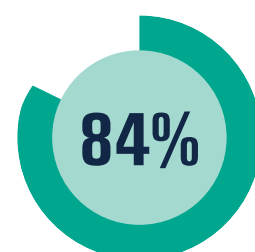
1. Increased publicity, visibility and recognition
2. Catalysed growth, career progression, training and academic success
3. Enhanced credibility, profile, and validity
4. Opened doors to other funding and further opportunities



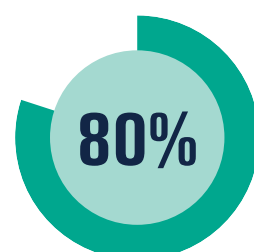
METHODS

In 2023, An anonymous survey was sent to all Whitley Award winners. Independent Consultant, Dr Doughty analysed the results which were received from 73 respondents (out of 195 active alumni).

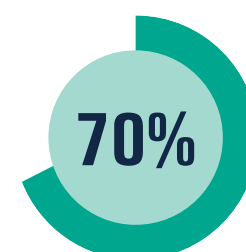
WHAT WINNERS PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY SAID:



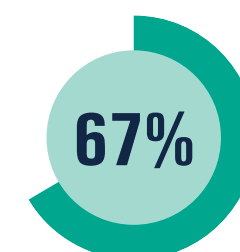
said the Award increased access to international donors.



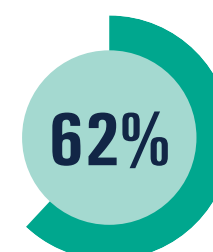
said the Award increased access to other conservationists internationally.



said the Award increased access to in country media.



said the Award increased access to international media.



said the Award increased access to decision makers in country.

IMPACT OF WINNING A WHITLEY AWARD

INCREASED PUBLICITY

- 100%** agreed that winning a Whitley Award increased their profile.
- 99%** found the publicity of winning a Whitley Award helpful.
- 88%** said the media training during the Awards week had a positive effect on their confidence and skills in engaging with the media.



The Whitley Award managed to position my career on an international stage.

CATALYSING GROWTH

- 97%** felt that the Whitley Award helped them be more successful personally.
- 99%** of respondents felt that winning the Whitley Award enabled them to expand or scale up their conservation work.
- 93%** felt that winning the Whitley Award enabled them to improve conservation practice.
- 71%** felt that they have achieved the conservation outcomes they set out at the start of their Whitley Award funding.



My Whitley Award was the catalyst for what has become a global collaborative venture in saving seahorses.

ENHANCED CREDIBILITY

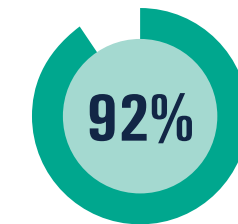
- 91%** feel that winning a Whitley Award had a strongly positive impact.
- 90%** stated the Whitley Award helped them feel more capable in making a difference to conservation.
- 59%** of respondents said that they knew at least one other project who has used their work as a model for replication.



It has given me strong recognition, prestige and credibility that allowed my long-term conservation work to achieve key support, relevance and political incidence...

OPENING DOORS

Winning a Whitley Award is a catapult for success and often leads to recipients being recognized with further awards, funding, and prizes.



feel that winning a Whitley Award contributed to receiving other prizes and/or awards.



The Award boosted our work by linking us to other networks and possible funding opportunities.

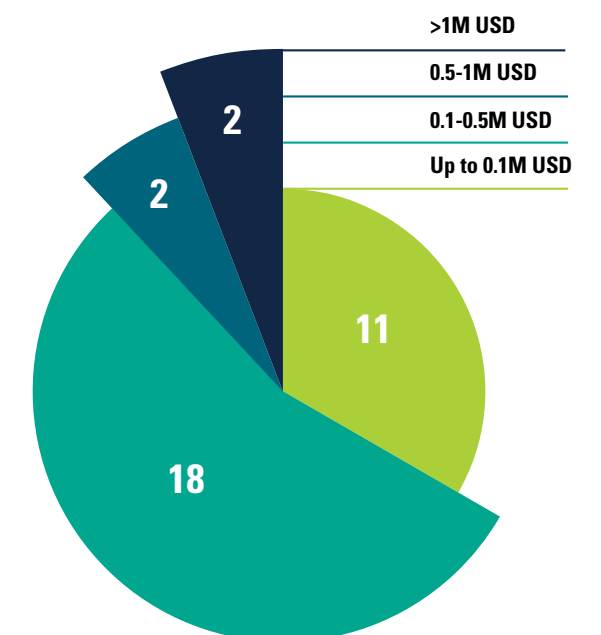


COUNTERFACTUAL ASSESSMENT

Independent Consultant, Dr Hunter Doughty attempted a counterfactual assessment by surveying those who nearly won a Whitley Award to help better understand the relative impact of a Whitley Award on conservationists' careers. Twenty-three Whitley Award applicants (who did not go onto win) between 2008 and 2018 were contacted. Five people responded which, although too low for a comparative analysis, provided the following snap-shot:

- + Two of the five near-winners did explicitly mention the Whitley Award when asked if there were any award(s) they did not get but that may have made a difference in their career.
- + Four of the five stated that they have won or received subsequent prizes, awards or grants, although these are comparatively smaller in size to those received by Whitley Award winners.

TOTAL FUNDING WINNERS SAID THEY RECEIVED BECAUSE THEY WON THE WHITLEY AWARD:



SHINING A SPOTLIGHT

WFN ACCELERATES THE CAREERS OF CONSERVATIONISTS BY WELCOMING THEM TO THE WORLD STAGE.

In addition to receiving project funding, Whitley Award winners are championed through a WFN-led PR drive with the world's top media brands. Our campaigns extend from winners' home countries to the international stage, turning them from local to global environmental stars.

Beginning at the Whitley Awards Ceremony with tailor-made films narrated by WFN Ambassador, Sir David Attenborough, and endorsement from high profile supporters including WFN's Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, the increased visibility helps to expand winners' reach, validate their work and heighten credibility among donors and peers. Resulting global media coverage of their work draws attention to environmental issues and builds local pride for projects on-the-ground, often increasing community participation.

WFN's own digital communications, which are seen by thousands internationally, further boost winners' profiles, and help to inspire philanthropic support from new sources, kick-starting a snowball effect that continues to bolster project funding. As their profile and credibility is raised, winners secure a better position to influence environmental policy on a regional, national and international scale.

“

The impact was more than that of funds. The international recognition was incredible as it gave me much more access to decision-makers and enabled us to work with them on conservation at their level.

**MELVIN GUMAL,
2014 WHITLEY AWARD WINNER**



of participating winners agreed that their Whitley Award win increased their profile.

CASE STUDY

FARWIZA FARHAN INDONESIA

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE LEUSER ECOSYSTEM TO PROTECT SUMATRA'S ICONIC SPECIES

Since winning her Whitley Award in 2016, Farwiza Farhan has gone from grassroots activist to leading environmental advocate. Leveraging the credibility of her Whitley Award, Farwiza has successfully driven change from the ground up in the fight to protect The Leuser Ecosystem in Sumatra, Indonesia, pioneered through her Acehese NGO, HAKA.

The Leuser Ecosystem is the last place in the world where Critically Endangered Sumatran tiger, orangutan, elephant, and rhino can still be found roaming together. Farwiza uses the power of collaboration to mobilize local, national, and global campaigns that empower communities to become involved in policymaking. She helped launch a citizen lawsuit against palm oil companies operating illegally inside the Leuser Ecosystem, ending in a victory for conservation, and a precedent-setting USD \$26 million fine.

Farwiza then used her WFN 25th Anniversary Funding grant to successfully halt construction of the proposed 173-meter high Tampur Leston hydro-dam. A development that would have destroyed free-flowing river ecosystems, drowning 4,000ha of pristine rainforest that represents the last link connecting populations of Sumatran elephants. Through soliciting media attention, protests, and disseminating information about the impacts of the dam, she ignited local and international outcry which led to building permits being cancelled. A triumph for this irreplaceable ecosystem.

Farwiza continues to fearlessly challenge unsustainable plans that would expose this landscape to unsustainable development and threaten to wipe out the species that live there.

“

The Whitley Award was the first award I ever received. Mine was risky work, and WFN had faith enough to give me funding, which helped me to build profile. Afterwards, others had faith in me too.

Farwiza's continued activism since winning her Whitley Award has led to:



Recognition as an 'emerging leader' on the 2022 TIME100 Next list. The accolade from TIME magazine features 100 rising stars from across industries and around the world. Farwiza was spotlighted for her contribution to 'shaping the future and defining the next generation of leadership' and chosen as the cover star of TIME's Asia edition of the magazine.



Praise for Bill Gates, posting from his official Twitter account; "Leaders like @wiiiiza make me more optimistic about the future of the world" [30/9/2022]. He was also quoted in National and International press articles as saying that he had had a chance to meet with Farwiza around the beginning of 2022 and was impressed with her environmental efforts.



Creating the impact film, Sumatra's Forest Guardian with WFN partners, WaterBear Network, for their free online streaming service, which reaches 25 million viewers.



Becoming a TED Fellow, joining nearly 500 visionaries across 300 disciplines in a programme that facilitates coaching, mentorship and delivering TED Talks.



An interview on BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour ahead of COP27, discussing the power that women hold when it comes to climate conservation.



Speaking on stage at the Clinton Global Initiative event Climate Week 2022 meeting, where Farwiza was introduced on stage by Hillary Clinton.



LOOKING AHEAD

AS WE LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT 30 YEARS, WE KNOW THAT IT IS ONLY TOGETHER THAT WE CAN TACKLE THE CHALLENGES THAT OUR PLANET FACES. THANK YOU TO EVERY ONE OF YOU WHO HAS SUPPORTED WFN'S JOURNEY SO FAR!

HOW WHITLEY FUND FOR NATURE COMPARES

When asked to compare WFN to other award making organisations, respondents discussed factors specific to how the Whitley Award had affected them. The most common topics were:

1. WFN boosted publicity across traditional press and social media platforms
2. WFN increased prestige via perceived profile and recognition
3. Other topics included a supportive team, training opportunities and long-term support given to aid project growth

When asked what 3 things WFN could do more effectively, interestingly, the top 5 (in order) were:

1. Provide more publicity
2. Provide more networking opportunities within the Winner Network
3. Provide more training opportunities
4. Simplify the application and reporting process
5. Award longer-term funding

WHAT'S NEXT?

TAKING ON BOARD FEEDBACK, WE HAVE DEvised 5 KEY POINTS OF ACTION. GOING FORWARD WE WILL CONTINUE TO ACTIVELY LISTEN TO WINNERS AND RESPOND TO THEIR NEEDS AS BEST WE CAN TO SUPPORT THEM WITH REALISING THEIR GOALS.



1. Continue to publicise the work of winners and environmental issues

By pitching stories to press and highlighting news across printed publications and online platforms championed by WFN's Head of Media Relations and Head of Communications, we want to spread the word that we can all make a difference to the environment. WFN's People for Planet Summit in 2023 is an example of how we are working hard to spotlight winners and make sure their voices are heard.



2&3. Grow the support we provide to our winner network

Through our Winner Network Development programme launched in 2021 and led by a dedicated Grants and Networks Officer, we are providing additional training opportunities to support winners in adding to and sharpening their existing skill set, with alumni setting the agenda. Though this programme winners are supported to meet and learn from each other, as we build an international peer network to facilitate knowledge exchange.



4. Continually evolve our application process

Our application process is reviewed annually by our Head of Grants to streamline, ensure accessibility, and cast the net wider in terms of our reach, and we continually take on board feedback to strengthen our approach. We are actively working with similar grant giving organisations to take this a step further, aligning our application forms where possible to make the process of applying less time consuming for applicants, while maintaining rigorous due diligence to select the strongest winners.



5. Channel more to conservation work on the ground

Over the past 30 years, WFN's impact has grown substantially, raising £30 million to support the work of more than 200 conservationists in 80 countries. Demand for funding from winners continues to grow. We want to increase what we offer in support to our alumni. To meet this goal, we are committed to increasing our fundraising target over the coming years, seeking to raise £3m per year by 2025 in response to conservation need.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We are a charity completely reliant on donations, with no capital endowment. The more we raise, the more support we can channel to wildlife conservationists. Together, we can protect and restore nature, securing its future.

PLEASE SCAN TO DONATE:



THANK YOU.



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30 years of making a
difference, 30 years of
building up capacity,
30 years of helping
conservationists to
reach our dreams and
help our planet.

XIMENA VELEZ-LIENDO,
2017 WHITLEY AWARD WINNER

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Kate Stephenson
Head of Communications

Lisa Wheeler
Grants and Networks Officer

Georgie White
Head of Partnerships

WFN PATRON

HRH The Princess Royal

WFN TRUSTEES

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Catherine Faulks
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Kate Humble
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