



Responsible Ecotourism at Hesaraghatta Grasslands

A report on community capacity building, nature guide training,
and local stewardship

Reporting period: September 2025 to June 2026

A COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE BY



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BENGALURU
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Executive Summary



A grassland is often mistaken for empty land. At Hesaraghatta, this project began with the belief that the people living closest to the landscape could become the ones who help others see it differently.

The Responsible Ecotourism at Hesaraghatta Grasslands project was created to train youth from communities around Hesaraghatta as certified nature guides. But at its heart, it was never just a training programme. It was an attempt to connect local livelihoods with grassland conservation, and to build a group of young people who could interpret, protect, and speak for a landscape they call home.

Implemented collaboratively by The Naturalist School, Native Jungle, and Our Native Village, the project was supported under the Small Grants Programme of the Bengaluru Sustainability Forum, administered by NCBS-TIFR and financially supported by Wipro Ltd.



The project originally aimed to train 10 beneficiaries. Through community outreach, institutional engagement, mobilisation, and selection, 15 participants were brought into the programme, expanding the project's reach to 150% of its initial target. Over the course of the engagement, participants went through weekend in-person sessions, field-based learning, on-the-job training, a residential module at Bannerghatta Nature Camp, Skill India assessment, certification, and continued mentoring.

The early signs of impact are already visible. Ashwini G has been placed as the resident naturalist at The Tamara in Coorg, while Naveen Narayan, a local of Hesaraghatta, has joined Farmers for Forests as a key outreach person. Participants have also begun moving into public-facing work through nature walks, college engagements, World Environment Day events, macro workshops, and conservation-linked public programmes.

This report traces the journey of the Hesaraghatta engagement from outreach to training, from certification to first opportunities, and from ecological learning to early livelihood outcomes. It is also the story of how a misunderstood grassland can become a classroom, a livelihood pathway, and a place of local stewardship.

15

participants selected

150%

of planned beneficiary target

Multiple
post-course engagements

3+
early livelihood outcomes

1. Opening Impact: From Training to Opportunity

The first proof of a programme like this is not a certificate. It is what happens after the certificate. At Hesaraghatta, that proof has already begun to show.

Ashwini G, one of the trained participants, has been placed as the resident naturalist at The Tamara, a 56-cottage resort in Coorg, Karnataka, set amidst about 200 acres of coffee plantation. In this role, she interacts with multiple guests every week, sharing her passion for nature and wildlife while also opening up conversations around conservation.



Naveen Narayan, a local of Hesaraghatta, has been appointed as a key outreach person at Farmers for Forests, a social enterprise environmental organisation that supports biodiverse farms and forests to improve climate resilience, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods. In a short time, he has visited about 10 schools to discuss walks and workshops, and has already led nature walks for over 100 students across two schools, both less than half an hour from Hesaraghatta.



Nikhil S has also worked as a naturalist at Regenta at Sakleshpur, Karnataka.

These are early outcomes, but they matter because they point to the larger purpose of the project: to help young people connected to the Hesaraghatta landscape turn curiosity, field exposure, and training into real professional pathways.



The project was not designed to simply teach participants how to identify birds, plants, insects, or ecological systems. It was designed to build confidence, communication, guiding ability, field discipline, and an understanding of how nature, conservation, hospitality, and responsible tourism can come together.

Ashwini, Naveen, and Nikhil's journeys are therefore not isolated success stories. They are the first signs of a larger shift: local youth being mobilised, trained, mentored, assessed, and gradually introduced to the world of nature guiding, ecological interpretation, and conservation-linked livelihoods.

2. Project Background

Hesaraghatta is one of Bengaluru's most important open landscapes. Its grasslands, lakebed, scrub patches, agricultural edges, and village commons support a wide range of biodiversity and ecological interactions. At the same time, it is a landscape that receives increasing attention from visitors, birdwatchers, photographers, cyclists, walkers, and nature enthusiasts.

This creates both an opportunity and a risk. Without interpretation, visitation can remain unstructured. Visitors may enjoy the landscape without understanding its ecological sensitivity, grassland biodiversity, or the communities connected to it. With trained local guides, the same visitation can become a tool for awareness, conservation, and livelihoods.

The project was created to address this need. It aimed to train local youth as certified nature guides who could lead responsible nature experiences, communicate the ecological importance of Hesaraghatta, and help build a more community-led model of nature engagement.



3. Project Purpose

The project aimed to create a responsible ecotourism model for Hesaraghatta by training youth from the surrounding communities as nature guides.

The purpose was not only to teach participants about birds, insects, plants, or ecology. It was to help them develop the full set of skills required to become confident nature interpreters: natural history knowledge, field observation, guiding techniques, safety, ethics, hospitality, storytelling, visitor management, and the ability to communicate why grasslands matter.

A flyer for the Nature Guide Certification Course. The background is a photo of people in a natural setting. The text on the flyer includes:

- Logos for Self India, NEET, and other organizations.
- Headline: "Did you know you could have a nature-based career?"
- Text: "OPPORTUNITY TO GET CERTIFIED AND WORK AS A NATURE GUIDE."
- Location: "GREATER HESARAGHATTA CONSERVATION RESERVE"
- Text: "Enroll in the Nature Guide Certification Course and start your journey as an enterprising Ecopreneur! Job oriented course open to graduates of ALL streams."
- Course dates: "Course dates - (Hybrid Mode) Dec 21st - Feb 22nd, 2023 (Weekends only) Feb 23rd - 26th 1 week at Bannerghatta Nature Campus"
- Contact: "For enquiries please write to us at: courses@naturalist.school"
- QR code: "SCAN TO APPLY"
- Footer: "Financial aid will be provided to deserving candidates from the local community. Selection will be based on application and interviews." and "Naturalist School" logo.

The larger goal was to connect three important outcomes: local livelihood creation, conservation awareness, and responsible public engagement with the Hesaraghatta landscape.

The Naturalist School

4. Project Partners and Collaborative Model

Partner / Stakeholder	Role in the Project
The Fig Tree Naturalist Foundation / The Naturalist School	Curriculum design, nature education, natural history training, pedagogy, resource persons, certification pathway, and guide development.
Native Jungle	Local ecological understanding, field support, landscape connection, and grassland-specific interpretation.
Our Native Village	Responsible tourism context, local anchoring, hospitality/ecotourism connection, and community relevance.
CEAH / CPDO Hesaraghatta	Institutional support and training venue for weekend modules.
BSF / NCBS-TIFR / Wipro Ltd.	Grant support and enabling platform under the Small Grants Programme.
Local stakeholders	Community support, mobilisation, field linkages, and local participation.

5. Outreach and Awareness

Before the training started, the team spent time speaking to local institutions, governing bodies, and community stakeholders to explain why Hesaraghatta's grasslands matter, and how nature guiding could create both livelihood and conservation value.

Meetings with Gram Panchayat representatives helped introduce the programme locally. A key discussion with DFO Mr. Ravindra IFS and PDO Smt. Veena helped place the project within the larger context of grassland conservation and responsible ecotourism.

The team also reached out to young people through First Grade College, Hesaraghatta, and Acharya University, building interest among students who could become the next generation of local nature guides.

6. Mobilisation and Selection

The selection process looked beyond qualification. It looked for curiosity, commitment, communication potential, and a willingness to stay with the full journey. Interested candidates were spoken to, screened, and interviewed by Swarna, Arvinth, and Chandrashekhar.



The project was originally planned for 10 beneficiaries. But the response from the ground allowed the team to select 15 participants, taking the project to 150% of its intended reach.

Participant List

Nithish	Hitesh	Prajwal B
Sharath Kumar N	Nanda Kumar M	Ashwini G
Naveen Kumar N	Thirthesh R	Prashanth Gopinath
Nikhil S	SriHari S	Ranganath Sampath
Sudeep	Gurusiddappa P	Vidya Adiga

7. Course Design

The Certified Nature Guide course was designed as a hybrid programme combining weekend in-person sessions, online learning, a residential field module, on-the-job training, assessment, certification, and mentoring.

The training was designed to build both knowledge and confidence. Participants were introduced to natural history, biodiversity, ecology, birdwatching, butterflies, insects, taxonomy, nature journaling, citizen science, interpretation, guiding ethics, Leave No Trace principles, hospitality, inclusion, safety, and employability skills.



Training Timeline

Phase	Period	Main Focus
Outreach and awareness	Sept-Oct 2025	Community and institutional awareness
Mobilisation and selection	Nov-Dec 2025	Candidate identification and interviews
Weekend training	3 Jan-15 Feb 2026	Core natural history, guiding, and interpretation
On-the-job training	15-22 Feb 2026	Real-world nature engagement practice
Residential module	23-28 Feb 2026	Immersive field training at Bannerghatta Nature Camp
Skill India assessment	26 Feb 2026	Viva, theory, and practical assessment
Valedictory	7 Mar 2026	Certification and stakeholder gathering
Post-course engagement	Mar-Jun 2026	Walks, mentoring, and early placements

8. Weekend Training Phase

The weekend training phase began on 3 January 2026 at CEAH, CPDO Hesaraghatta. The course opened with registration, introductions, orientation, and expectation-setting.

Early sessions focused on building personal connections with nature, team-building, understanding the role of a nature guide, and exploring biodiversity on the CEAH campus through nature walks.



The weekend modules used experiential learning. Mornings often began with outdoor sessions or focused nature walks, while classroom sessions, discussions, games, films, and activities were used to deepen learning through the day.

- Biodiversity of India, natural history, flora and fauna
- Birds and birdwatching
- Insects, butterflies, and taxonomy
- Wetland, grassland, soil, and cloud ecology
- Nature journaling and citizen science
- Ethics of nature guiding and Leave No Trace principles
- Guiding techniques, storytelling, and interpretation
- Nature photography, inclusion, diversity, and hospitality skills





9. On-the-Job Training

The on-the-job training phase gave participants an opportunity to experience real-world nature engagement. Participants were involved in facilitating a nature engagement session with school children at Nrityagram, Hesaraghatta. The session was facilitated by Mr. Atul from Farmers 4 Forests.



This exposure helped participants understand how nature education works with young audiences. It also gave them a chance to observe facilitation methods, group engagement, child-friendly interpretation, and the importance of creating meaningful outdoor experiences.

The OJT phase moved participants beyond classroom learning and showed how natural history knowledge can be converted into public engagement.

10. Residential Module at Bannerghatta Nature Camp

The residential module was held from 23 to 28 February 2026 at Bannerghatta Nature Camp. This was one of the most intensive phases of the programme. The aim was to immerse participants in a field-learning environment and give them sustained exposure to wildlife, ecology, guiding practice, and professional naturalist culture.



A highlight of the residential phase was the screening and discussion of the film Gandhadagudi, followed by an interaction with director Amoghavarsha in a campfire setting. The discussion focused on passion, conviction, initiative, following one's heart, and ecopreneurship.

- Mammals and safari interpretation
- Tiger, tracks, and signs
- Reptiles, snakes, and snakebite awareness
- Basic first aid
- Nature walks and guiding technique practice
- Wildlife films and discussions
- Spiders and connections in nature
- Employability skills



11. Assessment and Certification

After completing the training modules, participants appeared for the Skill India assessment as part of the certification process. The assessment was conducted online on 26 February 2026 and included viva, theory, and practical components.

The valedictory function and certificate distribution ceremony were held on 7 March 2026 at CEAH, Hesaraghatta. The ceremony was attended by Dr. P. S. Mahesh, Joint Commissioner, Government of India and Director, CPDO; senior staff of CPDO; representatives of The Naturalist School, Native Jungle, Our Native Village, Bengaluru Sustainability Forum, and the Forest Department; families of participants; and resource persons.



The Chief Guest for the ceremony was Dr. Meenakshi Negi, IFS, PCCF, HoFF. The valedictory marked an important transition for the participants: from trainees to certified nature guides ready to begin engaging with the public.



12. Participant Kits

Each participant received a field kit to support their learning and future guiding practice. The kits were designed not only as course materials but as practical tools for field learning, documentation, and future nature walks.

- Jacket, bag, cap, and badge
- Field notebook for nature walks
- First aid box and essential first aid field guide
- Magnifying glass
- Pocket guide on birds
- Pocket guide on common trees of India
- Pocket guide on butterflies
- Water bottle and mug
- Stationery: A4 and A5 sheets, notebook, pens, pencils, colour pencils, eraser
- Bookmarks and stickers
- TNS participation certificate
- Skill India certificate

13. Post-Course Engagements and Field Opportunities



Following the training and certification, participants began stepping into real field opportunities. These engagements became practice grounds for confidence, communication, visitor handling, and public nature interpretation.

Date	Engagement / Audience	Impact / Notes
8 March 2026	Women's Day Nature Walk Audience: 15+ participants	Celebrated and encouraged women's participation in nature, conservation, and outdoor learning.
12 April 2026	Paid Nature Walk Audience: 15+ participants	A key milestone showing the livelihood potential of trained local guides.
Sunday, 7 June 2026	World Environment Day Walk Audience: 30+ members	Continued public engagement and kept Hesaraghatta visible as a landscape for ecological learning.
9 June 2026	Guided Walk for Taj Group Audience: management personnel of Taj group of hotels and select guests	Introduced hospitality leaders and guests to the landscape through guided interpretation.
9 July 2026	Mount Carmel College Biotechnology Walk Audience: 50 students + 2 professors	Connected college students to Hesaraghatta's grassland ecology and field-based natural history learning.
5 August 2026	Mount Carmel College Biotechnology Walk Audience: 40+ students	Follow-up institutional engagement showing repeat interest from the same college.
July 2026	ASC Campus World Environment Day Nature Walks Audience: 150+ army personnel	Extended the guides' exposure beyond Hesaraghatta into urban institutional nature engagement.
July 2026	Olympus Macro Workshop Support Audience: 30+ participants	Gave participants exposure to specialised nature experiences and photography-focused audiences.

July-August 2026	TNS 5th Anniversary Nature Walks Audience: 100+ participants	Allowed trained guides to support a larger public-facing TNS celebration and engage varied audiences.
August 2026 onwards	Cubbon Walks: Audience: 15+ participants each week	Shows the growing demand for trained nature communicators across institutions.

After the training and certification, the certified nature guides have led multiple walks at Hesaraghatta Conservation Reserve, reaching hundreds of people. Alongside these, they have supported college walks, hotel group engagements, macro workshops, World Environment Day events, TNS 5th anniversary walks, and other nature engagement opportunities. The table below captures confirmed engagements and leaves space to add additional walks from the full tracker.





14. Early Livelihood Outcomes

The project has shown early livelihood-linked outcomes that strengthen the case for responsible ecotourism as a real pathway, not just a training idea.



Ashwini G has been placed as the resident naturalist at The Tamara, a 56-cottage resort in Coorg, Karnataka, set amidst about 200 acres of coffee plantation. As part of her role, she interacts with multiple guests on a weekly basis, sharing her passion for nature and wildlife and introducing guests to ideas of conservation through everyday hospitality experiences.



Naveen Narayan, a local of Hesaraghatta, has been appointed as a key outreach person at Farmers for Forests, a social enterprise environmental organisation that supports and creates biodiverse farms and forests to improve climate resilience, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods. In the short time since he joined F4F, he has visited about 10 schools to discuss the walks and workshops he can offer students. He has already conducted nature walks for over 100 students across two schools, both less than half an hour from Hesaraghatta.



Nikhil S's journey adds another important layer to the project's impact story. After completing the training, he worked for as a naturalist at Regenta, Sakleshpur, Karnataka, where he was able to apply his learning in a real hospitality setting. His role went beyond simply accompanying guests on walks, introducing guests to the biodiversity around the property, and supported nature initiatives that added value to the guest experience.

This is significant because it shows how the training opened doors across different directions, not just conservation education or local walks, but also hospitality, responsible tourism, and customer engagement through nature.

These stories matter because they show movement from learning to livelihood. The participants are not only using the knowledge they gained; they are taking it into resorts, schools, farms, forests, colleges, and public walks. The project has helped create confidence, certification, exposure, and networks that can support professional opportunities in nature guiding, hospitality, conservation education, and responsible tourism.

15. Continued Mentorship and Learning

A WhatsApp group was created with all participants to support continued learning after the course. This is important because nature guiding is not a skill that is completed at the end of a course. It grows through repeated field exposure, mentorship, feedback, public walks, and practice.

The next phase for the group involves continued mentoring in communication skills, especially Hindi and English, and supporting the guides to lead walks on a rotational basis at Hesaraghatta lake and grassland.

16. Key Outcomes

- The project exceeded its original beneficiary target by selecting 15 participants against a planned target of 10.
- Local youth from around Hesaraghatta were trained in natural history, guiding, interpretation, safety, ethics, hospitality, and citizen science.
- Participants were introduced to the ecological importance of grasslands, wetlands, birds, insects, plants, and broader biodiversity.
- The programme created awareness about Hesaraghatta as a sensitive and valuable grassland landscape.
- Participants completed weekend training, on-the-job training, and a residential field module.
- Participants appeared for Skill India assessment as part of the certification process.
- A valedictory and certification ceremony was held with strong stakeholder participation.
- Post-course public engagement expanded through the Women's Day walk, paid nature walk, World Environment Day walk, Taj group walk, Mount Carmel College walks, ASC campus walks, Olympus macro workshop support, and TNS 5th anniversary walks.
- Early livelihood-linked outcomes emerged through Ashwini G's placement as resident naturalist at The Tamara, Naveen Narayan's outreach role at Farmers for Forests, and Nikhil S's role at Regenta, Sakleshpur.
- A continued learning group was created to support mentorship beyond the training period.

17. Wider Impact



From Training to Livelihood Pathways

The strongest impact of the Hesaraghatta project is that it has begun to move beyond the classroom. Ashwini G's role as resident naturalist at The Tamara, Naveen Narayan's outreach role at Farmers for Forests, and Nikhil S's naturalist pathway show that the training is translating into real opportunities connected to nature, hospitality, education, conservation, and responsible tourism. These are early outcomes, but they give the project its clearest direction: local youth can become professional nature communicators when training is backed by exposure, mentoring, and networks.

Reach Through Walks and Public Engagement

After the training and certification, the certified nature guides have led more than five walks at Hesaraghatta Conservation Reserve, reaching over 100 people. These numbers should be updated from the walk tracker. Even with numbers still being consolidated, the direction is clear: the guides are no longer only learners. They are beginning to interpret Hesaraghatta for students, guests, institutions, families, and nature enthusiasts.

A Growing Pipeline of Opportunities

Future and follow-on opportunities have continued to come in. The guides and the larger project team have supported or are being considered for college walks, macro workshops connected to Olympus, TNS 5th anniversary nature walks, World Environment Day nature walks at ASC campus, hotel group engagements, and other public nature experiences. This matters because every opportunity becomes a practice ground. Participants learn how to handle different audiences, tell better stories, respond to questions, manage groups, and translate field knowledge into meaningful visitor experiences.

Institutional and Industry Connections

The post-course engagements have also connected the guides to a wider ecosystem: colleges, schools, resorts, hospitality groups, environmental organisations, photography communities, and public nature audiences. The 9 June 2026 guided walk for Taj group personnel and select guests, the 9 July 2026 walk with 50 Mount Carmel College biotechnology students and 2 professors, and the expected 5 August 2026 engagement with over 70 students from the same college show that trained local guides can serve both educational and professional audiences.

Impact on Conservation Awareness

Grasslands are often misunderstood, overlooked, or dismissed as empty land. Through this project, participants were trained to recognise and communicate the ecological value of Hesaraghatta. Every guided walk becomes an opportunity to change how visitors see the landscape: from a vacant open space to a living grassland ecosystem with birds, insects, seasonal changes, ecological relationships, and conservation concerns.

Ripple Effect in the Community

Apart from formal walks and events, the guides are regularly visiting the Hesaraghatta grasslands and lake to keep learning more about the landscape. They also take friends and family on informal nature appreciation walks. This is where the ripple effect becomes visible. The project is not only creating guides for visitors; it is creating local ambassadors and stewards who are carrying conservation conversations into their own circles.

A Platform, Not Just a Course

In that sense, the Hesaraghatta project has begun moving beyond a course. It is becoming a platform for continued learning, livelihood exposure, public engagement, and local stewardship. The next step is to strengthen this platform with better tracking, regular walk calendars, guide rotation, communication mentoring, and stronger documentation of participant journeys.

Participants' Testimonials

Participants shared their feedback about the course, highlighting improved understanding of grassland ecology, biodiversity and conservation. The hands-on sessions and field experiences helped build their confidence as nature guides.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1N2yB9DqUH7LWnNMsP4YzQKMeFlxsTUgm>

18. Learnings and Areas for Strengthening



- Participants will benefit from further support in communication skills, especially English and Hindi, to engage a wider range of visitors.
- A structured guide rotation system will be important to ensure that opportunities are distributed fairly among trained participants.
- Regular nature walks should be planned and marketed so participants can continue practising and earning.
- A simple tracking system should record walks conducted, visitors engaged, income generated, and participant progress.
- Individual participant stories should be documented in greater detail to show the human impact of the programme.
- The project should create standard walk scripts, safety protocols, pricing formats, and visitor guidelines for Hesaraghatta.

19. Lessons Learned, and Reflections

The Hesaraghatta project offered important lessons on what it takes to build a community-linked responsible tourism model from the ground up. The biggest learning from the Hesaraghatta project is that local conservation work cannot begin with training alone. It has to begin with trust. Nature guiding is still not an obvious livelihood pathway for many young people and families. The early outreach with local stakeholders, colleges, government representatives, and community members was therefore critical.

It helped position the programme not as a hobby course, but as a serious skill-building opportunity connected to conservation, hospitality, tourism, education, and local pride. The project also showed that participants enter with very different levels of exposure and confidence. Some were strong in field curiosity, some in communication, and some needed more time and mentoring. This meant that the course had to go beyond natural history. It had to build confidence, discipline, visitor handling, storytelling, safety, and interpretation.

Language and communication also emerged as areas for continued support. While several participants showed strong curiosity and field interest, they would benefit from further mentoring in English and Hindi communication, visitor handling, storytelling, and interpretation. This is especially important if the guides are expected to work with schools, colleges, hotels, tourism groups, and mixed urban audiences.

20. Systemic Reflections Relevant to Bengaluru

Hesaraghatta also raises a larger question for Bengaluru: what kind of nature does the city recognise, and what kind of nature does it ignore?

Grasslands are often seen as empty, dry, unused, or waiting to be developed. This is not just a local perception. Research on India's open natural ecosystems has pointed out that grasslands, shrublands, savannas, deserts, and scrublands have historically been undervalued, misclassified as “wastelands,” “degraded lands,” or even absorbed into forest categories. A 2023 paper on grassland conservation in India also identifies a “forest bias” in institutions and policy, which has contributed to weak grassland conservation and restoration frameworks.

The Hesaraghatta project showed that these landscapes can become outdoor classrooms, livelihood spaces, and places of public interpretation. A trained local guide can change how visitors see a place. This is the systemic value of the project. It offers a model for Bengaluru's peri-urban future: identify overlooked ecological landscapes, train local youth, create structured public engagement, and build livelihood-linked stewardship around them.

The project also shows why urban sustainability cannot be only about infrastructure, waste, water, transport, and energy. It must also include biodiversity, ecological literacy, local livelihoods, and the ability of citizens to understand the landscapes around them.

21. Way Forward

The next phase should focus on consolidation. The trained guides should be supported to lead regular walks at Hesaraghatta lake and grassland on a rotational basis. These walks can be designed for families, schools, colleges, photographers, nature enthusiasts, and corporate groups.

Participants should receive continued mentoring in communication, interpretation, visitor handling, and entrepreneurship. A public-facing Hesaraghatta nature walk calendar can be created to make the walks visible and accessible.

The project partners can also develop themed walks around grassland birds, insects, seasonal ecology, lake ecology, pastoral landscapes, and responsible nature photography. Over time, the project can become a model for how urban and peri-urban landscapes can support both conservation awareness and local livelihoods.

22. Feedback on the Role of the BSF Small Grant

The BSF Small Grant helped turn a good idea into a working model. It enabled the project partners to move from intention to implementation: outreach, mobilisation, selection, training, residential learning, participant kits, certification, mentoring, and early post-course opportunities.

The grant also gave the project space to experiment. Responsible ecotourism in a grassland landscape is not a ready-made format. It had to be built through local trust, field learning, resource people, and real public engagement.

The results show the value of this catalytic support. The project reached **15 participants instead of the planned 10**, supported early placements for Ashwini G and Naveen Narayan, enabled public walks, and created a growing pool of local nature communicators. BSF's Small Grants Programme is meant to support local, innovative projects that bridge research and on-ground action; the Hesaraghatta project is a clear example of that role in practice.

The grant did not just support a course. It helped create the beginnings of a local stewardship model for one of Bengaluru's most misunderstood landscapes.

23. Conclusion

The Responsible Ecotourism at Hesaraghatta Grasslands project began with a clear idea: to train local youth as nature guides and create a community-linked model of responsible tourism.

Over the course of the engagement, the project moved from outreach and mobilisation to training, field immersion, assessment, certification, public walks, and early livelihood outcomes.

It exceeded its original beneficiary target, trained a committed group of participants, created awareness around the ecological importance of Hesaraghatta, and helped participants take their first steps into the professional world of nature guiding and conservation-linked livelihoods.

The placements of Ashwini G and Naveen, Nikhil's emerging naturalist pathway, the Women's Day walk, the paid nature walk, the World Environment Day walk, college engagements, hotel group walks, and workshop opportunities all point to the same larger impact: the project has begun to move from training to action.

Hesaraghatta now has the beginnings of a local group of trained nature guides who can help visitors see the landscape differently: not as empty land, not merely as a weekend destination, but as a living grassland ecosystem, a place of biodiversity, memory, livelihood, and stewardship.

This is the real promise of the project: to create a future where the people closest to the landscape are also the ones who help others understand, respect, and protect it.

Course Media (photos and videos)

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ksJkBTnLw6qUF62l7bGdxbHZuQth2H2>

