



IZE GRANTS PROGRAM

SPONSORED CONFERENCE DELEGATES GRANT

The International Zoo Educators Association (IZE) is a professional organization dedicated to expanding the educational impact of zoos and aquariums worldwide. Its mission is to improve the education programs in the facilities of its members, provide access to the latest thinking, techniques, and information in conservation education, inspire visitors to conservation action and model caring attitudes towards animals. IZE has members from more than 50 countries around the world who are interested in communicating and cooperating within our field of zoo and aquarium education and with other conservation professionals. IZE's primary fund raising project is the support of conservation educators from around the world through the Sponsored Conference Delegate Grant. This grant funds educators from developing countries to attend the IZE biennial conference. Sponsored delegates are selected as part of a competitive process. A limited number of professional development grants are available every other year to attend the IZE conference. Each grant includes support for conference registration, airfare, accommodation, some meals, and IZE membership for two and half years. The visa and passport fees are the responsibility of the IZE Grants recipient.

IZE adopted the Sponsored Delegates Grant knowing that wildlife conservation efforts are more critical today than ever before as human populations expand and our impact on the Earth and its resources grow exponentially. Conservation education is vital in creating awareness and action in audiences. The IZE Association emphasizes professional development of conservation educators to increase their abilities in connecting people to nature. In order to become effective interpreters of the natural world, educators need access to innovative skills and techniques that involve and spark the curiosity of their audience. The IZE conferences offer exposure to these new practices and to educators from different cultures who share interests universal to environmental educators. During paper presentations, small group discussions, workshops, mealtime conversations, educators ask questions, discover new ways of experiencing nature and learn from each other. All of our members come together with a common goal . . . to inspire visitors to conserve wildlife and wild places. The IZE conferences bring together exciting educational practices and new ways of thinking about the environment. Delegates have told us over and over again that the chance to meet colleagues, make friends and find the support is a place for professional growth, powerful learning and friendships. Meet past sponsored delegates and read about their IZE Conference Sponsored Delegate experience.

“As the only zoo of Nepal, it was very important for me to know what other educators are doing. So I consider myself very lucky to be sponsored to attend the IZE Conference. I had the chance to learn many things in the field of zoo education as well as be able to establish relationships with other zoos. The people at the conference were very friendly and ready to share the nature of their work and give suggestions. Through the conference I have gained new ideas that I will try to carry out in my work. It was a wonderful lesson for me that even if you are short of funds still you can do something that greatly effects conservation of species and your visitors and students. Apart from learning new things the social events for the sponsored educators also was very good, so it was not just knowing the Zoo educators but also the chance to explore a new city.”

Rachana Shah

Conservation Education Officer

King Mahendra Trust For Nature Conservation/Central Zoo

“Being the only zoo educator in Yugoslavia, it is very important for me to keep in contact with other zoo educators and zoological gardens. In this way I can keep up-to-date in my field of conservation education. I can compare my work with others. It enables me to see what we are good at and where we need improvement. I was also able to share my knowledge and experience with other zoos outside Yugoslavia. The atmosphere at the IZE conference was very warm and friendly. Everybody was very helpful and willing to share their knowledge. I have gained new ideas that I will try to carry out in my work at home.”

Irena Furlan

Biologist and Head of Zoo Education Zoo Ljubljana, Slovenia

“The conference expanded my scope in a number of areas. The presentations, workshops and posters provided a deep contextual understanding of what others are doing including the success stories. It widened the scope of what zoos are doing for conservation education including the involvement of communities and the role of indigenous knowledge in conservation. The study visits around Hong Kong were fantastic and invigorated my way of thinking about how conservation, integrated with education, can form a desirable benchmark for communities and learners at different levels. The integration with people whose backgrounds are different but with same common goals was inspirational. And finally, the meeting of old friends and new ones leads to inquiry and exchange of ideas that align themselves to see the way forward.”

Bernard Bakobi

Regional Environmental Education Support (REES)Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)

Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA) Tanzania

“The IZE conference promoted different perspectives on conservation education and new ideas on ways to improve approaches to my daily work. It allowed me to reassess my department’s objectives to achieve a better

understanding of nature and the importance of zoo conservation by our visitors. I especially appreciated the shared experiences about the teaching and learning processes, the open space sessions that let us share our knowledge about a particular topic, the workshop on promoting caring attitudes towards animals in visitors, and techniques that achieve a more effective learning experience at animal shows, dramas and interactive exhibits. The benefit of the IZE conference for my own personal and professional development was to establish contact with educators from many countries and to know that there are many people who can support our projects. In the future, I hope to continue efforts in zoo education to provide our visitors with environmentally-friendly knowledge, skills, and attitudes, to strengthen bonds between other areas of my zoo with cooperative new projects, and to develop new projects that motivate the educative staff and volunteers.”

Miguel Angel Vieyra Guzman
Head of Educative Area San Juan de Aragon Zoo
Mexico City, Mexico