

The Himalayan Restoration Project

The Himalayan Restoration Project, a Zooreach initiative works towards building climate resilience, adaptation, fighting climate crisis to bring coexistence in the landscape, and reduce the human-wildlife negative interactions in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh, India. The project works on the intersection of restoration, livelihood generation, and wildlife conservation. The project was officially launched on 21 March 2024 in collaboration with the government school, Rathiya Panchayat (where 28 villages, with 500+ families, partnered with 800+ ha of their lands to be restored), HP Forest Department, and Global Landscape Forum. We started a community-led nursery, with 3,000 native Himalayan saplings grown in 2024. The Project has educated 300+ students, 200+ youth, and 200+ women in nursery management who joined our team to restore 1.5 ha of degraded land with 1,500+ native saplings in 2024.

The project started with their activities this year in the Chamba landscape in June 2025. Since then, we have conducted restoration across 16 locations planting 2,500+ native saplings, five community awareness meetings, four education workshops with government school students, and two training session for the women self-help group.



Restoration

The HRP team has conducted restoration drives across 16 locations in Matwari, Langa, Randoh, Jhalein, Chinjoti, Dugli, Basidhan, Mieiyari, and Dugli from 30 June to 22 August 2025.

This year we restored with 13 native species: Deodar *Cedrus deodara*, Wild Himalayan Pear *Pyrus pashia*, Ban Oak *Quercus leucotricophora*, Wild Pomegranate *Punica granatum*, Dhaman *Grewia optiva*, Wild Cherry *Prunus cerasoides*, Walnut *Juglans regia*, Himalayan Fig *Ficus palmata*, Poplar *Populus indica*, Himalayan Neem *Melia azedarach*, Horsechestnut *Aesculus indica*, Himalayan Wild Rose *Rosa moshchata*, and Mulberry *Morus serrata*.

On 26 July, another plantation drive was held on Uttam's farm in Randoh village, where 20 NSS students from Rajkiya Varist Madhyamik Vidyalaya planted 184 saplings under the guidance of the HRP team. After completing the plantation, the students were accompanied back to their school for an education outreach discussion where we spoke to them about the different problems related to climate change their landscape is facing and how we can work together to solve the problem.



During our first plantation drive this year on 30 June 2025, we saw an enthusiastic participation of 20 NSS students and three teachers from Rajkiya Varist Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Randoh, along with five guards from the Chamba Forest Department. A total of 50 saplings were planted during the session. To make the experience more reflective and educational, the students took part in an activity where they wrote about their planting experience, observations, and what they learned from the exercise.

Education Outreach

On 26 and 27 July, using vibrant colours, the students at Randoh Higher Secondary School illustrated their understanding of restoration, nature, and conservation. The day concluded with a documentary screening, where students watched "Pride of Chamba" by Green Hub and "Himalayan Monal" by RG Sustain, giving them deeper insights into the region's wildlife and conservation efforts.

On 4 October, the HRP team was invited to the Government Senior Secondary School, Sahoo, to participate in a Wildlife Week celebration organized by another NGO, Paryavaran Chetna Evam Gramin Vikas Prasikshan Kendra.



On 25 September the HRP team addressed the students, sharing details about their ongoing conservation initiatives and the importance of habitat restoration. The session concluded with the screening of "Pride of Chamba", which inspired the students to appreciate the rich biodiversity of their region and the collective efforts needed to protect it.



Community Meetings

In July the HRP team met with the local village leadership to address the ongoing issue of tree guard maintenance. Through visual communication using illustrated posters, the team presented the challenges and potential solutions. The village representative expressed strong support for the initiative and agreed to serve as a key stakeholder, ensuring active local leadership and community participation in all future restoration activities.



Later in the same month a meeting was organized with the women's self-help group at the field station, bringing together around 70 women from neighboring villages. The discussion centered on challenges related to crop depredation and explored community-driven restoration and plantation initiatives under the HRP to promote sustainable coexistence and local stewardship.



In August, the team conducted two interactive meetings with the residents of a nearby village to introduce the HRP and explore opportunities for future collaboration. Community members actively participated in the discussion, with several expressing interest in offering their farms for upcoming plantation drives and restoration efforts.

Women self-help Group Trainings



In July the team conducted two training sessions for 70 women self-help groups from the region on para-taxonomy, nursery management, seed collection & germination, and restoration. Project objectives and activities were communicated using outreach posters to enhance understanding. The sessions received an encouraging response, with 10 women volunteering their farms for plantation and five women expressing interest in collaborating directly with the HRP team.



Strengthening Partnerships for Restoration

In October 2025, we signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with all restoration stakeholders outlining the terms and conditions for maintaining restored saplings and plant protectors.

We also highlighted the importance of tree guards in ensuring sapling survival and forest regeneration. As a gesture of gratitude, certificates of appreciation were presented to stakeholders for providing land for native species plantation. The event played a key role in strengthening mutual understanding and encouraging community participation, helping stakeholders recognize the long-term benefits of restoration and their crucial role in sustaining the project.





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Citation: Bhattacharjee, T., A. Ansari, L. Tyagi, L. Rathore, S. Verma, V. Ahuja & S. Molur (2025). The Himalayan Restoration Project. In: *Zoo's Print* 40(10): 01–07.