

Neville Shulman Challenge Award Recipients

Royal
Geographical
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Year: 2009

Principal Investigator: Will Millard

Project Title: The Jalan Raya: Uncovering the Secrets of Papua's Trade On-Foot

Abstract: This project will investigate traditional inter-tribal trade in Indonesian Papua. The project will follow the course of an old-trade route known locally as the 'Jalan Raya' (Great Road). Following the route through the central mountain spine of the Papuan highlands, from the Kapauku Tribes of the Wissel Lakes in the West to the Dani Tribal territories of the Baliem Valley in the East, the recipients shall walk for approximately six weeks through areas that have remained almost completely unvisited. This will pose a number of physical challenges such as the terrain, climate and food over the six weeks, due to start in August 2009. With film and camera it is hoped to provide a deeper understanding of an ancient Tribal system under threat from the pressures of the outside world. The outputs of the project will include a short documentary film and submission of articles in major magazines and newspapers. It is also intended to make available any results of use to local and international NGO's.

Year: 2007/2008

Principal Investigator: Tom Parfitt

Project Title: From the Black Sea to the Caspian: On Foot through the Caucasus


Abstract: This project involves a journey of approximately 600 miles from the Black Sea to the Caspian. This journey will be undertaken on foot from sea to sea across the southern flanks of the Greater Caucasus, through Abkhazia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The Caucasus is one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse regions on the planet. However, it also one of the most maligned and misunderstood. This project aims to pare apart myth and reality and bring to foreign readers the real voices and stories of the patchwork of peoples living in the high mountains on the southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus: Abkhaz, Mingrelians, Svans, Khevsurs, Pshavs, Tush, Kists and Tats. The project aims to discover if there is a common highland culture that binds these diverse groups, and ties them in a wider sense to other mountain peoples in Europe. Themes to be explored include national myths, custom, religion, interpretations of history, inter-ethnic conflict and nationalism.

Year: 2007

Principal Investigator: Hattie Wells, Global Diversity Foundation

Project Title: The Kalahari Garden Project

Abstract: The San are southern Africa's oldest inhabitants, a people who have maintained an independent subsistence for thousands of years through hunting and foraging, and who are renowned for their abundance of ecological knowledge and ability to survive in one of the world's harshest environments. However, land dispossession and political marginalisation over the last two hundred years has made their nomadic lifestyle increasingly difficult to sustain. This ongoing project aims to assist the San in improving their food security and nutrition, and contribute to building the skills and opportunities necessary for preserving their environmental knowledge and establishing a renewed sense of self-reliance within the community. Training and assistance in cultivating home gardens with approximately sixty San households will be undertaken. The gardens will encourage horticultural and ecological education and contribute towards an improved diet for the San population in the area. Participatory research will be conducted with the aim of monitoring the impact of home gardens on food security and nutrition among the San and documenting their knowledge and use of edible and medicinal wild plants of the region.



Abstract: This project had four main components: 1) it compiled detailed case studies of local reconstruction in one or more post-war cantons; 2) it helped to make stronger linkages between Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian local leaders and social scientists and their Western counterparts; 3) it attempted to give local residents some involvement in a community profiling and 'visioning' exercise (often conducted in Western nations); and 4) it tested certain ideas about post-communist, post-war reconstruction in mountain communities

Year: 2001

Principal Investigator: Dr Alun Hubbard, University of Edinburgh

Project Title: Endless Summer: Antarctic Convergence Zone Expedition

Abstract: During this project a team of environmental scientists, mountaineers and divers, carried out environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and glaciological studies around the coastal zones of the Antarctic continent. By collecting unique data sets, they assessed the transfer and distribution of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) said to be 'one of the great environmental challenges the world faces', complemented by urgent baseline surveys of fauna and flora. The glaciological studies allowed for the development of climate change/glacier models in order to assess their response to enhanced global warming. The Antarctic Convergence Zone (where Antarctic cold and mid-latitude warm waters meet and mix) is seen to be a crucial location for such important scientific study. The project took 18 months and began in Auckland, New Zealand, from where the team sailed steel, ice-strengthened ketch, 'Gambo', via Tierra del Fuego and a number of sub-polar islands, to the west Antarctic Peninsula. The expedition also included exploration and first ascents of peaks on the Antarctic Peninsula.