

Elephant business - Nepal, India & Bangladesh

Getting Along with Elephants: Human Elephant Co-existence HECx, Nepal - Feb-March 2009

The second series of HECx workshops was conducted in Chitwan National Park and Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, Nepal, funded by USFWS. National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) invited people living in and around HEC areas of Chitwan, Bardia and Sukhlaphanta as participants and hosted the series. The workshop was coordinated by Mrs. Sarita Jnawali, Project Manager/ NTNC and In-charge Central Zoo, and Mrs. Rachana Shah, Education Coordinator.



The *first workshop* was organized at Chitwan at the Biodiversity Conservation Centre, NTNC, Chitwan National Park with 44 participants, including teachers, NGO's, buffer zone committee

members, wildlife department and zoo along with a Thai intern. The *second workshop* though it was organized at Chitwan the participants were from the HEC areas of Bardia National Park areas, and about 35 participants participated in it. The *third workshop* was organized at Sukhlaphanta at Mahendra Nagar which is close to Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, Far Western Nepal about 27 participants participated the programme. At this venue, due to a strike, participants reached with difficulty and stayed for long hours, out of their personal interest.

In the all three workshops 106 participants were given training as well as training materials and handouts for using at their place. Group composition was 45 teachers, 22 NGO's, 23 buffer zone committee members, 13 wildlife officials and 3 zoo personnel. Resource persons were B.



A. Daniel, R. Marimuthu, Sally Walker from ZOO, Rachana Shah, NTNC and Heidi Riddle from Riddle's Elephant Wildlife Sanctuary.

Programme details

The objectives of the programme was to empower teachers of all kinds to confront and teach about the vexed topic of Human-elephant Conflict and a partial 'solution' ie human-elephant coexistence HECx and to demonstrate innovative teaching and learning techniques



designated to change human attitudes and behaviour for the better. Sally Walker who introduced the objectives explained the meaning of active learning methodology by conducting a mini-drama inviting participants to wear masks of different characters of humans, animals and plants.

To assess the participant's pre knowledge about the subject three assessment techniques were conducted. They were Brain map, content survey method (written) and attitude assessment. It is important that the participants understand the basic information about the species that we discuss ie the Asian and African elephants. They were informed about the two elephant species and their sub species, classification and the regional names

Drama is of the active leaning tool. Four drama themes such as Human-elephant conflict, poaching and hunting for elephant body parts, why does a village attract elephants, certain do's and don'ts in the elephant area were made into script for the participants to practice and present.



A discussion was initiated to understand the existing forest cover in Nepal and important elephant habitats in Nepal. The forest cover in Nepal includes 16 Protected Areas that will include 9 National Parks, 3 Wildlife Reserves, 3 Conservation Areas and 1 Hunting Reserve. Present and historical distribution of Asian elephants was



made to understand by map reading activity. To trace the history of Asian elephants a drawing activity was conducted using elephant history cards starting from 2000 B.C to 2025 AD.

Do's and don'ts in the presence of wild elephants was introduced to the participants. They were informed that the elephants have been used or abused by human beings extensively for various purposes, and human elephant conflict is a old problem and it has been existing for long time but not severe as now. HEC is very



complex, no ultimate solution is available. Even though the governments and NGO's have been trying many things to cope with the problem and protect both human and elephants sometimes it is unmanageable by them. Every individual has to take the responsibility either as an individual or as a community and learn how to live with the situation as it is, not as how they wish. In order to do this, one must develop flexible attitude and learn to think in new ways and establish priorities.

To understand some of the adaptive characteristics of Asian elephant, a few games were done with participant's involvement. Elephant has been used as a powerful symbol in most cultures around the world. To promote conservation, people should understand the influence of elephants in development of human culture. A specific activity was designed to understand how this happened in human cultural evolution. A role play was also played to how people have different view about elephants and how

it vary between individuals.

To understand the people's tolerance or intolerance level towards problem elephants, social and economic problems caused by the elephant and smaller pests like rodents were compared. Later a debate was organised to understand some of the mitigation measures taken by the government with community participation. The process involved on protection and management of HEC at regional level was explained to them by a mock conference exercise.

Dr. Narendra Man Babu Pradhan gave a PPT presentation



from his doctoral degree on Asian Elephants in Bardia National Park, Nepal in the first training in Chitwan. In his presentation he talked about Asian elephant over times, Protected Areas of Nepal in which four areas have isolated elephant populations.

Towards the end of the training programmes tips for planning an education programme was given to all. The participants took personal commitment that they can do over a period of six months time. The participants received a certificate at the end of each workshop. Along with this all participants received 100 Ele-kit education



packets for them to go back and do education programmes in their respective areas.

HECx – Promoting Human Elephant Coexistence in Bangladesh - Educator Skills Training Programme, 22 June – 2 July, 2009

In Bangladesh, the people who live in the elephant range areas experience frequent human-elephant conflict in the past 20 years and the situation is becoming worst day by day. In order to address this emerging problem in Bangladesh, a series of educator skills training programme was organized in three locations namely Rangunia, Chittagong which is in southeastern Bangladesh, Sherpur, and Durgapur, Northern Bangladesh. The objective of the three



At Rangunia 45 participants took part in the programme. It was attended by teachers, forest department personnel, village heads, college teachers, NGO members, journalists, farmers and individuals who live in elephant area who are involved in education. The Sherpur participants were all from the HEC localities from Sherpur District and the group also had a set of officials from the forest department apart from agriculturalists. The group had a total of 33 participants. At Durgapur about 36 participants took part in the training programme. This group will include majority of teachers, journalists, lawyers, NGOs, village heads and agriculturalists. During the programme 6,000 ele-kit packets, 130 drama kits, were distributed. A teaching manual developed exclusively for Bangladesh was also given to each participant.



day programme is 1) to empower teachers of all kinds to introduce and teach about the vexed topic of human-elephant conflict and a partial solution to human-elephant coexistence HECX and 2) to



The 9 day programme included 7 trainees who attended all three workshops as interns, 5 educators from WTB and also 2 from FFI, Sumatran Elephant Conservation Programme, Indonesia. Resource person from ZOO, WTB and Elephant Sanctuary handled the sessions. The entire programme was sponsored by USFWS. Other funding partners are Elephant Family, Twycross Zoo, Columbus Zoo and Schonbrunn Zoo.



demonstrate innovative teaching and learning techniques designed to change human attitudes and behaviour for the better.

Advanced Technique Refresher Course Getting Along with Elephants – HECx

The first series of three workshops of educator skills training programme on HECx – Getting along with Elephants was held in November 2008 at North Bengal, India. As a follow up of this, a Refresher course was organized at Green Lagoon Resort, Lataguri near Gorumara National Park on 8-9 June 2009. This refresher course was organised with the financial support of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A total of 25 selected participants from previous three workshop locations were selected in which 5 of them represented the forest dept. The participants of the refresher course were selected on the basis of their performance and reports after the November training programme in 2008.

The objective of the course was to understand the effectiveness of the HECx training programme towards changing the behaviour and attitude of the people who live in HEC areas, to evaluate the educators after 6 months to understand the utilization of the training, their education activities on HECx and also to teach additional active teaching/learning tools.



In this refresher course participants were also evaluated through a questionnaire to find out whether they could change their own behaviour whoever lives in the HEC areas and also they could convince the people through education to change their attitude in order to promote human-elephant coexistence. They were also assessed if they could fulfill the commitments that they made during November workshops, also assessed for those educators who live in HEC areas if they could apply the tips that they learned during the training and they could change their behaviour or daily routine to avoid danger or safeguard their life etc.,

Bengal educator's network in order to share their work with each other while ZOO help them in all aspects of technical support.

Also we heard true stories from the participants themselves who narrated how the training programme changed their attitude and behaviour. Many of our participants changed their behaviour and also they helped to change the behaviour of the people who live in the elephant areas. Here are few examples: Two women saved their live by following the instructions of



Out of the 25 participants 17 were either from the HEC area or they conducted programmes in HEC areas. They were given a change to

share their education experience with other fellow educators of North Bengal. There was a discussion among the participants about linking educators of North Bengal so that they can help each other and cover the entire region to promote HECx. It was decided after the discussion that they form a North

Dos and don'ts given by the one of the educators. Some people stopped harassing the elephants whenever it enters into tea gardens, now they stopped harassing the elephants instead they approach forest department for help to drive the elephants away.

Before the refresher course, B. A. Daniel and R. Marimuthu visited one of the villages near Lataguri, a location identified by Mr. Manas Manjumdar, as one of the village as the target group.

ZOO supplied with 50-100 Bengali Ele-kit education packets which are very much needed in their working field. They commented that vernacular education materials will be very useful for them to teach the rural pupil and people.

