



BRING THE ELEPHANT HOME

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



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Annual Report 2015

Bring the Elephant Home

Approved by the board on March 29, 2016



1. Introduction

The year 2015 has been an inspiring year with a focus on strategy development, community engagement, learning, networking and discovering new conservation models and technologies. To make this happen, we have welcomed a new conservation manager to join the team: miss Siriporn (Vivi) Sriaram. In August 2015, Vivi and I formed a team and we inspired each other to find the best strategy for Bring the Elephant Home to save the Asian elephant.



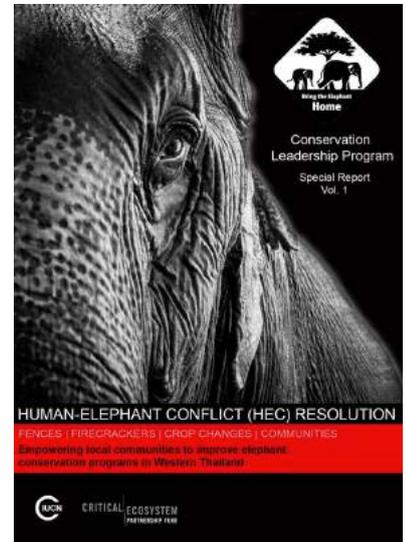
“Working with BTEH is very rewarding because we bring together people to work together on conservation of wild elephants and restoration of natural resources that benefiting the livelihood of local communities.”
Vivi, conservation manager of BTEH

Big plans, and thanks to a grant of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and natural resources), we were able to embark on a whole new initiative to realize this: the conservation leadership program.

To gain a better understanding about the attitudes of local people, support for conservation initiatives and the impact of human-elephant conflicts on the livelihoods of people, we have conducted a survey among 410 households as part of a graduate program of Miami University. Through Participatory Action Research, community members shared their innovative ideas to protect wild elephants and their vision of the future. The community discussed several new elephant conservation initiatives, including using beehives as a sustainable and effective fencing method. We are very excited to test this new strategy and keep developing conservation models that are sustainable, include all stakeholders and really make a chance. The Conservation Leaders and the new projects will receive support in the form of training, coaching, finance and practical implementation.

Our regular conservation programs in Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary continued as planned. Along with many volunteers, we were able to plant 8,000 trees and we created more access to drinking water for elephants. The project on Borneo also moved forward in 2015. We were able to support the forest restoration team of Hutan to restore two former oil palm plantations to their natural condition. By securing land as wildlife habitat, elephants can follow their migration routes safely, without the need to cross oil palm plantations.

In the Netherlands, we joined the organization team of the Global March for Elephants, Rhinos and Lions again. In Amsterdam, as well as in 135 other cities worldwide, we walked the march on October 4th to strike a clear note to stop the ivory trade and poaching.



By working together with several stakeholders and by stimulating conservation action, we help to create a more harmonious environment for elephants and people. With a little help, ecosystems can thrive again and human-elephant conflicts will reduce

There is still a lot of work to do. In 2016 the elephants can once again count on Bring the Elephant Home. Together we can make a difference!

Warm regards from the BTEH-team in Thailand,
Antoinette van de Water
Chair president





2016, © AnaGrillo for BTEH

2. **Mission and objectives**

The foundation Bring the Elephant Home (BTEH), registered in 2004, aims to better the chance of survival for Asian elephants. BTEH achieves this by restoring their natural habitat and by finding and implementing solutions to mitigate human-elephant conflicts, whilst cooperating and working in collaboration with local organizations and communities.

Basically, we want to prevent the extinction of the Asian elephant by:

- Preservation of the wild elephant, and restoration, expansion, and protection of their habitat in cooperation with our partners
- Mitigating human-elephant conflicts
- Encouraging local participation in nature conservation, and empowerment of local communities
- Raising awareness and education directed at protecting nature and elephants

3. Projects and programs 2015

- 3.1 Conservation Leadership Program
- 3.2 Research
- 3.3 Conservation Action Thailand
- 3.4 Conservation Action Borneo
- 3.5 Other projects, programs and events

3.1 Conservation Leadership Program



In 2015, BTEH received a grant from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to launch the “Conservation Leadership Program” initiative to stimulate growth of the organization and to facilitate capacity building. This unique training program allows conservation leaders to make real differences for wildlife. With the support of IUCN, Bring the Elephant Home established a small team of local community leaders and rangers to be more proactive in their conservation efforts. Rather than choosing expensive solutions to prevent elephants from going out of protected areas, the team explores new solutions, such as a joint monitoring plan, crop changes, education programs and beehive fence control.

The selected activities have the potential to be implemented as pilot activities for the community-based conservation program. Knowledge and skills needed to realize new HEC mitigation strategies, such the introduction of beehive fences, will be included in the capacity building program.

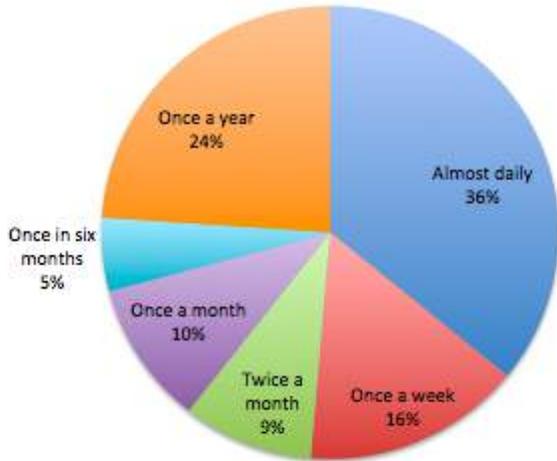


In December 2015 BTEH organized a study trip for community members, park rangers, researchers and BTEH and ZSL staff to meet with a research team from Phu Luang Wildlife Research Center in Loei Province. The community members reacted positively to the beehive-fencing concept and returned inspired and enthusiastic about the possibility of a new and more sustainable method of dealing with human-elephant conflicts.

3.2 Research

Understanding the attitude of the local communities towards human wildlife conflict is crucial to forming sustainable strategies to mitigate such conflicts. In October 2015, BTEH and conservation leaders conducted a survey amongst 410 people who live around Chong Sa Dao sub-district. The key findings of this research, which was done in collaboration with Miami University, allowed BTEH to have a better understanding on the HEC situation in Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary. The survey findings are as follows:

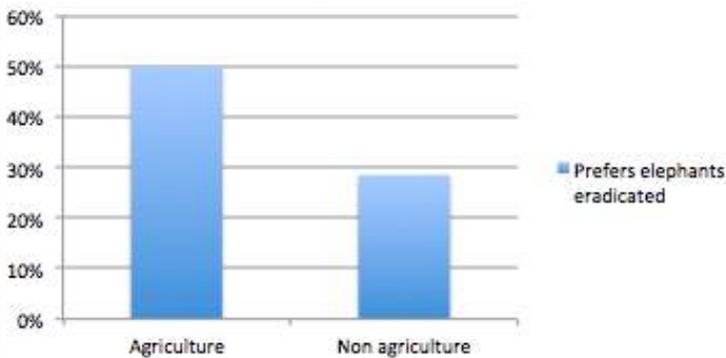
How often did you see or hear elephants outside the protected area?



- People working in the agricultural sector have a more negative impression of elephants because elephants raid crops, such as cassava, banana, jackfruit and mango.
- People who gain benefits through a community-based conservation program have a much more positive attitude towards the elephants, compared to villagers who do not benefit from these programs.

- Most people (87%) feel that it is important to invest in elephant conservation because elephants attract eco-tourists and conservation initiatives. This is mostly due to the fact that the local villagers have a long history of coexisting harmoniously with the elephants and the fact that the elephant is considered the symbol of Thailand.

Prefers elephants eradicated



In addition to the survey, BTEH organized Participatory Action Research to bring community members and park rangers together to talk about conflict reconciliation.



Participatory Action Research facilitates dialogue and stimulates ownership of conservation projects by community members.

Under the common goal 'A healthy environment for elephants brings people's happiness', the activities that are desired by both communities and park officers were discussed and added to the planning of the Conservation Leadership Program.



3.3 Conservation Action Thailand

In 2015, we worked with different volunteer groups on improving the habitat of the wild elephants of Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary. Thanks to funding from Banrock Trust / Accolade Wines we were able to plant 8.000 trees, including six experimental plots to compare the success rate in different conditions.



Drought is a serious problem in Kanchanaburi, causing a lack of drinking water for animals. In the dry season, wild elephants search for drinking water outside the sanctuary, resulting in increasing human elephant conflicts. Check dams are an effective way to improve the watershed conditions inside the forest.



Thanks to the dedications of many volunteers, we could convert a sugarcane plantation back into a natural forest in July 2015. The plantation is located at the border of the protected area, and is often destroyed by wild elephants. The abbot of a local temple convinced the owners to give the land back to nature and to create a buffer zone for wildlife. We hope that this initiative will be followed by many more, so we can convert all the plantations at the border of Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary.





3.4 Conservation Action Borneo

Bring the Elephant Home supports the local organization Hutan by funding the cost of seedlings, planting activities, tree maintenance and monitoring of the restoration of oil palm plantations.

In 2015, we continued our support to expand the corridor and to help analyzing data collected in the experimental plots.

Whilst we were in Borneo, we surveyed the experimental plots together with the reforestation unit to discuss used methods and to discuss reasons for varying results. Furthermore, we organized a participatory mapping to document local knowledge about the area, which is valuable information in addition to the statistics. The monitoring report for this project is available on request.





3.5 Other projects, programs and events

Bike for Elephants

On January 16th we organized our annual fundraising event Bike for Elephants in Kanchanaburi again. In two days 20 cyclists cycled over 120 km to help improve the lives of elephants in Thailand.

The first day ended at Sai Yok Yai Waterfall, where the participants could cool down while floating down the river. The second day ended at Elephants World, with time to feed and bathe the elephants. The funds raised by Bike for Elephants goes towards the conservation of wild elephants in Kanchanaburi.



Educational programs

In 2015 we have been collaborating with KIS, Walking, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok Prep International School, Walking Tree Travel and local schools in several eco camps and lectures.

On request, we organize volunteer tours, volunteer weekends or events, for international and Thai groups depending on the needed conservation action at the time of the year.





Adoption program

For many years now, BTEH has supported the costs for the care of the elephants that are living at the Elephant Nature Park.

The adoption program consists of seven elephants: Dok Ngeon, Sri Nuan, Faa Sai, Chang Yim, Sri Prae, Navann and Dok Mai. We have 212 adoptive parents to help take care of them. Thanks to their support, Bring the Elephant Home was able to donate 10.000 euro to ENP for their care. As captive elephants, the Elephant Nature Park is the best option for them. They are living peaceful lives, without much interference of people.

Events

On the 1st of January we had our annual Dutch traditional 'new year's dive' for the elephants in Honselersdijk. On 28 and 29 of June we joined the Greetings from Thailand Festival in Almere. Our annual donor meeting was organized in Honselersdijk on the 26th of September. And the 3th of October we joined the March for Elephants, Rhinos and Lions in Amsterdam to call for an end of the slaughtering of elephants and a complete ban on ivory trade.

On these public events our enthusiastic volunteers were able to reach new people and inform them about the plight of Asian elephants and to motivate them to get active as well. By selling merchandising and through the donation box they also raised funds for our projects in Asia.

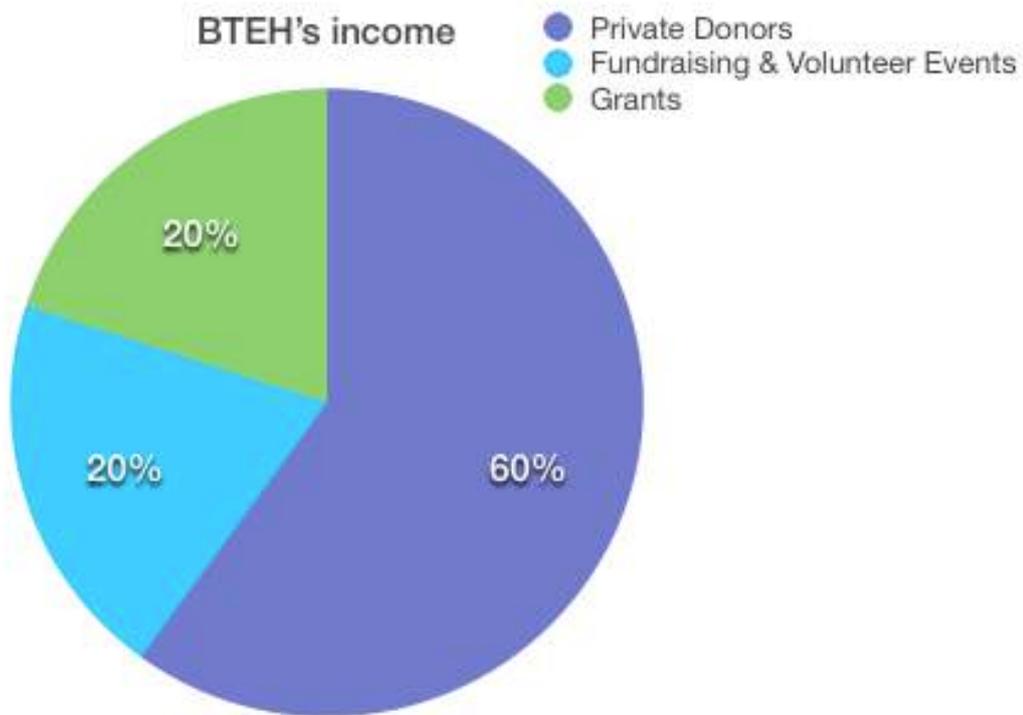
Support Elephant Haven

One of the largest commercial elephant camps in Thailand has signed a contract to phase out the riding of elephants and to start animal-friendly tourism: Elephant Haven Thailand, situated on the river Kwai Noi in Kanchanaburi. Bring the Elephant Home kicked off by bringing the first group of volunteers to this new project in June 2015. We also advised other volunteer groups that want to spend time with elephants to support Elephant Haven.

4. Fundraising and finances

In 2015, we have invested in expanding the range of activities of BTEH, enlarging our network and organizing the foundation in a more professional way.

Although the income from grants fluctuates, Bring the Elephant Home's income can roughly be divided into these categories:



* The financial reports of the Thai and Dutch foundation are available on request.

4.1 Private donors

We divide our supporters in one-time donors (about 1.200 donors), contributors with a monthly pledge (300), and adoptive parents (150).

Annually, the donors will receive a project update by email twice a year, including an appeal for an extra donation. Once a year we send out a direct mailing, with a personalized letter and something extra such as a photo or report. Furthermore, the donors stay connected to our organization through social media such as Facebook, and by our annual donor meeting. By these diverse activities, we try to keep our donors informed and connected with our organization.

4.2 Grants, funds and charity events

In 2015 we received the support of these international funds and grants (through the Thai and Dutch foundation):

Grant	Start date	Amount (Euro)
Banrock / Accolade Wines (for 2 years)	May, 2014	€20,000
New Year's dive for elephants (NL)	January, 2015	€720
The Green Experience	January, 2015	€500
Bike for Elephants	January, 2015	€3895
IUCN CEPF	April, 2015	€5950
Thai Festival, the Netherlands	September, 2015	€676
Foundation Endwell	September, 2015	€500

4.3 Corporate sponsoring

More and more clients demand from companies that they take responsibility when it comes to sustainability. By supporting our reforestation program, companies can become carbon neutral. Good for the environment, the elephants, and the local population. In 2015, we received 500 euro from Cryotainer in the Netherlands to compensate their CO₂-emission and to help the Asian elephants.



Protecting wild elephants in Thailand



Protecting wild elephants on Borneo



Other events



Learning new technique for forest restoration using drones



Faces of conservation leaders (The Chong Sa Dao community)



“Be a nursery caretaker one must really dedicate their heart into it.”

Ms Panor Kamnerdphet, nursery caretaker



“We many wild elephants in the village and the villagers know more about BTEH’s work, we are glad that BTEH is working to help us reduce the problem with wild elephants raiding crops and introducing new solutions such as Beehive fence project”.

Ms Laoo Phupradit, head of village 1



“Although I am still studying but I would like to be part of the conservation team that help protect wild elephant and bring peace to my community”

Miss Chutimol Supakul, village committee



“I have a dream that one day our communities can live in harmony and peace with wild elephants and the conflicts can be resolved.”

Mr Wasan Sujirat, Chief of Chong Sa Dao Sub-district





In Memoriam Dutsadee Nilubol (12/10/1974 – 12/02/2015)

On February 12, our dear colleague and dear friend Dutsadee Nilubol (Tik) passed away at the far too early age of 40 years old. During the last weeks of her life, Tik was surrounded by her loved ones and friends, to whom she was able to say goodbye. From 2007, Tik worked as the Trees for Elephants Project Manager for Bring the Elephant Home. Her extensive knowledge and enthusiasm has always been very valuable for many of our organization's projects. In grateful memory of what she has done for Bring the Elephant Home and for us personally, Tik will always be in our thoughts.

Photo credits:

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Siriporn Sriaram

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