



Strategic Plan 2018-2022

For a world where people and elephants
can coexist in harmony

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Acronyms

BTEH	Bring the Elephant Home
HEC	Human-Elephant Conflict
DCA	Damage Causing Animal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SA	South Africa
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1. Introduction

This strategic plan covers a period of ambitious change. Bring the Elephant Home will enlarge its focus to cover African elephants and has the ambition of becoming an authority on human-elephant coexistence. During the 13 years of focusing on Asian elephants, we invested in gaining knowledge, we tried new conservation models and we conducted research to explore new HEC mitigation methods. This is the moment to roll out our experience and expertise to other areas with HEC and gain and share knowledge about sustainable solutions across both continents. The foundation started as a dream of rescuing two street begging elephants and embarking on a journey to 'Bring the elephants home'. The organization went through different phases of growth during the different projects we organized. The diverse range of activities has produced a learning curve resulting in the development of an integrated approach: combining community participation, education, research, capacity building and practical action to realize positive change. We believe in a holistic approach to protect wildlife, which involves local communities, students, scientists, NGOs, government, Rangers, and everyone who cares about preserving the wonders of nature.

At our project sites, we have been confronted with the impact of human-elephant conflicts. We witnessed how fast HEC is increasing. We worked with people that were fearing for their lives and we felt the tension between elephants and people in situations that were about to escalate. With the expected human population growth, this situation can only deteriorate over time. *Unless* we all work together and take action. That's why we decided to make human-elephant coexistence our main objective for the years to come.

The only way to secure the future of elephants is cooperation and knowledge exchange at all levels. In all elephant range countries, people are trying to find ways to coexist with elephants on a local level. Researchers have been testing HEC mitigation methods. Parks have been confronted with conflicts in surrounding villages. National governments experience the impact of habitat fragmentation, which shows the importance of connectivity in the form of corridors. The future of elephants depends on all those stakeholders, learning from the experience of communities and conservationists across continents.

To maximize the potential of BTEH, we are now including the African elephant as one of our target species. By doing this, we will enhance our possibilities to find long-term holistic solutions of which all countries in elephant range countries can benefit.

Over the years, the context of our mission has changed. Also with this mission, we look for peaceful ways to bring the elephants home and to make sure their home is safe and suitable for their long-term survival. By working together with different stakeholders, by applying research to design new conservation models, we continue to make the needed difference!

Antoinette van de Water

2. Organizational Profile

2.1 Vision

BTEH's vision is to preserve elephants worldwide by restoring damaged ecosystems, to create suitable habitats for elephants and thus eliminating the cause of human-elephant conflicts (HEC). Our conservation projects are supported by a holistic stakeholder approach as BTEH believes that the best guarantee for living, thriving ecosystems is the involvement of the people being part of them. Economy and ecology can and should be complementary instead of contradictory forces.

Due to deforestation and habitat fragmentation, elephants across the globe have to deal with a great lack of habitat, food, and water. Therefore, we aim to preserve, restore, expand and connect habitat. In order to mitigate HEC, we look for solutions that eliminate the cause and reduce the impact of HEC on the lives of people and elephants. Instead of escalation, we aim for peaceful ways to make sure people and elephants can live together in harmony.

Bring the Elephant Home believes that all elephants should be protected and be able to live full lives in nature. We do not support the use of elephants in captivity when it goes against the animal's nature, when it's only for the pursuit of profit and does not contribute to the conservation of the species. Therefore, we recommend tourists to make the effort to see elephants in the wild, so that rangers and local communities will see the value of elephants, instead of the burden. We realize that protected areas are too small and scattered to contain viable elephant populations in many areas.

We must embrace the art of coexistence and focus on creating a more harmonious environment for elephants and people alike. This is why Bring the Elephant Home exists; this is why community engagement, learning, discovering new conservation models and technologies is the passion of Bring the Elephant Home. With a little support, people and elephants can coexist and ecosystems can thrive again.

2.2 Mission

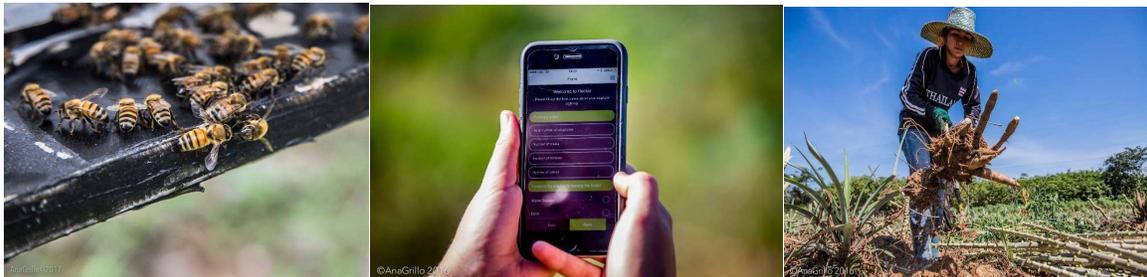
The foundation Bring the Elephant Home (BTEH) aims to better the chance of survival for elephants worldwide and to create a world where people and elephants can coexist in harmony. It is our strong belief that we only achieve this through a holistic stakeholder approach with a focus on practical, sustainable solutions.



2.3 Objectives

Bring the Elephant Home contributes to preventing the extinction of elephants by:

- Preservation of the wild elephant, and restoration, expansion, connection and protection of habitat in collaboration with local partners;
- Implementing, testing and sharing knowledge about sustainable solutions and new technologies to encourage human-elephant coexistence;
- Mitigating human-elephant conflicts in collaboration with local stakeholders;
- Encouraging local participation in nature conservation, and empowerment of local communities;
- Raising awareness about the importance of nature and elephant conservation.



2.4 Values

The core values of the organization are:

- Community-based - making wildlife valuable for local communities.
- A holistic network of scientists, community leaders, government, and NGOs.
- Practical: together with scientists, volunteers, Rangers, and community members we realize conservation action projects.
- Positive attitude: we show that solutions to protect elephants are within reach.
- Flexible: an adaptive management strategy allows us to be practical, to keep learning and improving our approach.



2.5 Code of Ethics

Relationship with Partners and Local communities

Local communities play an important role in the planning and execution of our fieldwork, and we respect their cultural and economic needs. We support prioritizing measures to promote gender equality and equal participation in decision-making and management at all levels of our projects. To maximize the effectiveness of our work, we aim to build partnerships with other organizations, students, governments and local communities. We recognize the value of collaboration with like-minded organizations. In partnerships, we maintain our independence, spread awareness about our points of view and credit our partner organizations. Decisions are made with respect for the interests of all stakeholders. We combine the best of local and external knowledge and resources in the planning of projects. In the case of using external knowledge, we will organize capacity building events to train local communities to guarantee long-term sustainability. Our aim is that new projects become self-supportive, create social cohesion, positive change, and improve the chance of survival for elephants.

Relationship with Staff and Volunteers

Our staff and volunteers have the right to be treated with dignity and respect as a co-worker. The team is small enough to develop personal relationship based on trust and friendship. We promote freedom of expression and open communication with respect for each other. Before hiring new team members, at least one reference will be sought in the form of a letter from referees or by talking to the referees in person. This allows us to learn about the applicant's capacity to work in a team, their flexibility and their ability to best represent the organization's cause as a new team member. The staff and volunteers only attend events which are safe and in compliance with health & safety regulations. Their suggestions are always welcome and responded with respectful feedback.

Child Protection Policy

Bring the Elephant Home acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children that are joining our volunteer events. We are committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and with our partner organization's requirements.



Code of Conduct

The board and staff of BTEH will take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest. No board member or staff of Bring the Elephant Home will use his or her position for the benefit, direct or indirect, personally or through family members, rather than the benefit of BTEH. BTEH staff and board members have an obligation to ensure the protection of confidential information. We expect employees to be ethical and responsible when dealing with our foundation's finances, products, partnerships and public image. All employees and volunteers should respect their colleagues. We won't allow any kind of discriminatory behavior, harassment or victimization.

Needless to say: Bring the Elephant Home is against all forms of violence. We are a non-governmental organization, politically neutral in every way. Of course, everyone who works for BTEH has the right to a political opinion as an individual, but not as a representative of Bring the Elephant Home.

2.6 Current Approach

Since 2004, Bring the Elephant Home has been working to bring elephants from unnatural environments or situations of conflicts, back to a more suitable and safe home for elephants. Throughout the years the focus has shifted in the direction to protect wild elephants. BTEH includes all stakeholders, such as local communities, youth, students, scientists, NGOs, Rangers, to learn about conservation work, to undertake fieldwork and to realize positive change.

The statistics speak for themselves. Understanding the perceptions of the local communities towards human-wildlife conflict is crucial to developing sustainable strategies to mitigate such conflicts. In October 2015 and March 2016, BTEH and conservation leaders conducted a survey amongst 410 households and 46 plantation owners in Chong Sadao sub-district in Western Thailand. The key findings of this research, which was done in collaboration with Miami University, allowed BTEH to have a better understanding of the HEC situation around Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary, home to about 200 wild Asian elephants. The survey findings are as follows:

- 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.

The survey was part of the Conservation Leadership Program, in which we use Participatory Action Research to bring community members and park rangers together to talk about sustainable community-based elephant conservation solutions. To plan our conservation work, more research data on the behavior and movements of the elephants is crucial. With our monitoring programs in Thailand and on Borneo, we find out whether or not the planted trees have survived and grown well in the first few years after planting in certain climate and circumstances.

Until now, our projects have reached these numbers of elephants:

- In the period that we focused on elephants in captivity, we rescued 8 elephants from the street to give them a life in semi-freedom. Furthermore, we helped hundreds of elephants working in tourists camps to receive a more humane as there is more demand for 'elephant friendly tourism' now, partly thanks to our media campaigns (Dutch TV, Animal Planet, international newspapers and magazines).
- About 200 wild elephants in the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary on Borneo, where we helped to create the corridor of life.
- About 200 wild elephants in Kanchanaburi in Western Thailand, where we work on community-based human-elephant conflicts (HEC) mitigation and habitat restoration.
- About 100 wild elephants in Chanthaburi in Eastern Thailand, where we installed beehive fences and initiated forest restoration efforts to mitigate HEC.



3. Context

3.1 Resources

BTEH derives its income from voluntary fundraising activities and receives no direct government funding. Staff and overhead costs are kept to a minimum. High profile film documentaries such as 'Return to the Wild' of Animal Planet (NCF), Aanpakken en Wegwezen (Llink) Helden van de Wildernis (Warner Bros), scientific publications (Natural History Bulletin of the Siam Society) and other media coverage of the charity are obvious promotional asset.

3.2 Stakeholders / Partners

The beehive fence project is in collaboration with the Phluang Wildlife Research Station. In Kanchanaburi in Western Thailand, we work directly with the local community of Chong Sadao. For about ten years, we have collaborated with FORRU of Chiang Mai University. Since 2015, we have had the support from the CEPF program of IUCN. Amongst our loyal funders in the Netherlands are the ASN foundation, Kootje Fundatien and the INNO Fund of WWF. We have been working with Nature Conservation Films for many years. Miami University supervises our research projects. In 2017, a collaboration with Elephants Alive in South Africa started to develop. In addition, in light of our mission for the next four years, other partnerships and collaborations will likely develop.



4. Projects and Programs

Within the 4 years of this policy plan, the organization aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Deepen our knowledge on tested sustainable HEC mitigation strategies.
- Share knowledge and establish a network in Asia and Africa on human-elephant coexistence.
- Become an authority on elephant coexistence by conducting research, attending conferences and publishing scientific articles.
- Secure funding to allow BTEH to cover both Asian and African elephants.

A new logo

For a fresh start of this policy plan, we are launching a brand new logo. The new logo relates to science, care and connectivity. It is modern, with a reminder of the roots of BTEH.



Projects and Programs 2018-2022

All our projects are in collaboration with local organizations and includes the participation of local communities. As a small, practical foundation, we are flexible and we can act quickly when an opportunity arises. Planned projects for 2018-2022 are:

1. Asian elephant conservation
2. African elephant conservation
3. Elephant research trust fund
4. Conservation Leadership Program
5. Adoption program that supports our mission
6. Charity and educational events

4.1 Asian Elephant Conservation

Chanthaburi in the South-East of Thailand and Kanchanaburi in Western Thailand are two of the most severe areas of human-elephant conflicts (HEC) in Thailand. In Chanthaburi about 100 wild elephants are permanently living outside the protected area, causing damage almost each night. Effective methods to bring harmony to local people are urgently needed. The beehive project mitigates crop raiding, creates harmony for people and elephants and generates income for local communities. BTEH helps to investigate whether beehive fencing is as effective in Asia as it is in Africa. In addition to measuring the effectiveness of beehive fencing, the project also examines the developing behavior of elephants in reaction to the presence of bees. If this sustainable method proves to be effective in Thailand, it could be implemented in other human-elephant conflict areas in SE Asia. Our regular programs in Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary continued as planned. Along with many volunteers, we were able to plant trees and we created more access to drinking water for elephants, while they supported the local community through a homestay program.



4.2 African Elephant Conservation

Increasing human activities has caused a decline of African elephant habitat and resulted in increasing human-elephant conflicts in areas throughout Africa where humans and elephants inhabit. Conflicts between farmers and elephants is a priority conservation challenge in Africa and with the expected human population growth, this situation will only deteriorate over time resulting in the dislocation and eradication of an already vulnerable keystone species.

In collaboration with our partner Electric Bench, we developed and tested the mobile app HECTOR to monitor human-elephant conflicts. The app HECTOR (Human Elephant Conflict Tool for Ongoing Research) is a tool for citizen scientists to participate in wild elephant's conservation and management. We will support the launch of an adapted version of HECTOR to South African partners to standardize the data collection on damage causing elephants. The app will assess the cause for destructive, learned behavior and help in the planning of intervention to mitigate conflicts. Furthermore, BTEH will support a Ph.D. research project focusing on the cause and impact of damage causing elephants and sustainable mitigation methods.

4. Projects and Programs

4.3 Elephant Research Grant

If our funds allow it, an BTEH Elephant Research Fund will be launched in 2018 to provide support for students to conduct essential (applied) elephants research in Thailand. We will start in Thailand to continue our activities and visibility and to enlarge the Thai team. The aim is to expand the Elephant Research Fund to other elephant range countries after the pilot program in Thailand.

The fund will seek the collaboration with Undergraduate or Graduate students from anywhere in the world working on projects with a clear elephant conservation value. Students will become part of our team and will represent BTEH on social media and other communication platforms. Applicants can apply for a small grant, with a maximum amount of 1,500 euro for the first stage of funding. Successful candidates will have the possibility to apply for the next stage of funding. Projects that are eligible are research projects on elephant behavior and ecology or related habitat field research with a clear elephant conservation value in Thailand.



4.4 Conservation Leadership Program

Through the Conservation Leadership Program, funded by IUCN in Thailand, local conservation leaders explored new conservation models that are sustainable, include all stakeholders and really make a chance. The Conservation Leaders receive support in the form of training, coaching, help fundraising, practical implementation, and reporting. This unique training program allows conservation champions/leaders to make real a real difference for wildlife. The Conservation Leadership Program establishes small teams, comprising of local community leaders and sanctuary officers, to be more proactive in their conservation efforts. Rather than choosing expensive solutions to prevent elephants from going out of protected areas, such as electric fences, the team explores new solutions, such as joint monitoring plan, crop/livelihood changes, education program and beehive fence control. In order to mitigate human-elephant conflicts and improve elephant conservation programs, we organize study trips for community members, park rangers, researchers and NGO staff to meet with researchers and conservationists in other HEC areas.

The Conservation Leadership Program was launched in Thailand in 2015 and has the ambition to expand to South Africa in 2018-2019.

4. Projects and Programs



4.5 Adoption Program

After over 12 years of support for the elephants that were rescued by BTEH and brought to the Elephant Nature Park, a new adoption program will be launched that will be in line with the mission and vision of this strategic plan. As our focus is on human-elephant coexistence and the protection of elephants in the wild, we will develop an adoption program that will support these objectives. The beginning of 2018, we hope to welcome many new supporters of our brand new wild elephant adoption program!

4.6 Charity and educational events

We organize different public events to reach new people and inform them about the plight of Asian elephants and to motivate them to get active for elephant conservation. Besides the educational value of such events, we also raise funds for our projects in Asia and Africa.





Foundation: **Bring the Elephant Home**

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