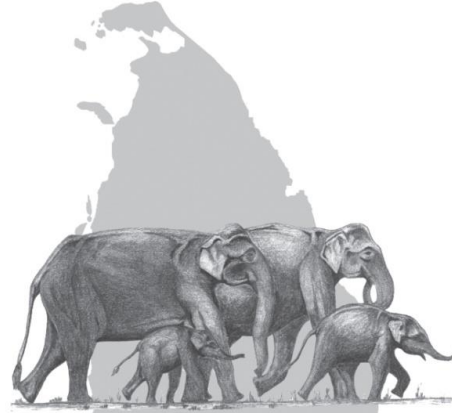


# Why are global conservation efforts failing? LESSONS FROM 21 YEARS OF SAVING ELEPHANTS BY HELPING PEOPLE



Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society  
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இலங்கைவனவிலங்கு பாதுகாப்பு சங்கம்

ENVIRONMENT LAUREATES CONVENTION,  
MARCH 11, 2016  
RAVI COREA  
PRESIDENT – SRI LANKA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
SOCIETY

# **SRI LANKA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION**

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- ✘ Established in 1995**
- ✘ First organization to be established outside Sri Lanka for the conservation and preservation of the dwindling biodiversity of Sri Lanka.**
- ✘ Fully registered voluntary social service non-governmental organization with the Ministry of Social Services of Sri Lanka.**
- ✘ Fully incorporated non-profit, tax-exempt organization based in the U.S.A.**

# **SRI LANKA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

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- **Mission: To enable communities to balance ecosystem protection and economic development by pioneering a model for sustainable conservation**
- **Vision: To help protect and conserve the diminishing biodiversity of Sri Lanka and to make the local and international community aware of its endangered status**
- **Philosophy: Local communities must actively participate as well as benefit from conservation and research efforts to save threatened ecosystems, endangered wildlife and their habitats**



# ADDRESSING ONE OF THE BIGGEST ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS – HUMAN ELEPHANT CONFLICT (HEC)



# Sri Lanka





# Today human elephant conflict defines the relationship between people and elephants in Sri Lanka





# Most agriculture practices are detrimental and incompatible for elephants to live with







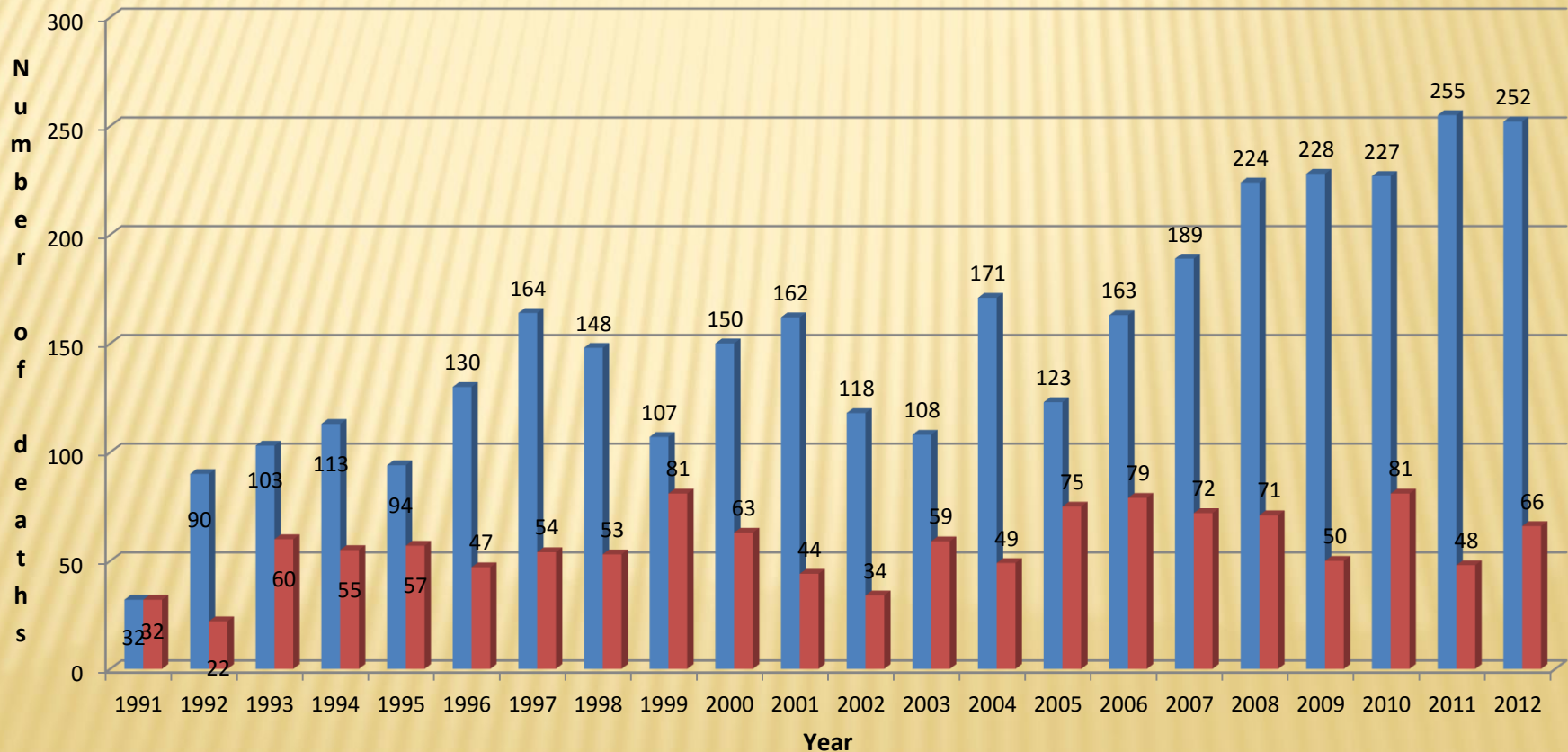


# HUMAN ELEPHANT CONFLICTS

- Annually 225 elephants are killed since 2008
- Annually over 60-80 people are killed
- Extensive crop and property damage – leads to poverty
- Increasing number of orphaned baby elephants
- Decreasing elephant population from 1992 - 2008, 2,337 elephants were killed by farmers
- 2004 to 2007 a total of 3,103 homes were destroyed by elephants
- Out of 210 households in one village, 64% had experienced crop and property damage.
- Household spend Rs.5,400 (<\$50) per annum to purchase items such as kerosene oil, firecrackers, flashlight batteries and bulbs to protect their crops and homes.
- 65% of villagers lived in chronic debt

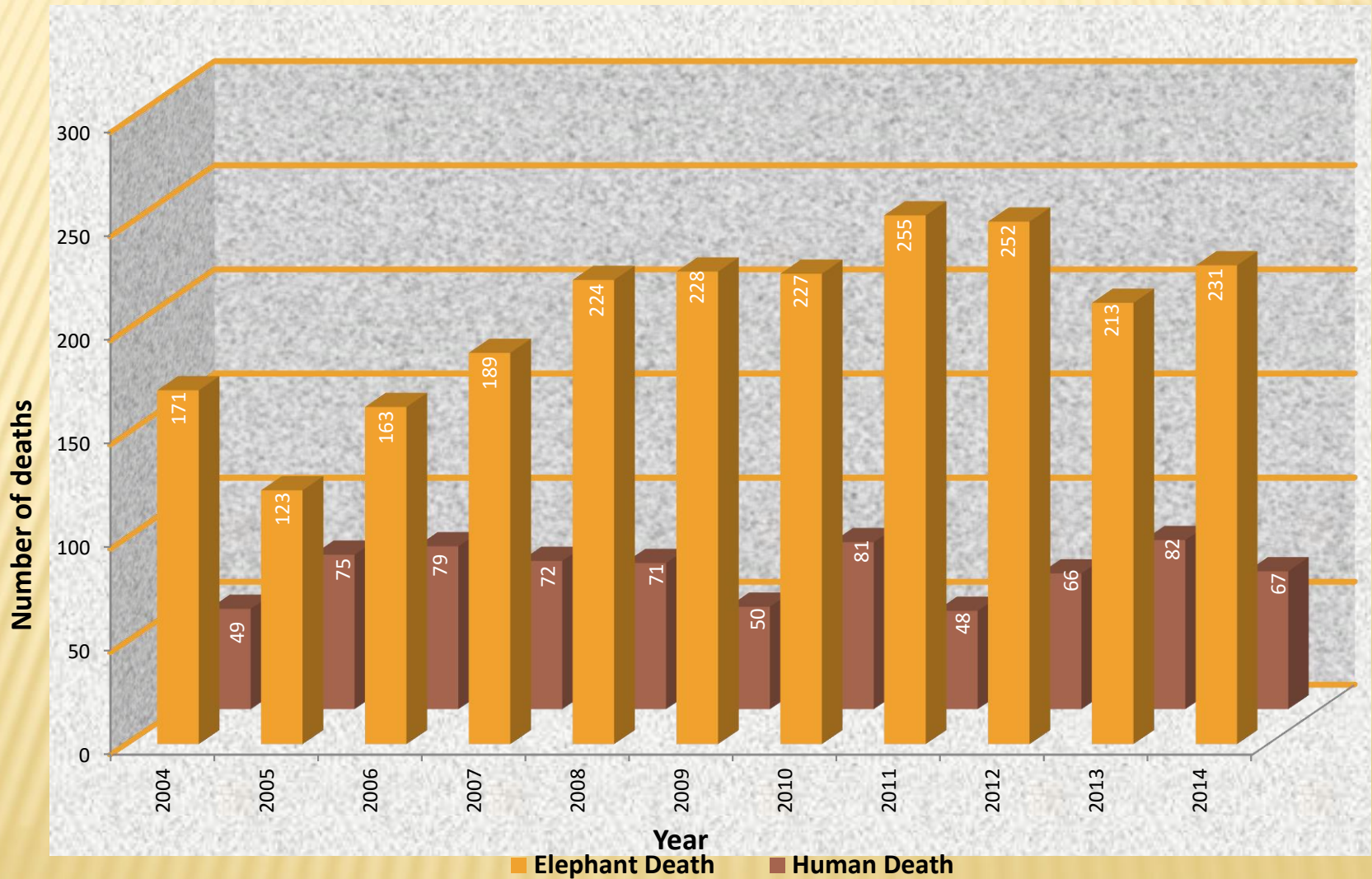
- **Poaching especially ivory poaching can be episodic. Reasons mostly *ex situ***
- **HEC is consistent and can persists over very long periods (ED: 3351 HD: 1252). Reasons *in situ***

■ Elephant Deaths ■ Human Deaths





# LAST TEN YEAR TREND





# COMMUNITY BASED SOLUTIONS – DIRECT BENEFITS TO STAKEHOLDERS





# CAPACITY BUILDING – FIELD RESEARCH





# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT





# THE REALITY!

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- ✘ **Though HEC is solely perceived to be a wildlife management or a wildlife conservation problem—in reality it is a socio-economic problem. HEC is mainly driven by socio-economic factors, e.g. population growth, economic development and human settlement programs therefore its resolution must also be approached from a socio-economic perspective.**

# MAIN CHALLENGES

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- ✘ **Though HEC is as a result of agriculture - the solution to mitigate HEC to a certain extent has to be based on agriculture since the alternative option of trying to change the traditional lifestyles of a vast farmer population would be impossible.**
- ✘ **Changing the behavior & attitudes of farmers is essential to these efforts.**



# MITIGATION OR ADAPTATION

- **Mitigation** has limits does not work for all situations
- Can be very expensive
- Short term impact
- Some times not sustainable
- Benefits over the long term could decline
- **Adaptation** is harder to implement – change in lifestyle
- Cost is a factor – can be inexpensive or expensive
- Benefits to Cost ratio is higher
- Sustainable
- Long term impact
- Addresses multiple issues and concerns
- Pre-emptive strategies



# ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES





# PROJECT ORANGE ELEPHANT





# PROJECT ORANGE ELEPHANT









# ELEPHANTS AND LIVESTOCK HAVE NO CONFLICTS





# Eco-tourism





# MAIN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Increase of annual household incomes by 212%.
- Decrease of annual household expenditure to protect crops by 99%
- Time saved by not having to spend night vigil to protect crops decreased from 9 hours to 45 minutes.
- Increase in environmental awareness in some villages by 42%.
- Elephant raids reduced by 100%
- Increase in agriculture production by 92%
- Increase role of women in household finance by 90%  
agriculture decision making by 60%
- No elephants have been injured or killed since 1998\*
- Electric fences allow elephants to feed nearby but stop entry into the villages and fields.
- 100% acknowledge reduced stress and improved wellbeing, increased mobility in the night, social interactions and regular school attendance by children due to the reduced risk of elephant raids.
- Made it possible for humans and elephants to co-exist where they share space.



# LESSONS LEARNED

- HEC mitigation, poverty alleviation, land use, livelihoods, and biodiversity conservation are linked
- Agriculture is one of the major drivers of biodiversity loss in many ecosystems.
- Solutions to mitigate HEC needs to be based on agriculture
- Sustainable development requires that biodiversity conservation and agricultural production are reconciled
- The Asian elephant is an ideal flagship species to promote landscape ecosystem conservation
- Most communities if given the proper knowledge, tools, skills and resources can sustainably manage their environment.
- Participatory approaches do not always work
- Need both bottom-up and top down planning, development and administration



# IMPACTS

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- × HEC Mitigation
- × Poverty Reduction
- × Biodiversity
- × International, national & local partnerships
- × Policy
- × Sustainable development
- × Gender and Social Inclusion
- × Leadership and Community Empowerment
- × Climate change



# AFRICA ASIA ELEPHANT CONSERVATION PROJECT





# **A PARTNERSHIP OF FIVE ORGANIZATIONS**

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- ✘ Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, Namibia**
- ✘ The Elephant Pepper Development Trust, Zimbabwe,**
- ✘ Ecoexist (formerly The Okavango Elephants & People Research Project), Botswana**
- ✘ Elephants for Africa, Botswana**
- ✘ Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society,**



# **IMPORTANT REASONS**

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- ✘ The current ivory crisis in Africa**
- ✘ The increasing elephant deaths in Asia due to HEC**
- ✘ The lack of collaboration between Asian and African counterparts.**
- ✘ The project is about protecting the planet's natural resources.**
- ✘ Killing of elephants is also a national security issue, a public health issue and an economic security issue since dead elephants will affect the tourism dollars to Africa and Asia in the long term.**













- ✔ Do protect elephant corridors
- ✔ Somarela ditsela kana mela ya ditlou



- ✔ Do learn about elephant behaviour – don't run
- ✔ Ithute boitshwaro kana maitsholo a ditlou sekai o seka wa sia



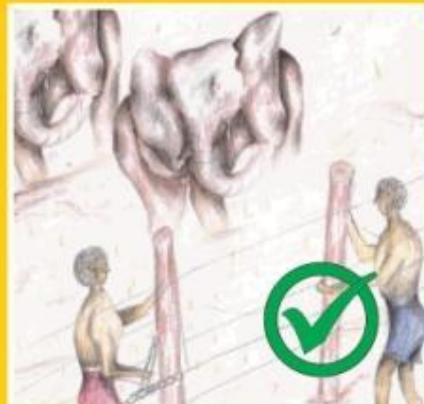
- ✔ Do try a variety of methods to protect your field
- ✔ Leka go dirisa methale kana mefota e e farologanyeng ya go sereletsha kana go thibela tshinyo ya ditlou na kana masimong



- ✔ Do diversify agricultural practices
- ✔ Dirisa mefota ya temo e e farologanye go leka go fokotsa tshinyo ya ditlou mo dijalong



- ✔ Do think about safety around elephants i.e. walk in groups
- ✔ Itse ka ditselana tsa pabalesego mo mafalong a ditlou, i.e. tsamaya ka dithopha/ digongwana



- ✔ Do maintain fences regularly
- ✔ Ela thoko gore masimo a nna n ageletswe sentle ka nako tsothe



Human-Elephant Conflict Mitigation Field Guide  
 Bukana ya go go itsise ka methale ya go fokotsa ntwakgolo e e fa gare ga motho le tlou



Africa Asia  
 Elephant Conservation Project  
 Lekalana la Afrika le Asia ka tshomarelo ya ditlou



### Crops non palatable:

- ✓ Chili
- ✓ Lime
- ✓ Lemon
- ✓ Black pepper
- ✓ Ginger
- ✓ Cotton

### Livelihoods compatible:

- ✓ Free range chickens
- ✓ Goats
- ✓ Dairy
- ✓ Apiculture

### Behaviors to adapt in human-elephant conflict areas:

- ✗ Don't travel on foot in places where elephants frequently visit
- ✗ Don't travel at dawn, dusk and night alone on foot or by bicycle if possible
- ✗ Elephants most times will ignore people so don't harass them unnecessarily.

Contact for more information: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Department of Wildlife and National Parks

Seronga: 6876823

Shakawe: 6875223

Maun: 6860368

#### Ecoexist Trust

Gusu Camp  
Kachirachira  
Eretsha

P.O.Box 161, Seronga

Tel: 6830240

✉ info@ecoexistproject.org

🌐 www.ecoexistproject.org

#### Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society

🌐 www.SLWCS.org

✉ info@slwcs.org



✗ Don't plough in elephant corridors

✗ Se dire masimo mo ditseleng tsa ditlou



✗ Don't shoot elephants

✗ Se hule ditlou



✗ Don't harass elephants, it only makes them angry

✗ Se tshwenye ditlou, seo seka digakatsa



✗ Don't beep your horn or drive aggressively at elephants

✗ Sere o kgweetsa fag are ga ditlou wa letsa lenaka kana wa di ralala ka lobelo



✗ Don't walk without a torch at night

✗ Se tsamaye bosigo o sa tshwara lebone



✗ Don't challenge an elephant when under the influence of alcohol

✗ Se leke go romola tlou o e phititsitse dino seka Bojalwa

Art by: Lamiki 2Boy Tshoganetso

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# ARE WE DOING ENOUGH?

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This is considering the magnitude and scale of biodiversity loss we are experiencing globally

The British orator, Edmund Burke, said,  
*“Nobody makes a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little.”*



# A IS FOR EFFORT





- ✘ Since Noah's effort there had been no attempt either human or divine that could be compared in scale or magnitude to save the world's animals.
- ✘ At a time we are facing one the biggest mass extinctions we have been unable to better Noah, in effort, scale, magnitude or achievement.
- ✘ This is considering the tremendous knowledge, wealth, and technology that is available to us.
- ✘ The Ark was built with the most rudimentary of technology and people still talk about it.
- ✘ What would we be leaving behind for people



# ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?

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- ✘ Are we doing enough to resolve not only HEC but the conservation of other species as well?
- ✘ Are the measures we are applying effective, impactful and sustainable?
- ✘ Are we educating and building the capacity of people that truly matters?
- ✘ Have we formed the most effective partnerships and collaborations?
- ✘ Will our current attempts guarantee the survival of people and other endangered species in the future?



# KEY CHALLENGES

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- The lack of funds?
- Lack of international cooperation?
- Political support.
- Administrative policies that do not support public/private partnerships.
- NGO Marginalization
- .
- Passion replaced by need to find a job in research and conservation. “Compromise seems to be the only way.”

# WHERE HAS ALL THE MONEY GONE?

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Annual incomes in 2014

- ✘ WWF = US\$220,790,782 (CEO's salary: \$800K)
- ✘ CI = US\$143.1 (millions)
- ✘ FFI = £15,801,237 (millions in Sterling pounds)
- ✘ TNC = US\$1,114,279 (billions)
- ✘ IFAW = US\$100,101 (in thousand)
- ✘ WCS = US\$234.6 (millions)
- ✘ IUCN = 102,530 (in thousand) CHF (Swiss currency)



# Some Important Questions?

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- ✘ What has all this money achieved?
- ✘ Has it been spent where it can make the most difference?
- ✘ What have we truly achieved at a global scale?

# OBVIOUSLY SOMETHING IS WRONG!

- ✘ Scimitar-horned Oryx (Extinct in the wild)
- ✘ Addax (About 10 left in the wild)
- ✘ Northern white rhinoceros (only 3 left!)





# OTHER MYTHS

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- ✘ Fallacy of Policy
- ✘ High tech or no tech
- ✘ Corporate conservation vs “community-based” conservation. What is really working?

# Arrogance or ignorance?

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- ✘ Placing ourselves as the most important species on earth had superseded every other consideration
- ✘ Development has become just another synonym for destruction



# SOME OF THE DRIVING FORCES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS

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- ✘ Unilateral decisions without good supporting knowledge has created most of our environmental and socio-economic problems
- ✘ Development is not the destiny of a few privileged people but the destiny of all.
- ✘ Therefore we need to develop in a manner that provides equal opportunity to all while safe guarding our environment.

- ✘ We need a new environmental ethic where we give important consideration to the fact that:
- ✘ The Environment is critical and vital to our own survival and of others.
- ✘ The Environment is the foundation and very basis upon which sustainable development can occur.
- ✘ The resources we need to develop all come from our Environment.
- ✘ We need to pay more attention to nurturing our environment than managing it all the time.
- ✘ We should not be taking all the time from our Environment but also giving back.



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Make our decisions carefully

The Buddha who is considered one of the greatest teachers and philosophers said to his own son, Rahula, “Reflect.” What he meant was before you take any action make sure it does not do any harm to you or to others.

# Enrich our own lives

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- ✘ Make our holidays and vacations meaningful
- ✘ Plant trees
- ✘ Be a responsible consumer
- ✘ Recycle
- ✘ Become a responsible steward for the environment. When we safeguard the environment we protect everyone.



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✘ The Great Mahathma Ghandi said, “*nature can take care of our needs but no our greed.*”

✘

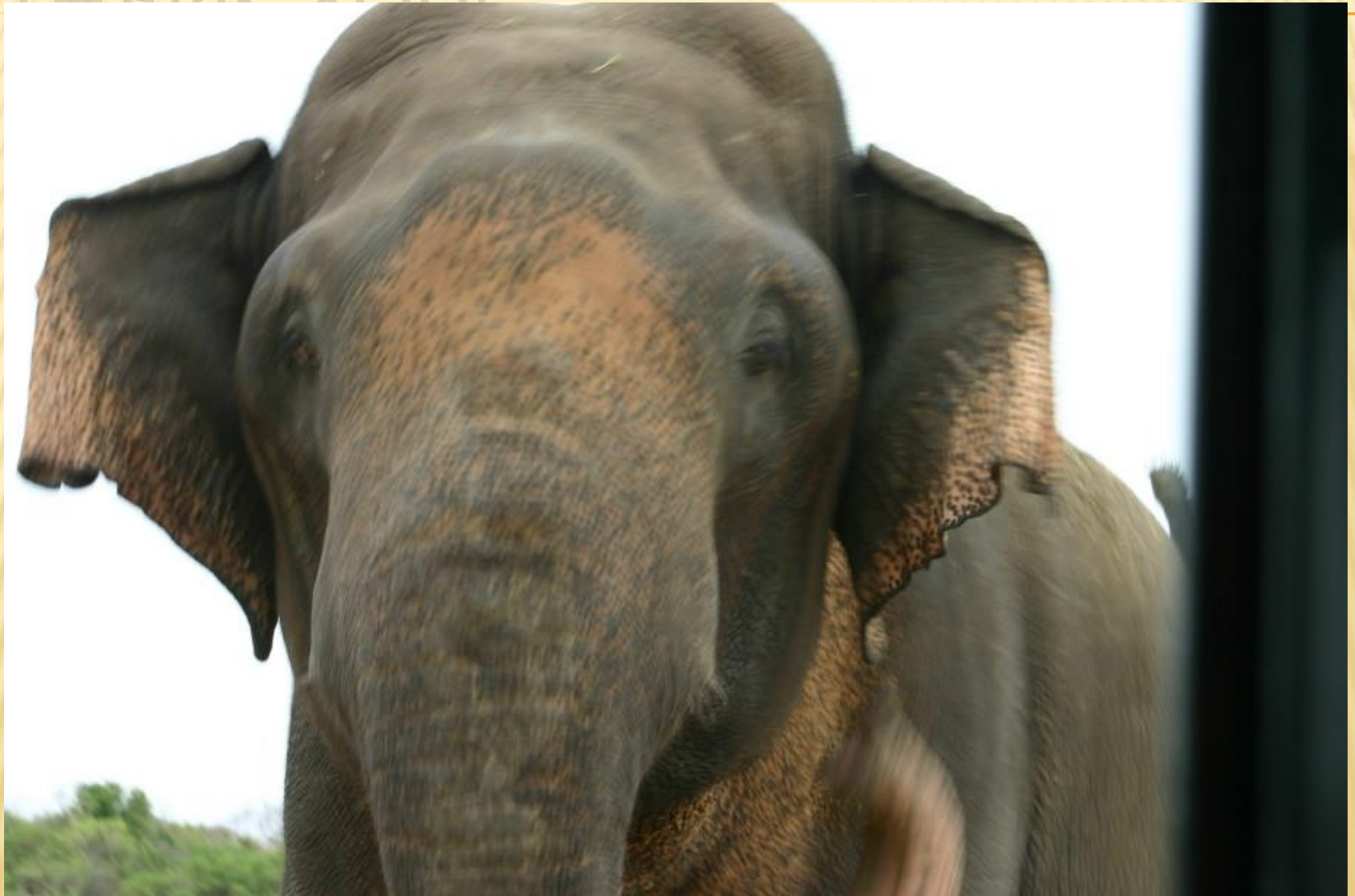
# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- ✘ European Environment Foundation and its Board of Directors



THANK YOU!



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