

Human Elephant Coexistence: Creating awareness to the school children of Erode district

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The International Elephant Foundation IEF funded a project **“Fostering Human Elephant Coexistence (HECx) awareness in Erode, Tamil Nadu, India”**.

The main objective of the project is to conduct a teacher training workshop on human elephant coexistence for 25 teachers and 25 mass awareness programmes for students and through this reaching out 2500 students who live in human elephant conflict areas. On 16-17 November, 2017 the teacher training was conducted at Bharathi Vidhyalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School. Twenty five (25) teachers from Thuckanaickenpalayam, Anthiyur, Sathyamangalam, Bargur, Thalavadi and Bhavanisagar block participated. The schools were selected by the District Eco Club Coordinator based on the intensity of human elephant conflict in those areas. Please click on to see the report:



Mrs. T. Geetha inaugurating the awareness programme at Onthanai school and Mr. L. Vijeyendran, NGC Coordinator also at the dias



Taught about elephant facts

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Mini drama on habitat loss



Playing mini dramas with the theme poaching

[http://www.zoosprint.org/
ZooPrintMagazine/2017/
December/34-39.pdf](http://www.zoosprint.org/ZooPrintMagazine/2017/December/34-39.pdf)

As a second part of the project, the school awareness programmes were conducted in the month of February 2018. The authour visited all the schools, met the trainee teacher, discussed with

them how they utilised the training with the students by using the elephant teaching guide. We came to know that almost all the teachers conducted some kind of teaching about the human elephant coexistence with the students. Some of them taught the students the mini dramas they learned and students performed the

dramas to other students. The following schools were visited with a team of Ms. T. Geetha, District Eco Club Coordinator, o/o Chief Education Officer, Erode and Mr. L. Vijeyendran, District National Green Corps Coordinator.

1. Panchayat Union Middle School Arigiyam
2. Government High School, Chikkarasampalayam
3. Government Higher Secondary School, Kembanaicken Palayam
4. Government Higher Secondary School, Kalkadambur
5. Govt. Girls Hr. Sec. School, Thuckanaickenpalayam
6. Govt. Tribal Residential Middle School, Kuttaiyur
7. Panchayat Union Primary School, Oosur
8. Panchayat Union Primary School, Velampatti
9. Panchayat Union Middle School, Thalakkurai
10. Government Tribal Residential Middle School, Kongadai
11. Panchayat Union Middle School Onthanai
12. Panchayat Union Middle School Bejalatti
13. Panchayat Union

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- Primary School, Periya Ullepalayam
14. Panchayat Union Middle School, Periyakallipatti
15. Government Tribal Residential Middle School, Bathri Padugu
16. Panchayat Union Middle School, Anaikkarai Post
17. Panchayat Union Middle School, Thattkarai
18. Panchayat Union Primary School, Sujjilkarai
19. Panchayat Union Middle School, Irutti Palayam
20. Panchayat Union Primary School, Thikkarai
21. Panchayat Union Primary School, Uginiyam
22. Panchayat Union Middle School, Malliammandurgam
23. Panchayat Union Middle School, Kurumbur
24. Panchayat Union Primary School, Mallayanapuram
25. R.C. Primary School, Mudianur

In each school about 100 students were participated in the awareness programmes. So, we reached about 2500 students as most of them had the chance to see or confront with the wild elephants at their villages. So this awareness program



Wore mask and carrying a placard and ready for taking HECx pledge



Awareness rally at the campus

will definitely help them how to behave with the wild elephants.

First of all they were told about the difference between Asian and African elephants, some interesting elephant facts such as their trunk, tusk, ears, skin,

nail, their body weight and height, walking and running speed, the day's requirement of food and water, lifespan, habitat, subspecies and their ecological role and why we have to save them, the reasons for human elephant conflict and do's and don't's

ZOOREACH Activities

in elephant areas in detail.

ZOO developed a elekit education packet in local language and it comprises of booklet, mask, wristband (*Rakhi*), placard and a sticker. The usage of packets were demonstrated. The students were given some time to to go through the materials and then they tied the wrist band with each other by taking a pledge to avoid human elephant conflcit, wore a elephant mask and carrying a placard and marched for elephant conservation at the class room or campus.

ZOO also developed a phamplet which has few tips on to avoid confrontation

with elephants in order to save their precious life. The phamplets also distributed to them. At the end they were requested to to share the information with the family members and others.

In some schools the trainee teachers arranged mini dramas based on the script avaiable in elephant teaching guide to the team, other teachers and students to see and evaluate. The dramas were really superb and they used lots of properties. We suggested the teacher trainees to take this kind of initiatives to other students at the school and also using the students to spread out human

elephant coexistence to the villagers.

My sincere thanks goes to Internantional Elephant Foundation for funding the project, Ms. T. Geetha, District Eco Club Coordinator, O/o Chief Education Officer, Erode and Mr. L. Vijeyendran, NGC Coordinator, Gobi Education District for their throughout coordination and participation for smooth running of education programs and all the teacher trainees and their headmaster/headmistress and students to carry out the project very successfully.



Girls Higher Secondary School, TN Palayam students gather to form an elephant