

Elephants *for* Africa

Conservation through research and education



Elephant Tales Newsletter

Issue 33



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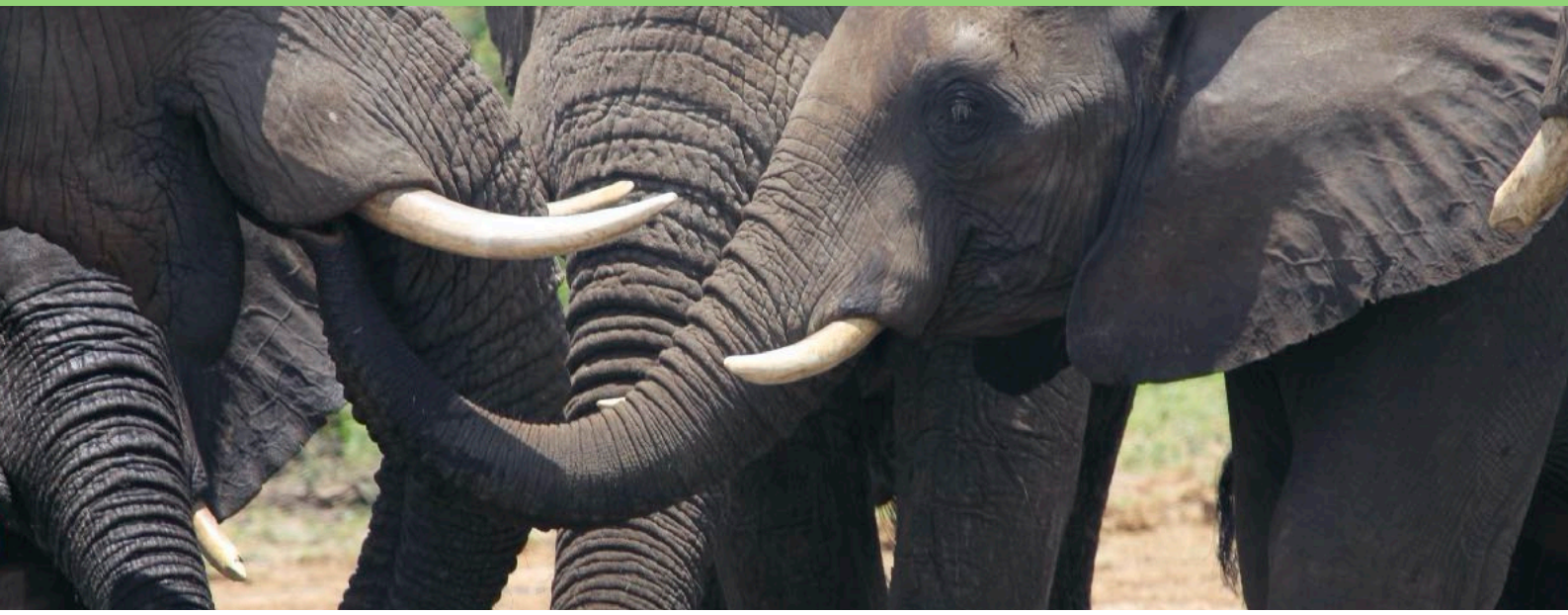
Winter 2020

Registered UK charity (CIO) no 1179318
Registered Botswana NGO CR12058

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Welcome by Dr Kate Evans

Founder & Director



2020 to date has certainly been full of challenges, our daily routine, relationships and work life disrupted by a global pandemic that has rocked the world as we know it. It has brought both the worst and best out of people. As always, I like to focus on the best and through our global world of TV, social media and radio I have seen and heard such inspiring stories of resilience, the blossoming of unexpected friendships and wonderful camaraderie. The welcome news of vaccines brings us hope for some normality to return, for families to be reunited and to feel the warmth of our friends hugs and handshakes. It has shown how, if we work together and focus our efforts we can quickly and effectively meet the challenges of a crisis and turn things around.

In our own small way, Elephants for Africa, the communities we have the privilege to work with, our funders and supporters have done this; we have seen a problem, one that disrupts everyday life, threatens livelihoods and lives as well as the sustainability of wildlife and biodiversity; Human-Wildlife Competition for resources. By working together, understanding the problem and seeking solutions together we are working hard to find resolution and a way forward towards coexistence.

Whilst 2020 has meant we have not achieved as much as we had planned, it has been a time of great reflection and as I read all the contributions from the team for this newsletter, there is one common thread that stood out for me and that is the importance of relationships, our families, our friends, our work colleagues, our supporters and for all of us at Elephants for Africa the wonderful people that we live alongside and work with. Your support and the great resilience that the communities we work with have, and are showing, is incredibly inspiring, as you will read throughout our newsletter it is now more than ever that the communities need our assistance and have shown us in many ways that they are grateful for our work. Perhaps no one sums that up better than Justice from the village of Khumaga, who one day sent me a video of a song he had written thanking us for our hard work.

Please take the time to view it here <https://youtu.be/eA0ri6k0ANY>

There is much to celebrate this year and much to look forward to in 2021, not least getting back into the schools and helping the children catch up on the education they have missed out on during lock down. Our schools programme is the focus of our Festive Fundraiser this year, which many of you have already supported and we are already 30% the way to our funding goal. <https://bit.ly/FestiveFundraiser2020>

THANK YOU and as many of us take time to celebrate this festive season, wherever you are I do hope you are able to be with, physically or virtually, the ones you love.

Looking forward to 2021

by Dr Kristine Meise, Project Manager



The first lines of a famous Christmas song by Hugh Martin reads

**“Have yourself a merry little Christmas
Let your heart be light
From now on
our troubles will be out of sight”**

This year many of us are waiting for our hearts to become light and not filled with worries anymore. Being the project manager for Elephants for Africa, and thus responsible for the budgets and the safe operation and timely delivery of our project objectives in the midst of a global pandemic, meant that worries often kept me awake during the night. How could we ensure that our operations would not put our staff and our partners in the community in danger? Where would we get the funding to continue all our projects and support the farmers, many of whom planned to plough this next farming season as the pandemic caused a lack of employment in the tourism industry? While this situation seemed unsolvable at the beginning of the year, the tide has turned due to the ongoing help of our local and international supporters. I cannot name one particular person or organisation as so many people showed their support by initiating emergency fundraising campaigns, extending deadlines, showing flexibility in changes to project objectives or simply listening to our worries.

Despite the social distancing, I feel that in many ways this pandemic has also brought us closer together and made us aware of the problems that others are facing and gave us the time to think about how we can help. While I cannot claim that our troubles are out of sight as human-elephant conflict is an ongoing issue and we have to be persistence in our efforts to create an environment that both elephants and humans can thrive in, I can definitely say that my heart is much lighter now that we are approaching Christmas and have numerous important projects lined up and funded for the next year. I am incredibly grateful that despite the problems and challenges you may have faced this year, you did not forget about us and the rural communities in Botswana. I hope that the Christmas time will bring you some joy, happiness and peace.

It is great to be on board

by Dr Heseikia Garekae, Community Outreach & Education Coordinator



On the 3rd of August 2020, I joined Efa as Community Outreach and Education Coordinator (COEC). This was an exciting moment for me, as I was always looking forward to joining one of the organisations working in the interface of wildlife conservation and community development in my homeland of Botswana. The COEC position entails overall management and operational responsibility for Elephants for Africa's community outreach and education programs in Botswana. My team members gave me a warm welcome, as I was transitioning from the urban life to camp life. For me, it was a smooth transition as I am a Boteti region native and familiar with the socio-ecological dynamics of the area.

Since joining Efa, I have been working closely with farmers in the area delivering themed workshops on elephant mitigation measures, with particular emphasis on adoption of a combination of traditional and conventional mitigation approaches. Elephant crop raiding is widespread in the area. Therefore, the workshops are aimed at empowering farmers to protect their fields from being raided by elephants. This is important for securing the farmers primary source of livelihood, crop farming, from being destroyed by elephants. Most interestingly, my current role accords me an opportunity to interact with diverse stakeholders such as civil society organisations, government departments, NGOs and communities in efforts towards promoting co-existence between people and elephants. This is something which resonates with my aspirations, which is to facilitate communities to realise a state where people and wildlife peacefully live together in shared landscapes, where human activities do not contravene with the global concerted efforts towards elephant conservation.

For next year, we have planned to conduct training on firewood efficient stoves and assist the participants with constructing the stove of their choice. This initiative is aimed at promoting sustainable utilisation of firewood resources, through reduction in the firewood usage which in turn reduces the frequency of firewood collections and the likelihood of encountering elephants and other potentially dangerous wildlife. I am glad Efa has responded to the call from forest-livelihood scholars, who called for a swift adoption of firewood efficient stoves in a bid to protect tree resources from over- exploitation and so I am very excited to launch this programme.

Living through history

- by Walona Sehularo, Community Outreach Officer



Reading about history is never as mystical as living through it. Perhaps in a decade or two we will look back with misty eyes at the long, sobering reality that has been 2020. At the beginning of the year, it looked like it would be an unforgettable year filled with many activities and engagement with schools and communities as we expanded our outreach.

This year, we welcomed Motopi Junior Secondary School to our Environmental Education clubs and had aimed to cover a curriculum focused on research and its components and host our first careers day. Unfortunately, we were only able to hold two introductory lessons before the schools closed and our face to face activities had to end. However, we have spent this time wisely and have five new lesson plans ready to go into action and I am finalising another two, which should be ready to roll out at the start of 2021. All things permitting, we will be back with the staff and students at Motopi JSS who are eagerly awaiting our return in early 2021.

All three club teachers at the primary schools we work with have shared the same sentiments of missing our presence and hoping we can return next year. Apart from increasing engagement with environmental issues, they highlighted the help that some of our lessons give in reinforcing learnt material during school lessons and helping with knowledge retention, things which help contribute to better grades in subjects like Science and Social Studies.

We have worked with teachers from Moreomaoto Primary School to create some lesson plans for tutoring, although we were unable to deliver them due to rising Covid-19 cases in school across the country. They will however come in handy with helping ease teacher workloads and make it that we could offer tutoring assistance for science topics, leveraging our more engaging and practical approach from the clubs to further improve students' grades in mainstream schooling. We've also begun designing and distributing posters on environmental topics for our four partner schools, to offer teaching aids that have been very much welcomed by the teachers: these cover topics such as the Water Cycle and Electricity.

I will hand over to Mankind to update you on our Community Project

Disrupted but not stopped, Community Outreach - by Mankind Molosiwa, Community Outreach Officer

Mr & Mrs Molosiwa, hard at work on the farm (Photo courtesy of Scott Ramsay)



The global pandemic has disrupted our daily activities as well as human interactions. We no longer do things the way we used to, but rather have had to adapt and conform with the new normal! Ooh Covid-19, will life ever be the same again?

Despite the effects of Covid-19 on mobility and interaction, all is not lost in delivering EFA community outreach activities. We have now resorted to conducting workshops in cell groups, that is meeting up with fewer farmers across the cattle posts surrounding my village of Khumaga. We conducted workshops about various mitigation measures for deterring crop-raiding elephants, with particular emphasis on solar-electric fencing which has generated much interest amongst the farmers. Moreover, we also resorted to conducting one-on-one workshops with individual farmers, especially those who invited us to come and refresh their knowledge on how to appropriately use chilli in their field. This is very exciting for me, as it shows the farmer's enthusiasm to our capacity development endeavours and shows that our hard work is paying off.

Perhaps of most interest and what I would like to share with you is that some of the farmers have already implemented the mitigation measure we have taught them this year on such things as solar-electric fence. This is really commendable and very encouraging, as the farmers are now willing to invest themselves and not waiting for either government or other organisations to assist, this represents a real change in attitude.

Covid-19 has reduced the economic power of the majority of households, so we anticipate an influx on the number of farmers who are going to plough this season. Therefore, chilli will be in high demand despite the dwindling supply and I am very grateful to hear that we have secured funding for another year's worth of chilli and we have funds to construct more chilli plots to increase local supply too, thank you to all you have supported us, we simply cannot do this without you.

Lastly, I really want to express my sincere gratitude's to my co-team members, they have worked hard and made sacrifices here and there in order to improve human-wildlife conflict in our area, the place I call home.

How to support EfA:

Should you wish to make a donation, you can do this online through Virgin's MoneyGiving page <http://bit.ly/EfADonate> or our Global Giving fundraiser <https://bit.ly/FestiveFundraiser2020>

You can also pay directly to our bank account, please contact admin@elephantsforafrica.org for details.

Additional support:

If you live in the UK and shop online you can generate a donation for Elephants for Africa by signing up with <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> or <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/> and a percentage of the sales are donated to Elephants for Africa.

Festive Wish List:

- £7.50 Book and pencil for five Environmental Club students
- £15 Monthly cost for an environmental club activity
- £45 Monthly fuel costs for all Environmental Club activities
- £95 Yearly costs for course materials for one school
- £240 Monthly salary for the time our Education Officer invests to run the Education Program
- £450 Road tax & insurance for our Education vehicle for 1 year

**Stay safe with best wishes
from the Elephants for Africa
team**

