

# Elephants *for* Africa

Conservation through research and education



Elephant Tales Newsletter

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[www.elephantsforafrica.org](http://www.elephantsforafrica.org)

[info@elephantsforafrica.org](mailto:info@elephantsforafrica.org)

# Welcome by Dr Kate Evans

## Founder & Director



With the COVID-19 pandemic still impacting everyday life, we wanted to touch base with you all to see how you are doing and we hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy. We also hope that this festive season offers you the opportunity to see your loved ones in person.

In this newsletter comes our gratitude and thanks for your continued support of our work during these difficult times. We simply could not continue without you. THANK YOU.

Like so many of you, we have had to adapt to these unprecedented circumstances and the uncertainty that remains. To ensure the safety of our partners, students, and ourselves, we've made necessary modifications to our programming.

- We are still eagerly awaiting the opportunity to return to our partner primary schools. In the meantime, we have, and continue to produce posters, which summarise the context of our monthly lessons which are displayed in the classrooms, as well as other materials.
- We have been able to start some initial work with Motopi Junior Secondary School and are working on completing the 2-year curriculum
- Our farmer and community workshops are now active again. However, they are somewhat different, with much smaller groups and therefore more travel and time for our staff. However, we know that this is time and money well spent.
- We currently are only supporting local students in their field work in Botswana. International students are engaged through analyses of our historical data, whilst others are busy preparing permit applications to conduct their field work in 2022 & 2023. We look forward to welcoming them to camp.

Despite the many challenges, we are busy expanding our Community Coexistence Programme into the village of Moreomaoto, sharing our knowledge with other communities, NGO's and schools and our research to understand the social and ecological needs of male elephants continues.

Our award winning Environmental Education Programme

## Educational Excellence - Small Organisation



We are delighted, excited and proud to let you know that we won a Silver Medal in the Educational Excellent category at the Global Good Awards and were the top-ranked Environmental Education Programme.

For more information about our EleFun programme visit <http://lght.ly/k8elj19>

This could not have been possible without the support of our many funders over the years that EleFun has been active, board member and of course the schools that have welcomed us in and support our activities.



*Testing the best method and material for making birds nests*

# Community Coexistence Programme

by Dr Walona Sehularo, Community Outreach & Education Coordinator



We are seeing increasing demand for our Living with Elephants Workshops as elephants continue to expand their range and more people return to subsistence farming. The latter has been due to the collapse of the tourism industry and many people find themselves out of work due to Covid-19. Expanding into the village of Moreomaoto has been something we have wanted to achieve for quite some time, as we have been working with this community on various program aspects, including partnering with the primary school and are excited to be expanding our farming elements. Mr Tathego Bolekanye has joined us as the Community Officer for the village, and thanks to support from the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens he has a Rav4 vehicle to ensure he can meet with community members. The vehicle has been named by the staff at the zoo 'Sheena' after one of the elephants in their care.

We are also excited to start focusing more on sustainable and alternative incomes in the communities we partner with, and thanks to funding from the US Embassy here in Botswana we have recently held two workshops on jewellery making. With the knowledge and expertise of the Ko Motjing Producers Cooperative Society from Maun and support from Sister Cynthia from the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady Apostles, 13 Motopi community members and 13 Phuduhudu community members are turning litter into beaded jewellery that they can sell to other communities and passing tourists.

We have also hosted a basket weaving workshop in the village of Khumaga. Basket weaving is culturally very important in Botswana and is a wonderful art form where stories are woven into each basket. With all these wonderful crafts the communities can now create we would like to support them in setting up a curio shop where tourists can stop, shop, and support the communities living alongside the wildlife they have come to see.

In June we also co-hosted an innovation workshop in conjunction with the social enterprise group These Hands, which focused on curating an environment in which participants can learn and innovate technological solutions to problems they face in their daily lives. A total of 19 participants benefitted from the workshop with a majority of them being women. This group is also part of the initial group of people from which we will be trialling Fuel Efficient Stoves with an effort to reduce trips made to collect firewood whilst still maintaining the efficiency of the stoves. Some negative human elephant interactions occur during firewood collection, so the hope is to reduce that contact and save the lives of both people and elephants.

# Tracking the giants

- by Thatayaone Motsentwa, Research Officer



Alongside our long-term monitoring of the elephant population of the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park, though observations on elephants we see on our research drives and through our camera trap surveys, we collect data to develop and improve mitigation methods that local farmers can use to communicate to the elephants that they are not welcome.

Please take a moment to enjoy this short video that explains the need for an elephant spoor tracking project in the Boteti region which we launched in February 2020 and has helped us highlight hotspots of elephant transgression across the park boundary and relate that to where farmers fields are located on the community side of the boundary. The western boundary fence has recently been reinstalled by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks and so we shall be continuing these surveys to understand how it is affecting elephant movement and if they damage the fence to get through.

Alongside this work we have also been tracking the elephant that have crop raided. The farmers call us in the morning if they have been raided and we go to the field, get information from the farmers, assess the crop damage, and then track the spoor to see where they have come from to get to the field and where they go to. This is helping us understand if elephants are coming out of the National Park at night to raid and then returning, or they are simply passing by a field and making the most of the opportunity.

We're grateful to our donors; Elephant Crisis Fund, Disney Conservation Fund, the International Elephant Foundation, and the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium for recognising understanding the need for such a project and providing the financial means to enable this work.

## Our Funder runs the virtual NYC Marathon



Having heard it was going to be the NYC marathon's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, our Founder and Director thought it might be interesting to see if she was still able to run a marathon having run the 40<sup>th</sup> 12 years ago with her then partner, now husband to raise funds for Elephants for Africa. Things have changed since then, and one thing is having been advised not to run on the road and therefore this marathon would be a trail marathon in the forests of Sweden. She signed up and encouraged by the team at Elephants for Africa decided, once more to make it a fundraiser for elephants for Africa.

Here is what she said about the experience:

Virtual NYC Marathon done. Hurrah and in under my target time of 6 hours. I decided to run it along a trail called Hallandsleden, that goes the length of the county of Halland where I live and takes you through beautiful forest and has wonderful vistas of lakes and open countryside, including the sea.

It was hard work, as one of the hazards of running in the autumn in the forest is that the trails are covered by leaves, make it hard to see any rocks or slippery roots. So, it was very slow going in parts. I did have a couple of trips, as I didn't see small tree stumps sticking up amongst the leaves. Thankfully I went flying into more leaves and got a softish landing..... and nobody saw!

It was super muddy and wet in sections, and again the leaves could hide those patches as well. At one stage I lost my shoe in the mud, which took me back to when I was ten years old and my first cross country race for my school when I was one of the first ones into muddy section, lost a shoe and then had to wait for the rest of the field to pass before I could find it. I came in second to last and, it would appear, I'm still traumatised by it today!

I had the trail to myself apart from the red squirrels and birds, until I got near Lake Lygern, about 26 kilometres in, so it really was a solo marathon. Highlights of the day was meeting family 18 kilometres in for a food and water restock, the beautiful scenery, and finally the kids running down the driveway to cheer me home at the very end. The latter was a great replacement for the crowd cheering me on at the end of the New York City Marathon. A very different experience this year., certainly much quieter than my first New York City marathon back in 2009, where the crowds were just quite incredible cheering you on every step of the way and giving you words of encouragement when you were obviously struggling. It was also a lot hillier, my sports watch telling me I did 1000 metres of ascent! Official time was 5.18.13. Very happy with that.

Thanks so much for all those that have so generously supported my efforts, donations can be made [here](#).

# Connecting to wildlife through a camera

By Walona Sehularo



Another workshop we hosted alongside Wild Shots Outreach was an introduction to photography, which enabled 16 young people from the village of Moreomaoto to explore their environment through the lens of camera, culminating in a safari into the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park. What follows are some quotes from the attendees and the impact it had on their lives.

**Pretty Majaga (20)** I was excited and scared at the same time to see an elephant closeup – but I was proud to have the opportunity to experience and learn the behaviour of elephants. This opportunity to do the Wild Shots course comes once in a lifetime. Visiting Khumaga National Park for the first time gives me hope and inspiration.

**Oratile Masheto (23)** I just fell in love with taking photos of elephants. Before this experience I would run away seeing an elephant because I did not know their nature and behaviour. It is so important for people from local communities to be able to go our National Parks, so they can learn about nature and see the beauty of our country.

**Anthony Thobogang (25)** - Seeing the elephants up close was a memorable experience I will take to my grave. I am now able to see the beauty in them – as well of course the tourist income. The game drive brought a sense of ownership, pride and belonging.

Many thanks to Natural Selections, Wild Shots Outreach, and a Private donor for enabling this inspirational workshop to happen.



## How to support EfA this festive season:

Should you wish to make a donation, you can do this online through Global Giving <https://www.globalgiving.org/donate/69635/elephants-for-africa/>

You can also pay directly to our bank account, please contact [admin@elephantsforafrica.org](mailto:admin@elephantsforafrica.org) for details.

## The online shopper:

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 and costs you nothing.

## The music lover:

Buy the album Harmony for Elephants and all proceeds are donated to us.

## Festive Wish List:

- £7.50. A chilli brick burner to keep elephants away from fields
- 12 A foldable microscope for a school
- £15 Monthly cost for an environmental club activity
- £60 Living with Elephants workshop
- £95 Yearly costs for course materials for one school
- £225 A farmer chilli plot, to grow chilli for mitigation
- £550 Staff tent
- £750 A WildShots Workshop for 15 youth