

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Bring The Elephant Home Foundation
For a world where elephants and people can thrive





TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Mission and Objectives
 - 2.1 Mission
 - 2.2 Strategy: integrated community-based elephant conservation
 - 2.3 Goal: sustainable positive change
 - 2.4 Objectives
- 3. 2021 in numbers:
- 4. Projects and Programs
 - 4.1 Tom Yum project
 - 4.2 Bee the Change project
 - 4.3 Research Rewilding Asian elephants
 - 4.4 Research South Africa (incl adoption program)
 - 4.5. Environmental Education & Collaboration
- 5. Media and Outreach
 - 5.1 Conferences and panel discussions
 - 5.2 Other media and videos
 - 5.3 Lectures
- 6. Our mission continues!
- 7. Thank you

Approved by the board: March 1, 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

Bring The Elephant Home values diversity, inclusion, and equality. We celebrate the range of diversity, culture, and unique differences within our organization and network. We embrace inclusiveness by encouraging everyone to share their ideas, opinions and knowledge, and we welcome diversity at all levels. Furthermore, we believe that inclusion enables out-of-the-box solutions, makes sustainable growth possible, increases resilience, and is essential to creating a just and more sustainable world.

Despite COVID-19, 2021 turned out to be a year of new opportunities for Bring The Elephant Home. A year in which we developed new collaborations with partners from all across the globe: from the United States and South Africa to Sri Lanka and Thailand.

One of our highlights of 2021 was the growth of our collaboration with farmers in a human-elephant conflict area in Western Thailand. Their creativity and enthusiasm to develop sustainable solutions for human-elephant conflicts are

inspiring. Together, we developed new methods to reduce crop damage by elephants. The Tom Yum project (launched in August 2020) promotes human-elephant coexistence in Thailand by supporting farmers to grow plants that are disliked by elephants, instead of mono-crops that attract elephants and have a negative impact on biodiversity. The project helps to diversify local livelihoods for rural people, which is vital, especially during these difficult times. It also aims to reduce violence towards elephants and protects the ecosystems on which we all depend.

The first results of the Tom Yum project are promising, and together with international partners, we aim to launch the same alternative crop projects in other sites in Thailand, Sri Lanka, India and Cambodia. This allows us to test the model in various socio-cultural and ecological contexts. In order to do this, we've partnered up with Trunks & Leaves, an organization with the same mission as Bring The Elephant Home.



Another highlight of 2021 was the start of an elephant behaviour study at Kariega Game Reserve in South Africa. Together with members of the Kariega Foundation, volunteers and interns, we have been monitoring the elephants in the park in order to assess how people affect the wellbeing of elephants and vice versa.

The research team records data on, for instance, the land type, proximity of the elephants, the type of herd, and the number of vehicles present. The team also observes elephant behaviour, using a custom behaviour observation app that contains behavioural displays such as trunk in the air (vigilance), head shake (passive-aggressive) and touching other elephants with the trunk (social).

This type of research is increasingly important due to the ever-decreasing area elephants can roam freely. Worldwide, elephants are struggling for survival. People intrude on their habitat; and their food, water and migration routes are disappearing. To survive, they venture on what is now human territory, causing serious conflicts. In the majority of these conflict hotspots, people are struggling too: with poverty, inequality and corruption. Conservation of elephants should therefore not only consider elephants, but also people.

The highlight of our research in South Africa was that we could finally receive the first group of pioneer volunteers, after a long and uncertain preparation time. For an entire month, this group helped with identifying elephants, researching their behaviour, and developing an educational elephant programme for local schools. Thanks to these pioneers, we now have a structured protocol to quickly identify elephants in the field and to collect data on elephants as efficiently as possible.

At three local schools in marginalised communities, we ran our elephant education programme, during which thirty children were selected to join a safari at the Kariega Game Reserve. As part of my PhD research, we also held a community workshop with 50 young adults. They shared their visions on nature conservation, and how conservation connects with the wellbeing of humans and animals. At the end of the workshop, three local group leaders shared what they learned with the rest of the group and held an inspiring talk about why we should all care about conservation and work together to protect elephants. The day ended with beautiful and emotional Xhosa songs, and a message from the community leaders about the African philosophy Ubuntu: about the importance of relatedness,

"I am because we are"



humaneness, compassion, inclusiveness, and being in harmony with nature and people. I wondered what the world would look like, if we would all live according to this philosophy...

By working together across continents and combining research and conservation action, we will keep improving the future of elephants and the people living amongst them. Together, we can create a world where elephants and people can thrive.

Special thanks to our entire international team! There were not many opportunities to meet each other in person. But despite this, we have been able to work closely on research, communication, the development of new projects and much more! We appreciate all the contributions each of you made!

Despite the challenges, we managed to achieve a lot in 2021. We are looking forward to creating new opportunities to better the future of elephants in 2022. Thank you very much for your involvement and support. We hope you will continue supporting us during the next year!

Antoinette van de Water
Director Bring The Elephant Home



2. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Mission

Our mission is to ensure the wellbeing and survival of elephants in the wild, contribute to socio-ecological resilience, and work towards a world in which people and elephants can thrive.

2.2 Strategy: integrated community-based elephant conservation

Our community-based conservation strategy, developed over more than a decade, integrates the intrinsic, ecological, economic, cultural, social, and spiritual values of elephants and implements solutions that provide mutually beneficial outcomes for people, elephants, and the environment.

2.3 Wider goals: sustainable positive change

By linking and increasing animal welfare, human wellbeing, and conservation, Bring The Elephant Home's projects transform elephant-human-

environment relationships, bringing mutual benefits and restoring systems on which these parties depend.

Our projects are inclusive and promote shared decision-making, ownership, sustainability, equality, pride, and partnerships. We believe that when local people take ownership of conservation efforts, lasting positive change will happen.

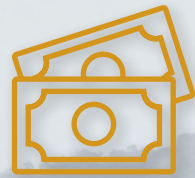
2.4 Objectives

- Conserving wild elephants and restoring, expanding and protecting their habitat in collaboration with local stakeholders;
- Implementing, testing and promoting sustainable solutions for human-elephant coexistence that provide socio-ecological and economic benefits;
- Encouraging local participation in nature conservation and empowering local communities;
- Raising awareness about the importance of elephant conservation and nature in general.



AN OVERVIEW OF 2021

TOM YUM PROJECT



17

local people earning **additional income** through alternative crop planting



5

new **citronella** and **lemongrass** plots planted



Over **300** seedlings have been distributed and planted.



21

new products in the Elephant & Co **webshop** being distributed from **Thailand** and **The Netherlands**



Elephant & Co products sent to **12** countries



1

new Tom Yum project **tree nursery**

BEE THE CHANGE



30

attendees at native species **beekeeping workshop**



15

new **beehives** placed on the border of Kuiburi National Park



Over **50**

jars of Beeyond Honey **sold** in the webshop, market fairs and retail partners



Supporting the Ruam Thai Beekeeping Group, a community enterprise created by

12

farmers interested in **using bees** to **prevent** elephant damage

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & COLLABORATION



Projects at **3** schools in South Africa



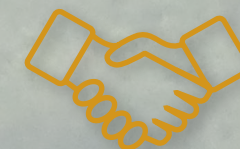
2 Community workshops organized in both **Thailand** and **South Africa**



Weekly lessons at Baan Ruam Thai School **40** students



Supervised **8** students



11 new partnerships



More than **17600** followers on **Instagram**



More than **8000** likes on **Facebook**

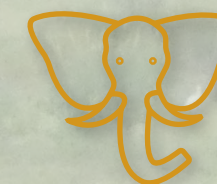
RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA including adoption program



35 hours of elephant observation



Elephant behaviour research on **30** elephants



Elephant Identification Kit for **30** elephants



80 volunteers helping out



41 African elephants adoptive donors

3. PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS 2021

All our projects are in collaboration with local organizations and include the participation of local communities. In 2021, we have prioritized collaboration, strengthening our network, and securing long-term funding for our projects. We have developed relationships with multi-level stakeholders in Thailand, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and the United States, resulting in international collaboration to realize human-elephant coexistence.

- 4.1 Tom Yum project
- 4.2 Bee the Change project
- 4.3 Research Rewilding Asian elephants
- 4.4 Research South Africa (incl adoption program)
- 4.5. Environmental education & Collaboration

4.1 Tom Yum project

The Tom Yum project supports farmers to organically grow alternative crops that elephants don't like, such as chillies, lemongrass, galangal, lime, kaffir lime, and other aromatic plants. These alternative crops are used in a range of handmade products, all with a unique conservation story. A group of 17 local people earns additional income through crop planting, maintenance, and product making, and a broader group is learning more about the project and stimulates interest through word of mouth.

The Tom Yum project started with the planting of 8 experimental field in September 2020. The first results were promising: while elephants destroyed 97% of the pineapple, while they only touched max 5% of any of the alternative crops



and this mostly happened because these crops were planted near the pineapple. Thanks to the support of Fondation Ensemble, we expanded our research to establish and study five additional plots of citronella and lemongrass, the crops that showed the most promising results in our study in 2020. Our field team is monitoring the plots on a monthly basis for master's research conducted in partnership with Miami University.

In March 2021, we launched the webshop Elephant & Co (<https://elephantandco.org/>) to sell handmade products with ingredients cultivated through the Tom Yum project. Citronella candles, lemongrass soap, ginger tea, and several other handmade products are prepared, packaged and shipped by a team of local people. To date, products have been sent to 12 countries, and we plan to broaden our sales network in Thailand to create greater demand and, thereby, greater incentive for more farmers to join the project.

In order to create an easily accessible, affordable source of alternative crop seedlings, we worked with the local community in Ruam Thai village to establish a Tom Yum project tree nursery. The nursery is managed by the local community. The seeds are brought in and germinated, and the

seedlings are maintained and then distributed to local farmers in the wet season. In 2021, ginger, galangal, turmeric, chilli, and kaffir lime seedlings were distributed to farmers, and Bring The Elephant Home has supported these individuals by purchasing their yield and using it in the elephant-friendly product range. Changing crop species in this community can not happen overnight, as these farmers have cultivated pineapple for many years. The community is slowly building a support network as they experiment with this holistic method.

In order to assess local perceptions of the barriers and benefits of alternative crop planting, Bring The Elephant Home's field staff conducted a household survey of 200 people farming land near the border of Kuiburi National Park. This data will provide valuable insight into the motivations for trying this method, prior experiences with alternative crops, and a greater understanding of the social, economic and ecological barriers that preclude widespread implementation of this strategy. As a result, Bring The Elephant Home will be able to support communities effectively, ultimately increasing local peoples' satisfaction and willingness to continue alternative crop cultivation.



4.2 Bee the Change project

Following the publication of Bring The Elephant Home's research into the effectiveness of beehive fences, we expanded the project and our network in 2021. Local people in Kui Buri, Thailand, on the border of Kuiburi National Park were keen to use native bee species (*Apis cerana*) in the beehive fence model, rather than the European bee species (*Apis mellifera*) that we studied in eastern Thailand. We received funding from Save The Elephants' Elephants and Bees Project to conduct this trial, and partnered with Dr. Orawan Duangphakdee and her team at the Native Honeybee and Pollinator Research Centre of King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) to begin this study. On December 22-23, 2021, Dr. Orawan and her team hosted a native species beekeeping workshop at our project site in Ruam Thai village. Nearly 30 attendees joined the workshop, including farmers impacted by human-elephant conflict, Department of National Parks rangers, Forestry Department officials, WWF Thailand staff and other local stakeholders. Together, we learned about keeping three different native bee species, identified ideal sites for a pilot project in 2022, and established a habitat enrichment plan to support native bee colonies. Through these capacity building events, the farmers gained interest and developed the skills needed to launch a new beehive fence project in this region in 2022.

Additionally, Beeyond Honey continued sales in 2021, and was distributed through Bring The Elephant Home's newly-launched online e-commerce platform Elephant & Co. Beeyond Honey is also sold in retail shops in Bangkok, Hua Hin and Phuket. Through the distribution of elephant-friendly honey, honey consumers support this holistic solution, BTEH supports beehive fence owners, and more people become aware of the way that bees are helping farmers and elephants.



4.3 Research Rewilding Asian elephants

Thanks to the support of Stichting Abri voor Dieren, our new research on rewilding Asian elephants was launched in October 2021. To investigate the potential of this project, we started a collaboration with the Conservation Ecology Program of King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi in Bangkok. A Master's student at KMUTT university is now conducting a spatial analysis to help BTEH in the planning of the rewilding project. HHer project aims to identify areas where deforestation and habitat fragmentation have created high-deficit elephant areas and where increasing habitat connectivity through forest restoration and creating corridors are most urgently needed. This information will increase our understanding of whether the reintroduction of captive elephants to these areas holds potential to restore ecological processes and genetic diversity.

4.4 Research South Africa (incl. adoption program)

In 2021, we started an elephant behaviour study at Kariega Game Reserve in the Eastern Cape in South

Africa. The objective of this study is to identify threats to elephant well-being in systems of small, fenced reserves. The first step for this study is to identify all elephants in the reserve and create an elephant identification kit. Next, we observe the behaviour of elephants, so we can assess how human activities (e.g., tourism, fences, management interventions) affect elephant behaviour.

This research is funded through our African elephant adoption program. In 2021, Bring The Elephant Home had 41 African elephants adoptive donors.

Furthermore, we are facilitating community workshops, conducting questionnaires and developing education programs to gain insight into the perspectives of Xhosa people on conservation and develop conservation strategies that promote equality and justice.

Furthermore, we facilitated community workshops and conducted questionnaires to gain insight into the perspectives of local Xhosa people on conservation and develop conservation strategies that promote inclusion, equality and justice. In November 2021, we welcomed our first group of students in Kariega Game Reserve to assist

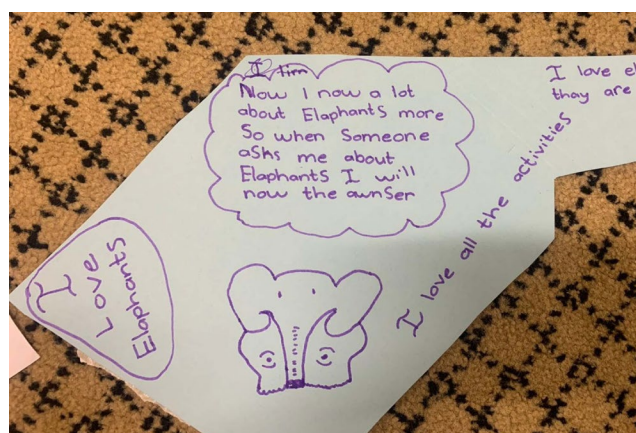
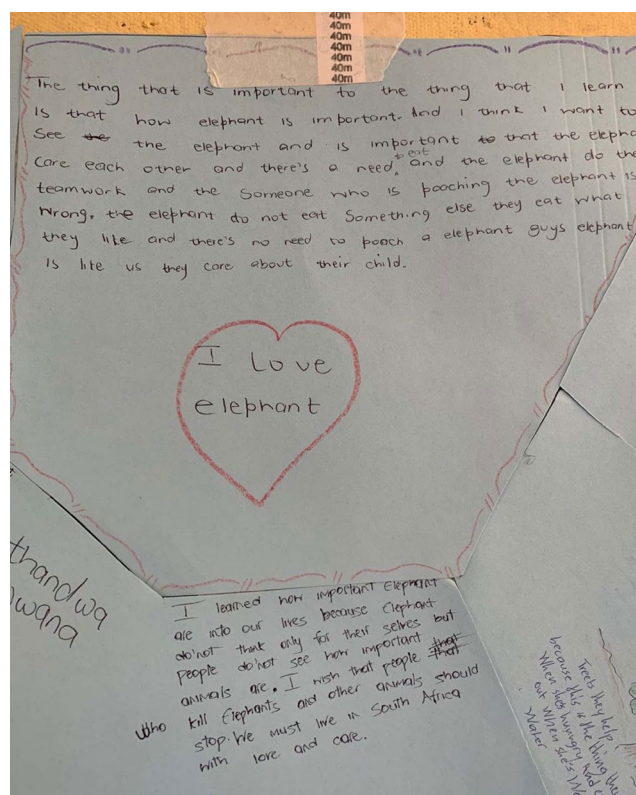
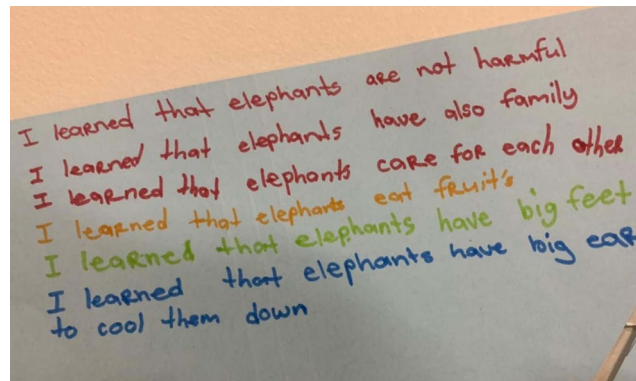
with community research, the development of an elephant education program, elephant identification and monitoring their behaviour.

4.5 Environmental Education & Collaboration

Throughout the pandemic, we maintained relationships with local and international schools to continue facilitating conservation action events in elephant habitats in Thailand and South Africa. At our project site in Kui Buri, we hosted site visits and student groups from International School Bangkok, NIST International School, and several

local schools, and ran online lectures with Verso International School. Additionally, we continued with our English Environmental Education curriculum at Baan Ruam Thai School, to connect local youth to conservation issues in their own community while simultaneously developing English language skills. While Covid-19 has halted in-person classes, Bring The Elephant Home and its partners are continuing to increase tolerance and awareness of Asian elephants through practical, community-based conservation work.

The pioneer group in South Africa tested an elephant education programme with interactive activities (like a life-size elephant), an inspiring



play, an art competition, and a quiz before and after the programme to measure its impact. Thirty children from three participating schools were selected to join a safari at the Kariega Game Reserve. For most of them, this will be their first opportunity to experience animals in the wild and learn about them. As part of Antoinette's PhD research, we also held a community workshop with 50 young adults from Xhosa communities neighbouring Kariega Game Reserve. They shared their visions on nature conservation, and how to connect this with the wellbeing of humans and animals.

As our organization is growing, we invested time and energy to better organize the 'back end' of Bring The Elephant Home. A new bookkeeping program and a new partnership with an accountant ensure that all income and expenses are registered transparently. Annually, our financial reports are audited by external accountants in Thailand and the Netherlands, and by the Dutch CBF. When a charity has been recognized as a charity by the CBF (CBF-Erkend

Goed Doel), you can trust that the organization has been closely reviewed. Therefore, our supporters can trust that their donations are spent in the most responsible and efficient way.

In 2021, we established a collaboration with King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) in Bangkok, the Native Honeybee and Pollinator Centre of KMUTT University, Trunks & Leaves, and Colorado University in the United States.

Academic collaboration

In 2021, we supervised 8 students and interns from Utrecht University, Wageningen University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT). The students worked on projects such as elephant identification, analysis and promotion of our webshop Elephant & Co, the potential of rewilding Asian elephants, and elephant educational programs.

4. MEDIA AND OUTREACH

4.1 Conferences and panel discussions

In 2021, Antoinette presented the results of our research at the Conservation Symposium in South Africa (November) and at the International International Congress for Conservation Biology (December). She also joined the panel discussion 'A new natural capital paradigm for a just transition' organized by the OECD Development Centre (November).

4.2 Other media and videos

WWF and UNEP publication

We are very proud of our contribution to the WWF and UN Environment Programme's publication "[A future for all: The need for human-wildlife coexistence](#)". Our Tom Yum project is covered on page 66 and 84-85.

Bangkok Post

What can you do when elephants leave the forest and enter your crop fields to feed on them? Farmers in the Prachuap Khiri Khan's Kui Buri district in Thailand are finding new ways

to co-exist with elephants through the Tom Yum Project. The Bangkok Post spoke to BTEH field supervisor Thanasit and project manager David Owen and wrote [an article about this project](#).

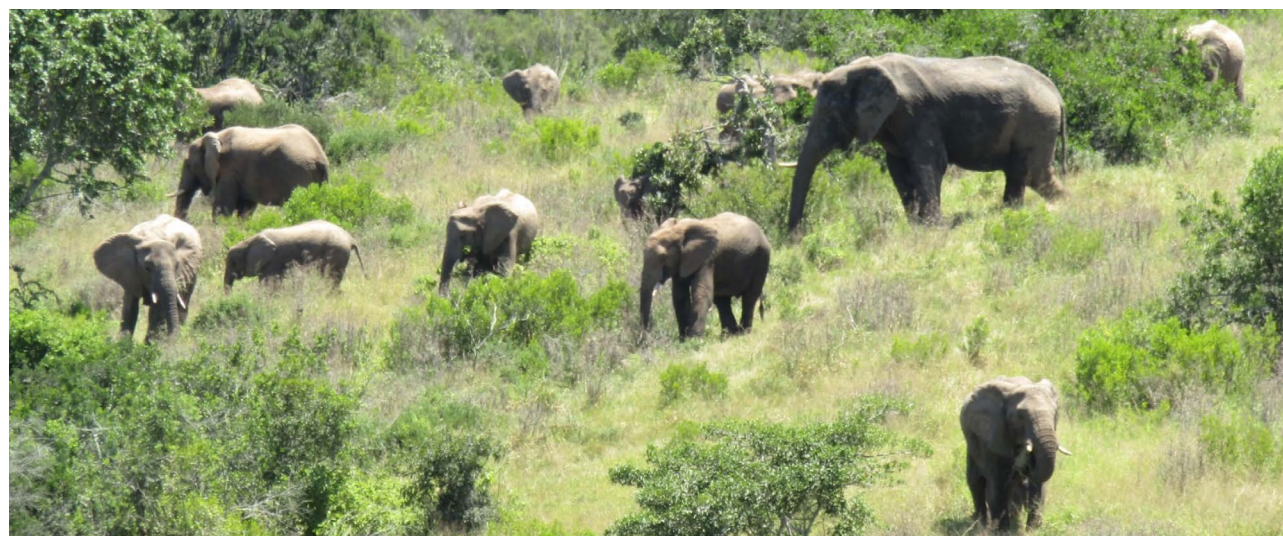
Our Better World video production

In February 2021, a team of Our Better World visited our project near Kuiburi National Park to document our efforts to realise human-elephant coexistence. The result is a beautiful video that tells the story of the Tom Yum project from the farmer's perspective.

"They are living creatures on this planet, so they have the right to live on this earth without anyone harming them. Everything is evolving. Humans are evolving, elephants are evolving. But the location is still the same size. We need to adjust our way of thinking. We need to adapt and learn to live with elephants."

- Samorn Sangthong (Som), activity coordinator for BTEH.

Watch the video [here](#).



Oog voor Afrika

"I often think of elephant herds as a metaphor of a just society. A society that appreciates empathy and compassion, a society that embraces coexistence, in which strangers are welcomed, elders are respected, and resources used wisely. Values increasingly absent in our own, competitive society. We need to change our way of thinking. By recognizing the elephant's right to exist and their full value chain, elephants will contribute to a better world."

- Antoinette van de Water

Read the article [here](#).

Social media

Thanks to our creative social media volunteers, our posts on Facebook are followed by 8,000+ people and on Instagram by 17,600 people. Our posts highlight our projects, new research that has been published about elephants and announce new products available in our webshop Elephant & Co.

"After volunteering for elephants in Thailand and rhinos in South Africa I was determined to do whatever I could to save them from going extinct. Working for BTEH is just one of the things I do to help this majestic creature and I'm proud to be part of this amazing team!"

- Gordon Wasch



4.3 Lectures

In September 2021, Antoinette gave a lecture at Wageningen University, hosted by the Future for Nature Academy, to discuss these questions. She talked about how BTEH's projects in various countries became increasingly centred around humans and human value orientations.

"Do you believe that elephants should have a right to exist, regardless of their value to humans? Do you believe that an elephant that has caused damage to your property should have a right to exist?"





6. OUR MISSION CONTINUES!

The future of elephants is heavily dependent on human attitudes and tolerance levels. Elephants are an umbrella species, which means that their protection positively affects key biodiversity areas and other threatened species. However, land-use changes and other socioeconomic issues increasingly cause human-elephant conflicts. Preventing these conflicts is one of the greatest challenges in elephant conservation worldwide. Despite the direct impact of elephants living in their area, community representatives have often been excluded from decision-making processes. We aim to connect and collaborate with communities living with elephants and local organizations to include their visions on ecological problems and co-create sustainable solutions bottom up.

We can't fully understand all the consequences of losing a keystone species such as the elephant. Because they are integral to so many connections in nature, their extinction would create a snowball effect of biodiversity loss. By reconnecting patches of habitat to allow elephants to move uninterrupted, applying a mix of community-based mitigation methods, and developing models that help people to rediscover and benefit from the value of elephants, we can create a world where elephants and people can thrive.

Bring The Elephant Home!



'Am I angry, or do I hate the elephants that cause so much damage to my crops? No, I am not angry, nor do I hate them. Because if we can live together in harmony, it will lead to sustainability, and benefit our environment. We have to think of a way to live with these wild elephants.'

'Elephants are a unique species - they're intelligent and powerful, and they can solve problems. They brought job opportunities, tourism, and income to my community, and we cooperate and work together all because of elephants.'

Thanasit Phibunwattanakon, Regional Field, Supervisor, BTEH

7. THANK YOU!

Bring The Elephant Home can only realize its goals thanks to the endless dedication of many people from different nationalities.

BTEH has a board in the Netherlands (board members Berrie Jurg, Liesbeth Sluiter, Dr. Suzan Doornwaard and Tis Voortman) and a board in Thailand (Antoinette van de Water, Siriporn Sriaram, Supassawan Homchailert and Dr. Aim Chotirot). Our projects in Thailand are coordinated by our Program Manager David Owen, Regional Field Coordinator Thanasit "Oh" Phibunwattanakon, activity coordinator, Samorn "Som" Sangthong, and are joined by many Thai and international volunteers. Our projects in Africa and Asia are supported by TeamNL: our growing team of volunteers. Special thanks also to BTEH ambassadors Leo and Toni van de Water, who coordinate BTEH's office address in the Netherlands.

We are very grateful for all our partners and donors who make our work possible! Special thanks to the Phuluang Wildlife Research Station (Thailand), Elephants and Bees Research Station (Kenya), Future For Nature Academy (NL), Project Dragonfly of Miami University (USA), School of Life Sciences of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Elephants Alive (SA), the Elephant Specialist Advisory Group

(SA), Human Elephant Voices Network (Thailand), Trunks & Leaves (Sri Lanka), ENCOSH (France), King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (Thailand), Native Honeybee and Pollinator Research Centre (Thailand), Voeten in de aarde, Kootje Fundatien, and FORRU of Chiang Mai University. We appreciate our membership of GlobeGuards (NL) and the connection this network brings to like-minded organisations.

Finally, a big thank you to all our donors and volunteers who were so important to us during this challenging year. We would not be able to execute our projects and initiatives without the financial support from Fondation Ensemble, Save The Elephants-Elephants and Bees Project, NIST International School, Nonthaburi Neighbourhood Reach, Stichting Abri Voor Dieren, and Fah Lanna Spa. We are grateful to Capstone for developing and maintaining our website and Flock for their ongoing support for our database.

Special thanks to all our long term volunteers from all over the world and to everyone else who contributed to the success of BTEH in 2021! We couldn't realize our goals without the loyal support of all our donors and sponsors. We are truly grateful for your support, trust and friendship.