

International Elephant Foundation sponsored HECx school awareness programmes

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International Elephant Foundation IEF sponsored a project entitled "Integrating teaching and folklore theatre to promote HECx in Tamil Nadu, India". The components of the project are to conduct teacher training workshop, school awareness programmes and street plays for community people promoting human elephant coexistence in Sathyamangalam Forest Division. The street plays and Teacher training workshop were conducted in the month of August 2015. The school education programmes, by the participants of the teacher training workshop, were conducted on 27 & 28 January 2016, Thalavadi and Kundri, Erode District.

Thirty five school teachers from human-elephant conflict areas attended the training workshop. During the workshop they committed to do at least two HECx awareness programmes for their school children or the community living nearby. In order to achieve this they were given HECx Training Guide supplemented with 50 Ele-kit education packets. Most of the teachers reported that they did what they promised during the workshop. As part of the project, two such schools were selected to so as to inspect them and to see their awareness programmes.

The authors, Mrs. Geetha, Eco-Club Cooridnator, Erode district, Mr. L. Vijayendran, NGC Cooridnator, Gobi Education District and Mr. T. Sakthivel, SEWA, Erode visited those two selected schools to witness their HECx awareness programmes. The project team visited Panchayat Union Middle School, Hasanur, Thalavadi and RC Middle High School, Kundri, Kadambur. Both are located on the Western Ghats hills and have the history of human elephant or other animal conflicts. Each and every student



Elephant drama - Panchayat Union Middle School, Hasanur, Thalavadi



R.C. High School, Kundri, Kadambur performing drama on rules to follow while rescuing wild animals

has their own interesting stories related to confrontation with wild animals or elephants either by themselves or family members.

On 27 January, the first awareness programme was organised at Hasanur school. Mr. P.

Venkatachalam, Head Master and one of the trainees of the teacher-training workshop arranged a

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Reading the elephant facts - Hasanur School



Rally around Hasanur village by school students



The team enacted elephant dramas

series of events on that day. Seventy five students and five teachers participated in the programme. The second awareness programme was organised on 28 January at R.C. High School, Kundri that was arranged by Mr. J. Dennis Rosario, another trainee. About 200 students and 10 teachers participated in the programme. The student participants are mostly from tribal villages where HEC area exists.

During the programme students enacted mini dramas, shared elephant information, elephant proverbs, how elephants are associated with our culture. The student went on a rally around the village by wearing masks, holding placards and shouting out elephant conservation message and how to be safe from elephants so as to save our lives.

At the R.C. High School, Kundri, some of the students were interviewed for their experience with elephants and they shared very interesting information and those were video documented. The programme was very useful for the school children and teachers to learn more about elephant behaviour and tips on do's and don't's in elephant areas in order to save their life, agriculture and property.

