



## Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects

### Half Year Report

(due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020)

<b>Project reference</b>	27-012
<b>Project title</b>	Promoting Human-Elephant Coexistence Through Education and Seasonal Fencing
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Myanmar
<b>Lead organisation</b>	Elephant Family
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Grow Back For Posterity + Compass Films
<b>Project leader</b>	Belinda Stewart-Cox
<b>Report date and number</b>	HVR1 (October 2020)
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="http://www.elephant-family.org">www.elephant-family.org</a> ; <a href="http://www.growbackposterity.com">www.growbackposterity.com</a> ; <a href="http://www.compassfilms.net">www.compassfilms.net</a> ;

#### 1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

This project should have started in April but because of Covid, the start date was postponed 4m to 1-Aug-2020.

##### Output 1 - Saving Lives:

GBP's H.EL.P safety education outreach team held conflict avoidance conferences in Myothit Township of Magwe Division from 28 Aug to 11 Sept 2020. This trip covered 8 villages and involved 700 households; a total of 1,179 people which included 47 officials, 12 monks, 615 students (346 male, 269 female), and 511 other villagers (251 men and 260 women). Full details are recorded in a spreadsheet that will be shared with YER1 in 2021.

##### Output 2 - Protecting Lives & Livelihoods:

In the first few months of this project (the growing seasons), GBP's H.EL.P fencing team supervised and monitored the installation of seasonal electric fences in nine villages of Yangon Division (Wetkaya, Alemyaung, Mwehauk Kone, Thabyu, Chaungsauk, Thanatchaung East, Thanathchaung North, Myinsaungine and Laharmange). These fences are helping to protect a total of 399 acres of paddy field as well as the lives of farmers working in this HEC area. The fence in Laharmange village that surrounds 89 acres of paddy will also serve as a training fence.

GBP has negotiated classroom space for its fence training sessions at the May Hey Wun Camp near Laharmange village which belongs to MTE (Myanmar Timber Enterprise). As soon as lockdown restrictions are eased later this year or early next, GBP will provide fence training to villagers in this area. While classroom studies and equipment training will be given at May Hey Wun, instruction in the installation and maintenance of fences will be delivered *in situ* at Laharmange training fence.

Villager leaders from the Mayyu mountain range in Northern Rakhine have asked GBP to include them in the fencing programme so GBP has invited some farmers and professional electricians to participate in the training. This will enable those participants to carry knowledge back to remote areas not initially included in this H.EL.P fence training programme. However, they will also be required to fulfil the same stringent certification standards so that they too can benefit from the equipment bank loan scheme. H.EL.P staff will ensure that all fences are fully monitored by then and by local FD officials trained by them to supervise seasonal electric fences in their area.

On the 25 July 2020, GBP received certification of conformity from the Ministry of Electrical Power Yangon for the Gallagher Energizer units it is using. This is a needed to carry out official electric fencing operations in Myanmar.

##### Output 3: Building capacity:

GBP director Aung Myo Chit hired and trained Mr Maung Maung Che as the new GBP H.EL.P fencing team leader, replacing Mr U Khin Maung Khi after his retirement. Working with MTE, Maung Maung Che led the government's elephant darting and capture team. He is a valuable addition to GBP's H.EL.P team having unparalleled community and government contacts and leadership qualities. He will oversee GBP's fencing teams as well as government and village trainees.

#### **Output 4 - Sharing knowledge**

In April 2020, GBP printed 5,000 HEC awareness education kits (including elephant board games) in anticipation of the educational campaign starting in July-Aug. These kits are given to relevant district, division and township officials, community leaders, and teachers. Human-Elephant Peace (H.EL.P) branded exercise books were also printed for students as well as T-shirts to be awarded to outstanding students. Coordinated by GBP director Aung Myo Chit, the H.EL.P team also updated its powerpoint presentation for the HEC education conferences.

GBP's H.EL.P team leaders gave presentations to the following government officials to illustrate the merits of this project's HEC awareness or seasonal fence training, as relevant to each area:

- On 7 July 2020, GBP director Aung Myo Chit met U Htoo Han, Regional Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, at Parliament Building in Yangon, to explain the merits of this Darwin project.
- On 4 Aug 2020, Aung Myo Chit also met His Excellency U Thitmy Myo, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment in the Mandalay Parliament building to explain the HEC awareness programme.
- Also on 4 Aug 2020 in Mandalay, Aung Myo Chit met Dr. Aung Myo Min, Head of MTE's northern Sagaing Division to explain GBP's H.EL.P program and find out about current HEC hotspots in Sagaing region.
- On 29 July 2020, also in Mandalay, GBP's H.EL.P education team leader Ye Nandar Aung met Dr Soe Thura Aung of MTE and U Wai Phyo Thet of the Forestry Division, both district officials from Sagaing and Magwe Divisions, to arrange field trips for the HEC education programme in Y2.

The outcome of the above meetings is the authorities' full willingness to provide all necessary support, including travel permits, for the H.EL.P programme in their regions.

#### **2a. Give details of notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for Covid-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

From the telephone communication maintained with key contact people in project areas (see below), the GBP team has continued to receive information on human-elephant conflict, illegal wildlife trade and poaching from those areas. The only non-Covid incident of HEC was reported on 20 Sept when wild elephants are said to have attacked Thittopin village, Ngaputaw township Ayeyarwaddy division. Three people were injured and one house destroyed. However, villagers think this attack reflects the elephant's anger at the killing of one of their herd members five days before (see below).

#### **2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of Covid-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

##### **1. Covid impacts on project implementation**

Due to Covid19 travel restrictions and by multiple lockdown periods, the education and fencing teams have not been able to access all the proposed education and fencing target areas. GBP staff based in Yangon can travel but must quarantine for 14-days if they travel from one area to another. So, the teams have visited areas that are still accessible and they have had regular telephone conversations with key contacts in the project areas in order to maintain relationships. As a result, have been given information on the apparent increase in poaching and illegal wildlife trade in those areas.

##### **2. Covid impacts on poaching and illegal wildlife trade**

In early September, contacts from Ngaputaw village in Ayeyarwady division, reported that elephants were seen scattered in small groups in the forest. The team reported this to the authorities and on 15 Sept, villagers found the skinned and segmented carcass of an elephant in forest near Myinwartaung village, Myanaung township, not far from Ngaputaw. During lockdown, patrol teams and other authorities have not been able to enforce the law and this has given poachers free rein.

Also on 15 Sept, law enforcement officials from the Forest Department of Bago Division confiscated 500g of ivory at the Letpan Hotel, Kyunkalay village, Letpadan township, Bago division. Later in September, Aung Myo Chit, GBP's director, found 30lb of dried elephant meat on sale in Kyimyindaing night market in Yangon.

Since Covid lockdowns started, GBP has received more reports about poaching than it did during comparable periods in previous years. Bago Region, had NO reports of poaching for several years but in the last few months, elephants and tigers as well as prey species (primates, boar, deer etc) have been poached by villagers who are out of work and therefore have time and need to hunt and collect other edible products.

### 3. Covid impacts on human-elephant conflict

As noted above, villagers believe that the 20 Sept elephant attack on Thittopin village in Ngaputaw township of Ayeyarwaddy Division in which three people were injured and one house destroyed was done in retaliation for the killing of one of their own 5-6 days before. Pressure on wild elephants from poaching activity in the area appears to be prompting elephant incursions into human settlements.

#### 2c. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No Date: June 2020

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No Dates: 3 July + 4 Aug 2020

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No Date: 26 Aug 2020

#### 3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes  No  Estimated underspend: £0

**3b. If yes, you must consider your project budget needs carefully.** Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

**If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes in the project, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have time to make appropriate changes if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

#### 4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

Only that significant delays in payment make life very difficult for our partner organisations, which are small, as they do for us. But you know that already and are, we know, doing your best to speed up payments.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document. **N/A**

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request. Please DO NOT send these in the same email.

Please send your **completed report by email** to [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk). The report should be 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**