

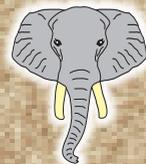
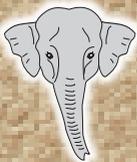
# DRAMA KIT

## Getting along with Elephants HEGx

### Using Drama in Public Education

Compiled by

Sally Walker with help from J. Basom 2001. [www.DramaEd.net](http://www.DramaEd.net)



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ZOO Education Packet/Drama Guideline #29 (March 2010)





## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Using Drama in Public Education for Getting along with Elephants**

#### **Challenges of teaching in HEC (Human-Elephant Conflict) localities**

Teaching people of any age to “get along with elephants” may be a challenge in any locality at any time, but particularly so today in and near wild elephant localities, where the elephants’ food and water source has been reduced and the elephants have to search for it in human occupied territory. It is not just food that has been reduced ... it is branches for swinging as a mosquito and fly swatter or as a fan to cool themselves; ... it is spaces where there is dust to roll around in; it is water bodies sufficient to submerge themselves and get a much appreciated bath; and it is the frustration of having to search and take food or water under duress in human habitations where normally they would not go.

How do we teach people to stay out of the way of elephants, to avoid injury, when an elephant is destroying their home, or trashing their crops, or laying waste their stores. How do we teach human beings that it is the fault of mankind itself and its greed and lack of forward planning that has led to over-development in what used to be forest ... used to be elephant territory and that they must not blame the elephant? Is it our place to do this when we, perhaps, have never had such experiences and live in areas where there is no such problem.

*What and why should we teach people who are experiencing these problems at all? Lets try to answer this question.*

One reason for teaching people experiencing these problems is simply to let them know their difficulties are being recognized. This is only the merest beginning. Rural people experiencing depredations by elephants often must feel that the rest of the country or world has, uncaring for their woes, left them to an awful fate. This would be the case particularly if we seem to be more sympathetic with the elephants than we are for them. If we are sympathetic with the people who suffer, they are more likely to listen to what we have to suggest.

Another reason for teaching people to get along with elephants is so they can avoid further loss, injury or death from elephant conflict. Although not every instance of elephant depredation can be prevented, in reading incidents of conflict one can (sitting in safety) easily see ways that if a little more care had been taken, a little more patience, and a little more thinking might have prevented a death or injury to a human being. Further reasons for teaching people to get along with elephants is that it is easier than teaching elephants to get along with mankind. Although both humans and elephant are smart enough to learn many things, it is doubtful that we could communicate the subtle

virtue of doing something we don't want to do "for our own good" we don't have a clue how to teach that to an elephant. We can teach a human being to stay out of harm's way for their own good, to refrain from challenging an elephant even if he is eating their crops for their own good, and to do whatever it takes to protect themselves from elephants ... to save life and limb.

Finally we try to teach people to avoid loss, injury and death by elephant for the sake of the elephant as well. When elephants raid villages and harm human beings, there is a terrible backlash to the elephant. Elephants are part of nature. They are the largest land mammal. They are part of the world's natural heritage. It is not their fault for being big, strong and hungry. We have to do what we can to protect them also, while governments figure out how to solve this problem.

So how do we teach people to change their attitudes and become more careful, for their own sake as well as for elephants. It is not easy but one method is drama. Why? because drama enables us to put ourselves in another being's place ... to feel what they feel and perhaps develop compassion. Drama can also show us how foolish we are if we take unnecessary risks with our lives to save a handful of grain, or to demand our own way.

**Such teaching is not easy.** Even when we are trying to educate people of our own culture, language, social class and educational level, we often fail to produce the result we want. When dealing with people from rural areas, forests, villages, etc. who have a completely different background, the challenge is immense. Often we see their conditions and think that we have no right to dictate to people whose immediate survival sometimes depends on doing things that are (from our perspective) harmful to wildlife and environment. A trapper can earn enough to keep his family a few days (or even weeks or months) by selling an animal or animal products to a zoo, a laboratory, or as a pet. A family can cook their food and avoid starvation by gathering firewood; they even may have to sell some firewood in order to buy rations for one meal.

It is also a fact, however, that people in these areas are capable of making enormous sacrifices and finding comfort in so doing if they are convinced that it is for their God, or their children's future or for some other lofty principles. In addition, they will also be the biggest losers if they lose their forest home. Finally it is also not correct to deny them education, "the truth" whatever the outcomes.

Also, when teaching anyone, city or country, rich or poor, one always finds that after communicating basic information to them, they can be

better teachers of themselves than anyone else if they are encouraged by appropriate activities. **One such activity is drama.**

**Almost everyone from any culture likes drama.** Drama is entertaining and inspiring. It can be especially so when our target audience can participate in dramas themselves. We give them some basic facts about the subject and ask them to create and act in dramas illustrating an issue or theme.

Creating and performing in a drama is an emotional experience which has more impact on our thinking and feeling than just reading words out of a book or hearing a lecture. Participating in a drama creates friendly bonds between people and brings out their best intentions.

**Acting in a drama enables us to get out of ourselves.** It helps them put themselves in the position of other entities - institutions, animals and plants, different kinds of people in different circumstances - and to see situations from a different perspective entirely.

We have made this Drama Kit for these reasons, e.g.

- to overcome linguistic difficulties, cultural differences, and social obstacles
- to working with people who live near to nature, or who are very different from people we normally know.

The kit contains masks of different types of human beings, different types of elephants. You may supplement this kit with things to use as "props" for your drama, such as brown bags or large covers, paper of varying colour and size, newspapers, old boxes, old hats, fabrics and old clothes, cardboard pieces, twine, gum and some coloured markers or crayons. The more such "props" you can provide, the more creative your participants can be. We have included in this booklet some information about using drama for education and some suggested drama ideas featuring human elephant conflict and welfare.

Our objective with *this Drama Kit* is that anyone who wants to educate people about elephant welfare and human-animal conflict could do so using drama aided by the contents of the kit.

We would like to hear from you after you use this material with your reports, comments, questions, suggestions and photographs.

## **WHAT IS DRAMA EDUCATION?**

### **What is Drama?**

Drama is a dramatic work intended for performance by actors on a stage (the stage can be the front of a room, a street, a basketball court or anywhere set a little apart from the audience). Drama is an art form that explores human conflict and tension. It takes the form of a story presented to an audience through dialogue and action. The story is conveyed using the elements of the theater: acting, costumes, props, scenery, lighting, music, and sound.

Drama has an emotional and intellectual impact on both the participants and audience members. It holds up a mirror for us to examine ourselves, deepening our understanding of human motivation and behaviour. It broadens our perspective through stories that portray life from different points of view, cultures, and time periods.

### **What is Drama Education?**

Drama education uses the art form of drama as an educational activity. It incorporates elements of an actor's training to facilitate the learners' physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

It is a multi-sensory mode of learning designed to:

- Increase awareness of self (mind, body, and voice) and others (collaboration and understanding and entering into another's feelings);
- Improve clarity and creativity in communication of verbal and non-verbal ideas; and
- Deepen understanding of human behaviour, motivation, diversity, culture, and history.

Drama employs elements of theater—costumes, props, scenery, lighting, music, and sound—to enrich the learning experience, reenact stories, and mount productions. Learners gain experience in the various roles of actor, director, writer, designer, and audience member. Drama education encompasses related disciplines and art forms such as pantomime (A performance using gestures and body movements without words), clowning (Acting like a clown or buffoon), drama games, storytelling, radio drama, melodrama (An extravagant comedy in which action is more salient than characterization), puppetry (The art of making puppets and presenting puppet shows), improvisation (A performance given extempore without planning or preparation), mask theater, public speaking, playwriting, directing, and play productions.

*Adapted from: J. Basom 2001. [www.DramaEd.net](http://www.DramaEd.net)*

## **DRAMA AS A TOOL FOR EDUCATION**

There are many forms of educational drama these all share one common goal, to create awareness or an understanding of an idea, or issue. The following are a few examples of the main forms in which drama is used as a tool for education.

**T.I.E. (Theatre in Education).** This is the typical image of drama, seen highly throughout the 1960's to 1990's. Usually performed for youth groups, or schools by a drama group this form of theatre was usually a devised piece which used abstract ideas to communicate a message, it follows in the tradition of plays seen throughout history.

**Pantomime** (Act out without words but with gestures and bodily movements only). These stories follow in the tradition of fables and folk tales, usually there is a lesson learned, and with some help from the audience the hero/heroine saves the day. This genre of play have been used since 16th century and was called a *masque*. A *masque* usually has an emphasis on moral dilemmas, and good always triumphs over evil. A *masque* is also very entertaining making it a very effective way of reaching many people.

**D.I.E. (Drama in Education).** Unlike Theatre in education, D.I.E. is based more upon workshops, and the group creating their own scenarios, ideas and even subject matter through the use of Drama and Drama workshops. Sometimes this kind of work may lead to the creation of a play, or a piece of T.I.E or some other means to show a result from the work. Drama in Education utilises skills across the spectrum of dramatic activity, everything from teachers in role to normal theatrical conventions of audience and spectator.

### **Workshops**

A workshop is a situation where a group is allowed to explore and think about an issue, a book, a thought, a play, anything. Within drama terms it is an active situation with a lot of learning and experiencing. Drama workshops have many different styles and approaches much like any group activity, this style and approach is determined by the group's willingness to participate. If the group were older at age 14-17 say then they would be less likely to enter into the drama and a more suitable frame would have to be chosen. For example instead of social workers they could become reporters, which would allow them to remain at the spectator end of the drama and give them a chance to reflect on the conditions surrounding events. However, this does not mean that the group always have to have a specific framework, they can remain themselves and still participate in the drama, allowing them to think about how they feel about the situation. In this case the group may enter the drama as themselves and how they would act in a situation. They also may explore being characters in a situation to see what might be making them act the way they do by comparing it to real situations in their lives. The important thing about drama workshops is to allow the group to play, and through playing, to learn.

## **WHAT IS CREATIVE DRAMA?**

A creative drama should have dramatic activities in which the real time experience of the participants is the goal. Creative drama is usually reserved for children four to nine years old - ages or stages of development when participants can benefit from dramatic experience if there is no pressure to perform. Creative drama can include dramatic play, story enactment, imagination journeys, theatre games, music, and dance.

Creative drama can help children learn about emotions, problem solving, and relating to other people. Through their experiences with drama, participating learners develop their imaginations and their confidence. One of the most special things about creative drama is that there are no "wrong" answers - through pretending, animals can talk, kids can travel to outer space or the jungle, and the sky can be green while the grass is blue. Use the ideas in this section to work magic in your classroom.

### **Resources for Creative Drama**

Things to use for inspiration during a creative drama:

#### **Fairy/Folk Tales/Tall Tales and Myths**

There are an incredible number of books containing collections of such stories. Some feature tales from a particular country, religion, or ethnic group, while others are grouped by subject (women, animals, nature). When choosing stories look for simple plots, dynamic characters, and a straightforward message. Ideally, the tales should be told, rather than read aloud, (besides giving a better sense of the dramatic to the listeners, there are also no pictures that you have to show) so learn them well. People particularly children enjoy acting out stories with humorous people or situations, and usually are willing to play inanimate objects that relate to the plot.

Don't be afraid to stretch the boundaries of the story – add in extra family members, duplicate protagonists/antagonists, herds of animals instead of one so that every person in the group has a role to play. With well-known stories (Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk), the group can use their familiarity with the plot to create new ideas, by modernizing the story, or placing characters from several different stories into one.

Stories from *Panchathandra*

The Elephant and The Sparrow

The Jackal and The Drum

The Crafty Crane and The Craftier Crab

Tale of The Three Fish

The Lion and The Jackal  
The tale of Two fish and a Frog  
The Croc and the Monkey

### **Poetry**

Poems provide a unique opportunity for a creative drama class, as they can be “acted out” instantaneously or after planning. Because poetry is often written in first person, it is easy for the participants to put themselves into the actions or emotions expressed in the poem.

When selecting poetry to use in class, look for a variety of styles, but keep in mind that the language should be direct enough for the participants to comprehend. Do not be afraid to use poems that are “silly”, most children delight in the absurd.

Here is an example of a famous elephant poem which is perfect for making a variety of different dramas. It is taken from an old Chinese or Indian tale ... nobody is sure which ... and has come out slightly different from several other versions based on different religious cultures such as Jainism, Sufism, Hinduism, Buddhism.

### **Children’s Books**

A good children’s book can provide enough activities for an entire creative drama class period. You can create a warm-up, a game, and an art project based on the theme of the book in addition to drama experiences. The most important factor in choosing books for this purpose is the teacher’s or leader’s interest – if a particular book gives you many exciting ideas, that is the one you should use.

Panchathandra Stories (<http://panchatantra.org/>).The Birbal stories (<http://www.geocities.com/shishusansar/birbal/index.htm>)\Tenali Raman



## The six blind men and the elephant

John Godfrey Saxe's (1816-1887)  
version of the famous Indian legend

It was six men of Indostan  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(Though all of them were blind),  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind.

The *First* approach'd the Elephant,  
And happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side,  
At once began to bawl:  
"God bless me! but the Elephant  
Is very like a wall!"

The *Second*, feeling of the tusk,  
Cried, -"Ho! what have we here  
So very round and smooth and sharp?  
To me 'tis mighty clear  
This wonder of an Elephant  
Is very like a spear!"

The *Third* approached the animal,  
And happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands,  
Thus boldly up and spake:  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a snake!"

The *Fourth* reached out his eager  
hand,  
And felt about the knee.  
"What most this wondrous beast is like  
Is mighty plain," quoth he,

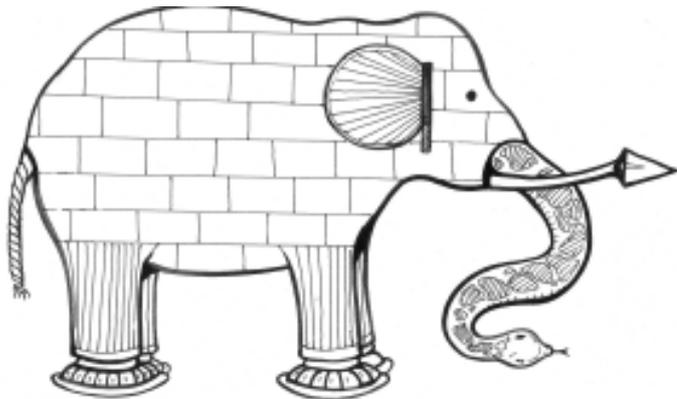
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant  
Is very like a tree!"

The *Fifth*, who chanced to touch the  
ear,  
Said: "E'en the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most;  
Deny the fact who can,  
This marvel of an Elephant  
Is very like a fan!"

The *Sixth* no sooner had begun  
About the beast to grope,  
Then, seizing on the swinging tail  
That fell within his scope,  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong!

MORAL.  
So oft in theologic wars,  
The disputants, I ween,  
Rail on in utter ignorance  
Of what each other mean,  
And prate about an Elephant  
Not one of them has seen!



## **PROP BAG**

A prop bag is a bag or a box or some sort of container holding really useful items - ones that come in handy during a theatre class. These items serve many purposes. Here are some uses of a prop bag and the items in it.

Justification of a Prop Bag (Why is there one in my classroom?)

The items in a prop bag serve as teaching tools in a class. Catching the attention of your group may be faster if they have something different to hold or to use. Props also make drama activities easier and more effective. Entrusting a child with a prop changes his immediate identity and environment ... he is "armed" for play or performance. Props can be used also to make a point from class more significant and memorable. The class will be able to make use of the prop bag during their drama activities, helping them to increase their skills. If a character is holding a telephone in a scene having a telephonic conversation, it is more realistic than the student pantomiming it. The exercise will retain its focus on the action in the scene rather than a distraction of someone holding an imaginary telephone. The props are used as objects for identity, role enhancement, concentration, inspiration of creativity, communication, etc.

### **Prop Bag items in addition to masks**

1. A large square of white fabric- This can be used as a tablecloth, a surrender flag, or any garment.
2. A roll of Aluminum Foil - Apart from its mundane functions, which might come up in an improvisation, foil can be molded into pieces of jewelry, armour, or a robot costume.
3. Sunglasses and Eyeglasses- A pair of glasses will help an actor get into character more easily, and will also cause one to gesture more meaningfully if he is holding it.
4. A Flashlight - Used for instant special effects, such as a spotlight. It is also good as a starting point for an improvisation.
5. A Towel - Like the white fabric, it can be used for many different situations, even a costume such as over the shoulder of a village loafer.
6. Head coverings: a turban, a Congress cap, a military cap, ladies headcover, headdress, etc.
7. Anything related to the drama at hand. You can supply additional items or even involve the class asking them to bring items such as cardboard boxes, paper bags, pieces of discarded material, old clothes. etc.

*Reference: <http://www.creativedrama.com/classroom.htm>*

## CREATE YOUR OWN DRAMA

Using the guidelines below, work with your group to write and perform a short environmental drama.

### Steps:

1. Choose an environmental topic based on a current conflict or issue that is important to your group. Try to pick a very specific issue, as you will have limited presentation time. What is your topic? (Facilitator may want to hold a brainstorming session first, and then write the chosen topics on a board).
2. List the people, plants, and animals to be involved in this issue. Who are characters in your drama? (Plants & animals can have speaking roles, too.)
3. Decide where your drama will take place. What is the setting?
4. What is the main message of your drama?
5. Pick what events you want to act out – your story line – keeping it simple to be able to present within a five to ten minute time frame. What are the main events in your drama?
6. You do not need to write a script; rather think of the kinds of conversations your characters would have. What are the main topics of dialogue?
7. Assign roles and rehearse! As you practice, keep in mind the message you are trying to communicate.
8. Make props and costumes – be creative! Using scrap materials and natural materials is a great idea.
9. Present your drama! Define the stage area and audience area. Make sure to be an attentive audience for the other dramas!

*Based on Wildlife Conservation Society, 1999 Papua New Guinea Teacher Training*



## BACKGROUND ON ELEPHANTS

### Some elephant facts

Primarily from National Geographic website <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/asian-elephant.html> or [http://www.wildlifetrust.org/news/2005/0401\\_asian.htm](http://www.wildlifetrust.org/news/2005/0401_asian.htm)

### Physical

- The elephant is Earth's largest land animal.
- Asian elephants are herbivorous mammals. As herbivores they eat vegetable matter instead of meat and as mammals they have hair (sparse as it may be), are terrestrial and suckle their young.
- Asian elephants are smaller than their African elephants
- Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*, Family: Elephantidae, Order: Proboscidea) group has several subspecies in different parts of Asia .... *Elephas maximus indicus* (India, Bhutan, China, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia), *Elephas maximus maximus* (Sri Lanka), *Elephas maximus sumatraensis* (Indonesia, Malaysia).
- Asian elephants have smaller, rounded ears.
- African elephants have larger ears which look like African map in shape.
- Elephant ears radiate heat and can be flapped like a fan to help keep these large animals cool. Elephants also keep cool by sucking water up their trunk and spraying their bodies.
- The elephant's trunk is an extended nose which can do many things : breath, smell, trumpet, drink, and pick up things. Asian elephants even have a projection on the trunk for picking up small items. This projection is roughly equivalent to the opposable thumb which apes and humans have which enhances their ability to handle objects.
- Tusks are also very handy substitutions of hands, used by elephant for fighting, digging, shredding bark. Tusks are made of ivory, the value and gathering of which accounts for one of the serious threats to elephant survival.
- Food of wild elephants may be grasses, fruit, bark, roots and, unfortunately, crops in human habitations near forests.
- Elephants are big and eat a lot, up to 150-200 kg of food per day.

- Elephants need for food requires that their biological need for sleep is less than other animals. Instead, they wander afar searching for a food source sufficient to satisfy their appetite and sustain them.
- Elephant digestion is such that, even with such a large stomach, leaves much to be desired. Elephants spend almost 18 hours a day eating, and defecates very often. The type of foods it eats and the size of stomach require this almost incessant eating for adequate nutrition.
- Elephants' eating habits alone require very large, well vegetated spaces and its need for water to rehydrate itself and for cooling necessitates that they are always travelling in their search for food and water.

### **Elephant Family**

- Female elephants live in communal groups with other cows and their young ones while male elephants are more solitary.
- "Childbirth" for elephants is more like human birth with a long gestation period (humans - 9 months; elephants - 22 months) and interbirth interval of 2-4 years.
- Babies weigh around 90 kilos and measure 1 metre in height
- Young elephants stay with the herd a longer time than most animals other than man and herd-members (called "aunties") keep watch on all youngsters, not just their own.

### **Captive elephants**

- Human beings have caught, kept and domesticated Asian elephants for millennia for a variety of uses, including work (transport human beings and material, heavy lifting, etc.) entertainment & recreation (zoos, circuses, park elephant rides, etc.), religious symbols in temples, and armed conflict.

### **Conservation**

- Asian elephants are highly endangered, having been assessed as threatened by the IUCN Global Mammal Assessment.
- Elephants enormous appetite requires an almost constant supply of fuel, that is, food. As human population grows and spreads over the landscape, foodgathering for elephants has become problematic. Some elephants invade human living spaces for relief of hunger and thirst which leads to conflict between man and animal.

### **Habitat exploitation**

Elephant population in Bhutan is confined to the southern plains and foothills within an area of 1500km<sup>2</sup>. The Elephant population moves between India and Bhutan spending the winter months in Bhutan. In

India over half a billion human beings share space in the wild with 26,000 - 30,000 elephants. What would normally serve as food for elephants is utilised by human beings for domestic stock food, firewood, and even human food. Human beings also clear these large spaces for agriculture of different kinds for living. for developmental projects -- dams, roads, railways, mines. Not only is habitat as such taken over but the elephants' migratory pathways as well, resulting in confrontations and then conflict between man and animal.

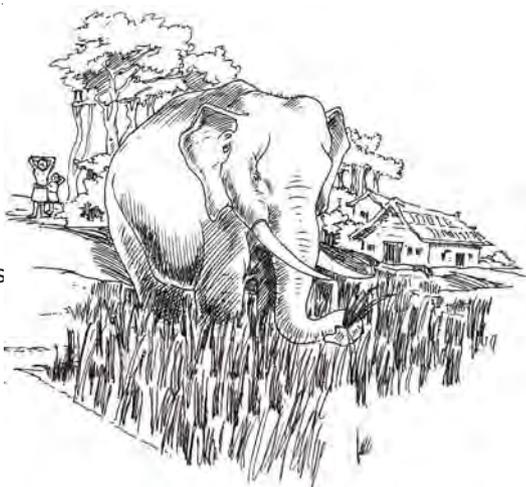
### ● **Human Animal Conflict**

When elephants and human being have unpleasant encounters it is called Human Elephant Conflict HEC.

The most common Human-elephant conflict HEC areas are places where people and elephants live in close proximity particularly along the boundaries of Protected Areas or National Parks. Elephants enter the farms and raid the agricultural crops such as rice, sugar cane, maize, palms and banana. In the process they damage human dwellings and occasionally cause injuries to human and in certain cases to the death of human. In many places, as a retaliating act, elephants are also killed by human. Thus Human-elephant conflict can take their toll both on human lives and property as well as elephant populations.

Elephant-human conflict is a result of habitat loss and fragmentation. Having been forced in areas now inhabited by humans they are also forced to find food where it exists ... if it happens to be in agricultural lands, kitchen gardens, etc then human being retaliate with methods that either fright, injure or kill elephants. The elephants hurt or kill their share of humans also, with a reported 300 human fatalities per year in India.

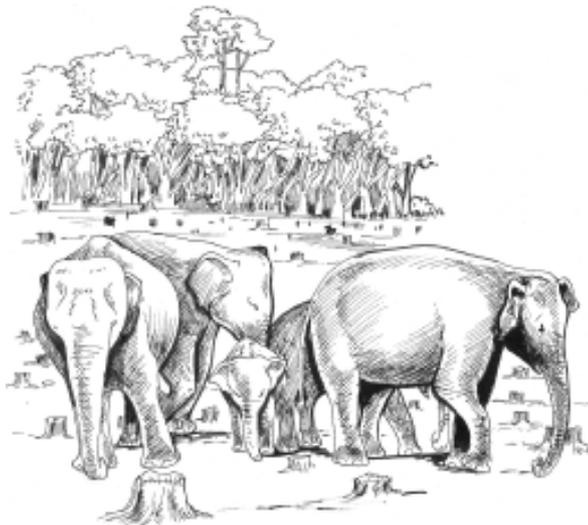
Once widely spread elephant populations are now restricted to small pocket and their distribution is highly restricted. Rapid deforestation and fragmentation has resulted in isolated elephant populations which has limited resources. Therefore, elephants sometimes raid crops when there is insufficient food in the remaining forests. The most common crops like paddy and sugarcane are also grasses selected for their nutritional value and therefore much



more attractive for the elephants than the wild plants in the forest. They are forced to taste these crops since they need to cross these fields to get to other forests. They are migratory animals and they have traditional migratory routes. While migrating, they take advantage of seasonally available cultivated crops. We are concerned about both human and animal welfare. Human-elephant conflict will lead to further decline in the elephant population and hence the issue of HEC is vital for Asian elephant conservation.

### ● **Poaching**

Another threat to elephants is poaching for ivory which show no sign of total curtailment despite strong international legislation which is not sufficiently backed up by grass root on the ground efforts or by the courts.



### **Sources of material to make drama more dramatic and educative**

Many people write about elephants. It is a popular and stimulating subject, whether African or Asian, wild or captive. The Library of course is a great source of material but many of us have access to electronic media today and can access the internet. Here are a couple of examples of the kind of summaries of scientific work being done to better know and understand elephants. Although dramas do not have to be true, such true stories can be exciting ways to create a dramatic programme. And because it is true, it is educative.

### **Elephants master basic mathematics**

from <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn14569>

An Asian elephant named Ashya beat this reporter at a devilishly simple addition problem. When a trainer dropped three apples into one bucket and one apple into a second, then four more apples in the first and five more in the second, the pachyderm recognised that three plus four is greater than one plus five, and snacked on the seven apples. (In my defence, I watched the video in a noisy and crowded auditorium.)

"I even get confused when I'm dropping the bait," says Naoko Irie, a researcher at the University of Tokyo, Japan, who uncovered the elephant's inner genius. She presented her findings at the International Society for Behavioral Ecology's annual meeting in Ithaca, New York. Moreover, Irie found that as well as summing small numbers with almost 90% accuracy, elephants can discriminate between small numbers.

That's not so surprising, considering that animals from salamanders to pigeons to chimpanzees can discern numerical values. But all animals, including humans when forced to make split-second decisions, are best at telling apart two quantities when the ratio between the large and small number is greatest.

### **Spot the difference**

Not so for elephants, Irie says. The four that she tested distinguished between five and six apples as well as they did between five and one. They picked the bucket with the most fruit 74% of the time, on average, far above 50-50.

"It really is tough to figure out why [elephants] would need to count," says Mya Thompson, an ecologist at Cornell University who studies elephants and attended Irie's talk. Asian elephants live in close-knit groups of six to eight, and they may count one another to make sure the herd sticks together. "You really don't want to lose your group members," she says.

Alternatively, the mathematical prowess of elephants may be a side effect of their bulging brains and an evolutionary kinship to other "smart" animals, Irie says.

Another true report also has enormous potential for drama

### **Self-recognition in an Asian elephant**

<http://www.pnas.org/content/103/45/17053>

**Joshua M. Plotnik, Frans B. M. de Waal, Diana Reiss**

Contributed by Frans B. M. de Waal, September 13, 2006

## **Abstract**

Considered an indicator of self-awareness, *mirror self-recognition* (MSR) has long seemed limited to humans and apes. In both phylogeny and human ontogeny, MSR is thought to correlate with higher forms of empathy and altruistic behavior.

Apart from humans and apes, dolphins and elephants are also known for such capacities. After the recent discovery of MSR in dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), elephants thus were the next logical candidate species. We exposed three Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) to a large mirror to investigate their responses. Animals that possess MSR typically progress through four stages of behavior when facing a mirror: (i) social responses, (ii) physical inspection (e.g., looking behind the mirror), (iii) repetitive mirror-testing behavior, and (iv) realization of seeing themselves.

Visible marks and invisible sham-marks were applied to the elephants' heads to test whether they would pass the litmus "mark test" for MSR in which an individual spontaneously uses a mirror to touch an otherwise imperceptible mark on its own body. Here, we report a successful MSR elephant study and report striking parallels in the progression of responses to mirrors among apes, dolphins, and elephants. These parallels suggest convergent cognitive evolution most likely related to complex sociality and cooperation.

## **DRAMA IDEAS FOR CONFLICT MITIGATION AND ELEPHANT WELFARE**

### **Drama, the powerful teacher**

Drama means 'to do or 'to act. A drama is a story acted out. In a drama people experience an eventful period, seriously or humorously. Drama performers use body, voice and movements to enhance a performance. Dramatic performance involves an intricate process of rehearsal based upon imagery inherent in the dramatic text. Drama influences both the audience as well as the performer. After a drama the audience is enriched with information and the story, while the performer experiences another identity by putting on a mask, or costumes, or just by using a prop related to the story line. So a drama could be transforming both for the performer as well as the viewers. Drama is also be performed without speech (called mime) and so it is a very flexible tool which has no language barrier and a powerful teacher.

Drama is also a good tool for teaching all ages of people to understand issues and even behave differently than they normally would in a particular situation. Drama often requires people to do things they might not otherwise do and thus to appreciate other perspectives.

Drama can help us put ourselves in another individual's or group's shoes or in an animal's skin and perhaps convey a new and more perceptive perspective, either sympathetic or contrary.

### **Who can perform a drama?**

Amateur "performers" do not need experience or background in drama to effectively use it as a teaching strategy. Instead they need only a sense of adventure and a willingness to try.

### **Shifting perspective : from ones self to that of a character**

Ask your audience to act, think, vocalize, and use their bodies as if they were the characters in the story, to express the sounds of their character, the movements and the physical size perspective. If you as a teacher or guide can lead an exercise with this objective, it may be more effective. If time is a constraint, you may simply try the suggestion above for about five minutes to help performers take on another being's perspective in terms of how they feel internally and behave externally. In the drama itself, if they clearly understand what character they represent and know simple facts about it, they will probably take on the identity of the character in course of the exercise.

**Create drama and play using masks** - Simple steps to create your drama

#### **Steps:**

1. Read the booklet entitled Elephant Etiquette - Getting along with Elephants or the chapter in this booklet about elephants. Select one of the elephant issues described in the booklet. As a group think of the situation and list characters.
2. Create and decide a drama situation, visualize or imagine the scene and plan the actions or sequences.
3. Develop dialogues keeping the story line you have selected or created. Make sure there is a situation in the drama that sends the main message and include other events which clearly lead up to it.
4. Let the individuals in your group choose their character, or if the drama is a little complex, you may want to appoint more able participants to be certain characters. Rehearse after discussing the message and theme of the drama.
5. Fix timing and present the drama using masks in the kit. If you need other characters get your students to prepare a "home-made" mask. If you need more masks for the same character, you can get students to trace them or you can photocopy them.

6. After the end of the drama, conduct a discussion among players and audience. This will enable you to know some of the inner experiences of your audience. Ask them questions such as "did you feel scared, happy, angry, excited, etc. during the drama. Did you have other feelings?"

7. Find some drama ideas to try with your audience. Some examples are given on next pages.

### **Drama idea 1.**

A group of human beings and elephants are talking. The people were a politician, a village head, some villagers, a poacher and a family with children. The elephants were an African elephant, a couple of Asian elephant and a baby elephant. They are talking about the Human Elephant Conflict problem. Each person in the drama gives his own perspective about the conflict and what it means to him personally. For example, the elephant complain about not having enough habitat to roam and to feed their herds of females, mother elephants and babies. The people were complaining about how the elephants were so greedy and ate so much and even destroyed property in the process. The discussion turned into a debate about who was mightier, the human or the elephant and each one recounted talents and strengths he possessed. Elephants boasted about their size and physical strength, and the humans boasted about their intellect and dexterity.

The youngsters piped up with the same view : if you are so strong and so smart, why can't you figure out how to live in peace in this world.

The adult humans and elephants felt ashamed of themselves and turned the discussion towards the needs of all and how to move toward that. They concluded without all problems solved but with a determination to each try and live together without harming the other.

### **Drama idea 2.**

The Blind Men and the elephant (and *vice versa*)

Everybody knows the story of the blind men and the elephant. Set the stage your drama first by reading the poem on page 8. Then ask your drama group to create a drama by reversing the characters, having 5-7 blind elephants come across a man and describe him. Let the drama end amicably. If you have someone who can draw, then give them a role of "documenting" the drama by drawing the man as described by the elephants. You can show them the art work displayed near the poem.

### **Drama idea 3.**

Refer the Booklet called Elephant Etiquette - Getting along with Elephants. Stage a drama about the different ways that people are

cruel to captive elephants, e.g. teasing zoo elephants, keeping temple elephants too closely confined or walking them in the hot sun without water; making farm elephants work too hard in the mid-day sun, etc. See if there is a way for such people to understand how the elephant feels and show how they become converted to treating their elephants right.

#### **Drama idea 4.**

A boy has been hurt by an elephant in the zoo. The elephant has pushed the boy, seemingly playing, and pushed a little too hard causing the boy to fall and skin his knees. Visitors to the zoo are up in arms, calling for the zoo to punish the elephant, led by the boy and his parents. A Municipal officer is called to mediate. The zoo in is an uproar.

In the meantime the veterinary doctor examines the elephant and discovered that someone of a certain height had been poking the elephant with a sharp device which punctured even the elephants thick skin. The boy and his family decide to leave the zoo before the elephant's punishment has been announced. They seem to be in a big hurry.

Zoo officials became interested in their behaviour and looked very carefully at them. The boy is walking very funny ... earlier they had attributed it to his fall but now they are not sure. Searching him, they find a long thin stick with a razor sharp nail imbedded in it. He has been poking the elephant with the stick, so hard that the elephant was in agony. The "push" he gave the boy was not vindictive -- it was just to stop his pain. The Municipal Officer apologised to the elephant and explained the charity of the big so called "dumb" beast who could have easily maimed or killed the boy.

#### **Drama idea 5.**

On a sunny day in the morning, villagers enter the bear by forest which is a home for animals like elephants, deers, birds, monkeys etc., to collect fire wood and other forest produce. Elephants use that place to browse and graze since that has lots of elephant fodder. They visit the place very often since it has a water body.

Months later an industrialist with his business team visits the wooded area and decides that it is a good place to start his paper industry. The contractor cleared the trees and land for construction of the factory to construct a big building.

After a few months elephants visit the area since it is the migratory path and observe something unusual structure on its path. They demolish the concrete structure. On the same night the watchman was stamped by the elephants. The industrialist after consulting with

conservationist decides to stop constructing the factory. He plants trees and restore the forest again. The elephants, birds, deers, sambars and langurs returned back to their original home. The local village people pledge to protect the forest and the wild animals.

### **Drama idea 6.**

A notorious wild animal trader (poacher) and his team were involved in the wild animal body parts business, particularly elephant products. The team killed hundreds of tuskers and expanded their business network. The team leader became a challenge for the law enforcers. He had a school going son who was proud of his brave father. One day the boy took part in one of the elephant conservation education programme in his village. He learnt that elephants have the right to live. He realised the mistakes done by his father. After a while he approached his father and requested him to stop killing elephants. He won the heart of his father and his entire team. The entire team started supporting animal conservation with the help of the educator and earned money as wildlife guides.

### **LIST OF MASKS**

The following masks are available with the kit. Photocopies on colour board can be made if more masks are required.

Elephants (Asian Male, Female and baby/African)

Politician

Village head

Villager Male/Female

Researcher

Forest officer

Veterinary doctor

Children (boy and girl)

Mahout

Fruits

### **TIPS FOR PLANNING AN EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

After the educators skills training programme on 'Getting along with Elephants you can plan education programmes at your place for your students. Combining the activities that you learned in the training programme and utilizing the Ele-Kit packets that has stickers, masks, placard, rakhi and elephant booklet you can plan half a day, full day or three days education programme for any groups or your school children.

Ele-Kit packets are effective if they are simply given out as souvenirs. It should be used as part of a systematically organized educational programme, featuring a variety of activities such as drama, debate,

mime, games and any other activity that you learned during the training, focused on the theme, they will be more effective.

A full-fledged programme will be better organised if there is an educator or person with experience in facilitating an event with your audience, and a few other helpers. There are many things to do in even a simple programme.

You may need volunteers to help you prepare a short presentation from the information given in the kits and packets, and to help announce and coordinate the activities which are possible with the packet. All these activities are designed for maximum fun and emotional and intellectual impact.

### **HOW TO USE ELE-KIT PACKET**

- rakhi-tying ceremony with participants using the rakhi enclosed in their packet (the rakhi can be a symbol of the participants committing themselves to conservation, or animal welfare, and to live harmoniously with elephants)
- a marching demonstration and/or standing still chant where participants put on their masks and hold up their small placards in a public area (this is also a good photo opportunity which will please the press and also be more interesting for readers than a set of dignitaries on a dias or other photos typical of such events)
- quiz programme testing participants on the information contained in the *Elephant etiquette* booklet .
- at least one or two games from the *Getting along with Elephants* teaching guide to be played with the participants
- a pledge card included in the *Getting along with Elephants* teaching guide; they should be given an opportunity to sign the pledge card and state their pledge;
- if a painting or drawing competition is conducted or a debate, one or more of the themes should be concerned with HECx themes
- After successful completion of the programme make a brief report to send it to ZOO either email or hard copy.
- Photographs of the event are important in our programmes and are intended for publication and display on a website.
- Sometimes in our theme based programmes sponsored by an international organisation, these photos end up not only in our magazines and newsletters but on many websites with many hits or a yearly report.
- Photos of participants in action which can be identified as part of the programme and associated with the theme, are preferable to plain group photographs.
- Best is when participants are wearing their masks or carrying their placards or tying *rakhi*.

- There are some programmes where participants play a game with an extra large t-shirt that can be sacrificed and this is always a good photo for the press.
- Credits: be sure the host, organisers, and sponsors, both local (ZOO) and international should be included in thanks and in press.
- In ZOO programmes organisers should write a report after the programme so that we can determine if best use has been made of materials and what is lacking from our side. This is a good idea for any programme where you are being given help from others.

## **ELEPHANT FINGER PUPPET KIT**

In the Drama Kit cover included with this booklet is a smaller cover which contains a whole Drama Kit for finger puppets !

Although finger puppet dramas would not be as dramatic as “whole person” dramas, there are some advantages! The puppets are all squares with an open space at bottom. Children put their finger(s) in the open space(s) and have finger puppets.

For the “Getting Along with Elephants” packets which you will get to use for teaching, we have created **Kinley Yanki** and **Dawa Norbu** elephants, so that kids can play with them even when they are alone. Here are instructions we included with the packets. They are addressed to the kids...

### **HEY kids, You can play with these finger puppets lots of ways.**

**1. JUST YOU.** You can stage short or long chats between **Kinley Yanki** and **Dawa Norbu** elephants who could be brother and sister, mother and father, even boyfriend and girlfriend, or just two elephant friends. You can make them talk to one another and to you. You can ask them questions about their lives, and as you learn about elephants, you can make their lives more interesting.

**2. WITH FRIENDS & SCHOOLMATES.** You can also stage elephant dramas using your finger puppets with friends or schoolmates who also have them . That means you will have a BIG herd of elephants in your drama! Unlike other dramas you need very little space and you can do sitting down ...even riding the school bus, or at the lunch table, sitting under a tree ....

**3. PHOTO OPTION.** You can also put your elephants on your fingers for a photo with your friends and have a close up photo or a photo of a whole herd.

**4. YOUR TURN.** Now it is your turn to make up ideas for using the finger puppets.

Have a good time with Dawa Norbu and Kinley Yanki Elephants.

### **HEY ! Teachers ! Organisers!**

You can use the Finger Puppet Mini Kit in many ways. Here are some:

**1. Working groups** – you can organize students that sit a few to a table into small groups to design and conduct a drama just among themselves. This is more for playtime but if you are teaching about elephants, they can use the information you have told them to create dramas or just to have something to say in the drama.

**2. Practice** – if you are short on space, you can use the finger-puppets in preparing for a drama, practicing dialogue or movement with the puppets for a run-through on the floor, stage, or outdoor theatre.

**3. Teaching** – with a little practice you could try teaching elephant lessons with some of the finger puppets on one of your hands ...or both. This will not work well with huge classes but if you have a small groups of young students, this will delight them and your lessons will be remembered.

### **4. You can have your class make their own finger puppets easily.**

You just need some paper and glue, tape or even staples. Most economical way is to fold paper over to the size puppet you want. Let the fold be the top. Then seal the sides, leaving plenty of room for a finger, and leave the bottom open for the finger. Kids can draw their own characters, either front and back or two characters, one on the front and one on the back.

### **5. Your turn !** You can think of many other ways.

We would LOVE for you to share your ideas and experience with us. Send to [zooreach@zooreach.org](mailto:zooreach@zooreach.org) and cc to [sonamchodn@yahoo.com](mailto:sonamchodn@yahoo.com) Or post to Ms. Sonam Choden, Sr. Forest Officer, Nature Conservation Division, Department of Forest, Ministry of Agriculture, Post Box No. 130, Thimphu, Bhutan.





