

Project Update: December 2022

Due to COVID-19 and federal and local level elections in Nepal, we were not able to kickstart our project. Finally, we got a chance to conduct activities to fulfill the project's objectives.

We conducted group discussions with the Jukekhadi community forest user committee members and Dahijhoda community forest user committee members in September 2022. We also conducted focus group discussions with local farmers to understand their experience with human-elephant conflict. Individuals involved with focus group discussions mentioned that recently there has been an increase in human-elephant conflict. Recently two calves were killed. To better understand this, we focused our discussion on this topic.

The objectives of the group discussions were:

- To convey the importance of elephants in the ecosystem to the rural community.
- To make community members aware of the reasons for conflict and the coexistence between humans and wild elephants.

Findings:

1. The human settlement in the Jukekhadi and Dahijhoda Community Forest periphery was developed around 50-60 years ago. Before, it was dominated by the forest area.
2. The natural habitat of the wild elephant was converted into agricultural land and settlements.
3. The change has adversely affected the habitat, food, and water availability for elephants.
4. Though the religious value relies within the rural community for years, the negative perception towards wild elephants among the community members is increasing due to an increase in conflict.
5. Human and elephant casualties have increased recently.
6. Local people agreed that habitat management activities such as the plantation of bananas and bamboo in the forest areas and the construction of water holes are needed to decrease the frequent visit of elephants to human settlements.



Figure 1 Discussion with Dahijhoda Community Forest User Committee members



Figure 2 Discussion with Jukekhadi Community Forest User Committee members



Figure 3 Discussion with Farmers Group members of Arjundhara municipality