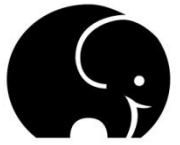


Importance of developing "Conflict Specific Mitigation (CSM)" Strategies to mitigate human-elephant conflicts: A case study from Wasgamuwa, Sri Lanka

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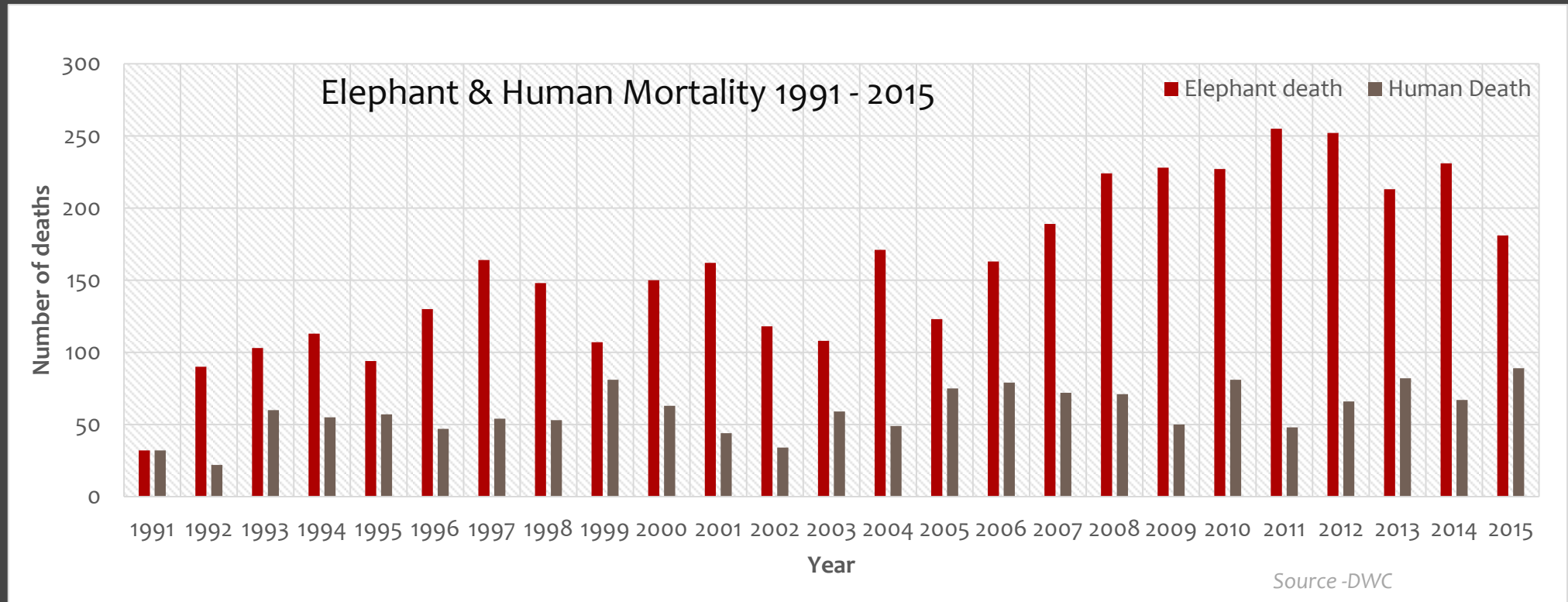
elephantea



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இலங்கைவனவிலங்கு பாதுகாப்பு சங்கம்

HEC biggest socio-economic, environmental & wildlife issue

- Last 25 years – 3795 elephant deaths and 1490 human deaths
- First 15 years average of deaths per year – Elephants - 120 Humans - 52
- Last 10 years average of deaths per year – Elephants - **216** Humans - **70**



Root causes?

- *Conflict over agriculture is the leading cause of death*

Land use change



Habitat loss



Competition for land between human and elephants



Current framework & policies to reduce HEC?

- *Mainly focus on implementing broad – scale mitigation measures*



Fencing elephants



Relocating elephants



Elephant drives

Current framework & policies to reduce HEC?

- Still HEC imposes various costs on local communities
- Still HEC threatens elephant populations



Broad mitigation strategies do not recognize SPECIFIC HEC at the LOCAL level

Main reason why the issue remains the same

Developing a Conflict Specific Mitigation (CSM) Strategy

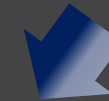
Research

- Identify specific HECs
- Study timing and location of HEC
- Assess socio-economic & wildlife impacts
- Prioritize different HECs
- Identify the most crucial problem



Participatory planning

- Discussion with stakeholders
- Identify joint objectives
- Propose socio-economic benefits to the community
- Mutual agreements for win-win initiatives



Implementation and Monitoring

- 100% involvement of the community
- Equal ownership of the project
- Monitor threats and success

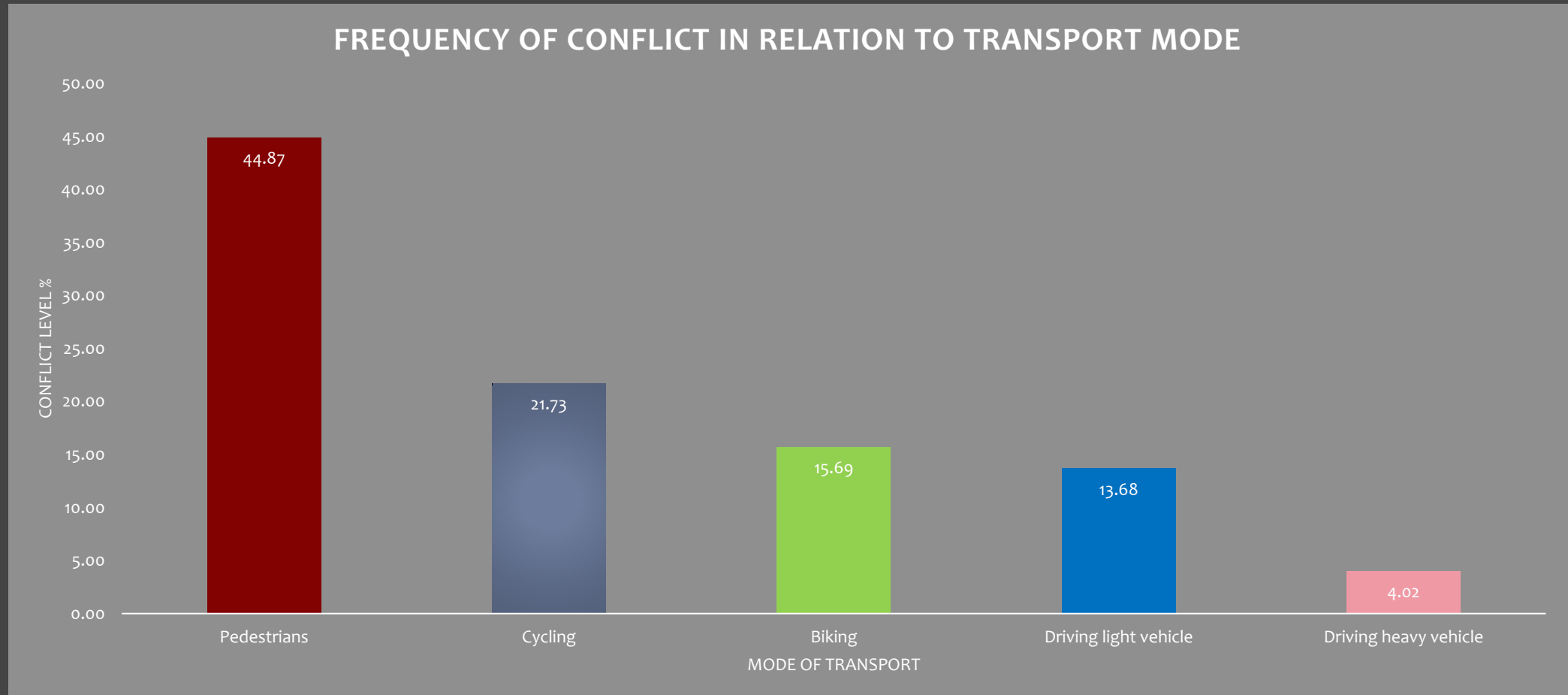
Case study – Weheragala Human Elephant Corridor

- Unprotected elephant habitat outside Wasgamuwa National Park (WNP)
- Only remaining link for elephants that move to southern forest reserves outside the WNP
- Only road access to two bordering villagers
- Daily encounters between elephants and people
- Elephant presence in the corridor – restricts movement of villagers
- Increased harassment of elephants – make elephants react aggressively toward humans
- Aggressive interactions – increased negative attitude towards elephants
- Negative impact on overall elephant conservation in the area



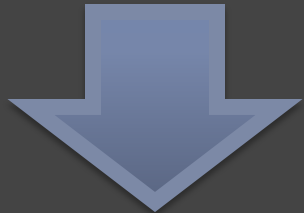
Our research at the corridor

● Mode of transport - main cause for the conflict

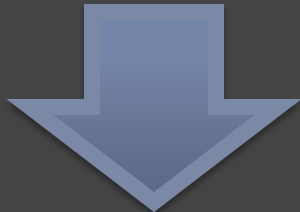


Our approach - Proposed CSM Strategy

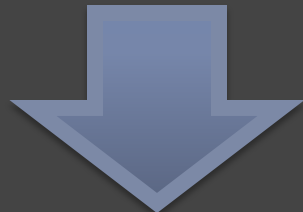
Reduce pedestrians and frequency of travelling



Community consultation - villagers could not afford to change mode of transport



SLWCS – Action



First EleFriendly© Bus service

EleFriendly© Bus Service

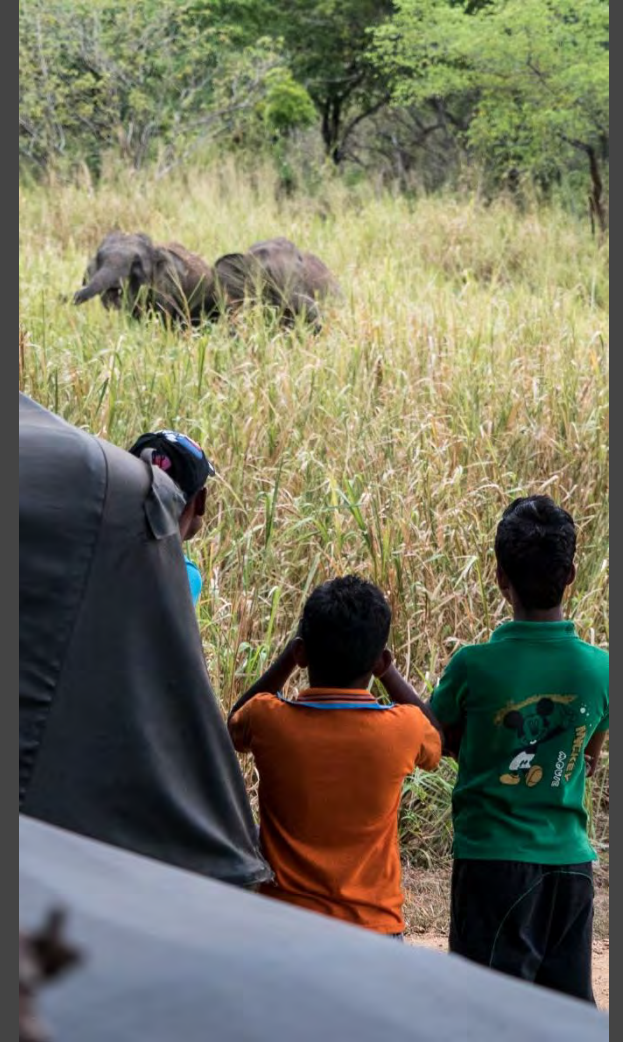


- First ever commute to reduce HEC
- Community owned
- Transports school kids for free
- Farmers are able to spend more time farming and less time patrolling
- Brought National and International communities together to support local people and wildlife



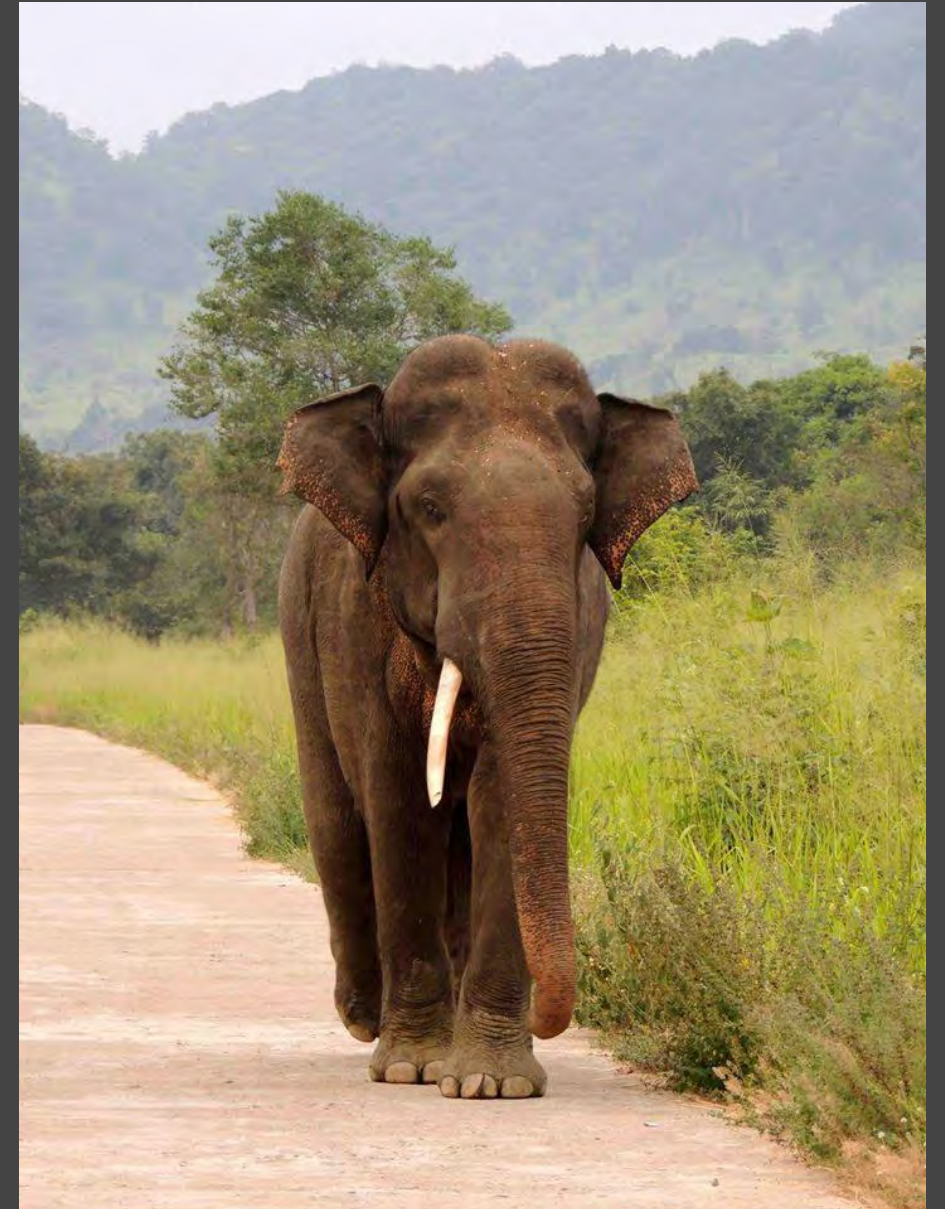
Outcome

- Conflict level has decreased for the last three months from 83 to 21 – a 74% decrease in conflicts
- Farmers' attitudes towards elephants have changed significantly
- Farmers are more cooperative – willing to listen & participate
- Elephants are less disturbed in the corridor
- Elephants are able to stay in the corridor for foraging and socializing
- Able to conserve the corridor/habitat for elephants



Conclusion

- Critically important to identify specific issues at local level
- Find the appropriate, unique solutions – need to think outside of the box
- Adapt solutions that can be implemented at a local scale
- Link direct benefits to the community
- IMPLEMENT what you promise – be willing to pay for the local community for their tolerance for wildlife

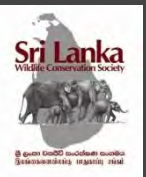


Other SLWCS ongoing & planned CSM Strategies

- Project Orange Elephant: providing a natural deterrent and a sustainable income



- Drone Mitigators: using UAVs to protect villages and fields to minimize human-elephant conflict interactions



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- Adele & Loi Nguyen



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