

**NAMIBIAN COMMUNITY GAME GUARDS AND RANGERS' EDUCATIONAL VISIT TO
TANZANIA**



Grant Title	South-south capacity building for human-elephant conflict management
Grant Agreement Number	Project 11307 – Contract 8466
Project Title	South-south Capacity Building for human-elephant Conflict Management Namibia
Donor	Darwin Initiative
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * International Institute for Environment & Development (IIED) * Honeyguide Foundation (HGF) * Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC)
Activity	Training of Namibian community volunteer rangers in Tanzania. July 2023

INTRODUCTION

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is a major challenge for both conservation and livelihoods. Wildlife can pose a direct and recurring threat to the lives and livelihoods of people who live with or alongside it. These people often retaliate and kill wildlife in response or encourage others to do so including rare and endangered species. Elephants can be particularly problematic, having the potential to wipe out a farmer's entire harvest in one night, as well as being responsible for the loss of many human lives. The Elephant Crisis Fund (www.elephantcrisisfund.org) highlights that human-elephant conflict (HEC) is on the rise across Africa as people and elephants compete for space. In Southern Africa, where elephant populations are high, this problem is particularly pressing. Poor rainfall has also exacerbated the problem as both humans encroach further into wildlife areas to meet subsistence needs, and elephants move ever closer to community water points and farmland.

In Namibia, IRDNC has used electric fencing and community patrolling to protect farms from elephants, but this has had limited success and pressures are constantly increasing. By contrast, in Tanzania, the Honeyguide Foundation has had extraordinary success in supporting farmers on the edges of community-owned and managed Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) to deal with elephants to the extent that they have seen as much as a 90% decrease in crop destruction in the areas where their approach has been implemented (<https://www.honeyguide.org/human-wildlife-conflict-prevention/>).

IRDNC has specifically requested Honeyguide to provide support to develop its capacity to manage human-elephant conflict (HEC) through the same or similar approach. IRDNC thus took staff, rangers, and community influencers from Communal Conservancies in Namibia to have first-hand experience of how the Honeyguide approach works to enhance their understanding of and capacity to manage elephants in their own sites better.

TRIP OBJECTIVES

The exchange visit to Tanzania is part of the planned and structured activities and outputs of the Grant.

Output 1: Community rangers in Namibia have increased knowledge and skills to tackle human-elephant conflict.

Activities

1.1 Scoping visit to Namibia by Honeyguide staff. **Completed in June 2023.**

1.2 Selection of rangers for training. **Completed in June 2023**

1.3 Training of Namibian community volunteer rangers in Tanzania. **Completed in July 2023.**

In broad terms, the exchange visit by the Namibian contingent to Tanzania had several goals:

- Witness and see that there are human-elephant mitigation measures that are effective and may, with some tweaking, be as effective in Kunene Region.
- Receive training in elephant ecology and behavior.
- Receive theoretical and practical hands-on training in crop raiding incident management.
- Engage with local communities in Tanzania with regard to elephants, problems, and the mitigation thereof.

AREAS VISITED

The group flew into Arusha and spent one night in the town. The opportunity was used to visit Honeyguide Foundation offices, meet the Honeyguide team, and receive a briefing on the planned trip. Thereafter, the group was taken to Randilen Wildlife Management Area where they camped for two nights. The focus was on four sites:

- Randilen CWMA
- Mswakini Juu village
- Nafco farms



Source: Bing

TOPICS COVERED

Apart from the broad experience of travel and engaging Tanzanians on a vast array of different subjects, varying from poaching, culture, farming practices, tourism, land ownership and tenure, education, and marriage, the following relevant topics were covered in some detail:

- Elephant behaviour, threatening vs. non-threatening behaviour. Dealing with threatening behaviour.
- Elephant problem incident management. The four-part “toolkit” developed by Honeyguide was explained and demonstrated and a strong practical element was brought into this training. Namibian rangers actively learned to make chili crackers, using flashing strobe torches and air horns. While Honeyguide kept overall supervision, much of this training was received from Village Crop Protection Team members (people actively and frequently involved in managing problem situations). The use of the Roman Candle fireworks and the “lifesaver” 12v alarm/light was a revelation.
- Duties, functions, and expectations of Rangers were discussed.
- WMA’s: the role and management of these organizations. The Manager of Randilen WMA, Meshurie Melembuki, provided an in-depth look at the formation of, management and challenges the WMA face. The constitution, various boards, and management structure were extremely interesting. This was particularly relevant when compared to the similar Conservancy concept in Namibia. The importance of connectivity between conservation areas was apparent.
- One of the highlights for the Namibian rangers was certainly the practical management of elephant incidents. The first involved a call out to deal with elephants that had entered a maize field. This resulted in vehicles being used to physically chase the elephants away in a hard and aggressive way to actively prevent them from returning soon. The second incident involved going after a group of 3 elephants and using the developed toolkit to chase them away. Both these took place at night. This was as hands-on as it gets with the Namibian Rangers actively participating in both incidents.

CHALLENGES

Perhaps the most significant challenge was the limited time. It would have been great to spend more days to engage further with the Honeyguide team and communities.

CONCLUSION

There can be no doubt that all the objectives of the trip were met. The exposure and training exceeded expectations. The next phase is to develop the toolkits from locally sourced resources. This is already underway. A further phase would be training and implementation on the ground. This might require some tweaking, but this is to be expected. The goal is to have these in place before the rains start, which will influence elephant movements and distribution.

The value of this exchange visit is not just confined to the objectives of the trip. The motivation factor is enormous, and the broad educational impact is very significant. The trip was an eye-opener for all and has stimulated interest and passion in most. All are keen to take what they learned back to their home environments and make a difference. Work needs to start on an adequate system of data collection and processing to monitor and evaluate progress and outcomes. In conjunction with Honeyguide, adequate training materials need to be developed and applied.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the success of the initial scoping visit by Honeyguide to Namibia and the visit of the Namibian contingent to Tanzania, the following timeline remains as a guideline. Output 1 has been successfully complied with and the focus will now be on the remainder of the program:

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (23/24)				Year 2 (24/25)			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1										
1.1	Scoping visit to Namibia by	2								

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (23/24)				Year 2 (24/25)			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	Honeyguide staff									
1.2	Selection of rangers for training	1								
1.3	Training of Namibian community volunteer rangers in Tanzania	2								
Output 2										
2.1	Equipping of Namibian conservancies with HEC Toolkits	6								
2.2	Ongoing monitoring of HEC and toolkit deployment and effectiveness in Namibian conservancies	10								
Output 3										
3.1	Documentation and videoing of training experience in Tanzania	2								
3.2	Development of interactive training materials	6								
3.3	Dissemination of training materials in Namibia, in Southern Africa and internationally	6								

Over and above the Outputs on the above timeline, serious consideration should be given to further exchange visits, both Tanzania to Namibia and Namibia to Tanzania. Based on discussions during the recently completed visit, these would engage on the following subjects:

- Monitoring and assessment of progress with the human-elephant conflict program

- Monitoring and Learning system employed by Honeyguide.
- The Tanzanian ranger system, an understanding of this program
- WMA's, development, formation, and management of these

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

NAMES	ORGANISATION/CONSERVANCY	POSITION
EBSON RIKAMBURA	Okangundumba Conservancy	Chief
KAVEKO TJIRASO	Otjiu West Conservancy	Game Guard
PINIAS MUTUEZU	Okungundumba Conservancy	Senior Traditional Councillor
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JUSTUS MUTINDI UAARURA MUTEZE	Ozondundu Conservancy	Chief
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EVELINE ROSA SUZE	Kunene Elephant Walk Project - IRDNC	KEW Fundraiser and Photographer
DAVID RUSSELL VINJEVOLD	IRDNC	HWC Coordinator
JOHN KENENA KASAONA	IRDNC	Executive Director
NINA MENSING	Kunene Elephant Walk Project - IRDNC	KEW Fundraiser and Social Media Content Creator
MUKUPA TJAVARA	Ongongo Conservancy	Game Guard

IRDNC *WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING
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FEW PHOTOS FROM THE TRIP



First experience for many in the group: Hosea Kuutako Airport



Honeyguide team welcoming the Namibian contingent. Namibian traditional chiefs presented them with gifts.



Meeting with the manager of Randilen Wildlife Management Area



Two nights were spent in the field with rangers, practical management of elephant incidents.





Training of the toolkit: Making chili bombs, Roman candles, air horns and lights



Training in the use of Roman candles



Making chilli crackers



THANK YOU!