



Policy plan 2009-2011, Bring the Elephant Home

Policy plan 2009-2011

Bring the Elephant Home

Decided on by the board, July 30 2009 in Utrecht

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Introduction

It is wonderful to see how much Bring the Elephant Home has accomplished in the past few years. It becomes even more apparent when one reads back the policy plan for 2007-2008, because most of what we wanted to do has been done. Our project Trees for Elephants, with everything that enters into it, is developing better than we could have dreamed. Our network of organizations and volunteers is much larger than a few years ago, in the Netherlands, Belgium, and most of all Thailand. We wanted to become more embedded in Thai society, and we did. Today, we are working in four regions in Thailand, and are cooperating with partner organizations. More and more Thai businesses and organizations are able to find us, partly due to our website in Thai, which is getting more visitors every day. We have an excellent Thai employee. There is more interest from the Thai media for our work. In regard to this, the presentation of the Great Elephant Escape in Bangkok was a true break-through.



Furthermore, we support the Elephant Nature Park, in part thanks to the adoption program, which is a success. We reach a lot of people through our stands, and we have a loyal and growing group of supporters. People interested in us follow and support the activities of Bring the Elephant Home from around the world. The essentials, such as finances and administrations have been well organized, and we are continually learning new things, which we use when we can.

In November 2009 the foundation celebrates its five-year anniversary, and this is why this new policy plan starts with a small retrospective. With hindsight we can regard the past few years as the second phase in the existence of Bring the Elephant Home. A new organization with a few projects has become a blossoming organization with long-term projects. Our approach has not really changed, and we are happy with it. We get to business, and do not just communicate the problem, but especially what needs to be done, and then we do it.

Of course, there is still lots and lots to be done about the much-needed protection of Asian elephants. We have an excellent basis to build on in the coming years: Clear, practical, daring, well-considered, and always with a positive attitude. In order to reach our goals, we wish to continue three specific developments: Our projects are an even stronger part of Thai society. Knowledge of tree planting for elephants is growing, and we are able to spread this knowledge. The projects are being followed and supported by even more people, businesses and organizations, from as many parts of the world as possible.

Bring the Elephant Home!

Antoinette van de Water, director
Berrie Jurg, chairman

1 Retrospective

2004-2006

Antoinette van de Water was working as a volunteer at the Elephant Nature Park, and wanted to do more to call attention to the fate of Thai street elephants. Therefore she invented ~~Bring~~ the elephant Homeq an ostentation walk with two elephants she would buy free, from Bangkok to the Elephant Nature Park. Once back in the Netherlands, she immediately started preparations, and late 2004 she took off for Thailand to make the project a reality. The street elephants Dok Ngeon and Sri Nuan were bought free and taken to the Elephant Nature Park, where they have enjoyed their freedom for years



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now. When she was bought free, Dok Ngeon was a foot shorter than Antoinette, but is now more than a foot taller (see photo). She is as healthy as can be, loves babies, and is now mother to Chang Yim. She has brought a baby elephant into the world in freedom.

During the implementation of this first project, Antoinette had to change her plans regularly to the circumstances. The results only became better. A lot of attention was created for the dreadful situation of the domesticated elephants in Thailand. Many newspapers, magazines, and television shows published about this. The wildlife documentary *Return to the Wild* was (and still is)

broadcasted by Animal Planet, and received two awards. The book *Thaise Olifanten van de straat* was read by many, and recently an English version of the book entitled *The Great Elephant Escape* was published. A first group of involved volunteers and supporters formed, especially in the Netherlands. Faa Sai (in the photo on the left, next to Dok Ngeon and Sri Nuan) was also bought free in 2007 by Bring the Elephant Home, and is now staying at the Elephant Nature Park. The Dutch broadcasting company LLink made a documentary about this.



2007-2008

After these first milestones we wanted to do more to tackle the causes of the terrible situation of Thai elephants. Most of the problems concerning elephants are caused by the immense deforestation in Thailand. There is not enough room or food for the elephants to live. Therefore, Antoinette came up with Trees for elephants, and submitted a request with Vodafone. The judges awarded her The World of Difference award, so now she could focus completely about executing the project.



We started planting trees for wild elephants on the edge of Khao Yai National Park and in Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary. By planting trees in Salakpra the biodiversity improves. The rangers of the forest, villagers from nearby, students from the area, everyone helps. Trees draw insects, birds, and wildlife. Elephants spread the seeds, and this naturally brings in more species of trees. In this way, the environment for the wild elephants is improving step by step.

To improve the living conditions of domesticated elephants, we planted trees on and around the elephant island in the Isaan. Two villages have become involved.

The villagers of Baan Pai Yai own the elephant Sri Prae, the villagers of Baan Pai Noi own Nok Noi. The elephant island is a true pioneering project. By showing people things can be done differently, we want to achieve a change in culture. This demands patience and perseverance, but also guts to just start and keep going. And it works. It is already impossible to imagine the island without the elephants Sri Prae and Nok Noi. They both have their own bank account. Who would have thought? Part of the earnings of home-stays and other activities from the villagers of Baan Pai Yai and Baan Pai Noi, are put in the accounts. Good for the elephants and for the villagers. The villagers own the elephants, and the project together. We have a long way to go, but our basis is solid.



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Trees have been planted in and around the Elephant Nature Park, since the elephants there need healthy food as well. The park has become much greener than before.

After the rainy season of 2008, over 100,000 trees had been planted. On several locations we worked together with a Thai partner organization. Every location has its own story and importance, but for every location goes: By planting trees we provide more food and room, and positive change. In 2008 over a thousand mostly Thai volunteers helped planting the trees. Children explained to their parents why planting trees is useful for the elephants. During the planting of trees an entire network of elephant protectors was created.



We started Trees for Elephants without any experience in planting trees. Because of our network, the tree expert of Bring the Elephant Home, the knowledge we have gathered after two tree-planting seasons, we have come a long way. The trees planted last June in Salakpra and on the elephant island look perfect, and we are very proud of the planted areas. The maintenance of the trees is now in professional hands. During Trees for Elephants 2008 we often had to change our plans, and again the results only improved. One step at a time we improved the environment of the Thai elephants. The tree-planting method FORRU had proven vital. This allows us to plant trees in a way that lets the original forest return. It cannot always (immediately) be done perfectly, but we do try. We support tree nurseries on several locations, and invest in the knowledge of the employees. When you start to realize, before you begin, how much weeding has to be done in the years to follow, you might not want to begin at all. It is better to just start planting.

There are now more adoption parents than before, to let us support the elephants Dok Ngeon, Sri Nuan, and Faa Sai, as well as the Elephant Nature Park. Bring the Elephant Home should consider itself lucky for the many loyal supporters and active volunteers in several countries. Antoinette received the Terre des Femmes award 2009 for the Trees for Elephants Salakpra Project. This environmental award from the Yves Rocher Foundation is given every year to women with inspiring initiatives that benefit the environment. In 2008 several thousand Dutch and Flemish children participated in the drawing contest of Trees for elephants. We are receiving invaluable support from Kootje Fundatien, Elephant Parade, WNF, Hivos, and ASN. We have a great website and newsletter thanks to internet-company Driebit. Nico den Dulk makes designs that are worthy the words house style, which match our activities and approach so well. And we have a beautiful online database, made by volunteers.

All of these parts contribute to the ability of the foundation to do the job. As mentioned in the introduction, we have grown from a new organization with a few projects into a blossoming organization with long-term projects. Our approach has not really changed. There is no reason to fundamentally change the mission and goals of Bring the Elephant Home for the coming policy period. Because of everything we have gone through, our mission and goals have taken a clearer shape than a few years ago.

2 Mission and vision

Bring the Elephant Home is - starting in Thailand - actively participating in the protection of Asian elephant which is threatened to become extinct.

Unfortunately Asian elephants have to deal with a great lack of room to live and food. Therefore, we are aiming reforestation, protection of the remaining forests, and solving the human-elephant conflicts.

The forests being planted for the Thai elephants are the solution. The elephants get more space, with a greater variety of food, the area is protected against further demolition, and the forests help solve the



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conflict with local farmers. One cannot imagine a future without elephants living in the wild. We will do anything to prevent this.

All elephants should be living in the wild. If this is not possible, they should be able to live in an environment as natural as possible, where they can behave as normal as possible. Therefore, we focus on projects that can make this possible: elephant parks and reserves.

Bring the Elephant Home is against using elephants in entertainment, when this is done against the animals' natural behavior, only in the pursuit of profit, and not in the interest of a better future for elephants. Elephants simply do not belong in the streets. Nor at the trekking camps where they are often worked to death. Tourists are being transported on a chair on the back of an elephant, but this much weight is degenerative to its fragile spine. Education should make tourists decide against it.

We understand that using elephants to make money is necessary to the survival of elephants. Therefore, we plead for and support animal friendly, natural, and sustainable elephant projects. We want to help owners and mahouts find a different way to earn a living with their elephant. The elephant should be able to roam, find its own food, and live together with other elephants. It is proven time and time again that tourists love to watch elephants in their natural habitat.

In conclusion: Bring the Elephant Home is aiming for a better future for the Thai elephants. We want to accomplish this by animal friendly ecotourism, by the conservation and creation of a natural environment for the elephants, producing healthy food for the elephants, furthering alternative employment for elephant keepers, and by solving the human-elephant conflict.

3. Goals and strategy

3.1 Long-term goals

- a. Protection and, when possible, expansion of habitat Asian elephant, starting in Thailand.

We are working on reforestation for wild elephants, aiming to create, improve, and maintain habitat and food. This improves biodiversity, and contributes to stopping climate change and environmental disasters. We contribute to solving the human-elephant conflicts in an animal friendly way, in which people consider the situation of the elephants.

- b. Animal friendly treatment of domesticated elephants, starting in Thailand.

We are working to create and maintain animal friendly, natural, and sustainable alternatives for domesticated elephants. We support the Elephant Nature park, and the development of newly acquired land. We also support the development of the elephant island in the Isaan to become an economically self-supporting project, and a good example. In case of emergency, we swing into action for domesticated elephants. We further alternative employment in traditional elephant villages.

For both of our main goals, we need to create more awareness and involvement in protecting the elephants. In Thailand (Thai and tourists), The Netherlands, Belgium, and as many other countries as possible. We educate tourists, so they might contribute to elephant protection. We involve and support the Thai public in protection of environment and elephants. We organize volunteer tours and events. For all of this, the attention of the media is critical.

3.2 Strategy

Even though our mission and goals have become clearer than a few years ago, our operating methods have not really changed. We get to work, practically and materially. We communicate not just that things are going badly but especially what needs to be done, and then we do it.



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Our current projects have longer terms, which require patience and perseverance, to achieve a change, one step at a time. But also for this goes: Get going, with a positive and practical attitude.

Since our network has grown, as well as our expertise, since we have become more embedded in Thailand, and since we have more means, we are able to do more to achieve our goals. The support from organizations, businesses, and individuals, with both money and work, is crucial.

In Thailand we co-operate with partner organizations when this is beneficial to the (long-term) result of our project. For together we are stronger.

Needless to say: Bring the Elephant Home rejects the use of violence, in all its forms. We are a non-governmental organization, politically neutral in every way. Of course, everyone working for us is entitled to his or her individual political opinion, but never on behalf of Bring the Elephant Home.

3.3 Spearheads for the years 2009-2011

We have a strong basis for working successfully towards our goals in the coming years. In the next chapter we will elaborate on our projects. To achieve our goals we would like to continue three developments of the past few years:

- a. We are an even stronger part of the Thai society.

Bring the Elephant Home is an organization without borders, and this is how we like it. We have been registered in The Netherlands. To become more embedded in Thai society it is necessary for Bring the Elephant Home to (also) be registered as a Thai organization. This is a logical step, for it contributes to the long-term goals of our foundation. For example, only as a Thai entity will we be able to open an account, make purchases in name of Bring the Elephant Home, or receive a financial contribution meant only for organizations with Thai registration. The Thai foundation will be separate legal entity under the umbrella of the Dutch foundation (like Greenpeace and Unicef). Where possible, this will be stated in the bylaws of both organizations. Of course, all legal and financial aspects will be well put in order. This policy plan 2009-2011 also applies to the Thai foundation. Subsequently, we will open a Thai bank account, to allow the Thai public to support Bring the Elephant Home financially. We will be using bookkeeping software in which both the Dutch and the Thai money flow can be kept.

- b. Our expertise in planting trees is growing, and we are able to spread this knowledge.

In the coming years we wish to set up our own tree nursery, which will be able to produce thousands of seedlings, and will become a blossoming educational centre for Trees for Elephants. In this way we will be able to invest in knowledge, up the level of tree planting, and spread the knowledge among students, government, and everyone involved in the protection of the Thai elephants. Antoinette will write a business plan.

- c. The projects will be followed and supported by even more people, businesses, and organizations from around the world.

This is something we can enhance in the upcoming years. The website is now multi-lingual, we have a newsletter in three languages, and we are active on Facebook. There is an offer to translate the website into German, which we could use in the next few years. First, the French and Spanish websites must get more visitors. For this we need volunteers in countries such as Spain. And of course, a new documentary like Return to the wild, which is being broadcasted world-wide.



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4. Projects 2009-2011

Everyone watching Bring the Elephant Home, knows new projects keep popping up. Many changes will keep happening, when the situation requires it, or when there are some good plans that contribute to our goals. The planned projects for 2009-2011:

1. Adoption program;
2. Trees for Elephants, including several subprojects;
3. Bike for Elephants;
4. Volunteer and holiday tours;
5. Jungle fund;
6. Elephants in Need fund;
7. Market stands and other public fundraising methods.

With these projects we also create:

- Education and promotion ENP, elephant island in the Isaan, and other projects for animal friendly care for elephants;
- Canvassing sponsors, supporters, and volunteers;
- Widen basis for the Elephant Nature Park and Bring the Elephant Home in Thailand;
- When necessary, pressure government and businesses;
- Develop network and expertise.

4.1 Adoption program

The adoption program started in 2006 with the elephants Sri Nuan and Dok Ngeon, in 2008 Faa Sai joined them. The number of parents has increased greatly in the past years. The most important reasons for this are: a correct record keeping, and connection with the foster parents, the broadcasting of *Return to the Wild* and *Aanpakken en Wegwezen*, and unprompted applications on the website. In May 2009 154 elephants were adopted, 122 of which in the Netherlands and 14 in Belgium. One foster parent has adopted several elephants, most of them just one. In 2008 en 2009 we were able to donate 5,000 euros to the Elephant Nature Park twice. In 2009 this is paid for by the foster parents for the first time.

The adoption program is and will be a fantastic and appealing way to get people involved with the Elephant Nature Park, and with the development of the three elephants living there thanks to Bring the Elephant Home. Dok Ngeons baby is now a part of the program as well. The adoption program is directly contributing to the wellbeing of the adopted elephants and the continuation of the park. In the coming years we will provide new material for the foster parents. For example videos of Faa Sai, Dok Ngeon, and Sri Nuan, in which Antoinette will show how they live in the park.

The adoption contribution will continue to be (a minimum of) 60 euros a year. Our goal is to increase the number of adoptions to give even more support to the ENP. It is our ambition to bring the number of adoptions of Faa Sai, Dok Ngeon, Chang Yim, and Sri Nuan up to 300 by the end of 2011; which means 146 adoptions in 2,5 years net. When the number of adoptions increases like this, Bring the Elephant Home will be able to donate 15,000 euros every year starting 2010.

The elephants Nok Noi and Sri Prae at the elephant island belong to the villages of Baan Pai Noi and Baan Pai Yai. Both elephants have their own bank accounts, which fall under the Village Development Bank. The villagers work on improving their economical position. Both villagers have taken out a loan with Bring the Elephant Home to cover part of the purchase price. There are permanent cost for food, medical care, and





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mahouts. An interest in The Netherlands and Belgium and other parts of the world can turn into more tourism at the island.

Sri Prae and Nok Noi will be part of the adoption program. The proceeds go to the elephant island and, of course, to the adopted elephant. It is our goal to give several thousand euros a year to the elephant island. We will communicate to future foster parents that visiting the elephants is not as simple as at the ENP.

People in Thailand can also adopt Sri Prae and Nok Noi, for a annual amount of 800 Baht (this will buy about a weeksworth of food). These donations can go straight into the bank accounts of the two elephants. BtEH will only send the (online) adoption packages. For this web forms are being created on the Thai website.

4.2 Trees for Elephants, including several subprojects

Elephant Nature Park

We support the Elephant Nature Park with promotion, adoption, purchase of land, and trees. After years of searching the ENP has bought the much-needed piece of extra land. ENP has asked Bring the Elephant Home for help planting trees. Of course we will. Furthermore, we will continue planting trees in and around the park, and we will support the tree nursery at the ENP. To create more diversity at the ENP, and to manage a more professional nursery, we will start up a nursery on our own account. This enables us to bring the many different species of seedlings, grown according to the FORRU methods, directly to the ENP to be planted and taken care of.



Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary

At the moment Salakpra has so few trees and animals, that the forest cannot sustain itself. By planting different species of trees, the forest can recover. At that time the number of tree and animal species will rise, and there will be a healthy habitat and enough food for the elephants. We have now spent



two rainy seasons planting trees, and will continue to do so in the coming years. We will invest in expertise in growing young trees in this area with a lot of bamboo. The nursery in Salakpra produces beautiful trees all year round, over 45 species. These trees can also be used at other problem areas in the forest. This allows us to play an active role in protecting the forest. Through the reforestation project in co-operation with the ECN our network in Kanchanaburi is growing. The nursery employees are great workers. The combination of Salakpra and

Elephant World is very popular with volunteers, both local and from Bangkok. It is easily doable from Bangkok, and very versatile. Planting or taking care of trees in the jungle, bathing and feeding elephants at Elephant World, and camping near the river Kwai. With weekends like these we support the projects directly, get a lot of work done, and involve more people in our work.

Elephant Island Isaan

At the elephant island in the Isaan the two elephants Nok Noi and Sri Prae now have a home. By planting trees a natural environment and food is created for the elephants. The project we carry out together with PDA, provides a positive example for durable and animal friendly tourism. After two



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major tree planting actions the area surrounding the island is now completely planted. We will now go and plant elephant food, replace dead trees, and possible plant trees beyond the village. Important



first steps have been taken in both villages, but a lot has yet to be done: building an elephant home and a mahout hut, the elephants need to be moved; we need a sign by the road, make sure a group stops by every month, and have the homestay work even without our presence. More villagers should speak English for this, and there should be a guide in the village. Our long term goal is for more elephant owners and mahouts to decide to no longer beg with their elephants or let tourists ride on the elephants' backs. First we'll see how this project with two elephants works out. But the villagers too wish to do

things slowly. Together with them, we will further tourism, make this a truly animal friendly elephant island, support the tree nurseries, and enlarge the exemplary role.

Elephant World

Elephant World is growing fast, has a good volunteer program, and our relationship with them is good. The project can potentially be a good alternative for more elephants. At the moment, five elephants have a permanent place, and often street elephants from Bangkok are taken care of temporarily. The location is beautiful: in a valley near the river Kwai, with plenty of room to create more habitat and food for elephants. The elephants should be given more freedom, and the hook is still in use. But the project is becoming more animal friendly every day. We help Elephant World by sending them tourists, volunteers, and local sponsors. We have helped buying free the elephant Quang (communication, food plan, loan). In 2009 we have planted 1,000 trees to reforest part of their land. Our ties with Elephant World is growing stronger, and our co-operation could become closer in the future.



Khao Yai National Park

In Khao Yai we have planted an area between the National park and the community forest, together with WERF. The temple and the villagers now follow our example: they now have their own nursery in Khao Yai, and are organizing tree planting days. We will discontinue our nursery at Khao Yai, but will continue to support new enterprises and the caring for the trees we have planted until the forest is self-sustaining. We also support the communication with schools near the park to increase awareness about the situation of wild elephants. If children, growing up near the National Park, dedicate themselves to improving the environment for wild elephants, it will greatly help.

Other possible projects

It is likely we will start a new Trees for Elephants project for wild elephants in the next few years, because we wish to do more for the wild elephant.

Trees for Elephants nursery

Within a few years we will start our own Trees for Elephants nursery, including an educational program. This will create more expertise in growing trees for elephants, allow the ENP (and in a lesser degree other locations) to be supplied with specific seedlings, and let us organize educational en practical school projects.

4.3 Bike for Elephants

In 2009, Bring the Elephant Home is organizing the first Bike for Elephants. Bikers join us in teams and find their own sponsors. The first tour goes around the Elephant Nature Park. We want to draw more attention to the park, and support it financially. When it proves a success, we will organize Bike for Elephants on a more regular basis.



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4.4 Jungle fund

The jungle fund is used for the purchase of land and for reforestation. It allowed us to contribute to the purchase of new land for the Elephant Nature Park. The strong point of the Jungle fund is and will be its direct and to-the-point work method.

4.5 Chang tours, volunteer tours and events

During the past years we have organized Changtours, volunteer tours, volunteer weekends or events. For both people from outside Thailand and the Thai. Given the large amount of work and finding contacts, it is prudent to view these as projects. One option is to create a group of Thai guides who are knowledgeable about Bring the Elephant Home and can provide guidance. Another option would be to hire an extra freelance employee for these tasks. This second option would actually be better, but we have to find a really good one. We will continue the Chang tours as long as they continue to sell and enough people are interested. This is rather shaky and our own promotion does not seem to work anymore.

4.6 Elephants in need fund

Emergency fund to buy elephants free. With donations from our supporters we are trying to create a basis for the Elephant in need fund. Of course, when we are about to buy an elephant free, try to find more once-only donations through an appeal for help. Sometimes we will help with a interest free loan.

4.7 Market stands and other public fundraising methods

Goals in The Netherlands and Belgium:

- Draw attention to BTEH from a large audience
- Draw attention to the problems of wild and domesticated elephants in Thailand in general
- Find new foster parents and supporters
- Raise money through merchandising
- Get visitors for the ENP, the elephant island, or other elephant friendly projects
- networking create and solidify contacts with organization, market vendors, and others



Goals in Thailand

- Education in Thailand is different: visitors are experienced with, knowledgeable about, and have an opinion about elephants. The results of market vending in Thailand is less about finances. People decide on the spot whether or not to visit the ENP or the island, go to a volunteer weekend, or help out in some other practical way.
- Beside markets, we are considering other promotional activities, such as a benefit concert, or other public meetings.



5. Canvassing and finances

In the past several years our income has substantially grown. Moreover, every year we have a positive result that causes our own property. We aim to maintain an annual growth in revenue. When it comes to donations, we estimate and hope that will be no problem. Much depends on grants and subsidies. When less money comes in through grants during a year, it is possible to tide this over with part of our own property. For the next few years, however, there is ample possibility to find revenue in individual sponsors, grants, funds, prizes, and companies. It is a positive thing we are not dependant on just one means of income, but are able to use several options.



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5.1 Supporters

We separate people with whom we can communicate through the internet from other supporters and interested people, who did not subscribe to our email newsletter. Revenue from standing orders and notarial deeds (in the Netherlands) are freely disposable, stable, and low in cost once taken out. It would be good to invest in this in the coming years. Once registration in Thailand is a fact and a Thai bank account has been opened, private donations will be coming in.

5.2 Grants and funds

The projects of Bring the Elephant Home are being supported by prizes, grants, and funds. Of course, things might not go as well every year, but we basically have a good outlook. In the next few years we will carefully contact existing subsidizers, and create more opportunities. Also by asking support from companies. And in Thailand possibilities for grants and sponsoring will increase after registration.

5.3 Database

For the above-mentioned, and for media purposes, our database is essential. We can improve and extend use of our database in the coming years. We have plenty of time to build on this, and weigh the pros and cons of this.