

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

The Jumbo Express is part of Elephant Nature Foundation's holistic approach to tackling the issues that threaten the survival of the Asian elephant. The project attempts to overcome various socio-economic factors that influence the fate of this highly endangered species by bringing supplies and medicine to isolated communities for both human and animal use. By pursuing community development goals, the Jumbo Express aims to reduce the pressure of poor health on elephants by enacting change in the lives of their owners and caregivers. In 2006 this project impacted on 39 locations, and directly contacted 94 elephants in various situations.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Socio-economic forces compound the vast ecological factors threatening the Asian elephant's survival as a species. Tens of thousands of Thai families depend on income from the elephant tourism industry. Those working directly with the elephants, generally employed to provide basic elephant care, are typically from lower income brackets with poor education and few livelihood options. Camp owners and elephant owners rarely come into direct contact with the elephants because such work comes with a certain amount of social stigma. It is often the case, therefore, that an underfed elephant is being cared for by an underfed man.

While the Elephant Nature Park (ENP) is providing an alternative tourism opportunity for elephant camps, the Jumbo Express strives to serve those involved with elephants at the lowest end of the pay scale. Many elephant workers come from rural communities, isolated by geography and lack of economic opportunity. Medical expertise and supplies are not always

available. Jumbo Express is breaking down these barriers by bringing supplies to under-serviced communities. The community development happening here is part of a long-term strategy to raise the standard of living for the people directly involved in elephant care. The Elephant Nature Foundation (ENF), therefore, considers the improvement of human lives as essential for the survival of the Asian elephant. Also, improving access to medicines has benefited many individuals and elephants, which is a worthy goal in itself.

1.3 PROJECT AIMS

The following list summarizes the short and long term aims of Jumbo Express:

- To make and maintain links with rural people working with elephants
- Provide medicinal and educational assistance for people and elephants
- Engage in community development projects: water, housing, resource management, sustainable tourism
- Observe and record the number of wild and domestic elephants, as well as the living conditions of domesticated elephants
- Continue to provide the opportunity for international visitors to contribute skills and resources to the Jumbo Express
- Work with communities to change cultural attitudes towards elephants and tourism

2.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

2.1 THE JUMBO EXPRESS

Jumbo Express is Elephant Nature Foundation's primary means for forging and maintaining positive alliances with rural communities. By providing free medical care and community development work to isolated villagers, ENF gains the trust and gratitude of local people, thus placing our staff in an ideal position for open dialogue. From a position of trust, ENF can encourage tolerance when dealing with elephants. Therefore, by raising the standard of living for communities dealing with elephants, the Jumbo Express helps improve the lives of the elephants.

The Jumbo Express was first started in the mid 1980's with Ms Chailert personally carrying medicinal supplies into villages on her research trips into the jungle. The programme today involves volunteers. Because each Jumbo Express excursion is tailored to meet the needs of the community or elephant facility, specific details vary greatly from case to case. Jumbo Express has already visited more than 300 Thai communities, hill tribe villages, and refugee camps ranging from the Thailand-Burma border up to the Laos-China border.

Aside from community outreach, Jumbo Express aims to raise the standard of living for domestic elephants that are working without access to proper treatment. Some elephants are isolated by physical geography while some suffer from ignorance or neglect. The Jumbo Express provides the services of veterinarians and people with elephant expertise in order to help.

This outreach program gives ENF the chance to spread information about elephants, as well as a chance to collect information from the field. A typical Jumbo event will involve one overnight stay in a rural community, with ENF

providing food for all. Volunteers and staff mingle with the villagers, de-worm children, give out treats, vaccinate livestock, and address any treatable medical problems. Discussion about elephants is encouraged. This may happen while sitting around the fire with a village elder, or perhaps after hours of playing games with school children. Some trips later proceed to elephant medical treatment, while other trips strictly involve research or community development.

2.2 DOCUMENTATION

Volunteers with any medical experience are encouraged to inform ENF staff as early as possible. Volunteers are responsible for recording all the details of the trip, most important of which is recording the amounts and types of medication given out, to whom medicines were distributed, and how distribution was done. Further details include location, distances, travel times, etc. Exact numbers will later be compiled into a short report.

ENF will compile detailed records of all elephants seen, and of reports from villagers. This may involve assigning the role of record keeper to one or more volunteers. Other volunteers may take on roles of administering medication.

A volunteer's job on a Jumbo Express is above all else, to enjoy the experience and act as ambassadors for ENF. ENF volunteer shirts and long pants should be worn. Of highest priority is to respect the local culture; no shoes are to be worn indoors, etc. Volunteers should keep in mind that hill tribes are modest and respectful people, and this may likely be their first impression of foreigners. If relationships are kept positive, the Jumbo Express will continue to be an excellent experience shared not only by the volunteers, but also the ENF staff and the villagers.

3.0 ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2006

3.1 SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Jumbo Express continues to build on a network of contacts within the elephant handling community. In 2006, the Jumbo Express was able to make 39 visits to elephant trekking camps, communities, logging camps, and schools. Volunteers were successful in building housing, creating fire breaks, engaging in other community development initiatives, operating a medical clinic, and de-worming a total of 356 children and 72 adults (Refer to Appendix A for a complete list of project activities undertaken in 2006). These operations directly impacted the health of 94 elephants throughout the region, complemented by the distribution of greatly needed veterinary medicine and supplies.

The greatest reward of this project, however, is written on the faces of the villagers and children that receive help. At least 142 families and 60 individual adults and children received general medical supplies throughout the year from the Jumbo Express. These estimates are likely below the actual distribution, as training and coordination of staff left much to be desired. Actual distribution is thus likely to be double the recorded data. With better training, more accurate reporting is expected for 2007.

3.2 ELEPHANTS

94 individual domestic elephants were visited in 15 separate locations in 2006. These visits typically involved examining the elephants, feeding them fresh bananas, and opening the lines of communication with their mahouts and elephant facility staff. Direct medical care was provided by ENF for 13 of these elephants (Appendix B provides a summary of the elephant treatments).

In general, elephants examined were working in the tourism industry, logging, were between owners, engaged in training, or in retirement camps. Figure 1, below, illustrates a breakdown of the elephants' occupational backgrounds.

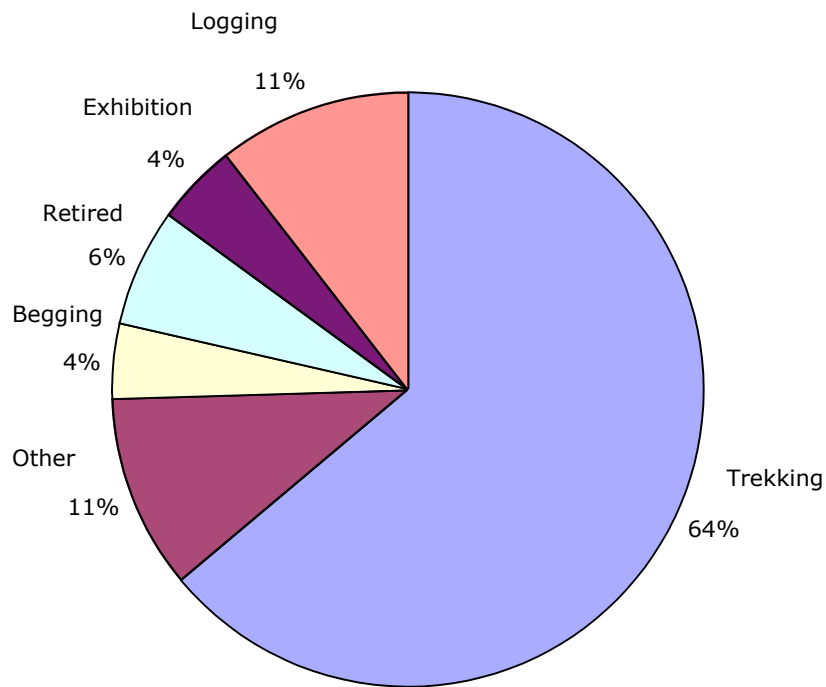


Figure 1: Elephant Occupation

Volunteers collected basic data for each elephant, including name, age, sex, location, occupation, general condition, injuries, and treatment (this data is available to ENF partner organizations upon request).

3.3 MEDICAL CARE

Overall in 2006, 116 people had their medical needs attended to with one-on-one consultations facilitated by ENF. Specifically, a two-day clinic conducted by Dr Gary Smith in the Karen village of Baan Muang Pem on February 16th and 17th was an overwhelming success (Appendix C offers a complete summary of the clinics' activities). Further to Dr Smiths' clinic, medical supplies were delivered to about 20 separate communities in need. In many cases, treatment and supplies were provided to people with no access to even the most basic of medical care. One extreme case involved a severe and chronic infection whereby the patient did not even have soap to clean the wound.

Jumbo Express also operated a successful de-worming program in 2006, in which at least 428 individuals were treated (refer to Appendix D for a summary of the de-worming treatments distributed). This program targeted **threadworm, roundworm, and hookworm, and to a lesser extent, pinworm, tapeworm, and whipworm.**

4.0 FINANCES

4.1 FUNDING

The Jumbo Express does not independently generate funds and therefore operates on a deficit, which is somewhat subsidized by ENP revenue. The majority of funding in 2006 came from private donations, most of which were covered by ENF founder, Ms Chailert.

The ENF receives no government support, has no corporate sponsorships, and does not receive regular funding from any organization. All funds come

from revenue generated from the Elephant Nature Park and donations from charities and concerned individuals from around the world.

4.2 RESOURCES EXPENDED

4.2.1 Medical

A considerable amount of medical supplies and medicine were distributed (Appendix E includes a complete list of supplies). It is important to note, however, that records of the amount of supplies distributed were recorded by volunteers in the field. Because of a lack of training and organization on the part of the volunteers, actual estimates are much higher than those recorded. Current records, thus, should be regarded as a baseline for actual distribution. With better training, a more detailed inventorying of medical supplies is expected for 2007.

4.2.2 Transportation

Transportation is a major expense for Jumbo Express, second only to medical supplies. For any event, a minimum of one 4-wheel-drive truck is needed to make the drive to the location, with two or three trucks often being used. Travel time to locations varies largely between 1 and 24 hours. Diesel fuel is thus a considerable expense. Two events in 2006 involved locations that required air travel. Salaries for transport related staff are also a factor.

4.2.3 Veterinary

Table 1, on the following page, displays an inventory of the veterinary supplies expended in 2006. Jumbo Express also keeps a qualified Thai veterinarian who serves as the vet for Elephant Nature Park.

Table 1: Veterinary Supplies

Item	Quantity
PenStrep IM injection	50ML
Negasunt 500g powder	7
Pyrad-Violet topical	3Doses
Betameth N topical	4Doses
Gentian violet	2Bot
Betadine cleansing	2Doses
Anti-B powder, 1 day's elephant dose	20
Rental Bolus	100Tabs
Piperlazine (pig de-worming)	1Jar
New Castle Disease Vaccination (chickens)	40ML

4.2.4 Non-Medical Supplies

The following non-medical supplies were distributed in 2006:

- Blankets
- Floor mats
- Mosquito Nets
- Toys
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Nail care kits
- Sun cream
- Eye glasses
- Clothing
- Educational supplies: books, pens, paper
- Art supplies: crayons, coloured paper, plasticine

4.3 CONTRIBUTIONS

Special thanks goes out to the following third-party organizations for their contributions and cooperation in 2006. Contributions came in the form of funds as well as in-kind donations of supplies and medicine. All is greatly appreciated.

- Serengeti Foundation, USA
- Abraham Foundation, USA
- Nong Ice Transport Company, Thailand
- Green Volunteers Network, Singapore

5.0 CONCLUSION

2006 was a successful year for Jumbo Express. The primary goals of the project were realized: targeted communities received support, and elephants were visited in their places of work. We continue to develop sustainable resource management and promote tourism that benefits the community.

With additional funding this project could invest resources towards planning and scouting locations, to better address needs of communities, and ultimately provide more supplies to more locations. A major focus for 2007 will be to continue to achieve the primary goals, and also to record more details of events.