

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

GVI THAILAND CHIANG MAI



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# INTRODUCTION

As we approach the beginning of not just a new year but a new decade, there is a lot to look back upon from 2019, both successes and challenges. At the end of May, we were delighted to welcome a new four-legged addition to the GVI team - baby elephant Lah Lah. Thanks to our project and the support of the village we work in, Huay Pakoot, Lah Lah has been able to grow and learn in her natural environment with the support of her family, something which has been wonderful to watch.



Almost exactly 7 months after Lah Lah's birth, sadly her grandmother Khum Suk - a GVI Trust elephant - passed away. At 70 years of age, she went peacefully in her sleep. The village came together to celebrate her life and bury her in the forest the following day. Her mahout, Wynn, continues to participate in English lessons and football games with GVI volunteers and staff, and is currently helping his father run the local coffee shop. We will all miss Khum Suk greatly but take peace in the fact that she was able to spend her last months with her new granddaughter Lah Lah in the forest.



# PROGRESS TOWARDS HUB GOALS

Thanks to the village of Huay Pakoot, our staff team, interns and volunteers, here is the progress we have made towards our long-term hub objectives during 2019:

## 1. INCREASE AND PROMOTE ELEPHANT ETHICAL TREATMENT



- A new survey given to all volunteers has shown a significant increase in their knowledge of ethical elephant treatment after project as compared to before project
- Analysing behavioural data taken on our elephants shows they display more natural behaviour from being able to roam in the forest

## 2. CREATE A VIABLE SELF-SUSTAINING ECO-TOURISM PROGRAM FOR THE VILLAGE

- New community activities have been added to the schedule, so that families in the village have more experience of how to run an eco-tourism program - examples being weaving workshops and storytelling with villagers
- Building a good relationship with the mahouts and owners of our elephants means they are happy to keep their elephants in the forest with GVI
- Some mahouts have been trained in data collection on their elephants so this can continue even outside of GVI



### 3. IMPROVE STANDARDS OF LIVING AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE IN THE HUAY PAKOOT VILLAGE



- Teacher training for volunteers has improved so that English lessons are more beneficial for schoolchildren. Monthly progress tests mean we can easily track the success of our lessons.
- Local staff member Su and NSP Boh Duh develop their leadership and English skills by being involved in our project.

### 4. IMPROVE SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE HUAY PAKOOT AREA

- New surveys have been started such as gibbon triangulation surveys and spider surveys, to track the biodiversity of the local area
- GVI Thailand Chiang Mai went viral in Thailand for doing a three-day litter pick around Huay Pakoot, raising awareness of the problem of litter in the country
- Two staff members attended the AZEC conference in November to share our project with others as well as receive ideas of how to effectively teach conservation to local communities



# SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

## REDESIGNING CURRICULUMS AND TESTING



We are always striving to improve how we deliver English lessons to the community, whether this is in the local primary school or in the local homestays. We usually review our English lessons based on annual progress test results and teacher feedback, but this year we have made some adjustments!

Working together Liane (Program Manager) and Toby

(Community Coordinator), who are both TEFL-certified, designed the 2019/2020 school curriculums- Liane worked on the topics and vocabulary, and Toby worked on incorporating phonics into the lessons. Previously, phonics had not frequently been used due to volunteers not receiving training on how to teach them, or how to use the jolly phonic approach. Phonics are a vital learning block when it comes to the English language. Once students can identify the sounds of phonics, they can then start to construct and read a variety of words. So now, we have a curriculum with grade-appropriate lesson plans as well a phonics guide for each grade.



Another improvement we have implemented, is the short TEFL-training we now deliver to any long-term volunteer/intern or staff member with the desire to become a teacher at the school. We have made this training compulsory for all leading teachers, much like how it is compulsory for everyone to be data-trained before taking elephant behavioural data. This is to ensure all our students are received top-quality English lessons, and that our volunteers feel confident and equipped with the training to deliver English lessons to the best of their ability. The TEFL-training is a series of interactive presentations

that cover a range of topics such as: jolly phonics, classroom management, lesson planning, learning disabilities, and tips for teaching. The training session lasts approximately four hours with breaks. With this training, we have seen our lesson planning productivity improve. We now allocate specific time in our daily schedule for teachers and their teaching assistants to gather in one area at base. This allows for the teams to pool their ideas and really plan their lessons effectively, with each member involved having a specific role to play in the upcoming lessons. All teachers are required to fill in a feedback sheet after each lesson, for evaluation purposes and for future teachers to use as a reference. Previously, we used this feedback



sheet track progress in addition to annual progress tests; to make our information more accurate, we have introduced monthly progress tests. The new progress tests take place after our students have undergone four weeks of lessons; teachers will then design a progress test that is based on the topics taught. The progress tests work on a rotational basis- one month will be a speaking and listening test, the next will be a reading and writing test, and so on. This is so we are teaching and testing the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening consistently. Results are then collected and inputted into spreadsheets by the community coordinator, where a breakdown of what students scored what on each question is applied. With this monthly information, teachers can then have visual information which can tell them if they need to move on to new topics or if they need to revisit certain areas of the curriculum. Progress tests are actually a great experience for the teachers and students; after the academics have been completed, teachers present their students with a certificate, and reward them with an ice-cream!

At the end of the school year, our community coordinator is planning to analyse the progress test results- we hope to further improve our English lesson capabilities year on year!

*Written by Toby Craze*

# SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

## NEW FEMALE SCHOLARS

In 2019, we are proud to have welcomed two local women to the staff team. Su joined us back in February as an NSP, and has now progressed to a full-time staff member. Boh Duh is still on her scholar program, having joined in November. These are the first women from the village to have been on the scholarship program here. Particularly with Su who has been with us almost a year now, it has been great to watch her confidence grow not only with her English levels, but also with communicating with the villagers. She is now a well-known member of the village from working with GVI and is held in high regard amongst the mahouts and the other community members who are associated with our project.



Both Su and Boh Duh are interested in working in the tourism industry in the future, and these skills will be very useful for them, as they spend their days managing volunteers and teaching them about the culture here. As well as being provided with English lessons twice a week, Program Manager Liane has begun to give them some basic first aid training, in the hope that as their English skills and confidence grows, they may be able to receive the full training and become Emergency First Responder certified. This would not only be great for our project, but also for the village.

One part of the project that Su has introduced is weaving workshops, where Su teaches volunteers how to weave the traditional Karen clothing - not as easy as it looks! This is another way for volunteers to be able to understand and appreciate this unique and special culture. We hope that Boh Duh can start her own workshops soon as she progresses.



This year we have also developed a Women's Empowerment segment which can be chosen by volunteers pre-arrival. The volunteers still have the option to participate in the elephant and conservation side of the project, but will be educated further on the importance of sustainability and empowerment when working with communities, and about the role of women in Karen culture, whilst assisting to teach

English to the local women in the evenings. Improving the level of English of the women here is important as many of them own shops and businesses, or provide accommodation for our volunteers.

We are very lucky in Huay Pakoot to be surrounded by many strong, empowered women, who we can all learn a great deal from.

*Written by Liane Fulford*



# SDG 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

## MAHOUT ENGAGEMENT

Over the past year we have succeeded in increasing the mahout and villager relationships with GVI. We have started to incorporate new ways of socialising with the villagers such as running a ‘gola dinner’, engaging in Friday projects and also mahout football.

‘Gola Dinner’ is an addition we have added into the yearly schedule. As opposed to the standard cooking class or mahout dinner on Wednesday evenings when the volunteers go to a villager’s



house and cook and eat with them, we invite villagers to our base and get the volunteers to cook a variety of dishes from their native countries. The villagers have loved trying new things made by our volunteers from around the world. This has helped boost our relationship with the Karen villagers of Huay Pakoot as we’re inviting them to explore our cultures and learn more about our cuisines. The volunteers have loved the chance to share their food and recipes with the villagers.



Another great effort by one of our volunteers to engage the mahouts has been the introduction of mahout football. This is where a group of our mahouts meet us at the school for a game of football. As this has become so popular we have included it in our two week schedule plan. With the constant fluctuating

volunteers we haven't had a steady team to defeat our mahouts as of yet. They are all very talented football players. This engagement through sport has led to the mahouts inviting us to the football tournament they partake in annually.

One of the other success stories we have is the increase in volunteer involvement in Friday projects. This is where we ask a villager if we can help them in either the rice or corn fields. This includes a variety of jobs such as fertilising the seeds, planting them, harvesting them and eventually carrying them to be weighed. We try to help in a different family's field every week. This has increased the villager's appreciation for our help. Also the volunteers are very enthusiastic about learning new agricultural skills.



One of the biggest achievements over the past year is the level of English knowledge that one of our mahouts has gained. Wynn who was the mahout for our recently deceased Khum Suk has made phenomenal progress with his English skills thanks to volunteers and staff members keeping him involved and engaged with his mahout English lessons. To increase comfort whilst learning we decided to move the lessons down to the coffee shop near his house which has increased his confidence tremendously.

*Written by Jonathan Berry*

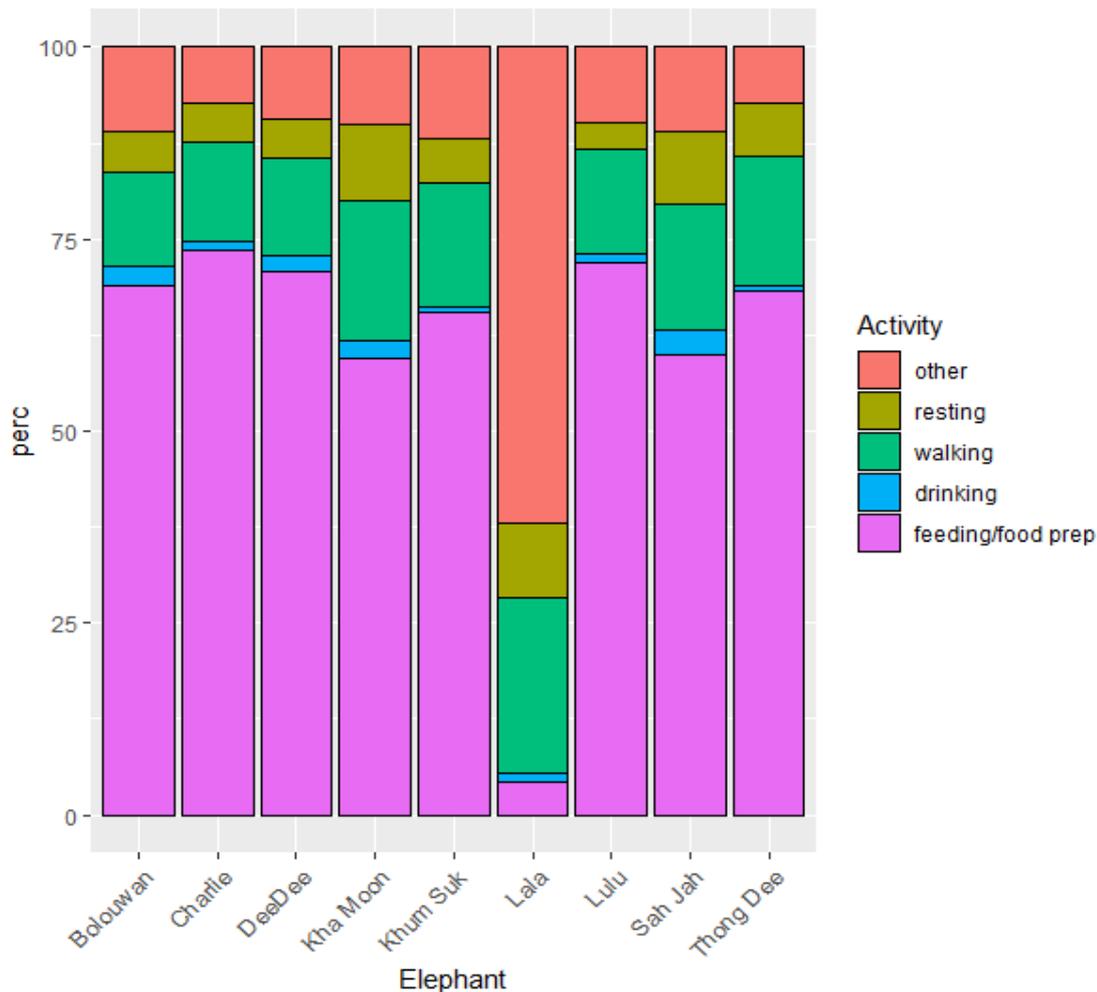
# SDG 15: LIFE ON LAND

## ELEPHANT DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

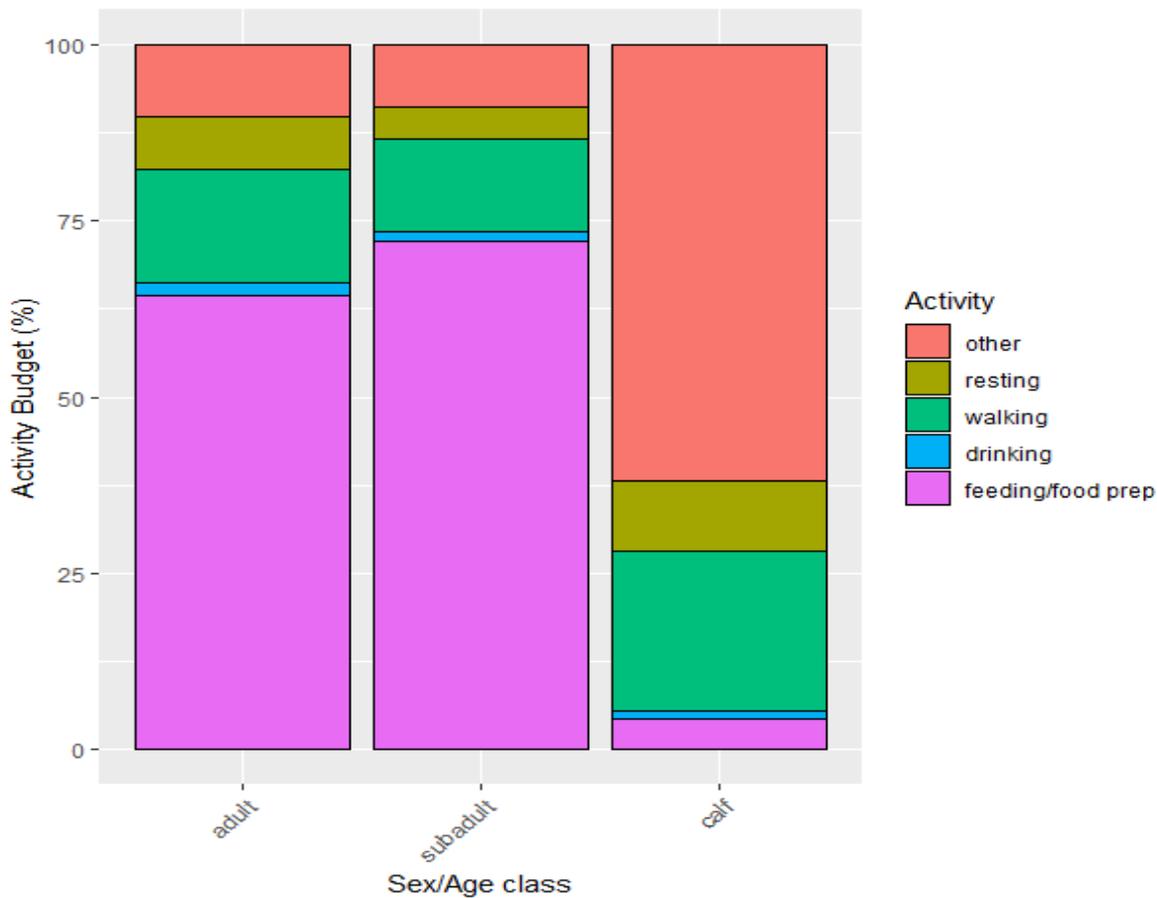
In May this year, a baby elephant was born! Kha Moon's and Bulouwan's daughter is called Lah Lah and she is always up to some shenanigans! Lah Lah's arrival was not only a very happy event for all of us, but also a chance to get unique insights into the behaviour of a baby elephant and its development. Therefore, when the baby was old enough to be regularly visited on hikes, we adapted our activity budget data sheet and ethogram to account for more specific behaviours only seen with the calf. Such behaviours are for example play behaviours with objects, other elephants or simply playful movements (e.g. swinging around the trunk, running around). At first, Lah Lah's only food source was Kha Moon's milk. But as she grew older, she started trying to feed on various objects such as grass, bamboo leaves, but also sticks lying around. Since all our older elephants already know what is edible and what isn't, we didn't see any of this "try feeding" behaviour, but we have added it to the ethogram now for the baby data. Just recently in November, Lah Lah was observed actually eating some bamboo leaves for the first time!



This year, we have also made some progress in analysing some of the data we are collecting. Our Elephant Science Coordinator, as well as a short-term intern tackled the task of looking into our elephants' activity budget data. Here are some of the results:



All GVI elephants (except for the baby Lah Lah) spent the majority of time feeding & food preparing (around 65-71% of time observed). The next frequent activity was walking, followed by “other” activities and resting. The category “other” activities includes behaviours like object handling, environmental and self-exploration, conspecific and human interactions, stereotyping, play behaviours, ear cocking or tail raising. As visible in the figure above, Lah Lah’s activity budget differed significantly from that of all other GVI elephants. She spent most of the time doing “other” activities (mainly exploring, playing, interacting with other elephants), walked and rested about the same amount of time as all other elephants, but only spent a very small amount of time feeding (suckling milk from Kha Moon).



The subadult elephants Lulu, Dee Dee and Charlie spent a little less time resting and a little more time feeding than the adults, but were otherwise very similar in their activity budget as the adult elephants.

Short-term intern Ally Woosley examined the activity budget data of our juvenile male elephant Charlie. Charlie joined the GVI project in late 2016 after having worked as a painting and posing elephant in tourist camps. Before joining the project, he had never lived in the forest. Due to this, he did not know how to forage for himself in the forest and would spend the majority of his day walking, because that was what he was accustomed to doing during the day when still in the camp. The mahouts Lek and Patti Sayee, as well as Charlie’s grandmother Thong Dee put in a lot of effort to teach him how to forage for himself in the forest.

Ally’s analysis above shows that Charlie’s activity budget in 2017 (data collection started in May 2017) was nearly identical to that in 2018 and 2019, which suggests that by then, Charlie was already fairly adjusted to his new life in the forest. A closer look into the feeding data might reveal how much of his food he was already finding by himself and how much was provided by the mahout.

Currently, our Elephant Science Coordinator is working on analysing the social network of our elephants. This could give us some interesting insights into how social the individual elephants are and who they have the strongest bonds with.

*Written by Chigusa Keller*

# PROGRAM PROGRESS: INTERNSHIP DEVELOPMENT

## DEVELOPING OUR CONSERVATION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

This year we've had a few new additions to our intern programs. We started a new component to the long-term conservation internship, where we play documentaries in pairs focusing on opposite sides of controversial issues, such as the slaughter of dolphins in Japan, and trophy hunting in Africa. Pairing the documentaries like this helps to give the interns real examples of the bias of media, and to understand the importance of being able to take an objective approach to international conservation.

We also created a staff mentor training. The training helps new staff to understand the general expectations and responsibilities for mentoring one of our interns, and serves as a means to properly introduce them to all the resources available to interns. This training has been given to all old and new staff and has been introduced to several other hubs.

Additionally, several more successful intern projects have been implemented as regular parts of our program. Long-term conservation intern, Michiel Maesen, created a new biodiversity hike involving arachnid quadrat sampling, and a local arachnid identification guide to go along with it. Long-term conservation intern, Cindel Delhedde, designed and completely remodeled a new kitchen and washing station for our project with the help of our local carpenter, Chat. Short-term intern, Emily Cox, worked with staff member, Chigusa Keller, to create our first ever gibbon acoustic triangulation biodiversity hike. Short-term intern, Ally Woosley, analysed activity budget data for one of our elephants, Charlie, and to how his behavior has changed over the 3 years that he has been with us and how this compared this to similar data on a wild Asian elephant.

*Written by Myles Davis*



# PROGRAM PROGRESS: AWARENESS RAISING

## PROMOTING ETHICAL ELEPHANT TOURISM THROUGH MARKETING

In 2019, the Chiang Mai hub has had the opportunity to expand its marketing capabilities, capitalising on this to develop a range of new methods of working towards one of the program’s key goals more effectively.

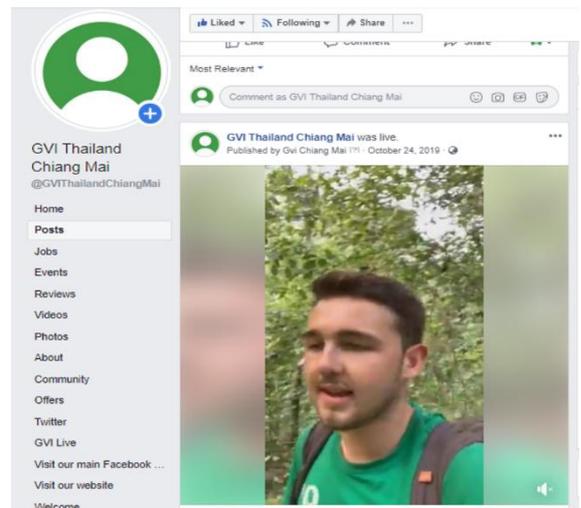
In the industry that this program is a part of in Thailand, there are many issues that are debated as to the ethics of keeping elephants in captivity. The hub has its own perspective on what it thinks is the “best-case” scenario, and by promoting what the program is and how it is done, the hope is that other organisations will take inspiration from that perspective in their own operation. The program receives a lot of positive feedback from volunteers regarding its mission, so it clearly resonates with people. Popularising this mission is one of the major ways to spread awareness of elephant tourism in Thailand and how tourists can make an informed decision about where they go to see elephants.

To facilitate this increase in marketing activity, a Content and Communications Plan was developed in Q2 2019 to provide an overview of what content would be creating for social media, as well as other communications to alumni or prospective volunteers.

Created within G:Suite, it is accessible for all hub staff, so that everyone is aware of marketing activity and can aid in contributing towards it, as appropriate. The additional benefit is that with content and comms being planned in advance, there is more strategy behind its production, leading to an increase in quality.

Hub Content & Comms Plan						
Key	Oct					
	7/10 MONDAY	8/10 TUESDAY	9/10 WEDNESDAY	10/10 THURSDAY	11/10 FRIDAY	
Email						
Facebook	Jonny and Steph Staff Announcement	Elephant Data Focus: Health Checks	Mahout Football	Open Days Reminder		
Facebook Live						
Blog						
	14/10 MONDAY	15/10 TUESDAY	16/10 WEDNESDAY	17/10 THURSDAY	18/10 FRIDAY	
	Chat w/ Villager	Intern Lecture Seah #2		Open Days Reminder	Newsletter Release	
			Gola Dinner		Alumni Newsletter #3	
					Content for Newsletter	
	21/10 MONDAY	22/10 TUESDAY	23/10 WEDNESDAY	24/10 THURSDAY	25/10 FRIDAY	
	Gola Dinner	Football Tournament	Volleyball Tournament		#HikeHighlights	
				Afternoon Hike		
					Intern Blog	

With a clear plan in place, this allows the hub to increase its post frequency on our main social media platform, Facebook. Facebook posts primarily focus on two key areas: 1) Provide an insight into our program and our ethical elephant tourism model. 2) Show the benefits of working with a local community to facilitate this model. Within these areas, there is a great diversity in topics covered on a month-to-month basis. Facebook Live is also utilised more frequently to provide immediate access to all activity at the hub, not just fundraising events. Not only did hub Facebook activity aid in promoting ethical elephant tourism, it also kept alumni engaged in the program so that their experience at the hub would remain with them and they would consequently tell friends and family back home about it; in this way, further awareness would be spread.



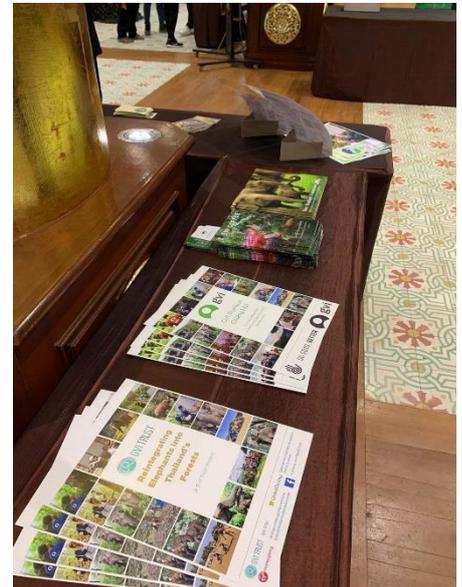
Two other initiatives further enhanced the hub's alumni engagement and helped increase and promote ethical elephant tourism in 2019. The first of these was the creation of a quarterly alumni newsletter. This newsletter, created by the hub for that hub's alumni, provides a much more personalised touch than generic alumni communications. The content provided within the newsletter is tailored to the alumni audience. Working alongside GVI Marketing, a template for the newsletter was developed in Q1 2019, using MailChimp. This is now the template for all other hubs to follow. A process for creating hub newsletters has also been developed alongside GVI Marketing, so that other bases can replicate it.

The first edition of the newsletter was sent out in April 2019, and the fourth edition is now releasing in the first month of 2020. Content typically includes an update on the elephants (the type of update only those working at the hub can provide), headlines from the hub (news, newly developed aspects of the program, fundraising activity updates, etc.), focuses on changes over the last quarter that have been particular highlights, and more. There has been plenty of feedback from alumni, grateful for the opportunity to continue to be engaged by the program even after leaving it.

The second initiative has been the creation of base handouts. These are available in both hard-copy and soft-copy, so that they can be distributed both digitally and offline. The handouts created so far include an Overview of the Program, a Fact Sheet about our elephants, a One-pager about the GVI Trust project we support and an Overview of Elephant Tourism in

Thailand. The hard-copies are displayed at base and are always available for new volunteers to read, in order to gain or consolidate further their knowledge. Volunteers are also encouraged to take these handouts home with them, functioning not only as souvenirs, but also as a physical piece of content that they can show to friends and family. Digital copies can be sent to any third-parties that the hub works with or are looking to work with in future, providing relevant information just by using existing materials. This saves time and maintains consistency.

In addition, in November of this year, two staff members attended the AZEC (Asian Zoo Educator’s Conference) Conference in Chiang Mai. This was an excellent opportunity to engage with other organisations in the area and spread awareness about the program. The base handouts were displayed at the venue and were given to other attendees when networking. This is yet another way that the handouts can be utilised to increase and promote ethical elephant tourism.



This year, a means of measuring the effectiveness of our efforts to work towards this hub goal was also developed. A market research survey was developed using SurveyMonkey in Q3 2019. This is a two-part session incorporated into the hub two-week schedule for program activity. On the first-week Monday, new volunteers complete a two-minute survey designed to assess their knowledge-level and experience with elephant tourism. Subsequently, on the second-week Thursday, they complete a similar two-minute survey. The process for this piece of market research is simple and is easy to understand. SurveyMonkey also provides useful analysis tools to assess the results. The purpose of the surveys are to see whether (after experiencing the two-week program the hub delivers) volunteers have a better understanding of elephant tourism and whether their knowledge level, as a whole, has improved. So far, evidence clearly points towards a substantive increase in that knowledge level. Therefore, the hub now has evidence that it is increasing and promoting ethical elephant tourism through educating participants.

## Ethical Elephant Tourism Knowledge Survey

Page 1

1. Do you think that elephants performing tricks or giving rides has an impact on the elephant's health?

- Yes  
 No

2. Do you know where the elephants in tourist camps and sanctuaries come from and how they are trained?

- Yes  
 No

3. Do you know what to look for to tell how a tourist camp or sanctuary treats its elephants?

- Yes  
 No

towards its goal to increase and promote ethical tourism.

*Written by Tom Mitchell*

Overall, marketing activity has been expanded to enable the hub to work towards one of the major program goals, while also being consolidated into a coherent plan, so as to have a focused goal. Many initiatives newly started this year are a first amongst all GVI hubs. These provide a platform that can be iterated upon in 2020. This will allow the Chiang Mai hub to continually improve how it works

# FUNDRAISING AND THE GVI TRUST

With a new elephant to support this year - Lah Lah - our fundraising towards our GVI Trust project has been even more necessary. We have run several big fundraisers this year, including a challenging 57km walk to the nearest town (a walk the elephants used to take for trading purposes), and a 3-day litter pick collaborating with other GVI hubs from around the world, picking up nearly 1000kgs of trash and making the local news!



Although our fundraisers have been successful, it is still challenging for us to bring in enough money every month to support our Trust elephants, so any further support is greatly appreciated. In 2020, we are working on a comprehensive plan for the GVI Trust to hand over the project here to the community. Throughout the time we have been in the village, a steady stream of volunteers has allowed the community to get used to running a tourism program here, learning some English, and running cultural immersion activities including our homestay system. The next step is to ensure the sustainability of this elephant reintegration project by creating an eco-tourism program with some of our current elephant owners, which they can eventually run independently. With homestays and cultural immersion activities already established, the next challenge will be to promote and market this program, bring in tourists, and create a sustainable business which also allows the elephants to remain in the forest! Another focus will be to continue to build capacities of the community here in English language, health and safety, and tourism management skills. We are really excited to work on this over the next few years.

*Written by Liane Fulford*

# HUB IMPACT AND EFFORT IN 2019



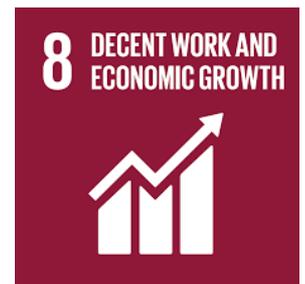
7 EFR courses run  
18 participants EFR trained  
1 community member EFR trained



35% of Primary School children reached age appropriate developmental milestones  
57 community students receiving bi-weekly English education from GVI  
8 women and 7 men from the community receiving weekly English lessons



62% of decision-making positions in our project occupied by women  
2 local women employed by GVI and trained in leadership skills



163 species recorded in 2019  
24 new species recorded, 4 from IUCN Red List  
200 participants trained in data collection techniques  
7 community members trained in data collection techniques  
22 surveys collected per month on elephants and biodiversity

172 volunteers took part in presentations on sustainable development topics and conservation discussions

# PLANS FOR 2020

Looking towards 2020, we hope to continue to welcome local staff members and scholars to our project, to ensure the village is as involved as possible in helping us hit our project goals. Staff members Shae and Liane are currently working on a revised leadership course to deliver to current and future scholars, which will hopefully give them some more skills so they can take on more and more responsibilities in our project, as well as a timetable, contract and duties list for scholars and local staff.

Another part of the program we really hope to develop more this year is the conservation curriculum, delivered to primary school children on a Tuesday afternoon. Following the attendance of the AZEC conference by staff members Chigusa and Jonathan in November, the conservation sessions have been very successful, covering topics such as plastic pollution, soil organisms, food webs, and more, in an interactive way. Of course, local staff Boh Duh and Su are invaluable help in these sessions, translating difficult concepts. We hope that this weekly lesson will encourage the children to take an interest in nature and know how to protect it.

We are also excited to roll out the new Bio Survey techniques course, which can be added on to any volunteer program. It is so important to us that volunteers come away from their experience here not only having made a difference to the community, but also having learnt things themselves and developed professionally, so we are always looking for new ways to ensure they get the most out of their time here.

