



# ASERC Conservation Education Policy

**OUR KIDS FROM TODAY AND TOMORROW  
IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR POINT OF VIEW FOR THE WAY FORWARD!**

16-03-2016

This document has been developed by ASERC to help guide and inform the practice of conservation education and provide a coordinated approach. It is intended for special schools, who support conservation ex-situ and in-situ. This living document will evolve to meet the changing needs of education philosophy and will be reviewed by ASERC regularly.

## **INTRODUCTION**

ASERC (Austrian Sri Lankan Elephant Research & Conservation Project) was founded in July 2005 with the aim of coordinating and promoting species protection and research as well as developing school programs focusing on biology and nature conservation. The issue is elephants both in situ and ex situ.

The Asian elephant is considered to be one of the most endangered large mammals on the planet. Nearly 80% of the original forests in Sri Lanka have been destroyed, and the space required by the elephants is being increasingly restricted by a human population counting about 20 million people. The main problems are expanding agriculture, the lack of corridors between the protected areas, and confrontations between wild elephants and farmers outside the protected areas.

The comprehensive ASERC protection project is multifaceted and encompasses animal protection, research and development, as well as very valuable environmental education, especially in the rural areas bordering National Parks like the near located Udawalawe, National Park.

### **ASERC Conservation Education Mission Statement**

ASERC wants to create an urgent awareness among the students and their families of the fact that the long-term survival of a thriving human population on earth is fully dependent on the rapid development of sustainability on a broad scale. Students get the possibility to learn about the many facets of ecosystems. The take-home message will be the urgency for nature conservation measures.

The great number of students in the chosen places of schools offers an excellent opportunity to increase public awareness for the irreplaceable values of a natural environment. Teachers in the schools can best promote nature conservation by education in the broadest sense. By raising awareness, it can help create the public pressure that ensures the future protection and preservation of natural ecosystems.

Conservation education can be achieved in different ways, but ASERC'S general ideas behind all these paths should be influenced by concepts such as:

learning by doing,  
learning by discovery  
and learning by participation.

All activities follow the motto "making science and research understandable for everybody".

"Never be afraid to cast your lot with a small band of people  
committed to changing the world; indeed this is often the only way change takes place."

-Margaret Mead

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched.  
They must be felt with the heart."

-Helen Keller

"If we can help young people keep alive their sense of curiosity, their joy of discovery, and  
their hope for the future, then we really can help make the world a better place."

-Dr. Jane Goodall

**Let's protect species diversity!**

**Key threats:**

- Habitat destruction
- Environmental pollution
- Hunting and poaching
- Displacement by neobiota (alien species)



**NOTE!**

It is important to note, that this ASERC Conservation Education Policy is focused on institutions/schools.

The support is for schools and their kids only!

**Conservation-Education Training and Awareness Program**

Within the next 3 years ASERC's conservation-education part focuses on the local residents and promotes awareness for nature conservation, especially in those areas where the elephant-human conflict has repeatedly flared up. During the entire duration a comprehensive school-activities of project-related lessons in species protection, biology and English will be funded by ASERC.

Therefore, following ASERC-programs should help to promote awareness for the irreplaceable values that nature provides and covers a wide range of environmental issues:

- Special school programs – through hands-on and minds-on activities
- ASERC drawing contest
- ASERC Clay-modelling competition
- Children's Book "Do you know, that ...?!"
- Excursions (Transit Home, Safaripark)
- Creating different animals masks
- Face fainting activities
- Creative workshops (Origami, Mandala, etc)
- Handcraft seminars (paper-production, batik-techniques, natural felt production, etc.)
- Interactive play-games (Olympics of animals, Science mobsils, etc.)
- Coloring-books Memory cards,
- Wildlife quizzes
- Puzzle rallye
- Specific worksheets for various grades
- Conservation Education Tool Box

### **Duration & Location of ASERC's new conservation education program**

In the years 2016-2018 there will be a big variety of different programs in following schools:

List of schools:

#### **School A**

Kindergarten (Montessori) School – Walawe Sri Wijaya Pre School, Damwelodiya Buddhist Temple, Kotaweheramankada, Balangoda.

Principal: Ms. H. Dinushika Samaratunga (Patron – Rev. Welipatha Pannananda)

Teacher & students strength of school: 01 teacher & 16 students

Grades and ages of students in school: Age 5 years

#### **School B**

Sunday Buddhist School – Walawe Sri Vidyananda Sunday Buddhist School, Damwelodiya Buddhist Temple, Kotaweheramankada, Balangoda.

Principal: Rev. Welipatha Pannananda

Teacher & students strength of school: 06 teacher & 93 students (expected to increase to 120 from Year 2017)

Grades and ages of students in school: Grades 1 to 11, ages 6 to 17 years

#### **School C**

Welipatha-yaya (=Wijaya-raja) Junior School – Ratnapura District/Balangoda Division Welipatha-yaya, Balangoda.

Principal: Rev. Welipatha Pannananda

Teacher & students strength of school: 13 teacher & 152 students

Grades and ages of students in school: Grades 1 to 5, ages 6 to 19 years

**Start of School Year:** 1<sup>st</sup> Week of each Calendar Year

### **Timetable of programs and respective activities in 2016**

The Sri Lankan New Year is on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> April and is an important festive period. Therefore in the schools A, B, and C first programs are proposed to be completed by beginning of 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016 already. It will be a painting contest where all paintings will have an essay/little story.

But additionally to the competition, there are also many other activities organized in 2016 like:

- Nature Student Committee
- Herbal garden & butterfly program
- Art competition
- „Flying“ journalist/reporter project
- Teacher Toolbox
- English books

For all these activities see following “activity timetables 2016 for the Welipatha-yaya Junior School and the Damwelodiya pre-school and Sunday School.

### **Evaluation / Reports**

One of the main important tools are gapless reports of each single activities and programs. Everything must be documented in writing and transmitted to all relevant parties. This is of great importance not only to know after a while what happened, but also of big value for all donors and/or to recruit new sponsors.

### Evaluation Interval

Another important step for successful cooperation-work is to have regularly evaluation processes. With that it is possible to integrate actual actions if possible.

Twice a Year, in April (before the Sri Lankan New Year), and in November (after the Year 5 National Scholarship Exams in August).

### Compilation and Submission of annual report and other progress reports

Annual Report in november and mid-term progress report in July

Besides these official reports regularly short infos and pics from the so-called „flying“ student-journalist/reporter should be forwarded.

### **Conclusion**

Within a very short time period, the children will develop an outstanding level of nature awareness. The result will be a holistic perspective of species conservation and biotope protection (= environmental education).

As we all are part of nature's rich diversity and we have the power to protect or destroy it. Biodiversity, the variety of life on Earth, is essential to sustaining the living networks and systems that provide us all with health, wealth, food, fuel and the vital services our lives depend on.

Human activity is causing the diversity of life on Earth to be lost at a greatly accelerated rate. These losses are irreversible, impoverish us all and damage the life support systems we rely on everyday. But we can prevent them. Let's reflect on our achievements to safeguard biodiversity and focus on the urgency of our challenge for the future. Now is the time to act.

This is an agreement between Vienna Zoo, Schoenbrunner Tiergarten Ges.m.b.H and the Welipatha-yaya Junior School, the Damwelodiya pre-school and Sunday School and the agreement partners commits to follow the ASERC Conservation Education Policy.



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