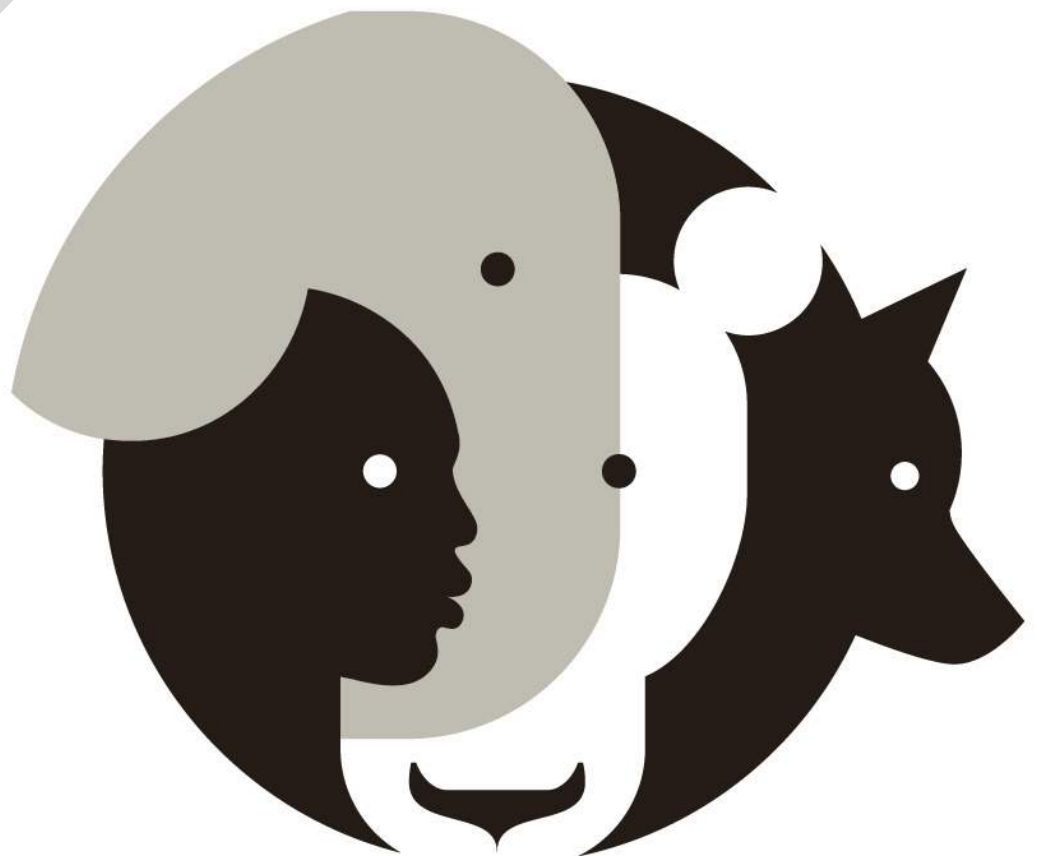


# IN THE SHOES OF AN ELEPHANT

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY PROJECT SHEET



**coexistence.life**





# ACTIVITY DETAILS

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## PROJECT TITLE

*In the shoes of...*

A journey around the world to discover the most fascinating and the most feared animals by man

## PROJECT DURATION

There are 7 Educational activities under the project "In the shoes of" that have a duration of approximately 50 minutes. Each of them is dedicated to a different animal. We have the Bear, the Tiger, the Shark, the Snake, the Elephant, the Wolf and the Bat.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The activity is structured in two different moments. At first, we discover what the kids know/think about the selected animal through the children's words. With the help of a microphone and a tape recorder, the children put themselves in the shoes of a journalist. They carry out a simple interview asking simple questions to their mates. It is the starting point for them to learn some curiosities about the species explained by the educators (conservationists, biologists, and zoologists). The second part of the activity involves greater dynamism and creativity. On the topic discussed, fun games and experiments are proposed to involve children and facilitators.

## PEOPLE INVOLVED

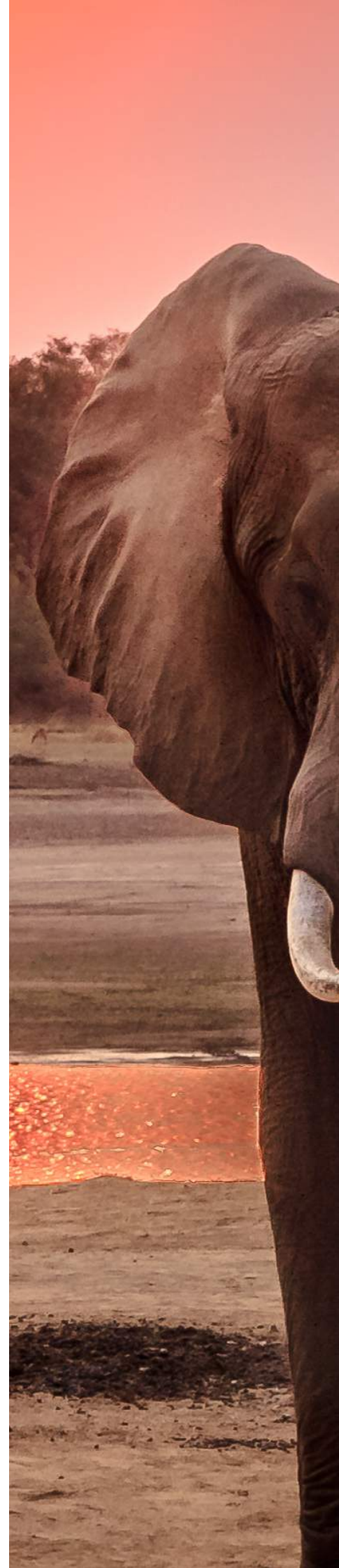
- School teacher or school facilitator (operator), if the activity is carried out at school.
- Educator: Expert in conservation, zoology and biology of large predators.
- Students: Age 6+



# ACTIVITY TABLE

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<b>TOPIC</b>	Coexisting with elephants
<b>TARGET</b>	Primary school, middle school and families
<b>DURATION</b>	Approximately 3 hours
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve general knowledge about elephants</li><li>• Understand what coexistence with elephants is about (including how to behave in case of encountering one)</li><li>• Learn about the threats elephants face</li><li>• Learn about different realities</li><li>• Involve students</li></ul>
<b>MATERIALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Powerpoint (Optional. Teacher to decide)</li><li>• Homemade theatre. Follow the <a href="#">link</a> for instructions</li><li>• A story to tell</li></ul>





# ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN

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## STEP 1

### GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ELEPHANTS

The activity could start (it's up to the teacher) with a short PowerPoint presentation. The presentation could be a way to teach the children basic knowledge about elephants (biology, ecology, threats and coexistence issues) to ease the understanding of the second step of this activity. For example, you could talk about:

**Biology and ethology of elephants:** Awaken children's curiosity by sharing information (scientific and curiosities) about elephants such as how they weigh, how much they eat, behaviours, etc.

**Elephant threats:** Explain the threats elephants face nowadays including poaching and habitat loss. Have a look at our [article](#) about the important role of the ranger in the conservation of natural protected areas.

**Coexistence issues:** Here, you can talk about land fragmentation that causes the destruction of cornfields and generates human-wildlife conflict. It is important that you mention possible solutions to inspire hope and commitment. For more information, you can have a look at our [article](#) that explains how the inhabitants of rural area built chilli fences to defend the farm from elephant raids.

**How to behave in case of close encounter:** There is a few literature around this, and we have compiled some in our library. Have a look at this [communication material](#) that looks into how to behave when meeting an elephant.



## STEP 2

### FIND A MEMORABLE STORY (WITH AN IMPORTANT ISSUE TO REMEMBER)

Remember that only a very small percentage of what we tell is remembered. Finding a story with a good moral or important issue will increase the chances of memorability. Here, you can choose any story you like. Below there is the story we chose as an example; ***“Jona and the elephant”***.

**Narrator:** *The story takes place in Tanzania inside the hut where the 10-year-old boy Jona lives with his parents.*

**Mother Selene:** *«cof cof» (the mother coughs) «cof cof».*

*Narrator: Jona wakes up and still asleep, reaches her mother who is preparing breakfast outside the hut.*

**Jona:** *«Mom, let me prepare the fire for you, the smoke is hurting your lungs».*

**Narrator:** *What an intelligent child! Always looking for a better way to fix things – Jona's mother thinks, stirring the porridge while she watches Jona arrange the wood sticks.*

**Jona:** *«One day we will have gas stoves and we will no longer have to burn wood so you will no longer have a cough».*

**Narrator:** *And here comes Jona's father, Jambo, with his machete. Showing a nice smile, he greets his wife and son and joins for breakfast. Jambo looks at the old sandals worn by his son and then at his broken sneakers from which his toes are now sticking out.*

**Papa Jambo:** *«Soon we will have enough money to buy new shoes».*

**Narrator:** *Jona finishes the last bite of porridge and greets the parents.*

**Jona:** *«Thanks mom, see you later! I go to school”.*





**Mother Selene:** «Bye bye. I have to go too, I'll go check the traps and if we're lucky we'll have meat for dinner tonight".

**Narrator:** From the forest comes the sound of broken branches and silent grey shadows appear. Elephant mother, Emora, lifts her giant trunk into the air and pauses to listen. The little elephant, Tamu, senses his mother's concern and approaches her. Aunt Nima follows them at a short distance, anxious and on alert.

**Elephant mother, Emora:** "I remember a time when it wasn't like that and the forest stretched all over the place. It was not interrupted by villages and cultivated fields. And you shouldn't hear the constant noise of people. There were no fences, no roads and there was no fear".

**Narrator:** Emora and Nima learned to survive in the forest from their aunts by recognizing the plants that could be eaten and finding hidden pools of water. The great herd no longer exists because they have all been killed by poachers for their ivory tusks. Emora have the courage to go forward and leads her small family to the edge of the forest. A large cultivated field appears in front of them and Emora begins to smell the danger. In the past, they could hide from the villages thanks to the dense forest. But now, with all these cultivated fields it is impossible to avoid open spaces.

**Nima, the aunt:** «What a delicious smell of this fresh corn, I don't know if I can resist».

**Narrator:** Following the mouth-watering smell Nima goes straight into the field. Emori hesitantly remains on the sidelines next to little Tamu.

**Voiceover:** «Elephants in the field!!»

**Narrator:** Suddenly a scream, lots of screams and whistles. Selene, Jona's mother, starts running.

**Mother Selene:** «Oh no! This is all the food we have for the next year».





**Narrator:** All the villagers start running with her, brandishing their machete and making as much noise as possible with the pots. Emora pushes her baby back to protect him, moves her big ears, raises her trunk and with her front paw begins to hit the ground repeatedly. Suddenly a shot.

**Mom Emora:** «What was it?! Where are you, Tamu?».

**Narrator:** Emora got into a real panic. She starts running towards the villagers, her instinct is to protect her baby. The villagers start throwing stones at her and they hit her several times. She tries to defend herself with her trunk. The three elephants manage to reach the edge of the forest and disappear among the vegetation.

**Narrator:** The following day, early in the morning, Jona crosses the village to go to the ranger's house.

**Jona:** «Hodi, hodi».

**Ranger:** «Karibu».

**Jona:** «Sorry for disturbing you sir, but yesterday I saw a big animal in the forest. It had small eyes and small ears but it was big, I was very scared but I stayed still to look at it».

**Ranger:** «Pole pole, slow down boy this is a great experience that must be told calmly. Tell me the whole story».

**Jona:** «I was walking in the forest on my way home from school and I heard something close to me, heavy breathing and I immediately thought of an elephant but it wasn't. He had a huge horn on his nose. I've never seen it before».

**Ranger:** «This is really good news, my boy, the animal you saw is a rhino. There are very few and we are looking for them. You'll be a good ranger one day».

**Jona:** «A ranger? I would really love it».





**Ranger:** «I have an important job for you, if you show me where you saw the rhino we will put on there a special camera, which will take pictures of him if he comes back».

**Jona:** «Will I be able to see the photographs? ».

**Ranger:** «I'll be happy to show them to you. But even more important is that with these photos you will receive money for the village and for your family».

**Jona:** «Really? Will I get money for the photographs?».

**Ranger:** «There are animals in our forest that live only here, people in other countries don't know these animals. If we stop cutting the forest it will be full of rhinos and other wonderful animals and when people see the photos they will understand that we protect our land and they will send us money to protect the planet».

**Narrator:** Jona's thoughts immediately go to her mother and her cough and to his father forced to sleep in the dust of the field to protect the harvest. This young boy now dreams about new ways to solve the problems of his community and suddenly he feels braver, full of hope and stronger than he has ever felt before.



### **STEP 3**

#### **LET'S PLAY A LITTLE COEXISTENCE THEATRE**

It is time to perform the story selected in the previous step. Performing a theatre play, in our opinion, has mnemonic advantages. It provides visual cues that help retain important concepts and it is a fun activity for everyone. To create your little theatre, based on the story selected in step 2, here are some useful tips:

- Make sure the children understand the story thoughtfully before performing it
- Make sure everybody has a role to play. Some children will move from character to character and others will read the story
- You can record and film the performance (with the parent's consent) to make children feel more important and focus more on what they are doing. Later another day, you can have a preview of the movie

