Project Update: July 2023

As per the indicated starting time in the schedule of project proposal was revised and started from date 15 January 2023 to 28 February 2023 following receiving the fund on 04 January 2023. During this time baseline information on both wildlife and target local community members, were properly gathered and compiled including data on, the floristic diversity, conservation status of woody species, the African elephant total population and the status of their habitats, features of dispersal, frequency, extent, causes, season, damage level of uncontrolled wildfire and related information about wildfire. The amount of construction wood and firewood, collected, frequency of poaching incidents and number of elephants poached, the spatial and temporal patterns of human-elephant conflict, the level of conflicts and the quantity of damage caused by elephants and perception and indigenous knowledge on biodiversity, conservation and sustainable utilisation of resources, information about types, spatio-temporal patterns, of human-elephant conflict and its economic costs from existing documents, the CCNP annual reports, the field visit and the findings of project one which was funded by Rufford Small Grant and entitled" Human-elephant Conflict and its Economic Costs around Chebra Churchura National Park, Ethiopia" to be able compare and evaluate the impacts of the implementation of conflict mitigation techniques, trainings and awareness raising programs at the end of the project.

Reconnaissance surveys for 25 days from date 01 to 25 February 2023 were conducted. All necessary information was collected. Official communication with the surrounding local government officials, community leaders and the park staff were also made. Teams were established and later participated in awareness programmes, training and implementation of human-elephant conflict mitigation techniques. Presentation and discussions on the central essence of the project was successfully conducted in each Kebles during this period (Photo 1).

Meeting with the park staff and presentation and discussions on the central essence of the project was also separately conducted during this period (Photo 2). All relevant and appropriate comments from the participants of each Kebles groups were organised and incorporated in the training manuals, questioners and focus group discussion points and the orientation was finalised.

Relevant comments and suggestions given on the workshop was incorporated the data collection formats and the project document and the orientation were finalised on 07 March 2023 and each group moved to the respective Kebles where they are assigned to collect data.

Actual data collection of dry seasons was carried out from date 09 March – 30 May, 2023 in six park adjacent Kebles Seri, Chebra, Delba, Yora and Shita.

Picture 1. Discussions at the Keble Level

(Picture 2). Discussion with the Park Staff (Chebera Churchura National Park).

During this period

Questions were addressed to the selected 800 households from the 20 park adjacent villages using standard formats and questionnaires. Assessments were carried out to identify community segments those are more vulnerable to human-elephant conflicts, the presence and absence of human-elephant conflict, its economic costs and the attitude of local communities towards human-elephant conflict, elephant conservation and their trust in the effectiveness of different human-elephant conflict mitigation measures and their recommendations. The interviewers were selected on the basis of chance encounter by the interviewer following the method (Newmark, et al., 1994, DemekeDatiko, 2013). Meeting and focal group discussion with local government officials and community leaders six people from 20 park adjacent Kebles at each Kebele administration offices was also conducted (Photo 3).

Picture 3. Meetings at the Kebles

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Picture 4. Focus group discussions.

Practical training on how to implement human-elephant conflict mitigation technics using chilli and honey beehive fence and evaluation of their effectiveness by uninterrupted follow up and confirmation if the elephants can cross those areas to adjacent villages, in the demonstration sites established at the elephant corridors in Seri and Chebera villages (Photo 4).

Environmental education and awareness raising programmes were conducted together with the community leaders in 10 elementary and secondary schools (Chebra, Seri, Yora, Delba, Gudumu, Boka, Keribella, Koyesha and Meta Elementary and Secondary Schools) and to the local communities, community leaders and local administrators in 20 park adjacent villages (Photo 6).

Picture 5. Chilly Fencing Practice at Seri Demonstration Site

Photo 6. Environmental Education and Awareness Rising Program for School Children/Students.