THE ISSUES
Human-elephant conflicts have increased over the last few years. Male elephants often feed on crops, and many farmers often retaliate, creating an unpleasant situation for both the parties. The Coexistence project was initiated by the Udawalawe Elephant Research Project in a bid to gradually encircle protected areas with community-based conservational initiatives and create conflict-free livelihoods for the farmers.

WHERE?
We focus on communities living adjacent to Udawalawe National Park and associated protected areas, in southern Sri Lanka. This area has roughly 1500 families, most of whom are farmers with a median annual household income below $1200.

HOW?
We started the pre-school sponsorship program 2018 in order to build trust with these communities and demonstrate our genuine commitment to their well-being. In 2018, six pre-schools were selected and in 2019 12 pre-schools were selected.