

## How the Karen community and MEF raise awareness

- **Storytelling and lived examples:** Sharing stories of elephants who live in their native forests with autonomy helps people understand the importance of elephants living in the wild.
- **Challenging assumptions:** The community encourages people to rethink their perspectives through a spectrum of experiences.
- **Highlighting autonomy as wellbeing:** Awareness is built by showing that true wildness for elephants is about self-determination, not isolation from humans.
- **Integrating science and culture:** Presentations bring together scientific observation, traditional ecological knowledge, and community experience to show elephants as cultural beings with agency.
- **Framing conservation as enablement:** Instead of controlling animals, the message is that humans should create conditions where wildlife can make choices, form social bonds, and shape their world.

### Ways everyone can contribute to solutions

- **Support habitats:** Advocate for and protect large, diverse landscapes where elephants and other wildlife can move freely and follow natural rhythms.
- **Promote coexistence:** Back community-led initiatives that reduce human-wildlife conflict and recognize that humans and elephants can share landscapes.
- **Value cultural knowledge:** Respect and amplify traditional ecological knowledge from local communities and mahouts who live alongside elephants.
- **Shift mindsets:** Help spread the idea that wellbeing for wildlife is about enabling autonomy, not just minimizing suffering.
- **Encourage responsible tourism and funding:** Support organizations and projects that prioritize animal autonomy and cultural continuity, rather than entertainment or strict management.
- **Be a learner, not a manager:** Engage with conservation as a process of listening and supporting, rather than imposing control.

In short, the community raises awareness by **transforming understanding**—teaching that wildness is a lived state defined by autonomy—and invites everyone to contribute by **protecting space, supporting coexistence, valuing culture, and enabling choice**.