

Orangutan TIMES

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program



Spring 2012

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Community Portrait: Sebadak Raya Village

Empowered communities such as Sebadak Raya are the greatest hope for conservation.

On the 22nd and 23rd of February, in the village of Sebadak Raya, an environmental activities day was held, which included discussions about customary forests, REDD++ opportunities and climate change. Community members were also able to partake in an environmental lecture, a puppet show for school children and environmental film screenings. The event was organized by Fauna & Flora International, Edi Nurdiansyah from Yayasan Palung (GPOCP), the volunteers of Yayasan Palung's TAJAM conservation volunteer youth group, as well as volunteers from RMI (The Indonesian Institute for Forest Environment).

Sebadak Raya has around 700 families, is located in the district of Sandai, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan, and is one of few remaining places in the region untouched by plantations and mines.

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Approximately 14,000 hectares of forest surround the village, of which 2,450 hectares are 'customary forest' or legally recognized traditional community land.

Trees stand tall around the community, the forest is valued and the community has appreciation for traditional customs. During the environmental activities day the team was invited to watch a fruit ceremony, a ritual traditionally held at harvest time. The indigenous communities of Sebadak Raya hold strong beliefs about fruit trees, they are viewed as a source of life and are forbidden from being cut down.

However, indigenous beliefs are not the only beliefs held in the village, the customary rules of other communities are also respected. Rules for having to keep certain livestock, such as pigs, is one example, and demonstrates the plurality of values that keeps harmony among the community.

Recently, agricultural and mining companies have tried, several times, to enter into the Sebadak Raya area. Despite their efforts, the community has stated their strong opposition to any such activity, and after a public hearing concerning the matter are currently standing against the companies' desires

to move into the area. The community wishes to conserve the forest for future generations to be able to appreciate, and be part of the natural environment that is so central to their traditional beliefs. In this time of rapid deforestation for conversion of land to agricultural and mining areas, where the disappearance of community lands is high, empowered communities such as Sebadak Raya standing up for their forests is what gives the greatest hope for conservation.





Orangutan Caring Scholarships Announced!

On Friday, May 18th, the two winning students, Rinta Islami and Ayu Agustin, selected for the first ever *Beasiswa Peduli Orangutan* (Orangutan Caring Scholarships Program) in West Kalimantan, were presented with their scholarships at an award ceremony held in Ketapang.

All GPOCP staff, the selection panel, the top eight students and local press attended the evening. Gary Shapiro, from program partner, Orang Utan Republik, flew in to present the scholarships to the recipients, making the evening a great official start to the scholarship program in West Kalimantan.

The program provides scholarships for local students from the Ketapang and Kayong Utara regencies to attend the Tangjungpura University in Pontianak, and is a collaboration between the Orang Utan Republik Foundation, Orangutan Outreach and GPOCP. A similar program exists in Sumatra, on which our program is based, although our program differs slightly, as we select students that are still in high school,

rather than existing university students. By selecting students still in high school the program sees the students through their entire university process, and links high schools and universities together in strengthening the future of orangutan conservation in West Kalimantan. The program has three main goals: 1) to foster an intellectual generation in Ketapang and Kayong Utara that has a commitment to, and concern for, the cause of orangutan and habitat conservation, 2) to provide moral and material support to young people of Ketapang and Kayong Utara for the continuation of their education to the college level and 3) to promote educational cooperation between parties in Ketapang and Kayong Utara on the topic of natural resource use. This year the program sought one student from each regency, and was aimed at students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

In order to apply, students were required to submit their school grades, two letters of reference and support from an academic tutor, a motivational letter and an essay about

orangutan and forest conservation. In total, 14 students applied, of whom eight passed the first phase. The second phase consisted of presentations given by the candidates and interviews with a jury, after which the final two recipients were selected based on the highest scores.

The scholarship value is approximately \$1500 per student, and will cover university entrance fees, yearly tuition fees for all four years, as well as research and thesis costs. The winning candidates have a number of obligations they must maintain throughout their time at university for the continuation of their scholarship into the following year. Each student's grade point average must be 2.75 or above, they must volunteer for one month a year at GPOCP and their research thesis must be related to Bornean orangutan conservation.

These exciting scholarships will start in the 2012-2013 academic year, and are a promising start to building an intellectual generation that is committed to orangutan and habitat conservation in West Kalimantan.

GPOCP Staff Profile

The Charles Southwick Conservation Education
Commitment Award Winner
Mariamah Achmad



In recognition of her outstanding commitment to conservation education, GPOCP's Mariamah Achmad was recently given the Charles Southwick Award by the International Primatological Society. Mariamah oversees GPOCP's education team and dozens of volunteers, coordinates all program activities and is continually developing the education program to advance conservation in communities around Gunung Palung National Park.

Mariamah grew up in West Kalimantan, the relatively isolated province where we work. She first became involved with environmental and conservation issues as a forestry student at the local university, Universitas Tanjungpura. She felt compelled to address the poverty and social conflict that so often causes environmental degradation in Indonesia. When inter-ethnic violence erupted in West Kalimantan, a result of the fall of the Suharto dictatorship, Mariamah worked with displaced communities, heading an alternative education program in refugee camps while finishing her undergraduate degree. In addition to her passion for environmental issues, Mariamah volunteers with local credit unions and women's rights organizations to build the stability her community needs for a

long-term conservation movement to survive. Education has always been a calling for Mariamah, before joining GPOCP she was the head of capacity building for the largest environmental organization in Indonesia, WALHI (Friends of the Earth Indonesia).

Mariamah has been an inspirational leader of our education team, and in her first year increased our outreach to extend to 40-50% more students and schools than the previous year, and further developed relationships with teachers in order to reinvigorate a commitment to environmental education in the classroom. In 2011 she oversaw a redesign of our lesson plans and the creation of specialized modules to cover mangrove habitat, climate change, eco-tourism, palm oil plantations and other issues particular to the communities we work with. Last year the program reached an impressive 5,833 students and 99 teachers in 135 schools throughout the Ketapang and Kayong Utara regencies, where 220 activities were conducted, including lectures, puppet shows and practical activities.

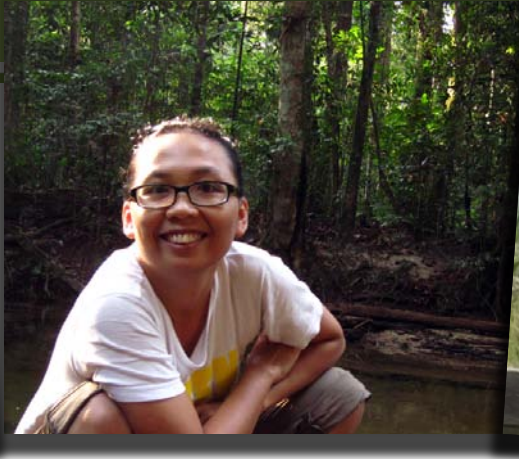
Her work has diversified our education program by mentoring secondary schools to develop their own volunteer conservation youth groups. These groups now take leading roles in organizing GPOCP outreach events such as Earth

Day and Orangutan Caring Week. Furthermore, Mariamah expanded our curriculum to include not only the teaching of important field skills such as plant identification, but also organizational management, presentation development and delivery and other related skills.

The Charles Southwick Award is structured so that \$250 goes to a local organization of the recipient's choice; Mariamah chose to give this to TAJAM, a local conservation volunteer youth group. The remaining \$750 goes to the award winner and Mariamah felt that she should use it to increase her capacity as a conservation educator. Therefore, to widen her national and international environmental network, and increase her conservation knowledge, she used the award to attend a conservation conference in Java held by the Indonesian environmental campaign group ProFauna.

It has meant a great deal to Mariamah to be recognized for her achievements and commitment to the cause she believes in so passionately. She has made, and no doubt will continue to make, a significant contribution to conservation education in Indonesia.

GPOCP Staff Changes



We are pleased to announce some important and exciting GPOCP staff changes that have taken place over the last four months. Serving GPOCP since 2008, Field Director, Andrew de Sousa, moved on to a new opportunity in Thailand at the beginning of 2012. Tito Indrawan and Monalisa Pasaribu have been promoted into the positions of Field Director and Operations Manager and Vicky Dauncey has joined us in the newly created position of Development Director.

Tito Indrawan, born and raised in Landak regency, is GPOCP's longest serving staff member having joined us in 1999 as a volunteer while studying at Universitas Tanjungpura in Pontianak. After finishing university, Tito became an official GPOCP staff member as an assistant for our Environmental Education Program and a year later became Coordinator for our Campaign project.

While coordinating the Campaign project he began to work with local radio stations to broadcast regular environmental programs.

In 2002 Tito became Coordinator for our Animal Protection Program, and during this time began to work with the Natural Resources Conservation Department (BKSDA). Tito was instrumental in making an agreement between GPOCP, BKSDA, the Police, FFI – Indonesia and Gunung Palung National Park Authorities to better enforce wildlife protection laws. From this agreement resulted the first ever prosecution of an orangutan trader in Pontianak in 2010. In 2009 Tito became Manager of our Wildlife and Habitat Protection Program, one of our two main programs, and then was most recently promoted to Field Director early this year, taking the place of Andrew de Sousa.

With Tito's longstanding service and outstanding dedication to GPOCP, promotion to Field Director was a natural step.

He is proud to work for GPOCP because he feels that we are unique in that even though we are not a large organization we have a comprehensive program covering areas as diverse as research, awareness and law enforcement, and yet are flexible and dynamic, maintaining good relationships with our government and community partners.

He is enjoying the role, the new challenges brought by it and the chance to concentrate on the work of GPOCP as a whole. Tito is optimistic for the future, and will continue to play a critical role in directing GPOCP's efforts to conserve orangutans and their habitat in Ketapang, Kayong Utara and beyond.

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Monalisa Pasaribu was born and raised in Ketapang. Studying Forest Management at Universitas Tanjungpura in Pontianak, she was part of the team that conducted the first orangutan population census in Gunung Palung National park back in 2001. Her passion for conservation and environmental education continued to expand as she joined Sibolangit Environmental Education Center in North Sumatra and Bodogol Environmental Education Center in West Java where she conducted environmental campaigns in schools surrounding conservation areas from 2002 through 2004.

Mona returned to Sumatra shortly after the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, where she volunteered with humanitarian NGOs providing assistance to victims in Simeulue, South and Southwest Aceh. Working with MSF and Oxfam she

was sent to locations such as Simeulue, Kutacane, Wamena, Pegunungan Tengah, Asmat and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Mona returned to Ketapang in late 2011 and was happy to join GPOCP, as she believes the organization has a proven commitment to the conservation of orangutans in West Kalimantan, and a unique perspective gained through our integration of research and environmental education at the same location. She believes her past experiences provide valuable inputs toward the development of a strong organization, which can strengthen the already excellent relationship the organization has with our partners.

Vicky Dauncey joined GPOCP in May as Development Director. In this newly created position her focus will be on fundraising,

communications and working towards shaping GPOCP through essential activities such as program evaluation and capacity building. Having worked in conservation for five years, primarily in Asia and West Africa, she hopes to be able to use her experiences to strengthen and develop the organization as a whole and bring a fresh, new angle to the work of GPOCP.

Vicky is happy to be back working in Kalimantan as it was there that her passion for great ape conservation was born nearly eight years ago, as a volunteer, and later an employee, of the Orangutan Foundation UK in Central Kalimantan. Since then she has worked all over the world specializing in integrated conservation and development and primate conservation. She earned an MSc in Conservation Science and most recently worked in Sierra Leone managing a national community-based chimpanzee conservation program. Vicky is enthusiastic about her new position and looks forward to continuing the fantastic work already taking place, while also being able to assist GPOCP in further developing and strengthening our work; moving ever closer to securing the future of the wild orangutan in West Kalimantan.



Pelansi's Rescue



Using Alternative Livelihoods to Help Mitigate Conflict

On Friday the 6th of April a male orangutan was rescued from a snare in the district of Ketapang, West Kalimantan, where GPOCP works. Pelansi, named after the area he was found in, had been trapped in a snare for 10 days, caught by his hand, without access to food or water. When GPOCP partner, International Animal Rescue Indonesia, an NGO working in the area to rescue and rehabilitate orangutans, was finally alerted to the situation they arrived to find him in critical condition. Pelansi's arm was infected and decaying with septicemia, which had already spread throughout his body causing a dangerously high fever of 104°F.

Nothing could be done to save Pelansi's decayed hand; so he underwent surgery to amputate his lower arm, just below the elbow joint. He is making a good recovery, and if he continues to do so should be able to be released back into the wild once a location is identified that is safe from snares and other man-made threats. Although Pelansi's recovery is miraculous, his story illustrates the plight of his species throughout Borneo and Sumatra. As a result of forest clearing for logging and large-scale agriculture, Pelansi was driven into an area where humans and wildlife are competing for space and food. One important aim of GPOCP's

Environmental Education and Alternative Livelihoods Program is to mitigate the conflicts that arise when orangutans and humans are forced to live close together in ever decreasing patches of forest. GPOCP works to raise awareness about issues such as the dangers of snares and the importance of forest and orangutan conservation.



Many Thanks to Our Recent Funders

Recent Funders: Anonymous • Arcus Foundation • Conservation Food & Health Foundation • Orang Utan Republik Foundation • Potrero Nuevo Fund of Tides Foundation • Sea World Busch Gardens • US Fish & Wildlife Service • Wenner-Gren Foundation • Woodland Park Zoo



Mission:

The Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program's mission is to develop a human community that is aware and motivated to conserve and protect the orangutan, its habitat, and biodiversity within the forest.



Visit our website at www.SaveGPorangutans.org to learn more about ways you can help protect the endangered orangutan

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Make a Difference!

We hope that you will commit your support to the Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program working to help save the Orangutans of Borneo, while promoting conservation and sustainable practices for future generations.

Today the world is changing rapidly and constantly. People realize that some of the changes we have seen have been detrimental to our environment. Others have created a movement of awareness and action to prevent future devastation. GPOCP has inspired and created local changes that have a global impact. We will continue to work with local communities and governments to promote sustainable living practices, which will in turn create conservation awareness, and ultimately protection for the Orangutans of Gunung Palung.



ORANGUTANS NEED YOU!

Interested in supporting our work with a tax deductible gift?

Donate by Check:

Checks should be made payable to Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program and mailed to: PO Box 15680, Boston, MA 02215. Please include your name and mailing address so we can acknowledge your gift.

Donate by Credit Card:

Visit our website at www.SaveGPorangutans.org, which will take you to a secure PayPal page.

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