



the Trust Times

**2025
ORANG UTAN
CYCLE**

TOGETHER WE GROW

we can make a meaningful
difference in their educational
journey.

PICK AND CLEAN!

keep it green by collecting garbage is the
simplest action that we can show them.

PLANT A TREE!

a small act of betterment in a
world that can often seem beyond
our control.

INTO

THE WILD

**5 weeks
15 treks
218 participants**

Scan for more!



Vol. 2025, Issue 1

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OFF THE PRESS

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Hello there, and welcome to the very first issue of The Trust Times for 2025!

It's your editor here still at Bukit Lawang Trust. Now, another cycle, "Orang utan," has come to an end, bringing with it countless stories of exploration and togetherness. This fresh edition of "The Trust Times" is filled with stories that remind us why we do what we do.

These pages introduce you to the game changers this year: volunteers who have gone above and beyond, students whose dreams are becoming brighter through our scholarship program, and fresh faces who have joined and supported our mission.

In this edition, we're not just celebrating highlights and new faces, we're appreciating the fantastic work that's shaping our community. Volunteers like Katie, Matt, Tanya, Rosie, Ozie, Windy, and David, whose dedication keeps projects thriving. Our safety initiatives are constantly adapting to meet the challenges of a changing world. The joy of new educational opportunities for our children and the growing bond between the Trust and the local community. Every moment, every project, and every step we take together lays the groundwork for something far greater than what any of us could achieve on our own.

So, whether you're a long-time supporter or just discovering what we do, we invite you to explore this edition, celebrate the progress we have made, and find inspiration in the pages ahead. If you're wondering how to be part of the next chapter, know this: There is always a place for you to be here with us. Visit our website for more information.

Thank you for taking part in this article and all of the things we'll do together in the upcoming chapters.

Through the jungle, the rivers flow,
Step by step, we learn to grow.

Warmly

Arya



Welcome on board!



My name is Tavie, and I'm the new Head of Operations at Bukit Lawang Trust. Originally from London, I've worked as a secondary school teacher, and for a not-for-profit offering coding apprenticeships and bootcamps.

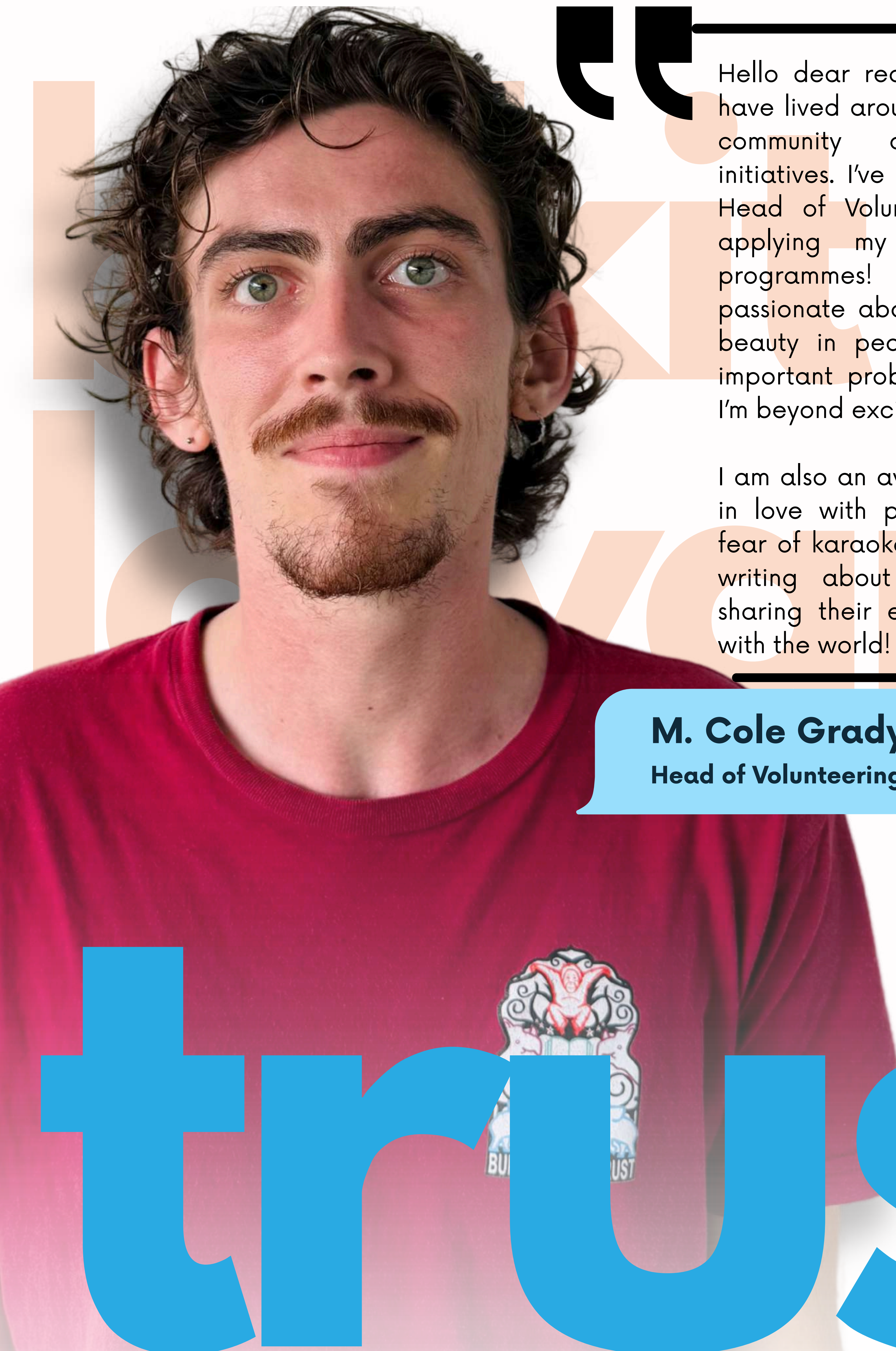
I'm excited to apply my experience in curriculum design to the BLT and learn more about sustainable development. I look forward to collaborating with staff, volunteers, trustees, and partners to ensure the BLT continues to positively impact the local community

I enjoy running, yoga, swimming, and cycling in my spare time. I've also loved exploring the environment around the Trust. A surprising fact about me is that I ran mosaic classes in London, and I hope to host a workshop for the BLT team and community.

Octavia Cogher
Head of Operations

trust

Welcome on board!



Hello dear readers! My name is Cole, and I have lived around the world working in various community development projects and initiatives. I've recently joined the Trust as the Head of Volunteering and look forward to applying my experience to the Trust's programmes! I am here because I am passionate about grassroots initiatives; there's beauty in people coming together to solve important problems in their communities, and I'm beyond excited to share in it.

I am also an avid writer, and I've quickly fallen in love with photography and overcome my fear of karaoke. My dream is to spend my life writing about organisations like the Trust, sharing their exceptional stories and people with the world!

M. Cole Grady
Head of Volunteering

the trust

Welcome on board!



My name is Maya Khairunisa from Langkat, North Sumatra. I am the Community Development and Regenerative Farming Manager at Bukit Lawang Trust, where I focus on sustainable resource management, community development, and regenerative agriculture. I work closely with local communities, NGOs, and the government to lead regenerative farming initiatives, youth and women empowerment program, village enterprises, conservation activities, and drive humanitarian programs. After years of working away from home, returning to serve my own community brings a deep sense of purpose. Being surrounded by the breathtaking Leuser landscape fuels my passion, making every effort even more meaningful.

Maya Khairunnisa

**Community Development and
Regenerative Farming Manager**



Into THE WILD

By Josu, Staff

At the beginning of the year, from January to February, Bukit Lawang Trust (BLT) successfully conducted its Jungle Trekking Program for Youth Ranger, engaging approximately 218 participants, including elementary school children, kindergarteners, and parents. This program was carried out regularly every Thursday and Sunday, providing a hands-on conservation learning experience while introducing children to the wonders of the forest.

Throughout the trekking journey, participants had the opportunity to learn directly from nature, observe diverse plant and animal species, and engage in interactive outdoor activities. For many children, this experience was their first encounter with the rich biodiversity of the forest, including a rare and unforgettable sighting of an orangutan.

Beyond trekking, BLT also organized a special camping program, marking the culmination of our conservation efforts through the Youth Ranger Program. However, this camping experience was exclusively for selected children who had successfully completed their environmental projects. A total of 16 students from three different locations participated in this immersive experience.

Through this initiative, BLT continues to inspire young minds to appreciate and protect the environment, fostering a deep connection between children and the natural world. We are proud to contribute to environmental education and conservation efforts and look forward to expanding our impact in the future.

With each child we engage, we are one step closer to creating a world where harmony with nature is prioritized and where the environment is cared for as our most valuable resource.

By instilling these values early on, we hope to cultivate a generation that not only understands the importance of preserving our ecosystems but also takes active steps to safeguard them. Conservation is not just about protecting wildlife and landscapes; it's about ensuring a sustainable future for all living beings.

Exploring, Protecting, Camping

By Ozi, Volunteer



The camping trek was an incredible and unforgettable experience! Two days and one night filled with adventure, learning, and teamwork.

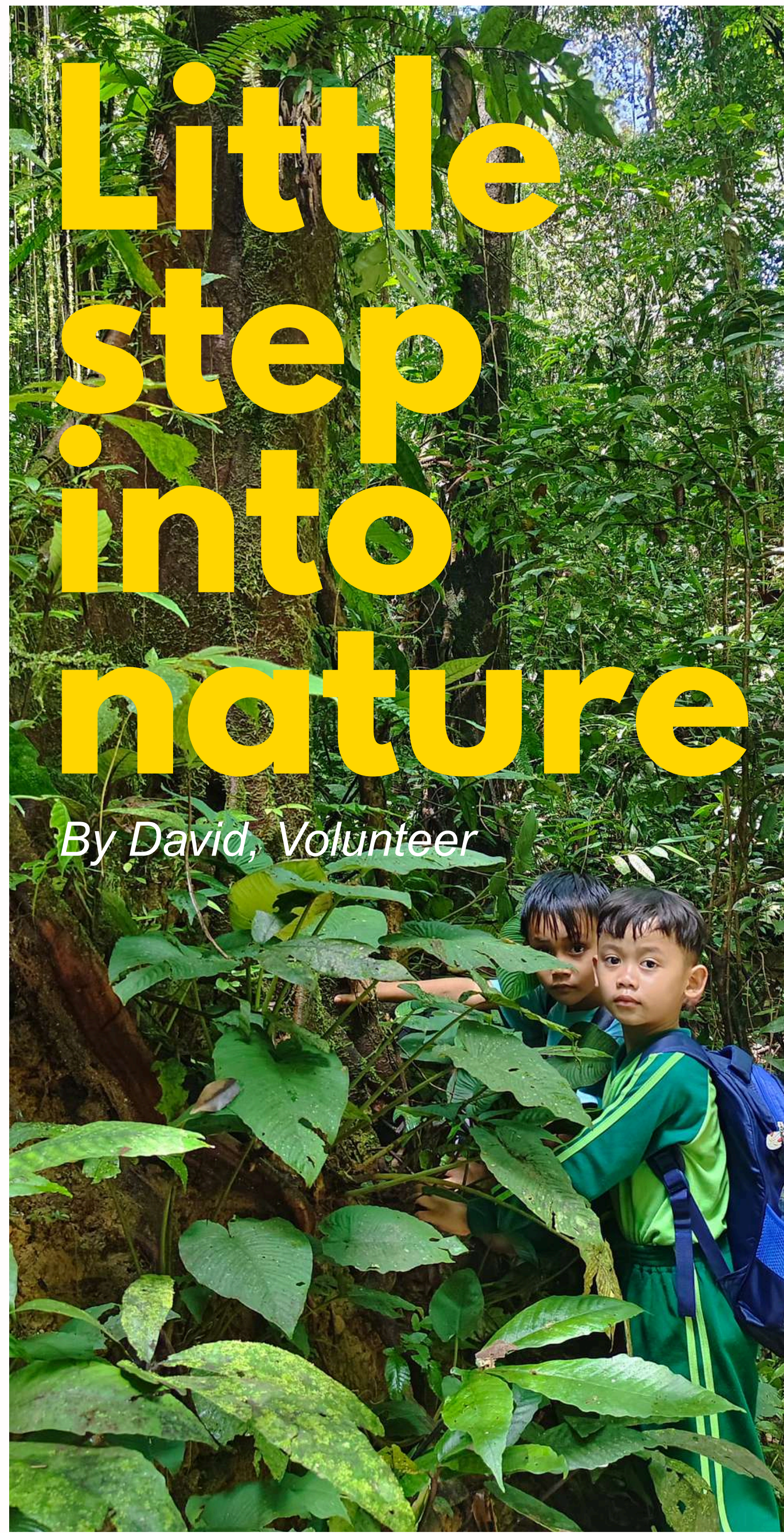
Selected Bukit Lawang Trust Youth Ranger students from different teaching areas came together, chosen for their consistent conservation efforts and good deeds each week. More than just a camping trip, this trek was a meaningful journey, teaching them the importance of the jungle and how to protect them, especially the rich biodiversity within Gunung Leuser National Park. The ultimate goal? To shape them into true "Conservation Warriors."

Throughout the trek, the students engaged in various activities that deepened their understanding of conservation. They learned about the delicate balance of nature, the importance of preserving flora and fauna, and the critical role the jungle play in their daily lives. These lessons weren't just theoretical, they experienced them firsthand, surrounded by the beauty of the national park.

Beyond learning, the trek was packed with engaging games and activities, all linked to conservation. These interactive sessions reinforced key concepts in a fun and memorable way. One of the most inspiring aspects was witnessing the students enthusiasm. Despite coming from different areas, they quickly bonded, working together seamlessly as a team. Their eagerness to learn, their excitement in every activity, and their willingness to collaborate made the trek even more special.

This camping trek was more than just an outdoor adventure, it was a transformative experience. It strengthened their connection to nature, instilled a sense of responsibility, and inspired them to continue their conservation efforts. Watching their passion grow was a powerful reminder that these young rangers are the future protectors of our jungle.





By David, Volunteer



I arrived at the Trust an hour before we left and it was already a hive of activity. Checklists being checked, equipment being sorted and eventually, the TK kids and their mothers being counted. I had been tasked with looking after Adiba for the day. Her mother was coming but would have her hands full with her little brother. The transport, which was one bus and three farm trucks, soon arrived and we all piled in. I was lucky enough to get the front seat of one of the farm trucks, the rest of the group had to stand in the back, like goats.



Batu Rongring is a lovely area of jungle. It is adventurous enough for TK kids but easy enough for the mothers and other adults to enjoy themselves. Adiba is fearless, so I often had to catch up with her as she raced ahead to pick up a stick or point out a mushroom. It was great to see her enthusiasm for nature.

After seeing the giant tree, the pride of Batu Rongring, we rested by an idyllic stream where Josu, the head of Youth Rangers, led us all in some meditation and mindfulness. I was very impressed by the patience and focus of the children. It was soon time to keep trekking, and our route quickly became challenging. We followed the stream which entered a small rocky canyon. We had to climb on slippery wet rocks and wade through deep water. At some points, the water came up above my knees and up to the chests of the children. The adults found it very challenging, often needing the help of guides to navigate obstacles. The children, however, never complained once and seemed to thrive the more challenging it became.

We arrived at the river, where we settled in the shade to eat our lunch. The children play in the water, climb on the backs of the staff and volunteers or splashing us with water. Rivers are dangerous, but these kids have played in fast flowing water their whole lives, so while being vigilant, we're never concerned for their safety.



After an hour or so it was time to move on, which involved wading across the river twice. I took Adiba by the hand as we struggled against the current. She soon got bored and left me struggling on the slippery rocks alone while she easily made it to the far bank by herself. It was another time when I felt like the children were there to help the adults finish the trek rather than the other way around.

After spending an hour at another swimming spot, the children got changed into their dry clothes (I hadn't brought any) and we piled back into the vehicles and made our way back to Gotong Royong. Most of the kids and some of the mothers slept most of the way.

It was a great day out, and I came away humbled by how adventurous, patient, focused, and well-behaved the children were. I hope they keep this enthusiasm for nature for the rest of their lives.



"YOU" are the missing piece we need

___R ACTIONS COUNTS



Orang Utan

cycle 2025



Your Safety Matters: Enhancing Safety Around the Trust

By Rosie, Volunteer

In this cycle, we've been working on improving health and safety at the Trust—testing out our new fire evacuation procedure, updating safety signs, and expanding our research on earthquakes. Running fire drills has really shown me how important it is for everyone to understand safety procedures because, in an emergency, that knowledge could save lives.

The first drill was a bit chaotic; people were scared and unprepared—but the second one went much better. Teachers had their registers ready, and staff were calmer and quicker at clearing the building. Making sure everyone at the Trust knows these procedures is so important as Bukit Lawang is a small village in a tropical region, so extreme weather is not uncommon. While earthquakes are rare, they do happen, and heavy storms and flooding are much more common, especially during the rainy season.

Knowing the basics is even more important as you never know when and how long one will last. I've also noticed that a lot of people in the local community don't know what to do in a natural disaster, simply because there aren't many resources on it. I've even learned things I had no idea about before coming here, like not staying in a car or standing under a tree during an earthquake. It's made me realise just how important it is to keep sharing this knowledge and making sure everyone feels prepared.

It's crucial that we keep raising awareness and providing resources to ensure that everyone knows how to respond during a natural disaster. Regular drills, educational workshops, and accessible information can go a long way in empowering individuals and families to take quick, informed action when needed. The more we work together as a community, the stronger and safer we will become in the face of adversity.



Fire Alarm: Alerts to fire, also it will help prompting evacuation.



Emergency Ladder: Quick escape tool for high places.



Whistle: Signals attention in emergencies.

Colors of Culture:

TK Kids Explore Batik

By Tanya, Volunteer

One of only three batik masters in Sumatra, hot wax, coloured dye and 40 kindergarten kids concentrating for 90 minutes. What could go wrong? To say I had low expectations when I heard about the plan was an understatement.

The first challenge was overcome with the teachers and volunteers preparing the wax designs the night before. Skin was burnt and mess was made but at least it wasn't multiplied by 40.

On the day, 40 kids safely went up 2 flights to the roof and calmly sat in rows on the floor. Master Naldi arrived and spoke to the children about what we were going to do. They were all rapt with attention. We split into groups of 4 or 5 so each corner of the letter could be held flat whilst one child painted. After a few minutes, my group eventually managed to hold the material flat. the first child chose their colour and started painting...They were so good, taking turns and painting inside the lines. Much tidier than if I had done it. It was so great to see so many children absorbed for so long and the end result was beautiful. The banner is now proudly hanging above the front door "kita ❤️ hutan" or "we love the forest". It makes me smile whenever I walk under it.

This experience has shown the power of teamwork and creativity. The banner, a symbol of their love for the forest, serves as a reminder of the positive impact we make when we work together.





**Nature is not
a place to visit.
It is a home.**

-Gary Snyder-





PICK AND CLEAN! KEEP IT GREEN!

How a Simple Clean-Up Can Make a Lasting Impact on the Environment and the People

By Ari, Volunteer



Wednesday, February 19th was my first garbage collection activity with Bukit Lawang Trust along the Bukit Lawang Small River. I did it with the Bukit Lawang Trust volunteer manager and a volunteer from California. It was very enjoyable because I felt like I was part of small acts of kindness to others. As an Indonesian who lives far from Bukit Lawang, the garbage collection activity made me understand that simple things that people rarely think about in other parts of the world actually have a big impact here. The Bukit Lawang community depends on the rivers around them for their livelihood, so collecting garbage is the simplest action that we can show them.

This activity has the potential to be a small example that will grow if we can involve more people. I didn't expect that collecting garbage along the Bukit Lawang River would provide a beautiful and new view. Seeing a clean river flow is always fun! Not only that, I can also get to know the community better and mingle with them. Greeting children playing in the river or having casual chats with mothers cleaning their clothes and cutlery there. These moments were full of warmth and simple joy, showing me how small actions—like cleaning up the environment—could lead to meaningful interactions.

Bukit Lawang Trust must do this activity routinely because it makes us closer to the hearts of the people. This is one way to be useful and introduce our identity more deeply to them, not only by knowing the names but also knowing what dreams we are working on for Bukit Lawang. I am sure the community will be willing to get involved if we can win their hearts. Don't forget to announce it to more people outside Bukit Lawang Trust!





Plant a Tree, Live in Harmony!

By Cole, Manager

Bang Naldi has been something of a fixture this cycle: he ran a class in Batik painting for our TK kids and offered sessions to some of our staff and volunteers. For each person who completes one of his batik workshops, he treks into the jungle and plants a fruit tree. In time, he hopes, he can feed the animals whose homes have been replaced with rows of sawit.

More than most, I believe Naldi feels the effects of deforestation—that march towards the destruction of our natural ecosystems. He grew up on the shores of the Landak River; its waters do not crest as high as they once did, and the fog over the jungle-covered mountains comes less often. The changes are subtle, deceptively slow, yet ever present. It gets to him, this slow change, and it pushes him to keep fighting for the land he grew up on.

He was kind enough to offer us the opportunity to join him on a tree-planting expedition into the jungle. We departed promptly at 9, and our arms quickly grew numb as we carried the heavy durian saplings from the Trust's front doors, waded across the Landak River, and scaled boulders along the edge of the creek. Naldi asked permission to enter the jungle, cupping his hands and shouting upstream: a polite warning that we were entering a space that did not belong to us.

Every few steps, we caught glimpses of vibrant, exotic plants hidden beneath the towering trees, their colors almost glowing in the dim light filtering through the canopy above. Despite the strain of the journey, there was a sense of reverence in the air—an unspoken understanding that we were guests in a world that had existed long before us.

We scaled the steep creekside slopes until we found suitable patches: relatively flat with enough surrounding foliage to protect them from the elements. One by one, we planted our young trees – each one will hopefully grow to be a testament to the legacies we leave at the Trust.

We worked together, our hands digging into the earth with care and purpose, knowing that each tree would one day stand as a symbol of our dedication. As we stepped back to admire our work, a quiet sense of accomplishment filled the air, the promise of new life taking root in the soil.

Even though our work may be one young tree among many, in time it will grow to be something much greater than ourselves, a small act of betterment in a world that can often seem beyond our control.



David



Rosie



Matt



Windy



THE CHANGEMAKERS



Tanya



Ari



Katie



Ozi

TOGETHER WE GROW

By Olya, Manager and Windy, Volunteer



As the saying goes, "It takes a village to raise a child". Here at the Trust, we too believe that collaboration between all adults in a child's life is crucial for their healthy development.

For a couple weeks for the second time this year, the Trust has been bustling with meetings that brought together teachers and parents to discuss the vital role we all play in fostering each child's development. Although a little unconventional for the rural Indonesia setting, these meetings had many a great outcome and both the teachers and parents were excited about the opportunity to talk about the children we hold so dear to our hearts!

The focus of the conferences was on three important areas: reading/writing, math skills, and social-emotional development. Teachers emphasized that these are skills that require practice, dedication, and patience—something that doesn't develop overnight but is cultivated through consistent effort.

Each child's development is unique, and we encourage open communication between teachers and parents to ensure we are supporting every child in the best possible way. Teachers are diligent about tracking progress, whether it's through daily observations or updating our individualized recording sheets, and we ask that parents continue the learning process at home. The growth of a child happens best when we all work together—parents, teachers, and the community.

The spirit of the conference wasn't just about reporting progress; it was about building a relationship between home and school and creating a space where parents feel comfortable asking questions and sharing insights. After all, the child's well-being and growth are at the heart of everything we do, and by staying transparent and involved, we can give them the tools they need for future success. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in their educational journey.



Empowering Dreams:

Unlocking Opportunities Through Scholarships

By Maya, Manager

Before the year 2024 wraps up, Bukit Lawang Trust launched its highly anticipated Scholarship Program, a powerful initiative designed to empower youth from the Bukit Lawang community. The program aims to support students in their pursuit of education while equipping them with the skills necessary to become future leaders and contributors to sustainable community development.

After receiving 13 applications, the selection process was rigorous, with candidates asked to provide exam results, household financial details, a cover letter, and a CV. Following a first round of interviews, we narrowed the field to four finalists. The chosen students were knowledgeable about their desired course and also showed deep awareness of Indonesia's current challenges demonstrate a passion for their studies and a readiness to engage in meaningful discourse. This scholarship program not only fosters academic achievement but also seeks to cultivate a generation of individuals committed to improving their communities.



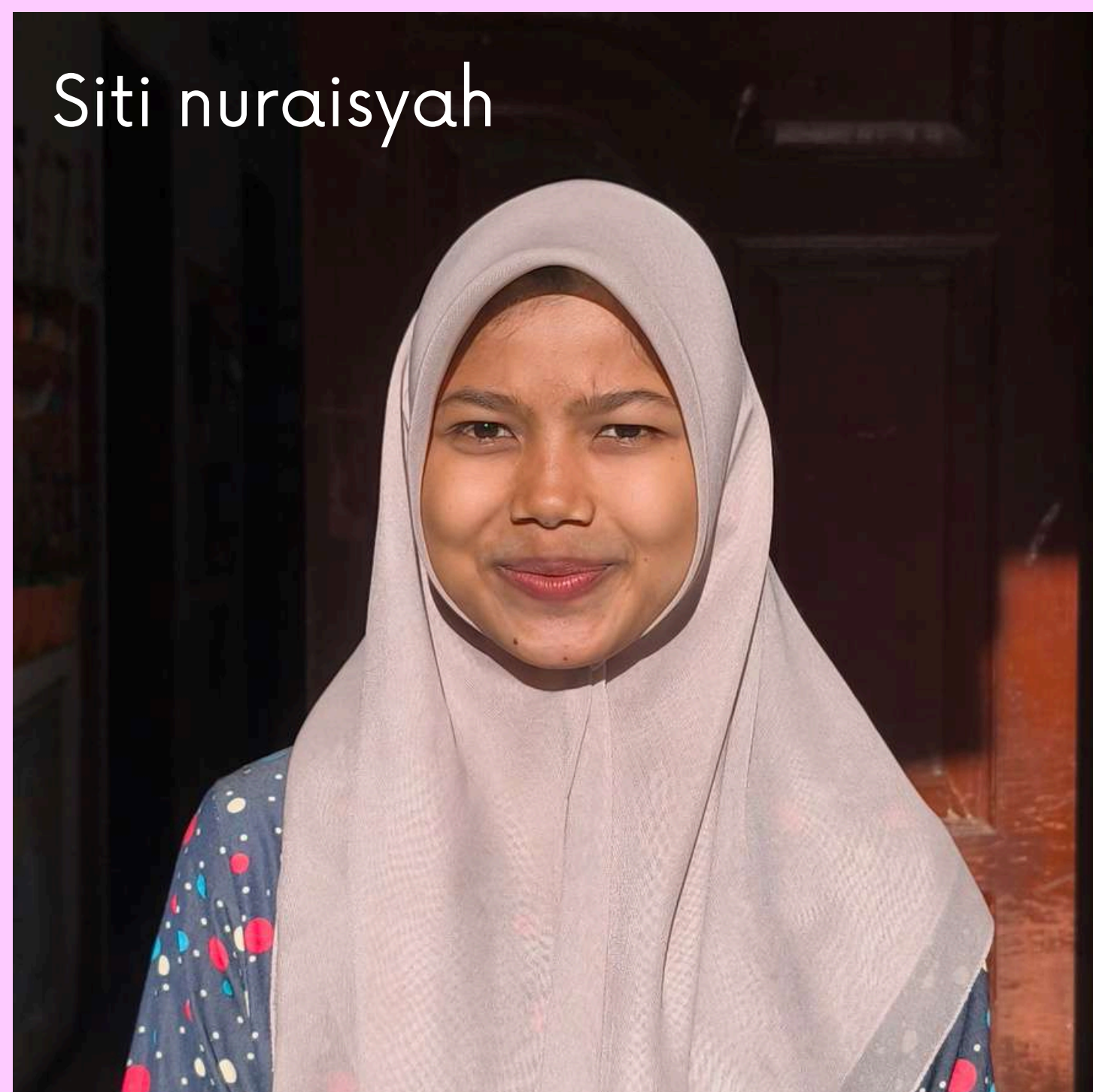
In addition to financial support, the scholarship program places a strong emphasis on building leadership capacity. We are committed to equipping these young individuals with the tools, knowledge, regular classes and opportunities they need to lead within their communities. By investing in their education, we are also investing in the future of Bukit Lawang.

We look forward to working closely with our scholarship recipients, their families, and the wider community to ensure that this program not only fosters personal growth but also contributes to long-term, positive change. Through transparency, accountability, and cooperation, we aim to create a lasting impact for both the students and their communities.

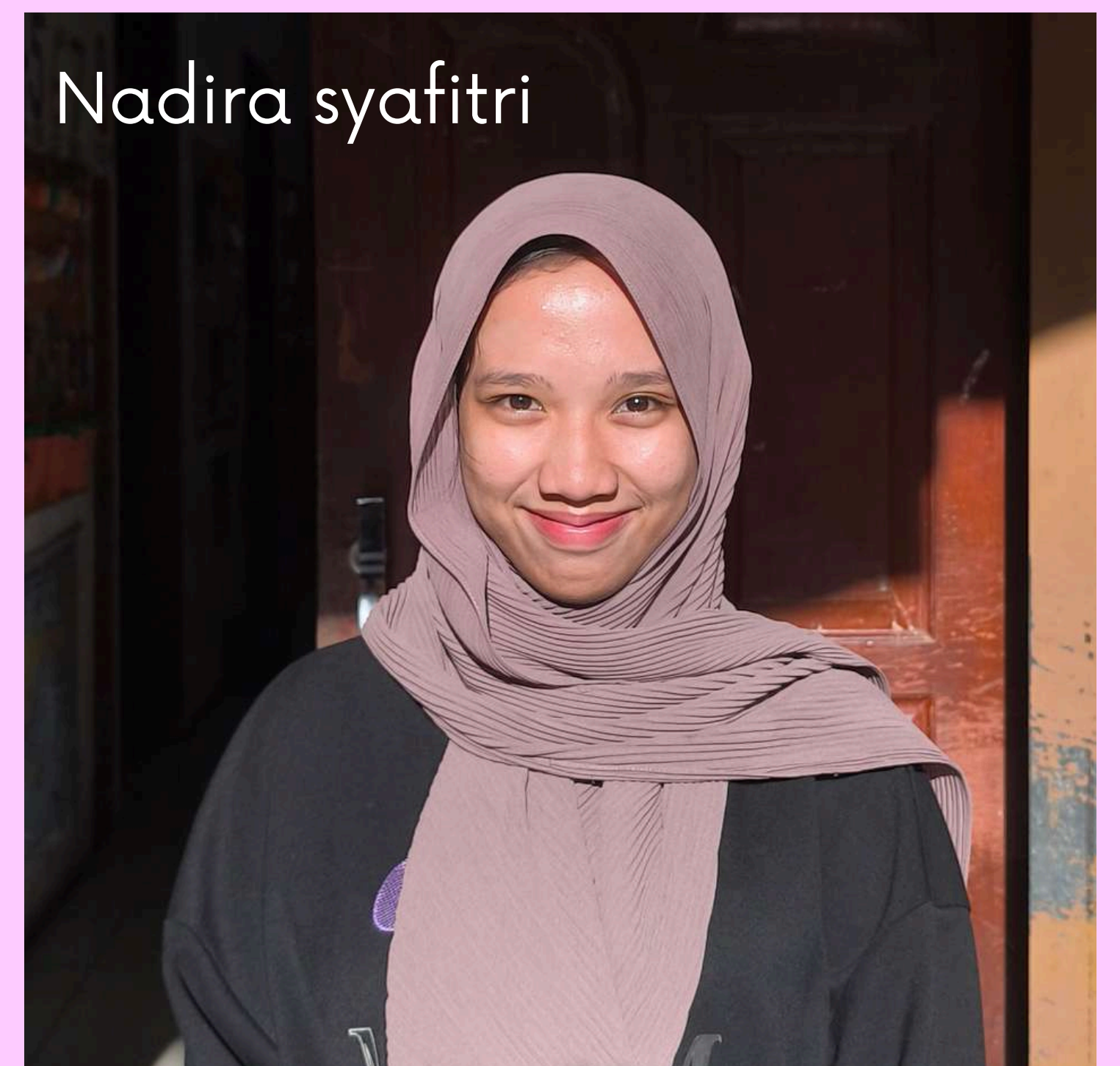
One key objective of the program is to provide educational support by offering financial assistance, ensuring students can access quality education without the burden of financial constraints. This year, our scholarship recipients have expressed a desire to study in Medan, but we hope to encourage them to consider studying beyond Sumatra, opening doors to broader experiences and networks.

Our scholarship awardee:

Siti nuraisyah



Nadira syafitri





with us

with us

Act Today



Be the Change

with us

www.bukitlawangtrust.org

Now
or
Never

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Impact Forever

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