



THE TRUST TIMES



DECEMBER 2023
Harmony in Diversity

Celebrating Nature: The Conservation Festival

For our 20th anniversary on November, we are holding a Conservation Festival to celebrate with the community. We invited stakeholders and all surrounding communities to come and build a sense of community and shared responsibility. - Page 1

A Love for Giving Back!

Fundraising for the Trust was an important part of my personal journey to get here because it showed my dedication and brought the people I really care about together. We all felt empowered. To be able to give money to such a great cause. - Page 13



We are the **Bukit Lawang Trust**

a grassroots Conservation & Education charity
based in rural North Sumatra, Indonesia

The Bukit Lawang Trust was founded in response to a flash flood in 2003. The flood destroyed much of Bukit Lawang and killed more than 240 people, leaving approximately 1400 people without a home.

Rebecca Coley as our Founder had visited the village a couple of months before the flood and decided to take action to help those she had met on her travels. Rebecca set about raising funds and went back with her family to provide basic aid to those affected. Initially, the Trust took the form of a medical clinic serving those who were suffering as a direct result of the disaster.

In 2007, fourteen volunteers from Rebecca's home-country travelled to Sumatra to build a permanent structure for the Trust, along with local people and support from the Jersey Overseas Aid Commission.

Our mission is to facilitate an economically and environmentally sustainable balance between human activity and severely endangered natural ecosystems through the implementation of a range of volunteer led development programmes.

We deliver high quality education in Conservation, English language, Eco-farming and Sustainable Business Enterprise in order to enable people to access more opportunities for their academic, financial, physical and holistic wellbeing as well as foster a respect and care for the environment. Through our volunteer cultural exchange programme we are able to provide free, quality education to rural communities here in North Sumatra to build stronger, more resilient communities while supporting efforts to protect severely endangered ecosystems.

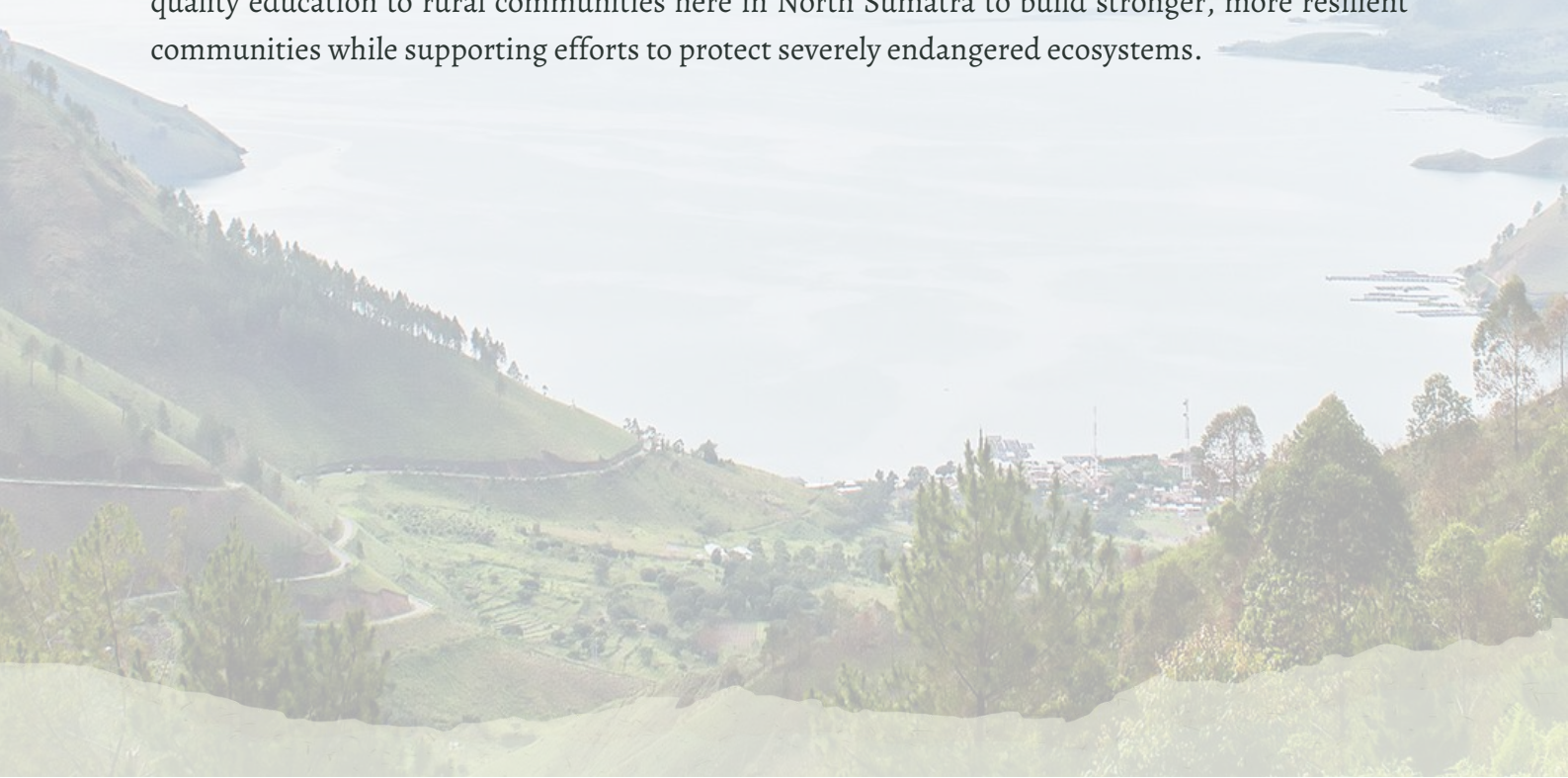




Table of Contents

1 *Celebrating Nature: The Conservation Festival*

5 *Flooding in Batu Katak*

9 *Our New Volunteers!*

14 *Rubbish – Where Does It Go?*

18 *Make A Change With Us!*

Content Director & Editor:

Agnesia Yolanda

Content Writer:

Agus Damanik

Berlia Yolana

Deumati Kumari

Emily Munden

Jane Keogh

Lailatusifa

Laura Bowmann

Matthew Wright

Melanie Fay

Olya Rubinova

Skye Graham

Yessie Cinthya

Proofreader:

Melanie Fay



Celebrating Nature: The Conservation Festival

By: Yessie Chintya

For our 20th anniversary on November 2nd, we are holding a Conservation Festival to celebrate with the community. We invited stakeholders and all surrounding communities to come and build a sense of community and shared responsibility. We aim for the festival to provide a powerful platform to raise awareness, encourage community involvement, and promote sustainable practices. This festival serves as a vibrant celebration of our natural world.

The festival features a variety of activities by combining education, entertainment, and community engagement. Our participants from the Business Program came to sell

their products and used sustainable products for their sales. They no longer used plastic and changed it into paper bags. We create interactive play displays that include educational games and live demonstrations that make learning about conservation an informative and fun medium for adults and children to learn about the environment in an engaging way.

In the arts and crafts activity, we showed participants how to use the rubbish for things such as brooches, pencil cases, pins, etc.

There was also an exhibition of mosaic paintings created by children from the locations where we served that the public could enjoy. The last thing was face painting, where children painted their faces with pictures of animals in the forest.

We are very grateful to all the Trustees who have supported us so that the Bukit Lawang Trust can serve it wholeheartedly to this day! We always hope that our programs and what we do here can make an impact.



Ecofarm Trip with Our Kindergarten Students

By: Lailatu Sifa

One of the routine activities we do for TK at Trust is taking them on a tour to one of our partners, the 'Eco Farming.' They are taken on a tour around the location and guided by the Eco Farming staff. It starts with learning how long it takes to decompose various types of waste such as plastics, diapers, and others. Then, they are taught about the plants there and their benefits. All the plants there use organic fertilizers and produce their own compost, such as from animal manure.

After finishing the garden tour, they are then gathered in the hall. They learn about ecosystems, forests, various animals, and especially the special animals in the Gunung Leuser Ecosystem. They learn how to preserve forests, love forests, what can and cannot be done. Then, they are introduced to the animals in the area such as tigers, elephants, and orangutans. They learn a lot, especially about orangutans, starting from the genetic similarity between orangutans and humans, the life cycle of orangutans, and the benefits of orangutans for the forest.

After the lesson is finished, to ensure their understanding, we then ask them questions. To keep them happy and engaged, we provide them with elephant, tiger, and orangutan masks to wear. We believe that our activities during this tour are very beneficial; they not only learn theory but also practice.



Teaching Kids about Professions That Take Care of The Leuser Ecosystem

By: Olya & Yola



Each month, our kindergarten teachers focus on a thematic topic for learning in their classes. This month, the students learned about professions and on the 30th of December, we organized a trip for our TK kids to the Gunung Leuser National Park Information Center! In this trip, the kids were learning about one of the many critically important professions for the ecosystem in Gunung Leuser - a Jungle Ranger, or Polisi Hutan if you want to say it in Bahasa. The kids learned about what rangers do and how they can help rangers to protect the ecosystem. In addition, they learned about the most important animals that live in Gunung Leuser: the Sumatran Orangutan, Sumatran Rhinoceros, Sumatran Elephant and the Sumatran Tiger. They further learned about the different kinds of monkey and apes that can be found in the jungle.

The class went very well and the students learned a lot! They got to see tiger and elephant footprints, Thomas leaf monkey and orangutan skulls, as well as a few of local bird feathers. After learning so much about the Gunung Leuser National Park, the kids were asked some questions and even got some stickers from the staff of the Information Center.

We then refreshed the kids with some watermelon and a break time beside the river before heading back to the school with an oplet all together. It was a great day full of fun and learning and we are hoping that the students will remember it for years to come!

Now We Have BLT's Jingle!

By: Matthew Wright



I come from a background of writing & performing music, so I noticed very quickly during my first volunteer cycle that there was a lot of love for music in the Trust, and in Bukit Lawang!

For the conservation festival, I really wanted to bring some creative flair to the occasion, and what better way than to write a trust song! I felt it would be amazing if I could not only get everyone singing, but also challenge myself to write the goals and ambitions of the trust in song form.

From there, I sat down with Agnes to bring Bahasa Indonesia, as well as her talent for singing and writing music, into the lyrics and melody of our song. It was slowly taking shape, with the lyrics expressing in a catchy way that we hope to grow and learn with the community.

We put it to the test in a meeting and within weeks we had many volunteers singing the first line of the chorus 'Di Sini' all around the trust building.

On the day itself, we nailed the performance! Seeing the joy on everyone's faces as we sung together as a unit really made me feel lucky. And even now, if you're wandering round the trust, you might just hear one of the PCs quietly singing it to themselves. Hopefully, maybe, we can show you some time in the future

Flooding in Batu Katak

By: Melanie Fay



On the night Monday 13th November, there was a big flood caused by the river overflowing, which affected the communities of Batu Katak and Tegapen. We work closely with these communities due to our business programme and so we wanted to do whatever we could do help. A few of us went over on the Wednesday to assess the situation and offer our support. There was a lot of mud all over the paths and in a few buildings, plus their water supply had been cut off.

We still had some donation money left over and so we spoke to the man who owned the water supply and offered to get it fixed, asking in exchange that he give the people in the community 2 months of water for free (since they usually pay him a fee). We went to the hardware store to find the necessary parts and everything was fixed by Friday.

On the Thursday, staff and volunteers took an oplet to Batu Katak, armed with spades and ready to dig! We spent the whole day there, shifting the mud and clearing the rubbish. There were also quite a few school kids there helping out as well. After we finished, we donated the spades and made sure they let us know if they needed anything else. It was a great team bonding experience and we were happy to be useful - and very sweaty!



Drainage Update on Our Farm

By: Agus Damanik



After a one-week hiatus marked by heavy November rains, returning to the cleared land presented a surprising transformation – a lush expanse of vegetation that needed attention. The prospect of getting back to work and transforming this lush expanse into our dream farm was exciting, but it came with an unexpected challenge – a wet and damp arena that demanded immediate attention.

Recognizing the persistent dampness, we devised a practical solution to utilize gravity in our favor. A series of trenches strategically dug across the field allowed gravity to naturally guide the water away from the farm area. This simple yet effective method not only encouraged efficient water runoff but also prevented the formation of waterlogged pockets. Additionally, the trenches served as channels for directing excess water toward desired drainage points, ensuring that our dream farm would flourish without the hindrance of water-related challenges.

This idea was inspired by volunteers Phil and Aaron, who generously shared their expertise. We also explored the possibility of linking our own individual trenches to the neighboring trenches owned by the local farmers' community, providing a unified pathway for water flow. To enhance this, we also designed the network to lead toward a small river adjacent to the farm, creating a sustainable and effective drainage solution for our farm-ready space.



Making Art from Plastic Waste? *WHY NOT?*

By: Deumati Kumari Chaudhary

Plastic management has been the major issue of the world their particles release harmful chemicals that deposit in the soil and ruin its quality which is adversely affecting natural life. The plastic is not managed correctly which is the cause of water pollution, air pollution, land pollution and also the reason for global warming. However, we can decrease the effect pollution has by recycling the trash.

I was a part of recycling plastic to make a mosaic for the 20th anniversary of Bukit Lawang Trust. Normally materials used in a mosaic are stone, minerals, glass, tiles or shells.

The plastic mosaic project came very handy in the **BLT 20th anniversary**. We recycled the trash to make the BLT logo and it was a main display in the celebration. It also made Bukit Lawang more knowledgeable about our vision of maintaining sustainable balance between human activities and nature.

The first part of the process was to collect the rubbish. They collected the trash from their home, street and school. The kids were enthusiastic and we gathered a bunch of trash. Then after, we washed and rinsed the trash and let it dry. We used the dried trash, rolled and stuck them onto the BLT shaped cardboard cutout which was our main display for the 20th anniversary.

The purpose of this project is to create an activity where children could learn more about recycling materials, its positive aspects and how they can help the environment. Moreover, children became more aware of the protection of nature, a clean environment, use of wasted materials and they also developed new ideas during the project. Great work kiddos!.



“It is better to light a candle,
than to curse the darkness.”



Our New Volunteers!

Kindness
MATTERS!



Phil

Laura

Hasan

Jane

Aaron



Skye

Deumati

Emily

Teach
Love
Inspire

Bake
The
World
A
Better
Place

Welcome Onboard!

Our Rhino Cycle 2023 Volunteers!



Deumati

I am from Nepal, I am currently studying Bachelor's in Hotel Management. I was most excited about BLT for volunteering because I am interested in different cultures, traditions, lives, and food. Actually more for food no lies! Moreover, I want to be fluent in English and build my confidence in public speaking.

I love traveling and exploring and I am getting both through BLT.

I am really happy to be here, the place is magnificent, and everyone in BLT is super nice, fun, supportive, and full of energy, I bet you will never feel bored!



Laura

I was born and raised in Central Java and met Aaron during college in the United States. We married and had one son, Hasan. I've always wanted my family to experience Indonesia, so I brought Aaron and Hasan to Bukit Lawang Trust. It is a warm and accepting community, so I'm happy to call it my home for the next few weeks. I love seeing my son have some of the same experiences I grew up with, eating fruits like salak and kelengkeng, playing in the river, touching putri malu (*Mimosa pudica*), and walking through the rice fields.



Skye

I'm from England. Before coming to the trust, I worked as a Nanny in London. I came to volunteer because my passion in life is to give back to the world as much as possible. I'm really enthusiastic about new cultures, the environment, animals and meeting different people through volunteering and travelling. Here at BLT they incorporate everyone to help and you really feel like you are making a difference with a team that have the same drive. The most memorable thing for me so far has been teaching in the village of Porli, the children are incredibly happy to learn and being amongst them makes my day even brighter! I can't wait to continue my experience here, and take on new challenges whilst making a positive impact.

Welcome Onboard!

Our Rhino Cycle 2023 Volunteers!



I am 10 years old, and I'm from Cordova, Alaska, United States. At home I enjoy playing outside, kayaking and kicksledding, building things, and geocaching. In Bukit Lawang I've enjoyed birdwatching, walking across bridges, and playing in rivers. When I leave I will miss being able to walk outside without a jacket and socks.



I am from the UK. I have been a yoga teacher for 20 years and have worked in nursery schools, children's clubs and ESL schools before too. My children are now all adults, enjoying their own lives independently and starting their own families so I thought that it was time to have a new adventure of my own so applied to the BLT volunteer programme. I am really enjoying the range of classes from kindergarten to adults, both at the Trust's school and out in the rural villages and local schools. I love the friendly, positive nature of the staff here and the warm welcome from the local community. I will really miss the constant greetings from everyone you pass in the street when I return to the rather more taciturn England!



I come from Scotland, but live in London, England. I've worked as a creative across a lot of different jobs, and most recently am working in sustainability in fashion. Volunteering at the Trust is very special, because there are so many different ways that you can get involved, and every day is different. The biggest culture shock about Bukit Lawang is how intense the storms are, it's amazing, but also can feel very extreme! Being at BLT has given me so much already, and I feel so grateful for the experience. You're easily absorbed into the local community, and given the space and support to make the experience your own. The team are incredibly warm and kind, and it's a very special place. Not to mention the jungle is pretty spectacular too.

Welcome Onboard!

Our Rhino Cycle 2023 Volunteers!



Phil

Hi! I am Philip Renouard. My home is in the Jersey channel islands. My occupation is a gardener and my passion is overseas aid work. Before coming here I have built a school in Mongolia, a sand damme in Kenya for climate change and support a orphanage in Uganda. This is where we send people from Jersey to help support their environment . I have had culture shocks before in different outreach programmes, home sick is one .

Here, the color of Butik Lawang/the blue rivers sometimes brown with silt . The green jungle around us with a mighty presence the sky and the awesome storms created in this environment. I learning again through a different community and how I can take this gift home to implement a social and environmental challenge.



Aaron

My family and I are from the small town of Cordova, Alaska in the United States. In Alaska I am a birdwatching guide in the summer and a musician and kicksled builder in the winter.

I was excited to be a volunteer at the Trust as a way to immerse myself in a small community in Indonesia and work with people who have a dedicated conservation ethic. Experiencing the warmth of the community and the curiosity of the adults and children has been a highlight for me. It is easy to have multiple conversations on the walk home from the market and be included in various activities along the way. I am happy to take home from this time many new friendships, experiences with the local education system, the local farming methods used at the eco-farm and a warmth shared with me by the local community and the Trust.

A Love for Giving Back!

By: Skye Lily Graham



Back when I was working in London at the beginning of 2023 I completed a TEFL online course, as after teaching primary for a year in Africa I wanted to learn more. Upon completing, a whole collection of opportunities opened up and I immediately wanted to use my new skills in something where I could give back. On the world map of working and volunteering opportunities, Bukit Lawang appeared as a small place in Indonesia.

The drive for sustainability and environment protection made me want to join the team, especially as they also had working with children as part of their ethos to have a positive impact. I applied and was extremely thankful to be accepted so I could get started as soon as possible on my fundraising campaign.

We baked and caked until we couldn't anymore. The set up was a traditional british stall plastered with posters that reinforced Bukit Lawang's motto of animals, people and the environment. In total our small little team did 4 market stalls and we made friends with returning customers and got great compliments too. Because I want to set up my own charity this was a great start in making connections and understanding how I could maybe fit it into a non profit start up too. Each stall we did we made over £300! With that in mind, I took statistics to evaluate how I could use the cakes, amazing people, baker volunteer extraordinaires and environment to raise money for other causes that need awareness like homelessness globally, brain tumor research, macmillan cancer support, food banks and many more important causes.

Fundraising for the Trust was an important part of my personal journey to get here because it showed my dedication and brought the people I really care about together. We all felt empowered. To be able to give money to such a great cause.

My Nanna is one of the most amazing bakers and we got her involved as much as possible, because she's so talented. She made British delicacies like Cherry Bakewell Tarts, Lemon Buns, and Viennese Whirls. My sister also helped by making some fantastic caramel white chocolate blondies, my mum and auntie too, and my dad helped iced the cinnamon rolls! We all came together to work as a team and support a lovely little cause that we all believed in. We now have a great team to work together with. It's amazing how people can be such a great force.



My Mama was helped in fundraising !!



Rubbish – Where Does It Go?

By: *Laura Stone Bowmann*

Though many in the Western world take for granted regular rubbish and recycling pick up, these concepts are newer in Bukit Lawang. Last week, six volunteers from Bukit Lawang Trust toured the Sumatra Trash Bank facility to learn what happens to trash here. I spoke with Imam, who answered my questions about how rubbish is handled.

What does the average person here do with their rubbish?

Rubbish pick up is not standard here, so each household disposes of their own trash, usually by burning it. Simply sweeping rubbish out the door is acceptable, and a disturbing amount ends up in the roads, drainage ditches, and rivers. When going somewhere, throwing rubbish out the window is common.

What options are available in the Bukit Lawang area?

Two organizations that partner together to offer trash pick up are Project Wings in Gotong Royong and Sumatra Trash Bank in Bukit Lawang. For a minimal monthly fee, Sumatra Trash Bank picks up people's mixed trash, dumps it in their landfill, and has their staff pick through it to pull out compostables and recyclables.

People who prefer to sort their own compostables and recyclables themselves can sell it to Sumatra Trash Bank. Clean plastics receive double the price of dirty plastics. Recyclables are weighed and tallied, and at the end of the year a family receives cash or other commodities like rice or cooking oil.

What happens to trash at Sumatra Trash Bank?

After trash is sorted from the landfill, organic material is composted at Project Wings. Large PET bottles are also brought to Project Wings to create "eco-bricks," bottles stuffed with soft plastics which have been washed and sun-dried. Bottle caps are washed, chopped, and sorted by color to create new plastic products on site. Other materials like paper, steel, aluminum, and small plastic bottles are stored and sold to larger recycling plants in Binjai, Sumatra.

What impact does the Sumatra Trash Bank make?

Trash Bank staff held community meetings and went door to door when they first started to educate people on the dangers of uncontrolled rubbish to the environment. Though change does not come easily, Imam says that there are now 400 families that understand how to properly handle their trash. Each month, the Trash Bank collects 16 tons of trash and recyclables.

How does Bukit Lawang Trust engage in the fight for a trash-free environment?

BLT's Youth Ranger programme helps to educate kids about proper rubbish disposal, recycling, and creative ways to reuse trash. For three weeks prior to our recent Conservation Festival on November 2nd, students collected rubbish, sorted and washed it, and used it to make a beautiful display for the festival.

Anyone from the Western world walking down a street in Bukit Lawang or looking at the canal will notice a need for better trash containment. However, organizations like Sumatra Trash Bank, Project Wings, and Bukit Lawang Trust are working tirelessly for a more beautiful, trash-free Bukit Lawang!



Waste Not, Want Not: Navigating the Sustainable Fashion Scene in North Sumatra

By: Emily Munden

In the West, we have a tendency not to give much thought about where our clothes end up after we're finished with them. For me though, it's something I think about every day. In my job working for a clothes recycling company back in the UK, I'm fascinated by the migration of clothes back and forth from the east to the west.

Coming to North Sumatra, I was eager to find out more about how the fashion industry connects with this small town in the middle of the jungle, and I wanted to share with you some of what I found.

The Clothing Culture - Buying Secondhand



Most villages have clothing shops here - selling both brand new and second-hand clothes. Speaking with locals, I was quickly told that the second hand shops and market stalls were the best place to find the best quality, as well as the best prices. Sifting through racks of vintage 90's Levi's jeans for as little as £2 a pair, it was easy to see why.

I used to work as a fashion designer, and part of that job was scouring vintage shops for the best of each decade, so I have somewhat of a trained eye when it comes to spotting something special. Amidst counterfeit Adidas and faded American school t-shirts were New York designer pieces and vintage gems that would have been snapped up back in the UK. All for under £5.

A lot of the time we don't get to see where our old clothes end up, and there's something beautiful in witnessing the global journey of

clothes, as they move through the hands and wardrobes of different people in different countries.

Shipping second hand clothes across the world is often given bad press, and to be honest, that's for good reason. Without proper management, it can result in inappropriate items entering into markets where there's no need or desire for them (like winter coats in hot climates), which is where we end up with piles of unwanted textiles building up on beautiful beaches and natural landscapes.

In actual fact, with the sheer volume of clothes being produced for the West, without a second hand market, the amount of waste would be immeasurable, and the damage irrevocable.

It's inspiring to see firsthand that the things that have been made, and loved for years, are now finding their way into the wardrobes of people who will love them for many more.



Repair Culture

Before setting out on my journey to Bukit Lawang Trust, I found that my trusted travel bag had been damaged, resulting in a broken zip. I called every repair shop and dry cleaner in my local part of London, and was met with a resounding sentiment: "This wouldn't be worth my time."

With a week to go, and willing to pay as much as I was quoted, and accept a pretty shoddy job, but no one was up for the challenge.

I ended up giving up, and buying a pack of 50 safety pins to attach my bag back together. Getting on the flight, I crossed my fingers that I would end up with all the stuff I'd packed, and set off on the 17 hour journey across the world.

Luckily the safety pins did their job, and I mentioned to Melanie that my bag was broken on our drive to Bukit Lawang from the airport. "I know a woman," she said, pulling out her phone to find the contact details. "She can fix anything."

In the West, we're used to throwing things away the minute they're not in perfect condition. Here we see that culture for what it is - a complete waste of something that could be worn or used for years to come.

I've since been introduced to a local man named Boy who repairs shoes at the Friday market. Armed with little more than a sturdy needle and thick thread, he'll try his hand at anything from sandals to walking boots, allowing them to last for many more miles than they'd otherwise be able to.

As someone who sees the impact firsthand of tiny imperfections resulting in thousands of shoes thrown in landfill (circa 290 million per year entering landfill in the US alone), it's encouraging to know that when given the opportunity, communities like the one in Bukit Lawang are willing and able to put time and effort into keeping them in action.

It's easy to ignore the responsibility we have to look after our planet, especially when we're living in a throwaway culture. When it feels like everyone around us is constantly buying new things and discarding old trends, we can get swept up in the rush, and forget that nothing ever really disappears, even when we throw it "away."

It might feel like any action you take isn't going to make an impact, but in truth, the more you conserve and take care of the things you have, the more capacity we have to build a future where new things don't need to be made at such a rapid rate.

By buying from sustainable sources, buying with intent to keep things for a long time, and finding ways to repair the things we own, we can all do our bit in minimising the global impact of our choices, and being a little bit more like Bukit Lawang.



Taking Yoga off the Mat with Bukit Lawang Trust

By: Jane Keogh



Often, in the West, yoga is seen firstly as a physical practice but the true meaning of Yoga is Union. On a personal level this relates to the union of body and mind using the medium of the breath to move towards a place of peace and serenity.

Yoga is a state of inter connectedness in which there is no you and I, no self and other - just a state of 'oneness' with all other living beings and the whole world. Everything that exists is part of the whole.

As a yoga teacher I often ended my classes with the popular mantra **"Om lokha samastah sukhino bavantu"** - "May all beings everywhere be happy and free" bringing a sense of gratitude, of kindness, forgiveness and peace to all.

This interconnectedness between all living things and the world around forms the basis of BLT and it's mission. The work of the Trust is built around the concept of service and purpose ('seva' and 'dharma' in the yoga sense). This is true yoga being taken off the mat and into life in a meaningful way; serving the community through work which finds its fulfilment in the act of giving without expectation of recognition or reward.

BLT provides aid to the local communities in various ways- through the teaching of English to improve the life chances of children and adults, through business grants and advice, through eco- farming and sustainable practices, litter picking, help with flood damages and generally addressing needs that arise.

There is a yoga class (suitable for all levels of experience) with Mel at the Trust every Thursday morning at 9am, offered freely to anyone who would like to come. Why not come and join and join us in the spirit of yoga?

why you should join with us..

"I highly suggest coming to volunteer here at BLT. You will meet so many amazing people, from fellow volunteers to the people in the village. Everyone is working here. And you just can't be sad when you see the kids walk in in the morning so happy with smiles on their faces and high fives ready".
- Andrea

● "Volunteering here will instantly change your life. It will bring you into the present faster than you can think about it. You will learn and experience so many things within even the first weeks, and whenever I've felt overwhelmed I have been fully supported by the new team around me. If you need a change, you want to feel like you're making a difference, and you love nature, then think about becoming a volunteer here for sure. I promise that whatever happens you won't regret it".
- Matt

"If you want to live an unique experience surrounded by beautiful nature, discover a new country, culture and people, and do something meaningful, don't hesitate to challenge yourself by joining the Bukit Lawang Trust team!"
- Marine

*Because we believe that
what comes from mind will change the mind,
what comes from heart will touch the heart,
and what comes from life will change the other life*



make a change with us!



change the world by being yourself

