



the

# Trust Times



**Brush,  
Rinse,  
Repeat!**

**A Day of Dental Care with Our Kids**

**PITCHING DAY**  
**24** Sustainable business  
Entrepreneurs Take the  
Stage

**Eco-Bricks Project**  
Our Eco-Bricks project focuses on transforming plastic waste into durable building blocks. Together, we're turning trash into treasure!



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# EDITOR'S "WISHPER"

*behind the desk*

Sitting at this long desk, faced with a sea of tabs stuck along the laptop screen, a half-finished draft, and an overplayed playlist (yes, mostly Taylor Swift songs). Editing The Trust Times feels like putting songs on your playlist, each song has a story, a moment, or a spark of inspiration from the heart.



After a long hiatus, we're back, and not just to share updates, but also to celebrate everything that makes Bukit Lawang Trust what it is today. Over the past few months, a lot has been happening. These moments make this magazine come alive, and I can't wait to share them with you.

But it's not just about us. It's about you - the readers, contributors, and volunteers who make this journey possible. Whether you were at Bukit Lawang or supporting us from afar, your contributions inspired every word we wrote.

So, what's inside? A bit of everything. New faces and dive into the heart of what makes the Trust so special. There's joy in these pages, but also growth, because even when challenges arise, this community always finds a way to shine brighter.

Whether you're reading this on a bright afternoon in Bukit Lawang or somewhere far away, dreaming about lush greenery jungles and Orangutan's large smiles, I hope you feel the love and effort that went into this issue.

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

Warmly

Arya

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# WELCOME ABOARD

“

I began my journey in the social sector by participating in a tourism ambassador event while freelancing as a radio announcer. Later, I worked as a national journalist, covering diverse national and international issues, before transitioning into marketing communications and media roles.

My first significant impact came from teaching in remote villages for a year, where I helped develop education and economic potential in border communities. This new experience as a teacher and facilitator broadened my perspective while building on my media background.

Joining BLT as the Youth Ranger Programme Coordinator excited me for the opportunity to learn and share knowledge, aligning with my belief in lifelong growth and contribution. ”



**Josupriyanto**

Youth Ranger Program Coordinator





On Thursday, 12 of November 2024, our staff member Arya led a successful 90-minute session with our two kindergarten classes, focusing on the importance of oral hygiene and developing healthy habits. For various reasons, many parents neglect brushing their children’s teeth, often due to cost, difficulty persuading their child, or the belief that baby teeth will fall out anyway—so, why bother? Arya delivered an engaging and interactive session, teaching the children how to clean their teeth properly and explaining what happens when they don’t. The session aimed to equip the children with the tools to maintain a healthy smile—one they can proudly display.

The session also included lessons on healthy eating, a sing-along, and even a live demonstration of brushing on a giant cardboard grin! The children brushed their teeth together, proudly applying their knowledge and encouraging one another. We hope that every child continues this practice, so that, in the future, they can protect their adult teeth.

Unfortunately, many educational institutions across Sumatra include appearance-based as well as academic-based acceptance criteria at their schools, such as having straight, white teeth. We aim to give our children the best chance to succeed by focusing on learning, life skills, and good habits—going above and beyond what other TKs may offer. At the end of the session, each child received a toothbrush and toothpaste.

They were excited to take them home, proudly carrying their new brushes and oral hygiene knowledge. (written by Zoe)





## The biggest change in people's trash in the modern era is the huge amounts of plastic waste.

Bukit Lawang is a stunning destination for many people, but like many areas in developing countries, it struggles with a growing trash problem. Traditionally, people have burned their waste—a practice that worked when it primarily consisted of small amounts of paper, along with natural materials like fruit peels and vegetable skins. Back then, it was an easy and effective way to dispose of trash. However, as families and communities have expanded, the amount of waste has significantly increased, and burning it now releases large amounts of carbon into the atmosphere, contributing to environmental issues on a much larger scale such as pollution that can harm people.

Here at the Bukit Lawang Trust, we try our best to reduce plastic waste. We have separate bins for hard plastic, soft plastic, paper, and glass. We try to remove soft plastic labels from bottles diligently, paper from packaging, and hard plastic lids from milk cartons. When these bins are full we contact the local trash bank which collects and recycles them, some of which are used to create their products. We also separate our food waste into either compost for our farm or to feed to our friend's fish.

This cycle, in a bid to increase our sustainability even further, we challenged ourselves with a forfeit system. It is very easy when shopping or getting food to receive unnecessary plastics. For instance, takeaway food or groceries often come in a plastic bag. Our challenge is to reduce this as much as possible by taking a reusable bag to the market or shop, using a Tupperware container for takeaway food, taking a reusable water bottle out with you, etc. It is easy to forget these simple steps so if we are caught with a plastic bag or water bottle our name is put in a pot. At the end of the week, some names are drawn from the pot along with a forfeit. The forfeits are not a punishment, but a fun task the person must perform the following week. . Hopefully, this will encourage the BLT family to be even more sustainable than we already are!

(written by David)

## HOW RECYCLING IS CHANGING OUR COMMUNITY?







# ECOBRICKS PROJECT

A study from the University of Leeds shows that 52.1 million metric tons of plastic waste are generated globally each year.

**W**aste is an issue impacting many parts of the world, with plastic waste being a particular concern. Effective management of plastic waste has become increasingly critical.

This challenge is exacerbated by modern lifestyles that rely heavily on plastic packaging for food and beverages. Everyday habits, such as using plastic bags for shopping and disposable cutlery and straws, contribute significantly to the problem. Alarming, Indonesia is the third-largest contributor to global plastic pollution, following India and Nigeria.

As a conservation educator in Bukit Lawang, I recognize the region's immense potential, given its rich biodiversity, forests, rivers, and ecotourism opportunities. These resources support the livelihoods of local communities. However, environmental awareness among residents remains limited. Waste is often discarded in streets, forests, and rivers, threatening the ecosystem and jeopardizing the sustainability of ecotourism. This can lead to ecological damage, degraded air and water quality, and adverse effects on human health.

To address these issues, the Bukit Lawang Trust—a community-based organization focused on education and conservation—initiated the Eco-Bricks Program. This initiative empowers children to act as agents of change, beginning with their families and local communities. Through workshops across local villages, kids learn to:

1. Collect and classify waste.
2. Wash and dry leftover food and drink containers.
3. Cut soft plastic into small pieces.
4. Fill and compact waste into bottles.
5. Create useful crafts from eco-bricks.

This initiative reduces plastic waste and promotes sustainable habits like using tote bags, reusable cutlery, and tumblers. It is hoped that adopting eco-bricks will foster meaningful improvements in local communities, particularly daily life. (Written by Juwita)



# SBP Take the Stage Entrepreneurs



We are thrilled to share that the first round of our 2024-5 business program has ended! held in Gotong Royong, our home village, strengthen our connection with the local community and learn together.

The program welcomed 24 participants, divided into two groups for an 8-week course with us. Covering with essential skills and knowledge, covering topics such as marketing, finance, environmental sustainability, customer awareness, and innovation. As the course progressed, participants honed their skills through practical pitching guidance, culminating in a final presentation before a panel of judges. Their business ideas included livestock, tailoring, traditional drink making, and even a small school.

To qualify for the grant, participants had to meet strict criteria: attending at least 90% of the classes, completing all assigned homework, and presenting a feasible business plan incorporating a sustainability component. Following the pitch, each participant benefited from a personalized one-on-one feedback session, designed to deepen their understanding of the course content and refine their business ideas further.

Out of 24 participants, 23 were awarded grants to kickstart or continue their entrepreneurial dreams. Two standout participants, Naldi and Sari, were each awarded and earned a higher grant due to the exceptional business plans.



Naldi, a talented batik painting specialist, impressed the panel with his innovative approach to sustainability, creating clothes from recycled diapers (see photo!). Sari's vision to produce gluten-free products—an untapped niche in Bukit Lawang—using only eco-friendly packaging, also captured our admiration. They were also among the most motivated and hardworking students for the duration of the course.

“

**One exciting possibility is focusing the next round on high school and college students, empowering the younger generation to create a brighter and more sustainable future.**

”

While the program celebrated many successes, it also presented invaluable lessons. We are committed to strengthening the educational aspect of our offering to better equip participants with sustainable skills and knowledge and are now exploring how to make an even greater impact empowering more individuals to create lasting, positive change. (written by Melanie)





# Mind & Body

## Stay Fit and Healthy with Fitness Class at the Trust

At the Bukit Lawang Trust, fitness isn't just an activity—it's a lifestyle. Three times a week, we come together for yoga, jungle fit and aerobics, building strength, flexibility, and resilience.

**Yoga** has profoundly changed my life and how I view my body. I used to see myself as weak, but yoga taught me otherwise. It's a journey of self-empowerment, connection, and balance. These sessions aren't just about exercise—they're about fostering well-being, harmony, and a positive environment for both mind and body. (written by Melanie)



**Jungle Fit** is a high-energy, fast-paced, high-intensity workout in Bukit Lawang's natural environment with cardio, strength, and endurance drills. Participants love the challenge of conquering unique obstacles and the bonds created by sweating it out together.



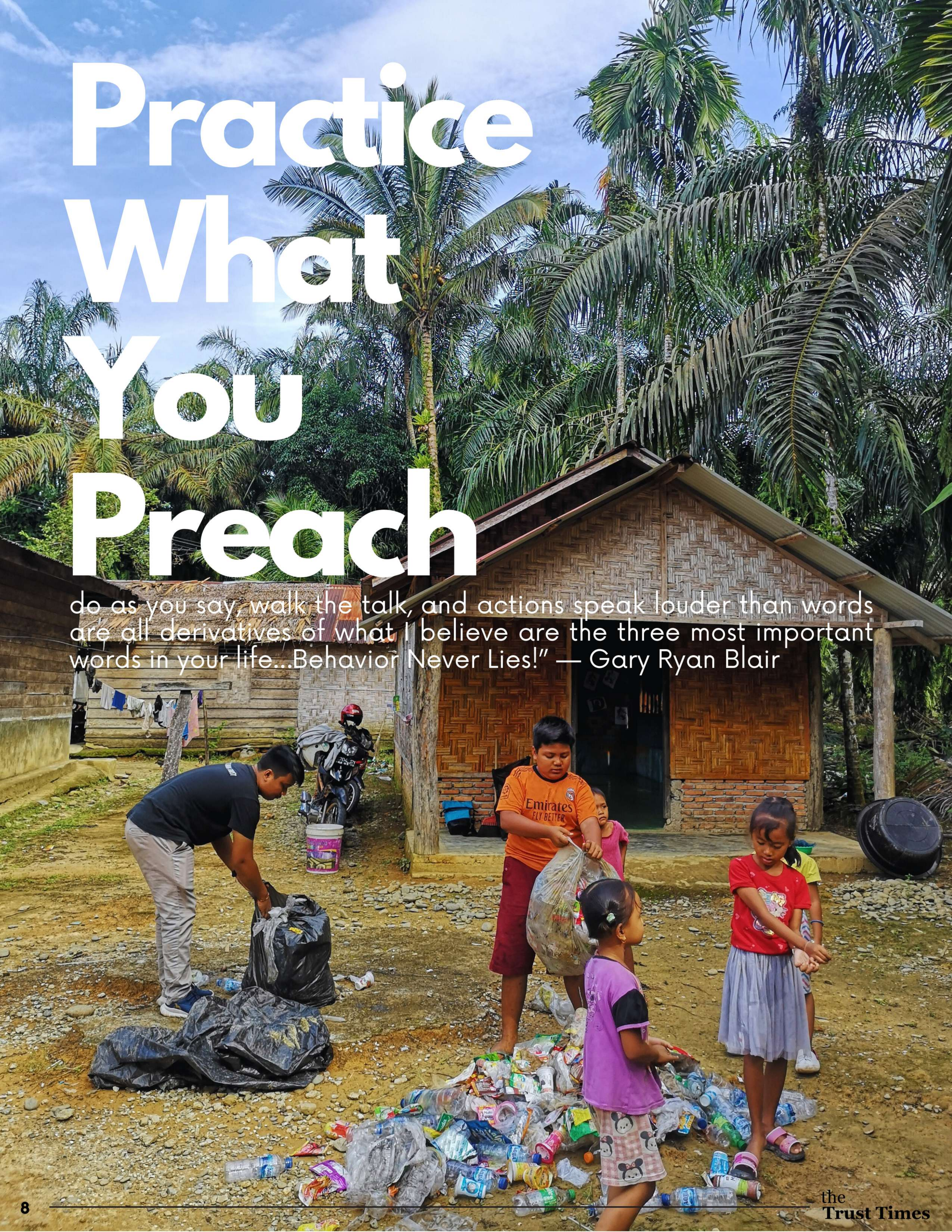
**Zumba** is all about moving to the beat. With its upbeat music and easy-to-follow dance steps, making every workout feel like a celebration. It's not just about burning calories; it's about embracing rhythm, boosting confidence, and connecting with others through the universal language of dance. Zumba is a favorite among mothers in our community and our team. (written by Arya)





# Practice What You Preach


do as you say, walk the talk, and actions speak louder than words are all derivatives of what I believe are the three most important words in your life...Behavior Never Lies!" — Gary Ryan Blair







# Heroes Among US

**Volunteer**  
*noun* UK  /ˌvɒl.ənˈtɪər/  
**B2**  
a compassionate individual who selflessly dedicates their time, energy, and skills to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.





# Welcome on board!

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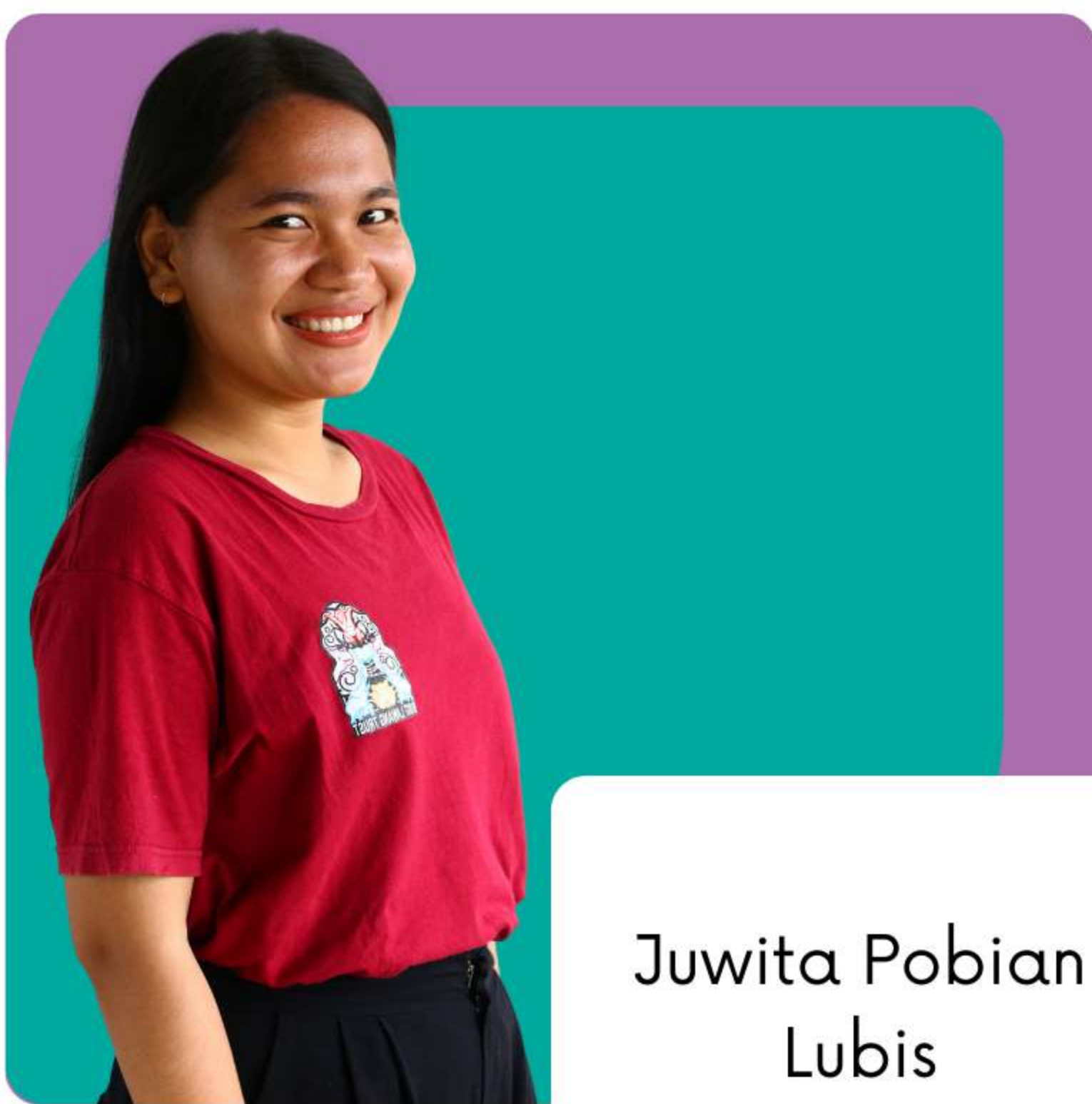
Hi! I'm Zoé from Jersey, Channel Islands, and a returning volunteer with The Bukit Lawang Trust. My main roles include teaching English to children and adults across villages, assisting with the Eco-brick project, Ecofarm, and Youth Ranger lessons. Currently on my third cycle, I first joined at 18 earlier this year and was warmly welcomed by the amazing staff and volunteers. Spending my first birthday away from home with my new "family" was unforgettable. Volunteering here is a privilege, working alongside passionate, dedicated individuals committed to empowering communities. It's been a transformative experience, allowing me to grow while learning from inspiring people. Representing BLT means being part of an NGO with 20 years of trusted community impact through education and empowerment.



Zoe Alexi  
Haydon

“

I am Juwita Pobian Lubis from Medan, and I'm proud to be a conservation educator for the Bukit Lawang Trust's Youth Ranger program. I teach children in Bukit Lawang, a wildlife-rich area in North Sumatra, about protecting the environment and their role as young rangers. In the program, we explore local biodiversity—animals, plants, rivers, and ecotourism potential—and practice making eco-bricks by turning waste into useful materials. This hands-on approach helps children become agents of change in their communities. I believe we reap what we sow. The earth gives us so much, yet we often harm it. If we want a better future, we must start caring for the environment today. If you can't find someone who cares, be that person.



Juwita Pobian  
Lubis

“

Hi, I'm David from Yorkshire, UK. I work for a conservation charity but want to become an English teacher. Volunteering at the Bukit Lawang Trust is perfect for me as it combines conservation and education, allowing me to gain teaching experience. This is my second cycle, and I plan to return next year. I help with the EFL program, teaching students of all ages, both on-site and in nearby villages. Outside of teaching, I work on projects like the website and enjoy spending time with other volunteers, staff, and locals. In my free time, I explore Bukit Lawang's wildlife-rich areas. I've seen orangutans, monkeys, gibbons, and beautiful birds like the rhinoceros hornbill. It's been an incredible experience!



David Ben  
Bromley

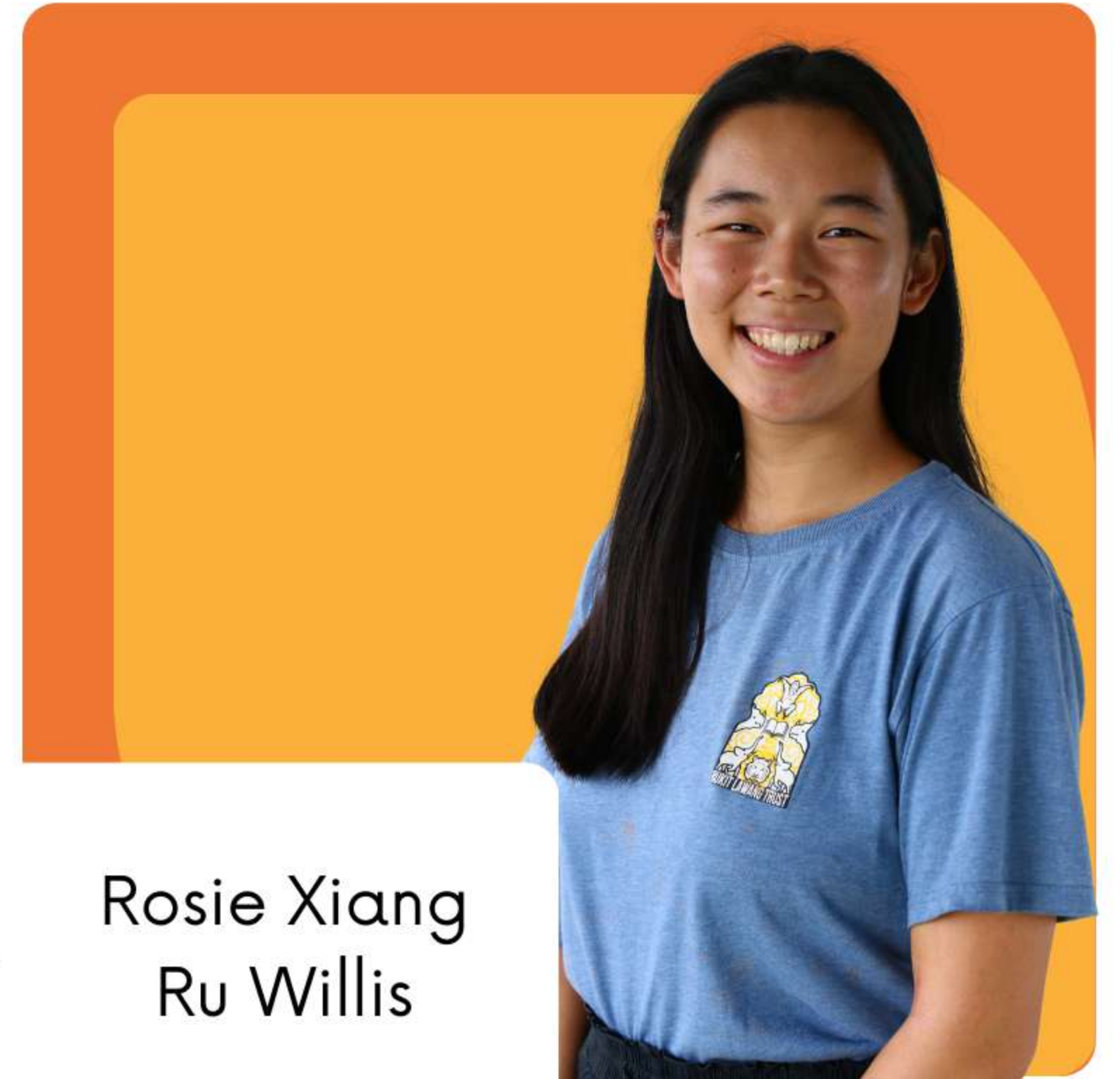


# Welcome on board!

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My name is Rosie, and I'm from Jersey. I study Sustainability and Environmental Management at the University of Leeds and currently serve as the lead volunteer at Bukit Lawang Trust (BLT). My role includes supporting volunteers, overseeing Hub Projects, teaching English, and assisting with conservation and kindergarten programs. I'm also involved in eco-bricks and eco-farm initiatives and contribute to the Sustainable Business Program, applying what I've learned in my studies. Working at BLT lets me collaborate with an inspiring, diverse team dedicated to empowering the local community. One of my favorite memories was bonding with children during an eco-bricks session, where we practiced languages and had fun while making a positive impact.

”



Rosie Xiang  
Ru Willis



Rudi Setiawan

“

Hi, I'm Rudi from Jakarta. I'm excited to support the sustainable business program at BLT. With my extensive background in finance and consulting, I aim to guide students in developing robust business plans grounded in strong financial principles. By sharing practical insights and real-world examples, I hope to empower students to create sustainable businesses that contribute to long-term success. Together, we can foster innovative, financially sound practices that make a positive impact.

”

“

My name is Miranda van Haneghem, from the Netherlands. After years as an accountant and raising my children, a severe burnout and chronic illness made me rethink my purpose. That journey led me to Bukit Lawang, Indonesia, where I now volunteer with the Bukit Lawang Trust.

I teach children aged 2 to 7 in the TK program and playgroup, helping them prepare for Indonesia's rigorous education system. Currently on my third cycle, I hope to stay until these children graduate in June. Watching their progress has been deeply rewarding.

The Bukit Lawang community's kindness has taught me the value of sharing and connection. Volunteering here has given me a new sense of purpose and shown me that true wealth is in the lives we touch.

”



Miranda Van  
Haneghem



# Welcome on board!

“

My name is Sarah, and I'm from Bukit Lawang, North Sumatra, Indonesia. At the Bukit Lawang Trust, I assess students' needs, develop assistance programs, create schedules, train volunteers, and report on student progress.

I assist kindergarten students through small group or individual sessions and coordinate activities with volunteers. Using play-based learning methods, I help children improve their skills while fostering creativity. I love teaching, learning, meeting people from around the world, and practicing my English. I also enjoy exploring nature, trying new things, and find the river incredibly relaxing!

Volunteering with the kindergarten program has been a fulfilling experience. It's shown me the importance of helping others gain knowledge and taught me that working with heart and purpose is truly meaningful.

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Sarahmai





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