

On World Book Day, International Animal Rescue Celebrates the Positive Impact of Literacy on Conservation in Indonesia

Wednesday 6 March, 2024

As schools celebrate World Book Day on Thursday 7th March 2024, International Animal Rescue is making a positive change for its unique approach to improving conservation through literacy in Indonesia.

Challenges such as child illiteracy persist, particularly among marginalised communities, and International Animal Rescue's efforts strive to ensure equitable access to education for all children, regardless of their background.

The literacy programme is part of International Animal Rescue's holistic conservation strategy, *IARconserves*. Spearheaded by Lia Aulia and her dedicated team, the *IARconserves* literacy programme has been instrumental in bridging the gap between education and environmental preservation in the forest-edge communities of Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park (BBBR NP) in Indonesia.

Lia Aulia, an AL-Haudl Ketapang Islamic College graduate and a passionate educator, shares her experiences working with the programme, highlighting the dire need for education in remote villages surrounded by dwindling forests.

Lia explains, "Our mission goes beyond traditional literacy efforts, aiming to address these communities' social and economic challenges. With approximately 80% of households living in poverty and limited access to education, healthcare, and transportation, many residents resorted to illegal logging as a means of survival. Recognising the urgent need for intervention, *IARconserves* initiated various initiatives, including scholarships, educational support, and training in alternative livelihoods."

The impact of these efforts has been profound, with a significant reduction in illegal nature impacting activities within the National Park and a newfound sense of empowerment among the local population.

Despite challenges such as the lack of school buildings and teachers, Lia and her team have been able to bring the joy of reading and environmental education to children who would otherwise have limited access to such resources.

Lia continues, *"Every time I come with the team bringing reading and picture books, these children are thirsty for stories. They asked us to read the stories in the books, and they loved to draw. They are also excited whenever we teach about environmental knowledge by playing directly in the forest."*

By promoting literacy and environmental awareness, these programmes not only empower individuals but also contribute to the preservation of vital ecosystems. Increasing reading habits in Indonesia has the potential to significantly enhance the quality of education and learning outcomes.

As we celebrate World Book Day, let us remember the transformative power of literacy and its crucial role in shaping a sustainable future for future generations. You can find out more about our programmes for children and young people here: <https://www.internationalanimalrescue.org/our-work/people>

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