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Multi-community survey and interview project to assess human-orangutan conflict and impacts of education and outreach near Gunung Palung National Park, West Kalimantan, Indonesia

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Yayasan Palung (YP), a counterpart organization to the Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Project (GPOCP), focuses on several projects, including conservation research, sustainable livelihood programs, environmental outreach and education, and a monitoring and investigation unit. This proposed project will be a multi-community assessment to ascertain both the extent of orangutan-human interactions in villages in the vicinity of Gunung Palung National Park (GPNP) and to identify the impact of education and outreach efforts as well as areas where further programs could be beneficial. The project is currently in the design phase, with input on the methodology and survey instruments coming from YP staff, other local NGOs, and international collaborators, including doctoral students at Brunel University in London, University of Georgia in Athens, and Boston University. We are proposing to conduct interviews in 8-10 villages surrounding GPNP, composed of villages that have long-term relationships with GPOCP, others in which GPOCP has recently started sustainable livelihood and education programs, and others with which GPOCP has never worked. The goal will be to interview 30 people in each of these villages—25 through a door-to-door method, in which every fourth house will be approached, and 5 more targeted interviews with community leaders. All of these interviews will be semi-structured, with a survey composed of both closed and open-ended questions covering topics such as orangutan sightings and interactions (both positive and negative), perceptions of orangutans, use of the forest, and knowledge about conservation threats to humans, orangutans and other animals, and the forest ecosystem in general. To supplement these one-on-one semi-formal interviews, focus group-style interviews will also be conducted, to allow for a wider range of opinions and experiences to be heard and considered. Interviews will be led by trained YP staff, permitting for these individuals to gain skills in ethnographic methodology, and to build and continue relationships between YP staff and community members in the villages in which YP works.

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