



Newsletter

February 2021

Sustainable agriculture and women empowerment programme in Gunung Nyiut, Indonesia, Credit: Planet Indonesia

We recently launched a dedicated website for IWT Challenge Fund projects.

Visit
iwt.challengefund.org.uk
to find out about all of our projects, see past editions of the newsletter, and more!

iwt.challengefund.org.uk

gov.uk/government/collections/illegal-wildlife-trade-iwt-challenge-fund

The Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) is a serious criminal industry worth up to £17 billion each year, threatening both wildlife and people. Funded by the UK Government, the IWT Challenge Fund tackles the illegal wildlife trade and, in doing so, contributes to sustainable development in developing countries. It funds projects which address one or more of the following themes:

- developing sustainable livelihoods to benefit people directly affected by IWT
- strengthening law enforcement
- ensuring effective legal frameworks
- reducing demand for IWT products



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



#endwildlifecrime



Baskets being handcrafted with newly learned livelihood skills, Credit: Victoria Pinion

Contents

Publicity and information about the IWT Challenge Fund	3
Introduction	4
Project articles	5
Reducing illegal wildlife trafficking through a holistic community-led conservation approach	5
Building capacity for engaging communities in tackling illegal wildlife trade	8
Newsletter contacts	10



Rangers using SMART on patrol in Queen Elizabeth National Park, Credit: Mustapha Nsubuga

Publicity and information about the IWT Challenge Fund

For more information about the IWT Challenge fund, please visit

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/> or

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/illegal-wildlife-trade-iwt-challenge-fund>

If you would like any further information about the IWT Challenge Fund, please email the team at IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk

If you would like to submit an article about your project for a future edition of the IWT Newsletter, please email an article of no more than one side of A4, alongside any pictures, to IWT-Newsletter@ltsi.co.uk

Publicity and referencing IWT Challenge Fund

We kindly remind project leaders that if they are publicising their work then it is important that they make every effort to recognise UK Government support through the IWT Challenge Fund. This is important as it helps us to ensure the IWT Challenge Fund retains a high profile and to secure continued Government funding.



Members of a Homestay supported by Blue Ventures in the community of Beloi, Timor Leste, Credit: Martin Muir

Introduction

In the first 2021 edition of the *Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund Newsletter*, we highlight projects that have local communities at their core and strive to make a positive impact on people, ecosystems and wildlife. This edition focuses on the importance of sustainable livelihoods and the holistic approach to tackling the trade.

Those communities with limited options and scarce resources may turn to unsustainable activities in order to provide for their families and may find themselves involved in IWT. Featured in this newsletter are projects that are helping to simultaneously improve lives and biodiversity through the introduction of sustainable income generating activities that benefit people and without taking a toll on the planet.

In this edition we also wanted to celebrate the launch of the very first website for Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund Projects!

Although there has been a Darwin Initiative website for some time, this is the first website dedicated to IWT Challenge Fund projects. The website will allow us to showcase the projects we have supported to date, and we hope this will act to facilitate networking and lessons sharing for past and current projects as well as support future applicants to the fund. By following this link (<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/>), you will be able to find project resources such as reporting forms, previous newsletters and change request templates and also search for other IWT projects by lead organisation, target country and even species! We hope that you find the website a useful resource and welcome any feedback to help improve its usability.

We hope that you enjoy this edition of the IWT Newsletter!



Community-led SMART patrol in Gunung Nyiut, Indonesia, Credit: Justin Grubb

Reducing illegal wildlife trafficking through a holistic community-led conservation approach

At Yayasan Planet Indonesia, we partner with some of the most remote villages in West Kalimantan to protect at-risk ecosystems and wildlife. Although the province has some of the densest forest cover on the island of Borneo, these forests are threatened by a combination of social, economic, and political drivers. In particular, a lack of access to social services, high rates of rural poverty, lack of tenure, and poor resource governance structures create extreme hardships for these communities. These conditions inhibit incentives for communities to conserve surrounding forests, and enable wildlife traders to coerce villagers into poaching for cash payments. As a result, villagers become dependent on illegal wildlife trade (IWT) and deplete surrounding biodiversity, becoming trapped in a vicious cycle of environmental injustice that fuels the country's one billion dollar annual illegal wildlife industry.

In an effort to address the drivers of IWT, we use a holistic community-led **Conservation Cooperative** (CC) approach that facilitates access to much needed services (financial and non-financial) for vulnerable rural communities living within West Kalimantan's protected areas.

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In 2020, eight community-led patrols consisting of 28 members patrolled nearly 6,000 kilometres, protecting tens of thousands of hectares of terrestrial ecosystems across two of our project landscapes in West Kalimantan. An additional 400 farmers received training on organic and sustainable farming practices and reported a 57% reduction in their production costs and a 60% to 100% increase in yields compared to before receiving training.



Tropical forests in Borneo are rapidly disappearing due to high rates of deforestation, Credit: University of Kent

In 2020, the results from a Participatory Impact Assessment revealed that, out of 26 crop species grown in the past year, farmers witnessed higher harvest rates for 12 commodities grown using techniques learned through our training programme. This surplus production not only ensures food security but also complements household incomes.

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While these activities support the development of a community’s social resilience, a central aspect of our CC approach is the creation of a community-led village savings & loans (VSL) programme specifically aimed at improving economic resilience. The VSL programme creates access to equitable capital that supports business development and strengthens livelihoods for CC members. To date, more than 150 CC members from nine villages have borrowed an excess of £26,000 and have generated more than £35,500 in savings and revenue from loans. Since borrowers are only required to pay back the loan principal with a 1-2% interest, the average loan repayment rate has been as high as 98% for returning borrowers. Between 2019 and 2020, we saw a 118% increase in borrowings by CC members, with 30% of loans being taken out by female farmers who used them to help with agriculture inputs and meet basic household needs.

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In 2020, our teams supported community members to establish seven new environmentally friendly businesses that meet 100% of conservation community standards (which do not allow unsustainable resource extraction practices).

It is recognised that human and environmental health are inextricably linked and that there are gender-specific needs related to healthcare and livelihood opportunities. We facilitate the participation of women in local resource management by encouraging collaboration, conflict resolution, compliance, and accountability. As the access to equitable livelihoods, healthcare, and income-generating opportunities increase for women, so do the benefits for their families and surrounding ecosystems. Empowered women and girls (as well as their male counterparts) are able to move away from exploitative activities and get involved in financially and environmentally sustainable livelihoods.

For CC members to continue to receive these benefits, they must ensure they are in compliance with conservation community standards. These standards prohibit destructive and unsustainable resource extraction practices in exchange for access to benefits from their CC. Compliance of members with community standards are enforced by their CC Management and CC Supervisory committees. Data from community-led SMART patrols show that in 2020 the encounters of illegal activities in forests surrounding our partnership villages decreased by 84% compared to 2018 levels. Therefore, as vulnerable communities gain opportunities to improve their well-being through access to unmet services, they are able to break free from the vicious cycle of environmental injustice created by socio-economic inequalities and create community-led deterrents to IWT.

Further information on project IWT077 can be found [here](#).



A traditional ceremony performed in Gunung Nyiut, Indonesia, Credit: Planet Indonesia



Uganda Wildlife Authority Community Conservation Wardens in training on community engagement skills, Credit: Julia Baker

Building capacity for engaging communities in tackling illegal wildlife trade

Since 2018, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) has been working with the IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group and other partners to build the evidence base on the effectiveness of engaging communities to tackle illegal wildlife trade. Through our “LeAP” (Learning and Action Platform on Communities and IWT) project we have established a database that now includes over 100 case studies of community engagement projects from around the world and highlights key lessons learned. The database can be accessed through the LeAP portal at www.peoplenotpoaching.org.

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Recently we partnered with the IUCN East and Southern Africa Regional Office to deliver a series of online training sessions on different approaches to engaging communities to tackle illegal wildlife trade (IWT). The series was based on the application of the ‘Local Communities: First Line of Defence against Illegal Wildlife Trade’ (FLoD) approach which was developed through an earlier IWT Challenge Fund project ([IWT020](#)) and takes advantage of an iterative learning process to help local communities, project designers and implementers understand the context-specific motivations and assumptions that underpin the activities (legal and illegal) of local communities. You can read a Q&A with some of the participants [here](#).

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Through another IIED led IWT Challenge Fund project (**IWT036**) we partnered with the Community Conservation Unit of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) to build their skills to encourage local people living around protected to get involved in conservation activities. This training initiative with UWA's community conservation wardens is part of a wider strategy for work on implementing park-level action plans for community engagement to tackle IWT.

If you would like to keep up with IIED events, such as our upcoming webinar on community-based rangers, feel free to sign up to the IIED newsletter available on our website or follow us on Twitter **@CommunitiesIWT**.

All of our training resources and case studies are available on the LeAP portal. We are always looking for more resources so get in touch if you have material to share at **info@peoplenotpaching.org**.

Further information on project IWT060 can be found **here**.



First Line of Defence community engagement methodology in practice in Kenya, Credit: Micah Conway



Kenyah women working in their home gardens supported by the University of Kent in Kalimantan, Indonesia, Credit: Ed Pollard

Newsletter contacts

For any queries on project applications or existing projects please contact our IWT Administrators (NIRAS-LTS International) at IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk

This newsletter is produced quarterly. To include an article on your project in an upcoming edition, please contact us at IWT-Newsletter@ltsi.co.uk

The UK Government's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund provides financial support to practical projects around the world which are:

- developing sustainable livelihoods to benefit people directly affected by IWT
- strengthening law enforcement
- ensuring effective legal frameworks
- reducing demand for IWT products

The IWT Challenge Fund has committed over £26m to 85 projects around the world since it was launched at the London IWT Conference in 2014.