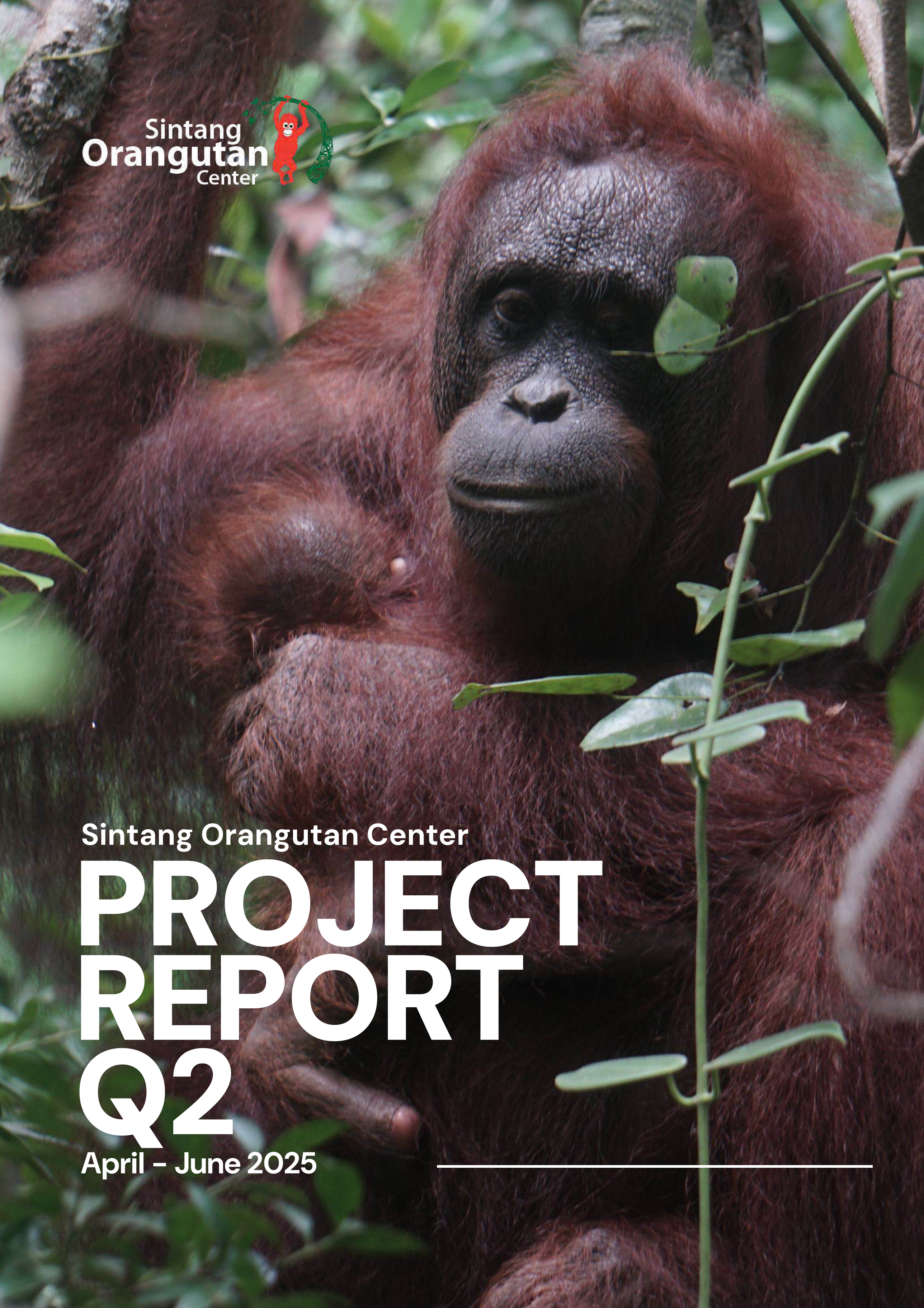

Sintang Orangutan Center

Sintang Orangutan Center

PROJECT REPORT Q2

April – June 2025

Ensuring Welfare for
Unreleasable Orangutans:

The Relocation of Mungky to PSO Arsari

Mungky is a Bornean orangutan of the subspecies *Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii*. He was first rescued in 2014 from Sanggau Regency, West Kalimantan. At the time of rescue, Mungky was 14 years old and had spent 10 years living as a pet. According to his owner, Mungky was purchased from Sekadau Regency when he was around four years old. During his captivity, he was fed a diet of rice, fruits, mineral water, and milk twice daily.

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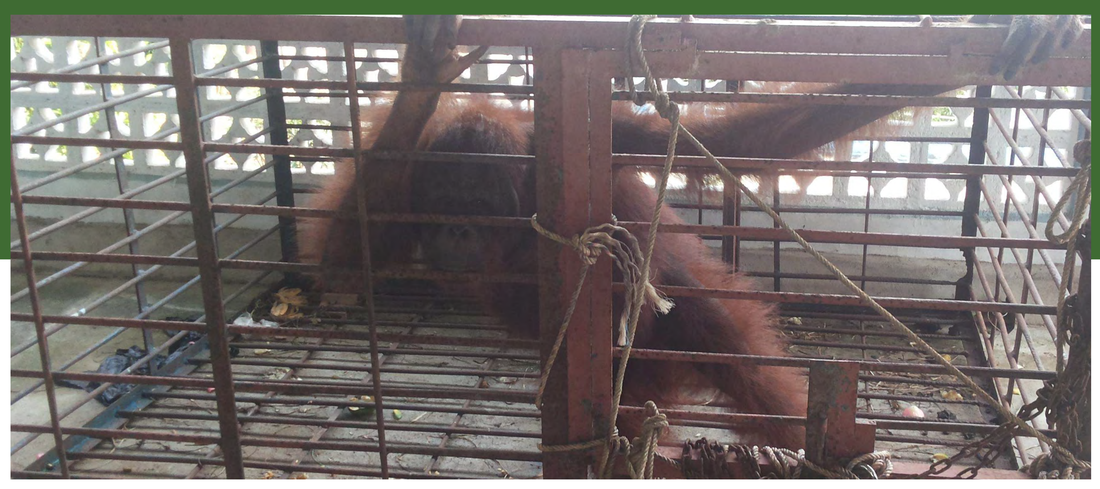
Physically, Mungky was in relatively good health upon rescue. However, his aggressive behavior was evident, likely due to prolonged stress caused by confinement in a small cage, an improper diet, and an unsuitable environment. Despite not yet developing cheek pads, Mungky exhibited dominant behavior, which made the rescue and handling process particularly challenging.



Why Can't Mungky Be Released?

At Sintang Orangutan Center (SOC), orangutans undergo rehabilitation in a forest school surrounded by an electric fence spanning a 2-hectare forest area. In this environment, they engage in daily activities such as climbing, identifying forest foods, and building nests. These behaviors are monitored by the keepers to evaluate their readiness for release into the wild. However, Mungky demonstrated extreme aggression toward humans and other orangutans. At the Sintang Quarantine Center, he frequently clashed with Mamat, an adult male orangutan in a neighboring cage, and often attempted to attack staff. He even bite one of the keepers. This behavior made it too risky for Mungky to be placed in the forest school, posing a danger to observers and increasing the likelihood of him escaping the electric fence. Without behavioral data from the forest school, it was impossible to evaluate his survival skills in the wild.

Relocation to the Arsari Orangutan Sanctuary (PSO Arsari) Given the limited rehabilitation options for aggressive adult orangutans, SOC took a strategic step by relocating Mungky to the Arsari Orangutan Sanctuary (PSO Arsari), managed by the Arsari Djojohadikusumo Foundation (YAD) in East Kalimantan. This sanctuary is specifically designed for unreleasable orangutans, offering a semi-wild island environment with high standards of animal welfare.

Relocation Process

The relocation was a collaborative effort involving the West Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), SOC, and YAD. The process, conducted on Friday, May 22, included the following steps:

1. **Land travel to Pontianak**

Mungky was transported from Sintang to Pontianak by car, accompanied by SOC veterinarian, animal keeper, and West Kalimantan BKSDA officers. The 9-hour journey included regular food and water breaks to ensure Mungky's comfort.

2. **Air Travel to Balikpapan**

Upon arrival in Pontianak, Mungky was taken to Supadio Airport for air transport via cargo plane to Balikpapan, with a transit in Jakarta. Careful coordination with the airline ensured that the transport cage met safety standards, and that the temperature in the cargo was appropriate. The team secured special access to feed Mungky during the transit to minimize stress.

3. **Land travel to PSO Arsari**

In Balikpapan, the PSO Arsari team welcomed Mungky and continued the 4-hour land journey to the sanctuary. Upon arrival at midnight, Mungky was immediately placed in a spacious overnight cage for adaptation and recovery.

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Otorita Ibu Kota
NUSANTARA
YAYASAN
ARSARI
DJOJOHADIKUSUMO
BKSDA
KALTIM

Post-Relocation Monitoring

For the first few days, SOC staff closely monitored Mungky's condition. Observations revealed no signs of excessive stress or illness. On the contrary, Mungky appeared active and explored his new enclosure, particularly the upper areas, indicating a positive adaptation process.

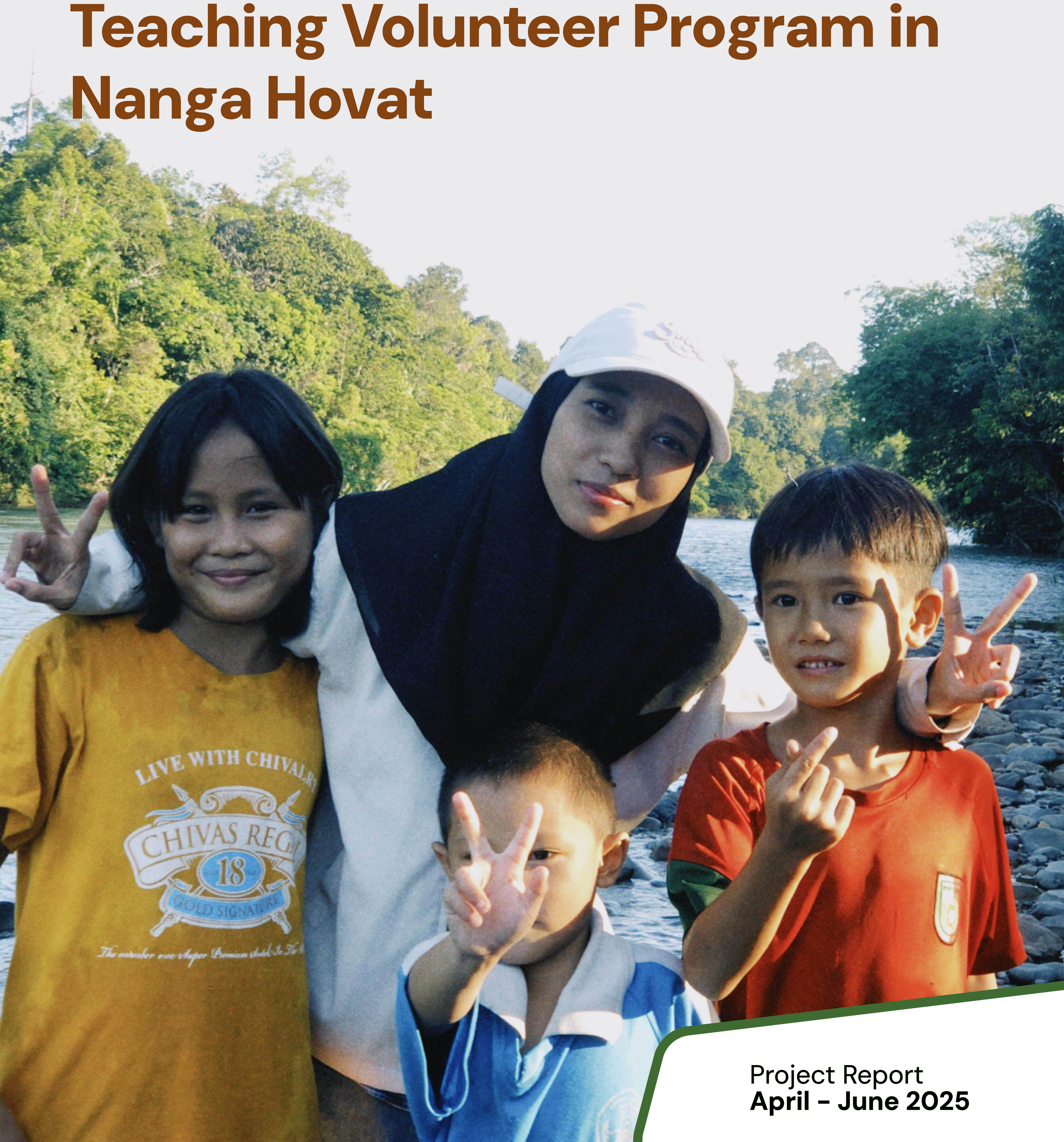
Mungky's Future at PSO Arsari

At PSO Arsari, Mungky will reside on a semi-wild island alongside other unreleasable orangutans. The island is designed to mimic their natural habitat with abundant forest vegetation. Controlled social interactions will be an integral part of his daily routine. During the post-relocation evaluation, SOC, PSO Arsari, the West Kalimantan BKSDA, and the East Kalimantan BKSDA agreed to continue monitoring Mungky's behavior. Should there be any indication of behavioral changes that suggest readiness for release, this possibility will be carefully considered in the future.

Nanga Hovat

Empowering Education
and Conservation:

The Revitalization of the Teaching Volunteer Program in Nanga Hovat



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After being suspended for one year, the Teaching Volunteer Program in Nanga Hovat Hamlet continued in 2025. This program was first introduced in 2022 as part of an effort to support education in remote areas. Nanga Hovat Hamlet, the last settlement in the sub-watershed of the Mendalam River, serves as a buffer zone for Betung Kerihun National Park. This area is also the nearest location to orangutan release sites managed by the Betung Kerihun and Danau Sentarum National Park Authority, with the Sintang Orangutan Center (SOC) as an implementing partner.

Nanga Hovat is rich in natural resources, including biodiversity and the potential for sustainable forest products. However, the local community faces significant challenges in accessing education. The hamlet has only one elementary school with a single teacher handling all grade levels. To continue to higher education, students must leave their village, a step that is often difficult due to economic constraints and a lack of academic preparation. Many students in Nanga Hovat still struggle with basic skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, making it difficult for them to compete with students from downstream regions. Consequently, most students who cannot compete return to their village to assist their parents. To address these challenges, SOC designed the Teaching Volunteer Program to improve access to education and the quality of learning in Nanga Hovat. The program aims to provide basic education, foster environmental awareness, and build community capacity in managing natural resources.

This year, the program adopted a new approach to volunteer recruitment, using a more open and organized process. Previously, recruitment relied on word-of-mouth referrals; now, volunteers are recruited more broadly through various communication platforms. SOC also hopes this initiative will become sustainable, with monthly rotation schedules for each volunteer group. Over a one-month period, volunteers will teach using interactive methods specifically designed to meet local needs. Lesson topics include the importance of forest conservation, biodiversity, and the benefits of education for the future. The program not only focuses on students but also involves the broader community to create a wider impact.

With the resumption of the Teaching Volunteer Program, SOC hopes to bring about significant positive changes in education quality and environmental awareness among the people of Nanga Hovat. Furthermore, this initiative strengthens the relationship between the community, SOC, and the Betung Kerihun and Danau Sentarum National Park Authority, fostering better synergy in conservation efforts and improving community welfare. This program is a small step with a big impact, representing a tangible commitment to creating a better future for the people of Nanga Hovat and preserving the surrounding environment.

Bridging Communities
and Conservation:

Enhancing Education, Connectivity, and Wildlife Awareness in Nanga Hovat

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