



Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund Covid-19 Rapid Response Round - Final Report

Due within two months of the end date of the Rapid Response Round project

(maximum 6 pages)

Project reference	CV19RR09
If linked with an ongoing project, please include that project reference here (e.g. IWT001)	IWT077
Project title	Conditional Cash Transfers to Reduce IWT from Covid-19
Country/ies	Indonesia
Lead organisation	Yayasan Planet Indonesia
Partner institution(s)	BKSDA (West Kalimantan); DISHUT (Dept. of Forestry)
Start/end date of project	1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021
Which fund was this project relevant to?	Darwin Initiative / Darwin Plus / Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund
Grant value (£)	£ 49,750
Project Leader name	Adam Miller
Report author(s) and date	Abrar Ahmad, and Adam Miller

If your project is IWT Challenge Fund, please submit to IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk.

1. Project Summary

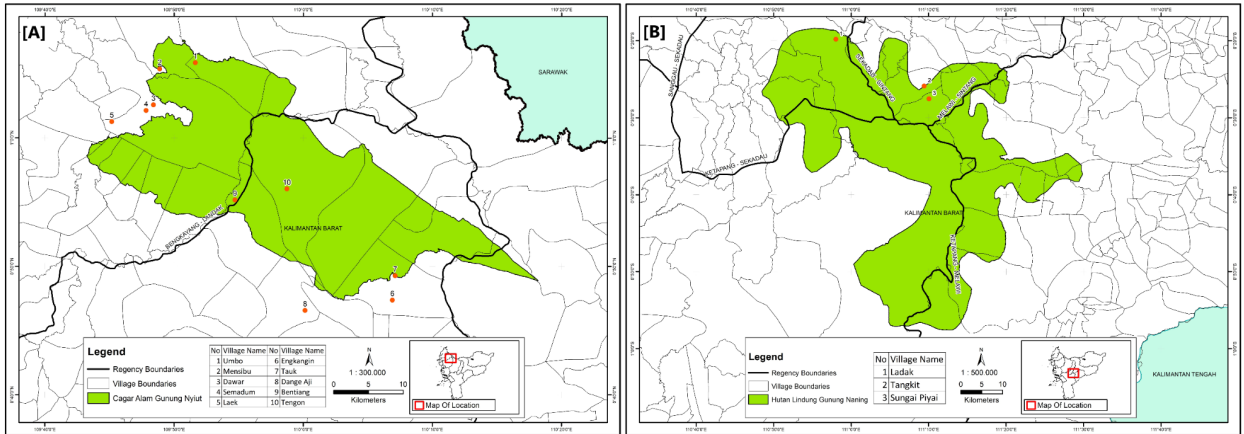
The adverse socioeconomic effects of Covid-19 is [aggravating inequalities](#) and creating greater pressure on rural communities of Southeast Asia to become involved in [illegal logging](#) and [poaching](#) to compensate for loss of livelihoods. This increased dependency on IWT will deepen the poverty-biodiversity loss feedback loop, trapping communities into a vicious cycle of social and environmental injustice for decades.

In July 2020, we assessed the initial impacts of Covid-19 on partner communities living across one of West Kalimantan's remaining tropical forest landscapes – the [Gunung Niut Nature Reserve](#). Our assessment revealed that 96% of respondents (N=91) were negatively affected by the consequences of the virus, whereas 89% of respondents (male - 91%, female - 85%) identified the downturn in the economy as the most significant impact of Covid-19 on their lives (farm produce sold for lower price/necessities bought for higher price). Particularly, the communities' were concerned with gathering enough funds to meet basic needs (43%), expenditure on children's education (26%), agriculture and business (13%), savings (9%), medical costs (6%) and paying debts (3%).

Such inability to meet basic needs in the short term by rural communities living near the reserve is likely to create spikes in poaching activity and dependency on IWT to support their families. In *Covid-19 Rapid Response Round Final Report Template 2021*

order to reduce opportunities for such likelihoods, we provided conditional cash transfers (CCTs) to support 892 households consisting of a total of 1,157 direct beneficiaries across 13 villages in two IWT077 project sites (Gunung Niut - 845 direct beneficiaries, Gunung Naning - 312 direct beneficiaries) (Location Map).

The aim of the CCT was to lessen the negative impacts of Covid-19 by enhancing the economic stability of our partner communities and in turn reduce the likelihood of individuals turning to IWT to make up for economic losses resulting from Covid-19. In addition, this CCT provided us the opportunity to strengthen our relationship with villagers by extending our holistic approach to support communities to reduce their dependence on IWT activities. In particular, all the 1,157 individual recipients of the CCT renewed their commitment to avoid using environmentally harmful practices (e.g. hunting, logging, using chemical fertilizers, etc.) in order to continue receiving access to services from their village Conservation Cooperatives which is supported by the IWT Challenge Fund.



Location Map: The following map shows the [A] location of 10 villages in the Gunung Niyut site, and [B] location of 3 villages in the Gunung Naning site where the CCT was implemented

2. Project Achievements

The intended outcome of this project was to reduce the dependency on IWT for 1,158 members across 2 sites in West Kalimantan through a CCT to lessen the economic shocks of Covid-19 and revive conservation agreements. The first step of implementing this project involved communicating with village leaders and Conservation Cooperative members in our 13 partner villages to determine and finalize logistical and administrative issues. Ensuring gender equality was inherent in our project design as all households in the 13 partner villages received the CCTs. In the case of value for money, our overhead and administrative cost (staff cost, M&E, travel cost) were lower than 10% of the actual budget. This meant that over 90% of funds were used to support community members to reduce the economic burden caused by Covid-19. By adhering to high ethical standards while making partnerships with villages, we ensure transparency in financial transactions that benefit community members. In the case of this CCT, village leaders were engaged from the very beginning of project design through implementation and evaluation. As

In order to achieve this outcome, we identified the following 2 objectives: (1) Improve economic stability for 1,158 household members through a CCT administered over a two-month period, and (2) renew anti-poaching agreements with 1,157 households through a CCT with the condition being the requirement to sign a conservation commitment to shun environmentally exploitative activities and not use funds for environmentally harmful practices by 744 households in Gunung Niut and 148 households in Gunung Naning.

As part of evaluating objective 1, we planned to carry out a ‘before and after’ representative sample survey of community households that received the CCT to understand the impact of the

CCT on their daily lives. Additionally, we used data collected by community-led forest SMART patrol teams from both sites to understand the change in encounters of illegal activities between the months of January to April 2021 in forests surrounding our partner communities. In case of the household survey, questions were asked regarding the impact of Covid-19 on various aspects of community members lives such as *impact on the economy, impact on livelihoods, impact on food security, and current support and use of CCT funds* (see attachment). In total, 166 CCT (Gunung Niut - 90, Gunung Naning - 77) participants were interviewed through the pre-survey. Additionally, between January 2021 and April 2021, community-led SMART patrols covered a total of 3,823 km (Gunung Niut - 2,791 km, Gunung Naning - 1,032 km).

Based on the results of the community survey, it was clear that community households were still facing the impact of Covid-19 when the CCT was being implemented. In both locations, the primary source of income for households is from agriculture. In case of access to markets where farmers sell their produce, survey results show that farmer's in Gunung Niyut were less likely to be able to sell their produce due to market closures compared to farmers from Gunung Naning. This had adversely affected farmers in Gunung Niyut who said that their incomes changed compared to the previous year (65%) compared to Gunung Naning farmers (35%). When asked about how Covid-19 impacted their incomes, households pointed out that movement restrictions and transport limitations (Gunung Niyut - 25%, Gunung Naning - 32%) had a major impact on their incomes.

Alternatively, we found similarities between both sites in terms of movement restrictions and increases in cost of food items. In case of livelihoods, participants from both sites opined that their impacts were affected because of Covid-19 (Gunung Niyut - 80% and Gunung Naning - 61%). In case of food security, the majority of the households from both sites (Gunung Niyut - 71%, Gunung Naning - 70%) stated that they were consuming the same food/products before the pandemic was declared in Indonesia (March 2020). In case of major challenges related to ensuring enough food for their families, participants from both sites pointed out that the increased cost of food (Gunung Niyut - 49%, and Gunung Naning - 64%) was the biggest challenge followed by not having enough money to purchase foodstuff (Gunung Niyut - 40%, and Gunung Naning 7%), and market closures (Gunung Niyut - 6%, and Gunung Naning - 26%). In order cope with such challenges, community members have increased their consumption of wild products (non-meat) taken from their forest/gardens (Gunung Niyut - 29%, and Gunung Naning - 31%) and reduction in meat/fish/eggs (Gunung Niyut - 28%, and Gunung Naning - 34%).

While half of the participants of the survey from each site stated that they received support to purchase foodstuff after the Covid-19 pandemic from different sources, more than 40% of those participants each sites (Gunung Niyut - 45% and Gunung Naning - 42%) stated it had not been enough. When asked about their household's top priorities, participants stated that access to food, covering basic needs, and recovery/change of livelihoods were topmost priorities. After receiving the CCT, households stated that their first priority was to 'pay for food and other basic needs' (Gunung Niyut - 82%, and Gunung Naning - 91%) followed by 'start/restore livelihoods' (Gunung Niyut - 59%, and Gunung Naning - 72%).

As part of evaluating the impact of the CCT on the surrounding environment, we used data from community-led SMART patrols to check for illegal activity (hunting, logging, encroachment) near the participant villages from January 2021 to April 2021. We estimate illegal activity by dividing the total number of encounters by kilometers patrolled (e.g. 5 hunting activity/20km patrolled = 0.25 incidents per km). As the CCT was completed in March 2021, our assumption was that illegal activity would either stabilize or reduce after the CCT was implemented. We found that the incidence of encroachment and logging reduced across both sites, while only the encounter rate of hunting increased for Gunung Niyut (Table 1).

Table 1: Encounter rate (incident per km patrolled) for illegal activity in surrounding forests of partner communities in two sites where CCT was implemented

Month	Gunung Niyut			Gunung Naning		
	Encroachment	Hunting	Logging	Encroachment	Hunting	Logging
Jan 2021	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.17	0.00
Feb 2021	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.07	0.26	0.16
Mar 2021	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.07	0.07	0.01
Apr 2021	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00

Findings from the community survey revealed that even though community members received support from other sources during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not enough for them to cover their family's basic needs. As community members in both sites stated that this CCT will allow them to use funds to meet basic needs and re-start/restore livelihoods, the direct impact of this project would be to tackle IWT through providing quick financial incentives that address lack of income to support basic household needs (purchase food, pay for medical expenditure, etc.). In addition, we also found that across both sites, in general incidents of illegal activity declined (except for hunting activity in Gunung Niyut site) in the month following the administering of the CCT (April, 2021). This provides us with the preliminary evidence that this CCT was able to reduce hardship created by Covid-19 that in turn would have increased incidents of illegal activity in two IWT Challenge Fund supported communities.

3. Lessons learnt

In light of the ongoing pandemic, we followed best-practice health protocols when distributing the funds to community members. Our field staff used a system of maintaining safe distancing of CCT recipients by using scheduled queues, controlling spacing, and cleanliness (use of hand sanitizers and disinfectant).

Initially, as part of impact evaluation of the CCT, we had planned to carry out a pre- and post-survey. While the pre-survey was carried out just before the implementation (mid-March), the post-survey was planned for April 2021 to estimate the direct impact of the CCT on a household's food security and livelihood. However, around the end of March 2021, West Kalimantan experienced a [sudden increase in Covid-19 cases](#). In order to stop the spread of Covid-19 into our partner villages, village leaders decided to restrict people from entering their villages from other areas. This meant that we were not able to carry out regular field activities, which included the post-survey, in April. Nevertheless, we were still able to collect and analyse data from community-led SMART patrols to compare before- and after- incidence of illegal activity in forests surrounding villages where the CCT was implemented.

In case of future CCTs, we would like to implement a program that provides both cash and non-cash (food) support to households. This will ensure that recipient households can get basic necessities as well as cash to meet other needs.

In our experience, the key to smooth implementation of a conditional cash-transfer program greatly depends on good communication with village leaders. This eliminates instances of

miscommunication and poor judgement that can cause grievances between some community members and the implementers.

4. Other comments and feedback