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The New Eco Role Models

Saving the Earth one village, turtle, and bag of recyclables at a time. (And what you can do too.)

BY AMANDA ROBB



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Founder, Health in Harmony, Oakland, California, and its counterpart, Alam Sehat Lestari (ASRI), West Kalimantan, Indonesia

How She Started: I was studying orangutans in 1993 in Gunung Palung National Park in Borneo—a beautiful but threatened place. In the past two decades, 38 percent of the park has been

damaged by illegal logging, one of the few sources of income for the local citizens. They're now feeling the consequences: Floods are frequent, and infection from mosquito-borne illness is high. I went to Yale School of Medicine with the goal of returning to Indonesia to improve local health conditions and preserve the environment.

How It Works: We established a medical clinic in Sukadana, a large village in southwest Borneo, in July 2007, and we've seen more than 6,000 patients. We started a healthcare rewards program that provides discounted ambulance service and monthly mobile clinic visits to communities that stop the destruction of Gunung Palung. Also, anyone who cannot afford the clinic fees can work instead at our organic farm and seedling nursery, which is growing trees to be used in reforestation efforts.

Biggest Success: The day the head of a village—in a center of illegal logging—said he had personally hiked around to ensure that there was no more illegal logging.

Just One Thing You Can Do: Avoid palm oil. [Clearing land for palm plantations] is one of the major causes of rainforest destruction in Indonesia.

FROM THE APRIL 2009 ISSUE OF *O, THE OPRAH MAGAZINE* ([HTTP://WWW.OPRAH.COM/APP/O-MAGAZINE.HTML](http://www.oprah.com/app/o-magazine.html))

PRINTED FROM OPRAH.COM ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2014
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