



# Indonesia

## Pilot Project: Increasing Environmental Awareness through Religion: Single-Use Plastic Ban in Traditional Markets in Jakarta

Indonesia is one of the largest producers of plastic garbage found in the oceans. Jakarta alone is responsible for around 7,000 tonnes of trash, 14 % of which consists of plastic that is difficult to recycle. Despite a 2020 ban on single-use plastic bags, it has been a challenge for traditional markets, where over 70 % of the population shops, to do away with the bags.

The GIZ project “Sustainable Use of Peatlands and Haze Mitigation in ASEAN” (SUPA), in cooperation with their partners from the civil society and religious organisations, implemented an innovative pilot project at the Tebet Barat Market in South Jakarta. The aim was to raise awareness about the ban on single use plastics and encourage sustainable behavioural changes among the population. Religious actors were incorporated into the project so they could use their networks to bring the environmental messages into the community.

### Results

The pilot project reached nearly 1,000 people, including market traders, residents of the Tebet district, and members of religious organisations. The results show a 6 % decrease in the number of plastic boxes and bags used at the market; smaller packaging could even be reduced by 17 %. A rethinking among some customers was also noticed: they brought their own bags and jars to package their purchases.

A survey revealed that beyond the desire to protect the environment, people can be motivated to change through religious values. Belief-based messaging played a decisive role in raising awareness: texts from Friday Sermon and an

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<b>Implementation:</b>	GIZ Project “Sustainable Use of Peatlands and Haze Mitigation in ASEAN” (SUPA)
<b>Partners:</b>	Gerakan Indonesia Diet Kantong Plastik/Indonesia Plastic Diet Movement (NGO), Jakarta’s Environmental Agency, traditional market coordinators of the Tebet Barat Markets and religious partners: Lembaga Lingkungan Hidup dan Penanggulangan Bencana Pimpinan Aisyiyah (LLHPB PP 'Aisyiyah, religious women’s organisation) as well as the Board of the Dewan Kemakmuran Mosque (DKM) and Local Women’s Quran Reading Groups

e-book about the initiative’s results, which showed that environmental protection reflects good religious practice, were developed and distributed.

Videos shared on social media channels, in which religious actors explain the dangers posed by microplastics and offer alternatives, extended the reach of the messages.

Practical aspects of the project included exchanging plastic bags at the market in favour of reusable bags. Customers were encouraged to use more sustainable packaging after donation boxes for loan containers were established. One particularly creative approach was a single-use plastic-free cooking and shopping competition put on at the Aisyiyah

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### The Problem

Despite the ban on single-use plastic in Jakarta, which was passed by a Governor's decree, the consumption of single-use plastic remains very high, especially in traditional markets and in the informal food trade.

### The Role of Religious Actors

Religious actors retain the respect and trust of their followers and can do much to affect change in a community. As protection of the environment and natural resources plays an important role in most religions, dignitaries representing these values can prove to be a vital voice when it comes to the single-use plastic ban.

nursery, which offered awareness-raising measures and fun at once.

Information about environmental protection was delivered to market traders and customers through various trainings at the market and door-to-door campaigns in the neighbourhood. Religious actors emphasised the spiritual dimension of the market as a place of sustainable trade. An Aisyiyah employee summarised it fittingly: "My market is my place of worship. Negotiations of religious teachings also take place at the market, including those on preventing damage to the environment."

## Challenges and Learnings

The pilot project revealed that long-term behavioural changes require time and work to convince people. Religious actors can make a positive difference here. Many traders feared they would lose customers if they stopped

offering plastic packaging. It therefore required a broad change of thought across the whole of society. At the same time, the pilot project showed the complexity of finding common ground amongst the various religious organisations, as each set their priorities differently.

The cooperation between civil society and religious partners strengthened the impact of the initiative. Whereas NGOs provided the expertise on plastic reduction, the large network offered by the partner organisation Aisyiyah at both the local and the national level allowed for an effective dissemination of the messaging. The integration of environmental aspects into religious *fatwas* could also support sustainability over the long-term. A *fatwa* is a religious declaration in Islam given by a recognised Islamic scholar or religious authority. It serves as a guideline for Muslims on specific questions and serves as an orientation aid.

The pilot project played an important role in the implementation of the plastic ban at the Tebet Barat Market and offers a basis for expanding the strategy to other markets in Jakarta. Representatives of the market's administration are already planning to take over responsibility for the donation boxes for reusable bags. The religious partners would also like to continue to promote the subject in their communities. Aisyiyah possesses a country-wide structure that allows for them to expand the project to other regions in Indonesia. The GIZ project is planning to incorporate religious actors into their environmental initiatives in the future in order to promote a long-term shift to sustainable behaviour.

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