

Strengthening Housewives' Environmental Awareness to Reduce Plastic Use in Pulokerto Village

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Abstract

The use of single-use plastics has become a major environmental problem in many places, including the Pulokerto Village in Gandus District. Non-biodegradable plastic waste pollutes the environment, clogs waterways, and affects public health. Homemakers are a group in society who play an important role in managing household waste because of their strategic role in regulating consumption patterns and daily habits within the family. The service activity took the theme of strengthening environmental awareness among housewives to minimize plastic use. Identifying community needs shows that there is a lack of knowledge and awareness about environmental cleanliness due to plastic use. The potential in Pulokerto Village includes the central role of housewives, who hold a strategic position in leading groups; active social organizations, including active PKK groups, savings clubs, and health posts at Pulokerto Village; the spirit of mutual cooperation and environmental awareness among the community; and access to digital information and social media. Therefore, the solution offered is an educational lecture for the service participants, who are housewives. The implementation method uses a participatory approach. The innovation in this service activity is the Eco Challenge Family (Plastic-Free Home Competition), Reusable Bag (Simple Cloth Shopping Bag), and Plastic Exchange for Household Items. The program is community-based, involving RT/RW, and is designed to be simple and applicable in daily life, adapting to the needs and potential of the local community. Therefore, the expected outcomes of this service activity are short-term results, in the form of changes in the initial attitudes and behaviors of housewives, and long-term results, in the form of changes in the environment and a healthier and cleaner lifestyle. The results of the activity show an increase in housewives' knowledge from 50.8% (pre test) to 56.8% (post test), as well as the formation of three program innovations: Eco Challenge Family, Reusable Bag, and Plastic Exchange for Household Items.

Keyword: Environmental Awareness; Housewives; Plastic; Socialization.

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Introduction

Environmental issues are a major challenge facing the world today (Duchaeva & Magomadov, 2023) including Indonesia (Komarudin & Ayuningtyas, 2024). One of the main issues of serious concern is the increasing amount of plastic waste (Tasnuva Dhara et al., 2023), which negatively impacts environmental quality and public health (Lin et al., 2025). Plastic is a synthetic material that is difficult to decompose naturally (Nayanathara Thathsarani Pilapitiya & Ratnayake, 2024). It is estimated that the time required for plastic to decompose naturally can reach hundreds of years, leading to a continuous increase in plastic waste accumulation over time (Azaad, 2023). Such an issue is exacerbated by the public's continued tendency toward consumerism and reliance on single-use plastics, both for household needs and economic activities (Ncube et al., 2021).

In the local context, this phenomenon is evident in the Pulokerto Village, Gandus District, Palembang City, South Sumatra Province. This urban village is one of the areas located along the banks of the Musi

River, with a demographic condition predominantly inhabited by lower-middle-class communities. Based on data from the [Central Bureau of Statistics \(2023\)](#), Pulokerto Village has a population of approximately 7,500 people, with the majority of residents working as laborers, farmers, small traders, and housewives ([Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023](#)). The community's average education level remains low, with the majority of housewives only having completed junior high school.

Initial field observations and interviews indicate that most households in this area are still heavily reliant on plastic for daily activities, such as wrapping food, carrying groceries, and storing household items. In one week, each household uses an average of 15–20 plastic bags. Mineral water plastic waste can be cleaned and sold, but most household waste is disposed of without sorting or recycling. The lack of awareness and limited access to information about the environmental impact of plastic have not motivated people to change their behavior. Most household waste, including plastic, is dumped into rivers, burned in yards, or collected at temporary waste disposal sites without sorting, polluting the surrounding environment, including bodies of water like the Musi River.

Pulokerto Village also faces limitations in terms of waste management services. The available landfill area is the largest in Palembang City, but the local community lacks knowledge, human resources, and skills in waste management. Additionally, there is no community-based waste management system that is functioning effectively. The potential for environmental pollution is very high, especially because this area is low-lying and prone to flooding, making household waste easily carried into the river when the rainy season arrives.

However, the target partners, in this case, the group of housewives in Pulokerto Village, have considerable potential for empowerment. Homemakers play a crucial role in consumption-related decision-making at the household level ([Puljić et al., 2022](#)). Target selection is done using a community representation approach. Considering that Pulokerto Village has over 20 active RTs, the ideal target number is 40–50 socialization participants, with a distribution of 1–2 people per RT or through social organizations such as PKK, Posyandu, pengajian activities, and arisan groups. Their openness to innovation and new information is a very important social capital in the implementation of community empowerment programs. On the other hand, the village government also showed a positive commitment to environmental programs and was willing to cooperate in supporting educational activities and community-based interventions.

This program aims to raise awareness and knowledge among housewives about the negative impacts of plastic use and to encourage behavioral changes toward a more environmentally friendly lifestyle. Empowerment is achieved through educational lectures on the environment and the dangers of plastic use. With a participatory and community-based approach, this program is expected to create sustainable behavioral change and develop agents of change at the household level ([Safitri & Hariyanto, 2023](#)). This activity directly contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, which promotes sustainable consumption and production patterns, and Goal 13: Climate Action, which calls for immediate action to address climate change and its impacts. The novelty of this service program lies in three integrated innovations: (1) Eco Challenge Family (Plastic-Free Home Competition), (2) the creation of Reusable Bags from recycled materials, and (3) a program to exchange plastic for household items. RT/RW community-based approach differs from the usual plastic socialisation programs that only focus on lectures without real actions and incentives for the community.

Method

This community service is aimed at housewives in the Pulokerto Village, Gandus District, Palembang City. The method used is a participatory and educational approach, with housewives actively involved in the entire series of activities. Additionally, the participatory approach allows for solutions to the current phenomenon. The stages of activity implementation consist of initial observation, coordination with local authorities, opening and pre-test session, educational lectures, and post-test session. At the first meeting, an initial observation was conducted at the Pulokerto Village, Gandus District. The observation aimed to determine the environmental cleanliness and plastic waste conditions in Pulokerto Village. This stage also identifies the awareness and behavior of housewives in using plastic. Then, exploring local potential and community resources that can support plastic reduction programs. The observation results serve as the basis for formulating contextual and needs-based community service activity materials ([Abuhamda & Bsharat, 2021](#)).

The next step is to prepare for the service activity, coordinating with the Pulokerto Village Head and the local community. Coordination is an important step to ensure that service activities can run effectively, efficiently, and be well-received by the local community. The location is at the residence of the RT 21

secretary in Pulokerto Village, Gandus District, Palembang City. The main target of the service is housewives from various RTs in Pulokerto Village.

The socialization activity was held on Saturday, October 18, 2025, at 09:00, targeting 20 housewives. This socialization stage begins with an introduction to general issues regarding environmental cleanliness (waste, sanitation, pollution) and reducing plastic use. Then, an initial pre-test was conducted on the participants to assess their knowledge of environmental cleanliness. This included knowledge of sanitation, the dangers of plastic to the environment, attitudes toward the use of single-use plastic, and daily behaviors related to plastic use. Participants attended community service sessions on environmental cleanliness and education on reducing plastic use.

Next, a post-test session was conducted as the final test to assess the participants' understanding of the material that had been presented, and the results of the evaluation were analyzed by calculating the percentage increase in scores from the pretest and posttest. Descriptive evaluation obtains information about individual characteristics, explains conditions, or symptoms in a specific group, so the results are percentages used to determine the extent of community knowledge improvement.

The output of this socialization activity was participants understand and apply the principles of reducing plastic use at home. With this understanding, the community will become more responsible for plastic usage and pay more attention to their own health, family, and environment to prevent significant impacts from plastic waste in the future (Mardhanita et al., 2021).



Figure1. Socialization activities with housewives and the Pulokerto village government.

Result and Discussion

Increasing Environmental Knowledge of Housewives

Community service activities were conducted by the Sociology Study Program of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Sriwijaya University, to increase the environmental literacy and awareness of housewives regarding the issue of household plastic reduction. The evaluation was conducted by measuring pretest and posttest scores from 20 respondents participating in the activity.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Strategic role of housewives •Presence of active social organizations •High spirit of mutual cooperation •Wide access to social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lack of environmental knowledge and understanding •Limited access to environmentally friendly products •Minimal continuous education activities •Lack of supporting regulations and facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support from government programs and non-profit institutions •Business opportunities from plastic recycling •Global trend towards green living •Ease of access to online educational information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consumerist and practical culture •Dependence on cheap plastic products •Lack of supervision and policy enforcement •Household economic challenges

Figure 2. Distribution of Participants Initial Knowledge Levels
(Source: Data processed by the team, 2025)

Every individual needs to cultivate awareness of the importance of environmental cleanliness. This can start by reducing plastic usage, followed by providing relevant materials to transform waste into valuable products (Hanif et al., 2024). Delivering educational lectures is an effective way to improve the skills and awareness of housewives regarding environmental cleanliness. Measurement can be done through pre-tests

and post-tests to show the extent to which knowledge and attitudes have changed and their connection to plastic reduction behavior (Supriani et al., 2024).



Figure 3. Discussion Session

Quantitatively, the results show an increase in average knowledge from 50.8% (pretest) to 56.8% (posttest). This 6 percentage point increase reflects a strengthening of conceptual understanding and attitudes toward environmentally friendly practices at the household level. The results comparison is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Results Pretest and Posttest

No	Aspects being Measured	Pretest (%)	Posttest (%)	Increase (%)	Description
1	Knowledge about the sources of household waste.	46	85	39	The majority of participants knew that over 50% of waste comes from households.
2	Understanding the times it takes for plastic to decompose.	52	91	39	Participants understand that plastic takes 100-500 years to decompose.
3	The 3R concept (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and plastic-free homes.	48	87	39	Understanding increased after socialization.
4	Understanding the dangers of microplastics to health.	50	78	28	Participants are beginning to understand the impact of plastic on health.
5	Awareness of the role of housewives in environmental change.	72	95	23	Almost all participants understood the central role of mothers in maintaining environmental cleanliness.
Avarage Score		50,8	56,8	6,0	Increased environmental knowledge and awareness

This increase qualitatively indicates that housewives' understanding of plastic is shifting from instrumental (knowing only) to reflective (understanding its ecological and social significance). Family based environmental education is effective in shaping sustainable ecological awareness, particularly among women who hold control over domestic consumption decision-making. From an environmental sociology perspective, Bourdieu (1990) explains that this phenomenon indicates the formation of an ecological habitus, which is the internalization of ecological values into daily thinking patterns and habits. The innovation in this service activity is the Eco Challenge Family (Plastic-Free Home Competition), Reusable Bag (Simple Cloth Shopping Bag), and Plastic Exchange for Household Items. The program is community-based, involving neighborhood (RT) and community (RW) levels, and is designed to be simple, adaptable to local community needs and potential, and applicable in daily life.



Figure 4. Answering pretest and posttest questions

This combination of digital technology approaches and simple local innovations aims to create sustainable behavioral change and strengthen the environmental awareness of housewives. By incorporating context-appropriate technology, this activity not only provides education but also fosters concrete, environmentally friendly habits that can be passed on to future generations.

Forms of Innovation:

Eco Challenge Family Innovation (Plastic-Free Home Competition)

(1) This program does not purchase sachet products and manages household plastic waste into creative products. (2) Supporting technology includes recording challenge scores through a simple Google Form or manual evaluation sheet. (3) The goal is to cultivate new habits through a fun and family-engaging competition approach.

Reusable Bag (Multi-purpose cloth shopping bag).

(1) This program creates cloth shopping bags from recycled materials such as old t-shirts or scraps of fabric. (2) They can be made manually (with a sewing machine) and can be used repeatedly. (3) The goal is to reduce dependence on single-use plastic bags when shopping at the market.

Plastic-for-Household Goods Exchange Program

(1) This program encourages housewives to bring plastic waste (ecobricks or clean packaging) and exchange it for household goods such as laundry detergent, salt, or soap. (2) Exchanging waste for household goods promotes the practical practice of plastic reduction while also fostering a spirit of mutual cooperation among residents. (3) The goal is to increase the enthusiasm for collecting plastic by providing something for personal needs (reward).

Understanding the Sources and Impacts of Plastic Waste

Significant changes were also evident in participants' understanding of the sources and impacts of plastic waste. Before the activity, most participants estimated household contribution to waste generation at around 30–40%. After the socialization, the majority of participants were able to accurately state that more than 50% of waste in Indonesia comes from households, as mentioned in data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry ([Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup Dan Kelautan, 2022](#)). The observation results of the service team show that the Pulokerto village area, especially RT 21, RT 22, and RT 23, is not yet equipped with environmental cleanliness signs or pamphlets. The public facilities prepared are shared trash bins to support environmental cleanliness. According to Allison's research, the persuasive community approach, which involves powerful and emotional advertising campaigns or posters about the impact of plastic, can influence a person's behavior ([Allison et al., 2022](#)). Programs that focus solely on providing information or knowledge (psychological capabilities) tend to have a negative or very small effect on actual behavioral change.

Additionally, knowledge about the decomposition time of single-use plastics is rapidly increasing. Participants now understand that plastic takes 100–500 years to decompose, not just decades as they previously thought. This has implications for increasing awareness of the long-term impact of plastic on the environment and human health. This result strengthens the Environmental Behavior Model theory, which explains that pro-environmental behavior is influenced by three aspects: ecological knowledge, moral awareness, and opportunity to act ([Hines et al., 1987](#)). In the context of this activity, participatory education provides space for the simultaneous formation of these three aspects, especially through discussions, simulations, and joint reflection. This is supported by Andrawina's research, which states that empowering housewives through environmental education and local community participation (Waste Bank) is a key strategy in addressing plastic waste problems at the household level. A value-based and continuous education approach is needed for pro-environmental behavior to become part of a lifestyle ([Andrawina et al., 2019](#)).

Changes in Perception of the Role of Housewives

Both before and after the activity, participants tended to agree that housewives play an important role in reducing plastic use. However, after socialization, there was a deeper understanding of the role. In the post-test, participants' answers not only mentioned mothers as "consumption managers," but also as agents of environmental value socialization within the family. Many respondents emphasized the importance of involving children in waste sorting from an early age as part of character development. This shows that the service activities successfully expanded the scope of awareness from the individual realm to the educational and cultural realms. This finding aligns with Talcott Parsons' theory of Structural Functionalism, where the family functions as an institution for socializing values to achieve balance in community life (Umanailo, 2019). Positive changes that occur in society are called functional changes, including reaching a point of equilibrium in social life. In this case, mothers act as agents of environmental socialization, instilling sustainability values through example and daily practices. As explained by Notoatmodjo (2012) in Auliani, the level of knowledge consists of six stages: knowing, understanding, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating (Auliani et al., 2023). The increase in participants' post-test scores indicates that the ecological knowledge of housewives has reached the "application" and "analysis" stages, where the information obtained from the socialization activities is not only understood but also beginning to be implemented in real behavior. Good knowledge is usually positively correlated with environmentally conscious behavior. The involvement of housewives in environmental education programs impacts the increase in independent household waste management practices and the formation of environmentally friendly habits at the family level (Ritonga et al., 2019).

Social and Cultural Dimensions in the Plastic-Free Home Movement

The socialization program is based on three main pillars of a plastic-free home: Environmentally Friendly, Spirit of Mutual Cooperation, and Exchange. These pillars integrate ecological values with local wisdom. The concept of mutual cooperation serves as a means of building ecological solidarity among residents, while also strengthening the collective identity of the Pulokerto community as a coastal community that depends on environmental sustainability. From a cultural sociological perspective, this phenomenon demonstrates a form of rearticulation of traditional values in the face of the challenges of ecological modernity. The value of mutual cooperation is no longer understood solely as working together, but also as collective environmental consciousness, which is ecological awareness that grows from togetherness. This approach supports Koentjaraningrat's finding that local cultural values can be the foundation for social transformation when integrated with sustainable development goals.

This aligns with the research findings of Mathis, that small, locally-led initiatives in collaboration with stakeholders (including scavengers) can lead to real progress in reducing marine plastic pollution. The success of these initiatives can be scaled up in larger cities, regions, or countries (Mathis et al., 2022). Furthermore, Mathis explained that the presence of scavengers as important contributors to recycling and waste diversion needs to be organized and supported. The housewives in Pulokerto have been doing simple recycling, which involves processing plastic water bottle waste and then selling it. Local community habits like sorting personal waste and mutual cooperation are forms of environmental protection. The best way to solve environmental crises in low-resource villages is by providing direct training to the community (especially women) to change their behavior and way of thinking. If people change, the environment will also improve, and society will become stronger and more independent (Simmons & Sanders, 2022).

Reflection on the Effectiveness of Service Activities

Overall, the increase in scores and changes in participants' perceptions demonstrate that the participatory socialization approach is effective in raising environmental awareness. The strategy used is a combination of interactive lectures, which is an appropriate means to bridge scientific knowledge with the daily experiences of housewives. This activity directly contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and Goal 13 (Climate Action). Additionally, the results of the activity demonstrate significant potential for developing a Community-Based Environmental Education model at the local level, with housewives as the central agents of change in consumption behavior and household waste management.

Conclusion

The community service activity titled "Strengthening Environmental Awareness for Housewives in Pulokerto Village" successfully demonstrated a significant improvement in participants' knowledge,

attitudes, and environmental awareness. Through a participatory approach, housewives are able to understand environmental issues more comprehensively, especially those related to the sources of household waste generation, the dangers of plastic to health, and strategies for implementing the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (3R) principles in daily life. The increase in the average score from 50.8% to 56.8% after the activity indicates a shift in knowledge toward a more reflective level of ecological awareness. This activity successfully fostered a new understanding that the role of a homemaker is not limited to managing consumption, but also extends to being an agent of social change and a carrier of sustainability values within the family. Thus, this activity not only has an educational impact but also strengthens the position of women as important subjects in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and Goal 13 (Climate Action). Sociologically, this activity also enriches the practice of community empowerment by fostering ecological awareness rooted in local social and cultural values.

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