

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The History of Single-Use Plastic

Global Single-Use Plastic Crisis — How It Started, Who It Hurts, What Must Change.

— Plastic Was Always Meant to Be Trash. 01

In 1956, a plastics industry editor publicly told manufacturers to stop designing for reuse — and fill the trash can instead. The disposable economy was not an accident. It was a boardroom decision made to grow industry profit.



OIL & PLASTIC

250 Oil Lobbyists. Zero Treaty.

02
250

lobbyists vs. the planet

At the latest UN plastics treaty talks, nearly 250 fossil fuel and petrochemical lobbyists showed up — outnumbering all 27 EU member states combined. 175 nations agreed to a binding treaty by 2024. It still doesn't exist.



The Countries Drowning in Plastic Didn't Make It.

Malaysia received 1.4 billion kg of plastic waste. Vietnam, 1 billion kg. Indonesia, almost 600 million kg — in just three years. The largest plastic manufacturers? United States. European Union. United Kingdom. Japan.



INDIGENOUS ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives Existed Before Plastic Did.

04

Woven plant-fiber bags in Papua New Guinea. Banana leaf packaging in Samoa. Bamboo cutlery across Asia. Beeswax wraps across Europe. Earthenware pottery everywhere. None of this is new — plastic erased centuries of knowledge.



SOLUTIONS EXIST

A Seaweed Straw Absorbs 95% of What a Plastic Straw Emits.

0.5
95%

emissions offset vs. plastic

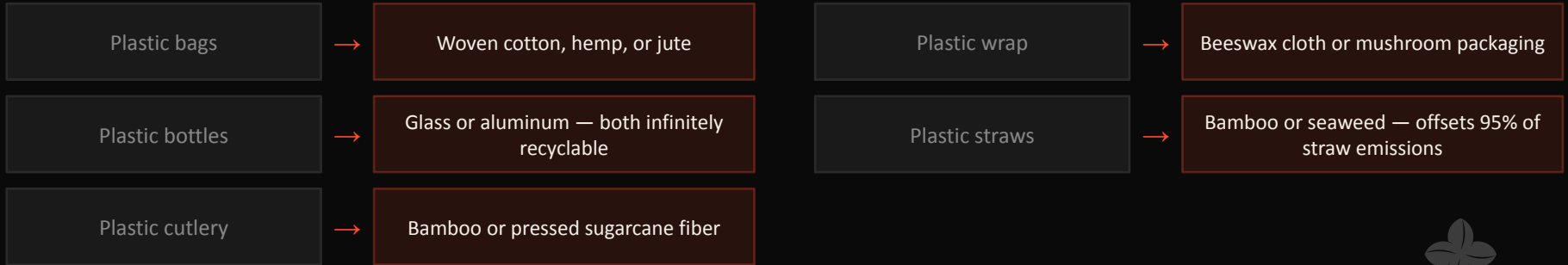
One study found that a seaweed straw removes from the atmosphere the equivalent of 95% of what a standard plastic straw emits across its life cycle — making it potentially carbon-neutral at scale. It exists. It works. What's missing is political will.



SOLUTIONS EXIST

07

Every Single-Use Plastic Has an Alternative That Already Exists.



The alternatives aren't waiting to be invented. They're waiting for the industry to stop blocking them.

Plastic Was Never an Accident. It Was a Business Decision.

What the industry doesn't want you to know about where plastic comes from, who profits, and who pays the price.

The Origin

In 1956, a plastics industry editor told manufacturers to stop designing for reuse and fill the trash can instead. Plastic began as conservation — but industry deliberately engineered the disposable economy.

The Colonial Logic

Plastic disposability requires someone to absorb the waste. That someone is almost always in the Global South. Billion-kg waste shipments arrive in Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia — from US, EU, UK, and Japan manufacturers.

The Alternatives

Woven plant bags, banana leaf packaging, bamboo cutlery, beeswax wraps, seaweed straws, glass, and aluminum are not future tech. They are ancient. The problem isn't the absence of alternatives — it's that they don't generate fossil fuel revenue.

The Treaty Block

175 nations agreed to a binding plastics treaty by 2024. It doesn't exist. 250 oil and petrochemical lobbyists — more than all 27 EU member states combined — attended the final negotiation and blocked every production cap.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Demand a binding plastics treaty that cuts production, not just "mismanaged waste." The alternatives are ready. The only thing missing is political courage.

The Plastic Pipeline

From extraction to blame — who profits at every step.

Land Rights

Industry & Market

Waste & Health

Colonial Framing

This infographic traces the full life of plastic — from the moment oil is extracted on Indigenous land to the point where receiving communities are blamed for the resulting pollution. Use as a full-page insert, poster, or zine spread.

→ **The next 2 slides show all six pipeline steps in detail**



1

Oil Extraction on Indigenous Land

99% of plastic is a petroleum byproduct. Drilling begins on Indigenous territories, often without free, prior, and informed consent — disrupting ecosystems, water sources, and communities that will never see a plastic product.

Land Rights

2

Plastic Manufactured in the Global North

The world's largest plastic manufacturers are based in the US, EU, UK, and Japan. Corporations like ExxonMobil and Dow produce billions of tonnes of single-use product annually with no liability for end-of-life costs.

Industry

3

Sold Globally as "Affordable" & "Convenient"

Single-use plastic sachets flood low-income markets because they appear cheap — while the environmental cost is externalized onto communities with no waste infrastructure to handle it.

Market Access



4

Exported as "Recyclable Waste" to the Global South

Malaysia received 1.4 billion kg of plastic waste in three years. Vietnam received 1 billion kg. Indonesia, 600 million kg. Shipped as "recyclable material" — much of it is unprocessable, designed for disposal, not recovery.

Waste Trade

5

Burned or Dumped in Frontline Communities

Open burning releases dioxins and furans. Rivers fill with microplastics. Groundwater is contaminated. Children in receiving countries bear the health consequences of consumption decisions made thousands of miles away.

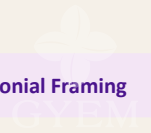
Health Impact

6

Blamed on "Littering" and "Mismanagement"

Scientific papers, media, and policy documents frame Southeast Asian and African nations as "mismanagers" of waste. The colonial framing erases the pipeline — making victims into perpetrators, and protecting the industry that built it.

Colonial Framing



Drop into zine pages, posters, or social graphics.

“

"Disposable plastics are simply not possible without colonizer access to land."

Research Week 1 · Colonial Framing

“

"250 oil lobbyists attended the UN plastic treaty talks — more than all 27 EU member states combined."

Research Week 3 · Treaty Obstruction

"Our lives or their bottom line."

Center for International Environmental Law

“

"The alternatives are not new. Plastic erased centuries of indigenous packaging knowledge."

Research Week 2 · Indigenous Alternatives

“

"More than 100 countries backed production caps. A minority with fossil fuel interests blocked it."

Research Week 3 · UN Negotiations

“

"Woven baskets, banana leaf packaging, bamboo, beeswax, glass, aluminum — none of this is new."

Research Week 2 · Pacific Solutions

Thread Starters — Long-Form Social Content

T1

From Oil Well to Landfill

Traces a plastic bottle from Indigenous land extraction → factory → consumer → export to Global South → open burning. Names who profits at each step.

T2

Why the UN Plastic Treaty Keeps Failing

Breaks down the INC negotiation process, the lobbying surge across rounds, specific tactics used, and the petrostate bloc doing the blocking.

T3

What Pacific Island Communities Knew

Documents traditional packaging systems in PNG, Samoa, Fiji, and Vanuatu — framing indigenous knowledge as active solution, not nostalgia.

T4

"Mismanaged Waste" — A Colonial Framing

Deconstructs how wealthy nations blame the countries they dump plastic in. Traces the term to its origin and exposes who benefits.



HASHTAGS

Use Across All Posts — Prioritise the First Three

#PlasticTreaty

#WasteColonialism

#BreakFreeFromPlastic

#IndigenousAlternatives

#EndPlasticPollution

#BigOilBlocks

#PlasticHistory

#GlobalSouth

#ClimateJustice

#ZeroWaste



Tip: Copy tags directly into post captions. Combine 3–5 per post for best reach.