



ALIANSI ZERO WASTE INDONESIA (AZWI)  
**BRIDGING DIFFERENCES FOR  
A COMMON ZERO WASTE GOAL**





AZWI members carry mannequins wrapped in Unilever-branded sachets during a demonstration demanding the company to stop sachet production and use.

**A**liansi Zero Waste Indonesia (AZWI) is a relatively young alliance of organizations campaigning for “the implementation of the real Zero Waste concept in order to mainstream various existing Zero Waste activities, programs, and initiatives to be implemented in various cities and regencies in Indonesia by considering the waste management hierarchy, material life cycle, and sustainable production and consumption.”<sup>1</sup> There have been some previous successes through the work of individual organizations working on waste like single-use plastic bans in some localities, communities adopting and implementing a Zero Waste framework, or forcing government action on waste dumping.

Still, solid waste pollution will continue to be one of the top environmental issues in the country as waste production increases with the economic upswing and the increasing population. Despite policies like the Waste Management Law of 2008 (No. 18/2008)<sup>2</sup> and other subsequent waste-focused policies, the problem persists so that in 2016, Indonesian President Joko Widodo issued Presidential Decree (No. 18/2016), national government’s

stamp of support for the construction of waste-to-energy facilities in the cities of Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya, Surakarta, and Makassar.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the desire to work together to present a stronger political front.

At about the same time as the issuance of the Presidential Decree (No. 18/2016), Break Free From Plastic (BFFP), a newly formed movement focused on stopping plastic pollution,<sup>4</sup> held its first global meeting in Tagaytay City, Philippines with some Indonesian groups in attendance. After this meeting, the Indonesian groups continued the conversation about forming an alliance to challenge the Presidential Decree (No. 18/2016) via a Judicial Review as their first project together.

The precursor to AZWI called National Coalition Against Waste Burning<sup>5</sup> was led by Indonesian environmental organizations including Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI), Nexus3, Gita Pertiwi, Indonesia Center for Environmental Law (ICEL), KruHa, and YPBB. Conversations on waste-related matters continued

through a WhatsApp chat group. Membership expanded as other groups working on waste with the same vision as the founding members were invited to the group chat with the hope of building up power together.<sup>6</sup>

One of the important events that the Coalition organized was a Zero Waste Hero Tour, a roadshow with Dr. Paul Connett, a retired chemistry and toxicology professor

from the St. Lawrence University, speaking with communities, students, and local political leaders on Zero Waste strategies and the ills of incineration.<sup>7</sup>

The occasion also presented an opportunity to reach out to other partners including organizations working on environmental sustainability to share challenges, experiences, and possible solutions in their respective cities.<sup>8</sup>



AZWI’s history began in 2016 when the president of Indonesia released a presidential decree on WTE project acceleration in six cities.

<sup>1</sup> Zero Waste Indonesia Alliance profile. <https://aliansizerowaste.id/profil-aliansi/>

<sup>2</sup> Waste Management Law of 2008 (No. 18/2008) of Indonesia. NATLEX: Database of national, social security and human rights legislation. International Labour Organization. [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_lang=en&p\\_isn=84427&p\\_country=IDN&p\\_count=611](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=84427&p_country=IDN&p_count=611)

<sup>3</sup> FY2016. Feasibility Study of Joint Crediting Mechanism Project by City to City Collaboration. Waste to Energy Power Plant Project for Bali Province in Indonesia. Final Report. 10th March 2017. JFE Engineering Corporation. Clean Authority of Tokyo. [https://www.env.go.jp/earth/coop/lowcar-bon-asia/english/project/data/EN\\_IDN\\_2016\\_01.pdf](https://www.env.go.jp/earth/coop/lowcar-bon-asia/english/project/data/EN_IDN_2016_01.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Rahyang Nusantara, GIDKP. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Fictor Ferdinand, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Rahyang Nusantara, GIDKP. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Zulfikar. Prof. Paul Connett and His Thought Contribution in the Middle of Indonesia’s Solid Waste Polemic. Oct. 30, 2016. <https://dietkantongplastik.info/prof-paul-connett-dan-kontribusi-pemikirannya-di-tengah-polemik-persampahan-indonesia/>

<sup>8</sup> Fictor Ferdinand, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

Following the Judicial Review victory, the groups decided to formally come together as an alliance. The BFFP meeting and the Judicial Review are recognized by its members as two important events that gave birth to Aliansi Zero Waste Indonesia (AZWI). They understood that the victory was only the first step in the long journey to achieve the Zero Waste vision for Indonesia.<sup>9</sup>

The alliance started with nine organizations operating from mainly four locations: Environmental Conservation Organization (ECOTON) and Komunitas Nol Sampah Surabaya in East Java; Gerakan Indonesia Diet Kantong Plastik (GIDKP), Greenpeace Indonesia, Indonesia Centre for Environmental Law (ICEL), Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI) in Jakarta; Nexus3 Foundation (formerly BaliFokus) and Pusat Pendidikan Lingkungan Hidup (PPLH) in Bali; YPBB in West Java, and Gita Pertiwi in Central Java.<sup>10</sup> Each organization had a different focus and expertise related to waste but agreed to find commonalities in their diversity to chart a common vision.

Today, AZWI has 10 members, some of them operating locally while others operating at the national and international levels. These are: Nexus3 Foundation, Nol Sampah, WALHI, GIDKP, Greenpeace, PPLH Bali, ECOTON, ICEL, YPBB, and Gita Pertiwi.<sup>11</sup>

## WORKING TOGETHER

The valuable lesson from the Judicial Review victory was that in order to win big, organizations need to find what within their individual capacities they can contribute to the alliance so that there is complementation and synergy in their actions together.<sup>12</sup> Some groups are working at the grassroots level; others at the national or international levels. Some focus on communications, others legal and policy work, or engaging businesses, etc.

Compared to a network, alliance work is akin to traveling to the same agreed destination together with a shared strategy and resources to ensure implementation of agreed plans while a network is like traveling to an agreed destination with each member deciding how and when they are going to do it.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, if there are members who are unable to keep up in an alliance, others can slow down or help build their capacity so they can keep up with the pace of the bigger group. This is achieved through knowledge- and skill-sharing.<sup>14</sup> For example, there are groups who are experts in brand audits. Others whose expertise and focus are different, can learn and build their own capacities to be effective participants of future brand audits, or even just to be able to speak confidently about brand audits in debates, political engagements, or in the public arena. Thus, AZWI members agree that the impact of alliance work, most often, is bigger compared to that of a network with network members deciding on their own strategies and

timing. Alliance work is a case of the sum of the parts being greater than the whole.

New roadblocks will continue to emerge, one of the first ones being the Presidential Regulation No. 35 of 2018 signed by President Widodo to accelerate the construction of waste-to-energy facilities in 12 regions namely: 1) DKI Jakarta Province; 2) Tangerang City; 3) South Tangerang City; 4) Bekasi City; 5) Bandung City; 6) Semarang City; 7) Surakarta City; 8) Surabaya City; 9) Makassar City; 10) Denpasar City; 11) Palembang City; and 12) Manado City.<sup>15</sup> Thus, alliances help sustain the work that has been started. In this particular case, their response was to tap the expertise of Dr. Paul Connett once more.

With Presidential Regulation No. 35 of 2018 as the trigger to formalize and strengthen the national alliance, individual organizations sent some of their staff to participate in a GAIA-organized workshop on movement building in the Philippines followed by a visioning workshop funded by the Plastics Solutions Fund (PSF) in 2019. These allowed them to develop a plan on how members can work effectively and efficiently together.

## EARLY CHALLENGES

Because members have their own focus, style of work, resources, and position on certain issues, among others, the differences could sometimes cause friction and misunderstanding.<sup>16</sup> They agree that there have been no major conflicts so far, except for one case where the Greeneration Foundation had to be asked to leave the alliance because of fundamental differences related to the position on thermal technologies. GF supported sending residuals to cement kilns which contradicts a key position of the AZWI. To prevent a repeat of that situation, AZWI developed a consent form that lays out its fundamental positions on key issues that members are asked to sign.

The experience, thus far, with AZWI is that alliance work is about respecting the unique nature and approaches of each member but also finding common ground with which to move forward. As the members reap the benefits of being in an alliance, they start investing more time, energy, and resources into realizing the common vision. However, thinking ahead, AZWI also needs to start developing a process for conflict management so that when the bigger conflicts arise, the members are prepared to deal with them.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, a critical element in alliance-building is trust.<sup>18</sup> In AZWI, the more experienced leaders from the different organizations have been working together for many years on different issues. A good working relationship and a friendship has been developed through the years, hence the deep trust in one another and in each one's character that they will do good. They then also serve as role models to AZWI's younger generation of leaders.



The Zero Waste Cities program continues to encourage the public to reduce and sort waste.

<sup>9</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Nindhita Proboretno and A. Vancher Dipatiukur by Sonia G. Astudillo. Tapping its members for a good cause, Always for a good cause. GAIA: Meet Our Members. <https://www.no-burn.org/meet-our-members-aliansi-zero-waste-indonesia/>

<sup>11</sup>AZWI Members. <https://aliansizerowaste.id/anggota/>

<sup>12</sup>Abdul Ghofar, WALHI. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>13</sup>Fictor Ferdinand, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>14</sup>A Abdul Ghofar, WALHI. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>15</sup>The Indonesian Government Encourages the Acceleration of the Construction of Waste-to-Energy Power Plants (PLTSa). ADCO Law. Sept. 12, 2021. <https://adcolaw.com/blog/the-indonesian-government-encourages-the-acceleration-of-the-construction-of-waste-to-energy-power-plants-pltsa-2/>

<sup>16</sup>Abdul Ghofar, WALHI. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>17</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.



## BASIC PRINCIPLES AND FOUNDATION FOR ALLIANCE-BUILDING<sup>18</sup>

According to AZWI members, these are the most important building blocks to what a good alliance should look like:

1. **Trust.** AZWI's experience has demonstrated the importance of trust and role-modeling by its leaders in alliance-building.
2. **A common vision.** The realization of a sustainable and healthy archipelago, through a civilization that utilizes natural resources as sparingly as possible, uses only safe materials, and does not waste anything.
3. **An agreed mission**
  - Synergize and leverage the resources, efforts, and potential of members and other change agents.
  - Mainstream the understanding of safe, waste-free principles in the extraction, production, and utilization stages.
  - Develop models and accelerate the implementation of secure Zero Waste solutions.
  - Stop all forms of promotion and efforts that are contrary to the safe, waste-free principle.
  - Build a collaborative network and actively participate in movements at the global level that are in line with AZWI's vision.
4. **An agreed set of shared values**
  - Independent. The alliance is not incorporated

into any organizations other than civil society groups that share the same values of the alliance.

- Transparent. The alliance mandate to have a secretariat to manage collaboration, facilitation, and coordination among members, including formal partnership with donors and other sectors. These need to be administered in a clear and transparent manner.
  - Learner. Learning is a continuing process.
  - Shared leadership. All 10 members can have the same opportunity to lead the alliance. The alliance serves to facilitate continuing development of new leaders from among the membership.
  - Be on the same side of vulnerable groups. This is an important social justice component of AZWI's charter.
5. **Shared Strategy and Resources.**<sup>20</sup> Initial funding from the Plastics Solutions Fund (PSF) enabled AZWI members to come together and build a shared strategy. Following that, its members are now exploring fund-sourcing PSF. The PSF funding also allowed them to set up a Secretariat that now assists the alliance in managing its funds, facilities, common platform, and resources in a way that also helps build shared responsibilities of the members to steward, nurture, and empower.
  6. **Forging relationships and friendships.**<sup>21</sup> Differences are easier to manage because the relationship is founded on openness and trust.

<sup>18</sup>Nindhita Proboretno, AZWI Secretariat. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>19</sup>AZWI's Vision, Mission and Values. <https://aliansizerowaste.id/profil-aliansi/>

<sup>20</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>21</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

## STRUCTURE, LEADERSHIP, CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In its early years, there was no robust discussion of structure so most of the agreed undertakings were done on an ad hoc basis.<sup>22</sup> However, the members felt that a structure is important in order to build synergy and manage pooled and common resources efficiently and effectively towards achieving their common vision together.<sup>23</sup> Structure also ensures agility in decision-making.<sup>24</sup>

1. **The Steering Committee:** This was the first committee to be established and was aimed at guiding the operations of the alliance and is the highest decision-making body in AZWI. It is composed of one representative from each of the 10 member organizations.<sup>25</sup>
2. **The Secretariat:** A few months into their operations, the members realized they needed someone or a team to coordinate the agreed work, gather proposals and ideas, and ensure that agreed work is on track. Without funding, YPBB and Nexus3 Foundation assigned one staff each from their respective organizations to perform the functions of co-coordinators temporarily

until some funding was secured.<sup>26</sup> After a year, they were able to secure funds from the Plastic Solutions Fund to set-up the secretariat, which now consists of two co-coordinators, three communications officers (1 for external relations, 1 for internal relations, and 1 for visual design) and one finance person. The secretariat is in-charge of coordination, facilitation, and management of Steering Committee meetings and other alliance meetings and related events. AZWI's communications officers also hold coordination meetings with communications officers of its member organizations, as well as the finance person.<sup>27</sup>

Currently, there are conversations that are unsettled at the time of writing:<sup>28</sup>

1. There is no doubt that AZWI members must align on their strategy and method of work to be effective movers of the alliance. However, the question remains: What adjustments are members willing to make within their respective organizations so that the agreed strategies and tactics of the Alliance are effectively implemented? and
2. Clarity of governance to avoid confusion and conflicts.



<sup>21</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>22</sup>Yobel Novian Putra, GAIA. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>23</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>24</sup>Fictor Ferdinand, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>25</sup>Rahyang Nusantara, GIDKP. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>26</sup>Yobel Novian Putra, GAIA. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>27</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>28</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

While members agree there have been no major conflicts in the past, prior to the establishment of a secretariat, there were occasions where some organizations had to be let go because their positions on certain issues such as on incineration contradicted that of the alliance's fundamental position. Background research was done on these organizations and the cases were deliberated and decided upon by the Steering Committee.<sup>29</sup>

After the secretariat was set up, it is the co-coordinators that lead the process of conflict management together with the conflicting parties. If unresolved, the secretariat is to approach a few members of the Steering Committee to help resolve the conflict before it is brought to the Steering Committee as a full body for decision-making.<sup>30</sup>

Regular face-to-face or online meetings help manage potential conflicts before they get bigger.<sup>31</sup> Issues may be brought to the attention of the secretariat to be included in the meeting agenda and addressed at that level. Most potential conflicts are already resolved during the regular meetings just by seeking clarification. For bigger cases, decisions are made by voting.

## CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES

- Annual meetings are the venues for strategizing alliance-building. It is also the opportunity to revisit and evaluate the strategies and tactics.<sup>32</sup>
- AZWI has been relying on PSF funding for many years so that it can produce work with greater impact. However, it is also beneficial to the alliance to explore other funding sources to supplement current PSF funds.<sup>33 34</sup>
- From the beginning, the secretariat must establish a clear governance structure.<sup>35 36</sup>
- Early on, AZWI already knew and agreed on the six priority issues which now became the most important bases for membership recruitment, knowing who to target because of potential member's position on the following issues:<sup>37</sup>
  - Single-use Plastics which includes sachets, problematic plastics (plastic bags, plastic foam, straws, cutlery, and microplastics), as well as promoting reuse as a solutions to single-use plastics;
  - Zero Waste Cities;
  - Waste Trade;
  - Upstream advocacy including petrochemicals and oil-and-gas;
  - False solutions includes thermal technologies, refuse-derived fuel (RDF), bioplastics, ecobricks; and
  - Just transition. There is an ongoing discussion among members to not consider this as a priority issue but incorporate the principles in all the priority issues.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Rahyang Nusantara, GIDKP. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>30</sup>Nindhita Proboretno, AZWI Secretariat. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>31</sup>Abdul Ghofar, WALHI. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>32</sup>Rahyang Nusantara, GIDKP. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>33</sup>Abdul Ghofar, WALHI. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>34</sup>Gungtik, PPLH Bali. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>35</sup>Yobel Novian Putra, GAIA. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>36</sup>Abdul Ghofar, WALHI. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>37</sup>AZWI Priority Issues. <https://aliansizerowaste.id/#>



A photo taken from a dumping site in East Java. Imported waste still continue to illegally enter Indonesia, especially plastic scrap which is used by local industries as alternative fuel.



## KEY LEARNINGS IN BUILDING AN ALLIANCE

- Alliance work is about building relationships. Members must be open to looking at different perspectives, learning from each other, and having the willingness to compromise.<sup>39</sup> Compromise means accepting new knowledge from fellow members, and could lead to something new.
- Allocate resources into building a team dedicated for secretariat function to ensure that pooled or common resources are managed efficiently and effectively and

collective agreements are on track.<sup>40</sup> If staff from member organizations are assigned to the secretariat, there must be an onboarding process so that there is a clear understanding of the secretariat's function versus the role of staff or manager running an organization.

- One of the most important skills of the secretariat is outstanding facilitation abilities so that the different perspectives are channeled into a synergy that results in positive outcomes for the alliance.
- Invest in helping build smaller member organizations who are unable to contribute as much resources as the bigger organizations.<sup>41</sup>

- Create an atmosphere for teaching and learning for members so that there is a better understanding of each other's work.
- Members will have to make adjustments to their programs or operations internally to align some of the

work with that of the alliance in order to achieve the agreed objectives.<sup>43</sup>

- An inventory of the competencies of the members is important to identify strengths and limitations of the members. Through the alliance, the likelihood that these gaps are bridged increases.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup>Rahyang Nusantara, GIDKP. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>39</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>40</sup>Rahyang Nusantara, GIDKP. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>41</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>42</sup>Gungtik, PPLH Bali. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>43</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.

<sup>44</sup>David Sutasurya, YPBB. Focus Group Discussion on Zoom. May 15, 2023.



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