

UTS2708: Water Governance i...

# Post-trip Blog

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## Mount Merapi Spring



“**Gotong royong**”, which refers to the spirit of cooperation among members of the community to achieve a common goal, is more pervasive in Indonesia.

This necessitated discussions between policymakers and local communities to attain a win-win outcome where they changed parts of Mount Merapi into a national park to allow conservation, but at the same time, they didn't fully deny residents' rights to stay and obtain resources like grass for their livelihoods.

## Slum Areas



In contrast to the upstream, water along this region of Kali Code is much more murky and heavily polluted.

Although residents live right beside a river, they rarely use the river for their daily activities anymore.

Instead, they use water wells or tanks. Some residents living further away from the riverbanks have access to water treatment plants, where they have access to clean water. Since the state of the river does not affect their daily lives, some of these residents have neglected the river and therefore its cleanliness too.

## Locals' Waste Management







Cokrodiningtan, a village along Kali Code, had initiated a waste bank management system, where residents separate their waste and deposit any recyclable materials at the designated waste banks. These waste banks give residents monetary incentives to encourage them to adopt this good habit. Locals also transform solid waste like plastic bottles into functional objects such as 'eco bricks' and stools.

We realised that consistent efforts are paramount in reminding and educating members of the community to adopt good habits of proper waste management.

Change requires communities to play a collective effort. Even though the waste bank system is still not widely implemented in other villages, it's definitely a great and encouraging start.

## Kali Ciliwung (Jakarta)



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Upstream



**Take some time to look at the pictures. Are all these images of the same river?**

Yes, it is the same river.

As we observed sections of Kali Ciliwung, we noticed how the water quality worsened in regions where humans could access the river.

When conducting fieldwork with the Depok community in the midstream, we witnessed the local community's everyday interactions with the river, such as washing their bedding. The community members' devotion and resilience in their efforts to improve the state of the river through advocacy was very inspiring. In fact, some of them would also take initiative to clear the rubbish from the rivers. This is something that we would not see in Singapore today, where locals are not as directly involved in maintaining water cleanliness.

During our boat ride, we observed several of the government's failed normalisation interventions like concrete walls. In spite of pressure from the government, local communities are still highly determined to push for naturalisation, which they believe is the best and most sustainable solution in the long run for their river and the communities there.



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Rubbish like plastic packagings found in the river that were manufactured by large corporations, as early as 1983



Compacting packaging waste into plastic bottles - 'eco bricks'





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Government's failed normalisation measures

New Jakarta



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### The Giant Sea Wall

The Giant Sea Wall is currently being built along the northern Jakarta bay. It serves as a measure to protect the city from floods and enclose a water reservoir for clean water. Even though the engineering interventions at the sea wall work in theory, the project has drawn many criticisms from experts.

Upon further research and reflection, we realised that the criticisms come from the fact that the government has not done much to increase availability and accessibility of water resources, and support residents in doing better waste management, and hence residents have to resort to continuing the extraction of groundwater, and in the long run, this will still cause Jakarta to further sink and become more vulnerable to floods.



The clean water upstream proved that if human activity did not worsen the water quality, there would have been an abundant clean water



source for the people downstream and people would not have to resort to using groundwater for daily activities. If waste management was done better, the issue of land subsidence could be mitigated too. We do acknowledge that there are way more factors that contribute to this pressing problem, but waste management is definitely one of the crucial factors that need to be given more attention, so that Indonesia will be able to achieve their goal of putting their rivers to better use for drinking, economy and the environment, and also mitigate the effects of land subsidence.



## Thank you!

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