



AKSI Brantas: Women Empowering Communities for a Clean Brantas River

The AKSI Brantas Approach aims to empower local communities—particularly women—in the protection and management of water quality in the Brantas River Basin, East Java. Over the past five years, this initiative has strengthened community participation by equipping women’s groups with the knowledge, skills, and networks necessary to advocate for cleaner rivers, prevent pollution, and develop sustainable green businesses.

The Brantas river under threat

The Brantas River is a vital water source for over 17 million people in East Java, yet it faces increasing pollution from industrial wastewater, plastic waste, and erosion due to deforestation. Despite policies to address these issues, enforcement remains weak, and local communities often suffer the consequences of environmental degradation.

Women at the forefront of change

Women play a critical but often overlooked role in water governance. They are key to household waste management and frequently lead grassroots conservation efforts. However, barriers such as limited access to decision-making spaces, lack of training, and societal expectations have historically hindered their participation.

The AKSI Brantas Approach has worked to overcome these barriers by strengthening women’s capacity in advocacy, organization, and sustainable business development. The initiative has trained women to monitor water quality, report pollution, and engage with local authorities. It has also helped women’s groups structure their initiatives, secure funding, and establish eco-friendly enterprises, such as refill stores and moringa tree plantations, that reduce plastic waste and improve livelihoods.

Read the [full report](#) to learn more about our empowerment strategies and the inspiring stories of the women working toward a cleaner Brantas River.

Community-led solutions

Several women-led groups have emerged as powerful forces for change. This report documents the inspiring work of five such groups:

1. Sekar Mulyo (Jombang) – Established a Green Belt Fish Sanctuary, restoring local fish populations and creating sustainable fishing practices.
2. Wadulink (Sumengko) – Developed a Moringa Green Belt Park to stabilize riverbanks and reduce erosion.
3. KTH Kepuh (Panglungan) – Led reforestation and eco-tourism initiatives to protect upstream forests.
4. Hijau Daun (Kediri) – Pioneered community waste management programs and campaigned against single-use plastics.
5. SEKOPER (Gresik) – Advocated for gender inclusion in environmental governance and established waste-free shopping models.

Expanding the movement

The success of the AKSI Brantas Approach has demonstrated the effectiveness of community-based environmental management. The initiative has not only improved local water quality but also inspired women’s leadership in environmental governance.

Looking ahead, Makara and ECOTON are committed to expanding this approach to other river basins in Indonesia, starting with the Balantieng Watershed in South Sulawesi. By documenting and sharing these community-driven strategies, the intention is to inspire other grassroots movements to take action for cleaner rivers.