



Campaign Report for

100 DAYS TO #BEATPLASTICPOLLUTION

Acknowledgments

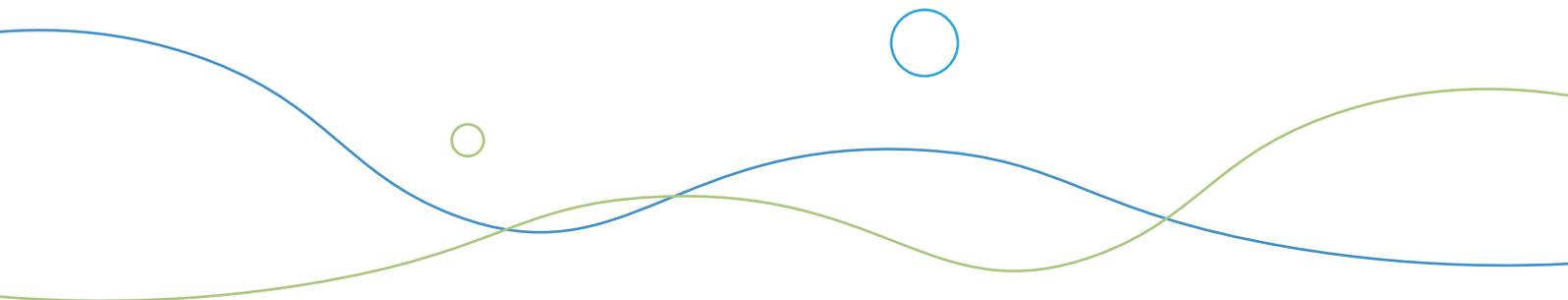
The campaign “**100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution**” was carried out as part of ‘SEA circular – Reducing marine litter by addressing the management of the plastic value chain in Southeast Asia’, a project jointly implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), with funding from the Government of Sweden.

This report on the **100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution** campaign provides an update on the campaign outcome, impacts, learnings and recommendation as well as an outline of the campaign from planning to designing and implementation. This report also describes the digital toolkit and how that has helped to reach the campaign goal.

The campaign was run by [The MeshMinds Foundation](#).

Technical support was provided by the Communications Division, UNEP.

Editing, layout and design of this report was coordinated by The MeshMinds Foundation.



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Executive Summary

The campaign “**100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution**” was developed to unify the efforts of young sustainability advocates from the South-East Asia region by employing “[hashtag activism](#)” on social media. In a recent study by SEA circular, [social media](#) was perceived by 88% of consumers in South-East Asia as the most effective platform to learn more about and be encouraged to take action on plastic waste issues. This is more than traditional media such as newspapers (45%) and radio (45%).

Through spotlighting their day-to-day grassroots activities against the threat of pollution and waste, the aim was to bring together young sustainability advocates in the region under one voice to showcase, share and express their support on social media to effect real change and inspire the next generation.

The focus of the campaign was on supporting awareness and catalyzing behavior change to avoid single-use plastic. Based on a 2009 study published in the [European Journal of Social Psychology](#), on average, it takes 66 days for a new behavior to become automatic. So the challenge was set as “100 days” that people should try to avoid seven “polluting plastics” specific to the region and commonly used on a daily basis: bottles, bags, straws, cutlery, takeaway containers, masks and bubble tea cups. At the same time, young sustainability advocates were invited to use the digital toolkit that comprised four (4) Augmented Reality (AR) filters and games to challenge and mobilize their peers on social media to join the movement to #BeatPlasticPollution.

By 10 January 2022, one month following the end of the campaign, the **100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution** campaign had reached 21m+ unique individuals with 1.2m+ people playing with the AR experiences, resulting in a high engagement rate of 5.6%. In addition, the campaign reached 45 different countries, including the 7 target countries that were identified at the start of the project. The campaign also received numerous high profile features, including the BBC, Asia Development Bank (ADB) and at the SEA of Solutions 2021 virtual conference.

Through in-depth and constructive dialogue at the SEA of Solutions 2021 virtual conference, the event closed with 10 acceleration solutions that set the benchmark for stepping up collective actions to end plastic pollution and which were later detailed in the outcome report, “[Accelerating solutions to reduce plastic waste](#)”. The solutions echo the urgent call of the UN Environment Assembly for “more action, more cooperation, more finance and more ambition and more sustained commitment”.

Major learnings of this campaign include the importance of (i) advocating for sustained commitment to avoid single use plastic and acknowledgment that new habits need to be formed over time; (ii) telling the stories of ‘real’ role models represented by young sustainability advocates operating at the grassroots level; (iii) embracing innovation using the latest digital technologies and gamification techniques to increase engagement with youth-focused communications; (iv) using visual communication techniques to power inclusive education that is accessible to all, regardless of nationality, age, or gender; and (v) leveraging partnerships to maximize support and amplification opportunities. In future, campaigns should include plans to educate youth and engage them in community level awareness raising initiatives focused on action-oriented activities to help them own their efforts towards the goal of ending plastic pollution and rebuilding a sustainable future.

On 2 March 2022, Heads of State, Environment Ministers and other representatives from 175 nations endorsed a historic resolution at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) in Nairobi to [End Plastic Pollution](#) and forge an international legally binding agreement by 2024. The resolution addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, including its production, design and disposal.

In summary, the **100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution** campaign has set a benchmark with its creative work and successful outreach plan. It has specific relevance to the identified solutions of engaging with communities and youth via education, sharing and clear communication. The campaign is a paradigm of how to combine visual literacy, social media and augmented reality technology to successfully engage with target audiences across South-East Asia aged 13-25 years to change their habits on single-use plastic and to keep those habits for life.

Project Background and Delivery

We are facing a plastic pandemic

Plastic waste is choking our seas and coasts, threatening ecosystems, livelihoods and lives in South-East Asia. Due to Covid-19, we are now fighting a plastic pandemic of new waste created from 'new norms' of plastic consumption, such as the use of single-use plastics including personal protective equipment (PPE).

Striving for cleaner seas, [less plastic wasted](#) and a circular economy requires fundamental change along the plastic value chain, from how we produce, to how we consume, dispose of, and recover plastic products. [Shifting from linear to circular systems](#) requires engagement with all parts of society - policy makers, businesses, investors, consumers, academics, [youth](#), and rural communities. [Preventing plastic pollution is a human rights issue and is everyone's business.](#)

The focus on South-East Asia

South-East Asia is at the heart of this marine plastic pollution challenge. Six of the top 20 polluters of marine litter are in South-East Asia, making the region a major hotspot of plastic pollution. With single-use packaging, masks and gloves piling up on beaches and informal sector waste workers increasingly endangered, the direct impact that marine litter has on the livelihoods of disadvantaged local communities as well as the environment, is clear.

Commissioning the project

The MeshMinds Foundation is supported by its sister organization, MeshMinds, a creative technology studio that has a strategic partnership with UNEP under a Memorandum of Understanding dated 22 January 2021. Via UNEP, the SEA circular team reached out to The MeshMinds Foundation to partner on a social media campaign to kick-start an organic, self-sustaining viral movement to communicate, mobilize and advocate for unified action on plastic waste issues. The brief sought to utilize technology and innovation (specifically, Augmented Reality or "AR"); and to build on existing key platforms and partnerships to amplify campaign and outreach efforts.

Why a social media campaign

In a recent study by SEA circular, [social media](#) was perceived by 88% of consumers as the most effective platform to learn more about and be encouraged to take action on plastic waste issues. This is more than traditional media such as newspapers (45%) and radio (45%).

Why AR

Augmented Reality can provide a number of key benefits to brands and organizations. Six of these key benefits are:

1. "Brand Value", whereby AR amplifies the emotional connection to a brand;
2. "Brand Purpose", whereby AR reinforces the reason a brand exists in the world;



Figure 1: from SEA Circular's Perception of Plastic Waste Report.

3. “Product Value”, whereby AR celebrates the personality and positioning of a product;
4. “Product Purpose”, whereby AR elevates the product benefit and the reason to believe;
5. “Product Trial”, whereby AR allows people to experience the product;
6. “Promotions”, whereby strategic initiatives can make a real impact in repeat action and behavior change.

For the purposes of understanding the benefits to organizations, such as UNEP and SEA circular, we can consider the “product” to be scientifically fact-checked, environmentally-sound information about the triple planetary threat of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

Research has shown that AR increases the perceived value of products and brands. In fact, interactions with products having AR/3D content showed a 94% higher conversion rate than products without¹. If well designed and implemented, AR can convey innovation and responsiveness from forward-thinking brands. AR increases engagement and interaction and provides a richer experience for the individual, over and above standard communications online. AR is also mobile and personal and, therefore, hugely accessible to a rapidly growing smartphone market. Further, brands have access to detailed analytics enabling them to truly understand their audience and improve their offerings.

AR has a number of practical applications for organizations across different industry sectors. Some examples of industry specific applications include:

1. **Education.** Increase engagement with today’s most pressing social and environmental challenges by using animation and visual communication to introduce complex topics in fun and engaging ways that make the content more memorable.
2. **Culture, Heritage & Tourism.** Think about augmented exhibitions containing content for museum or gallery visitors, as well as virtual tour guides for specific tours covering local culture, history and food and drink.
3. **Commerce.** Drive product sales of sustainable goods and services through activating additional multimedia brand content in one AR experience, as well as consider activating virtual product demos using AR enabled packaging.

1. <https://www.facebook.com/business/news/insights/future-ar-vr>



Project Delivery

The MeshMinds Foundation and SEA circular worked out a means to deliver the project through 3 main activities under a Document titled ‘SSFA SEA Circular MeshMinds Annex’. The objective of the phased delivery was to ensure that the final campaign was built on a strong foundation of research, insights and strategy.

These activities build upon one another and support the development of the overall social campaign and innovative communication tools.

Summary of Brief:

- Focus on the importance of engaging with and raising the voices of ‘real’ role models over celebrity figures, in order to drive authentic resonance amongst our audience: identifying and spotlighting grassroots campaigners focused on the plastic pollution crisis from South-East Asia.

Target Audience:

For this project, our target audience was digitally-connected youth who are 13-25 years old across South-East Asia – Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Amongst the consumers in our primary markets, we defined a target demographic for our campaign: 13-25 year olds Gen-Z youths who are digital natives and frequently learn and express themselves through social media. Our intention was to engage them effectively through social media; through platforms and content that capture their attention and compel them to participate.

Communications and Outreach Goals:

A key goal of SEA circular is: ‘Growth in consumer demand for plastic pollution reduction’, Through this project, we sought to achieve these specific outputs:

1. Social and economic impacts of marine litter are better understood.

2. Outreach partnerships are broadened and strengthened.
3. Mass consumer awareness about the need to prevent plastic pollution, to prompt behavioral change and support for policy reform.

Activity A: Dec 2020 - April 2021

- Scope: Advise and support SEA circular project efforts to map and audit existing campaigns addressing marine litter and/or plastic pollution
- Deliverables: A ‘way forward strategy’ that includes an analytical framework, developed from an analysis and audit of wide-ranging outreach and communication campaigns in the South-East Asian region.

Activity B: May 2021

- Scope: Develop a strategy for outreach campaign activities and a clear roadmap for campaign development and implementation.
- Deliverables: A creative brief for campaign activities (including campaign measurement; identification of key tools and products for development), based on the identified campaign platform.

Activity C: June - September 2021

- Scope: Develop communication/outreach tools and products.
- Deliverables: An Augmented Reality (AR) focused digital toolkit, including recommended additional campaigns activities and partnerships.

Key Campaign Deliverables

1. A robust content toolkit and social media plan

Our way forward strategy captured the greater influence of ‘real’ role models over celebrity as a means to resonate with our audience. We decided to create content with changemakers and sustainability advocates across our target markets in South-East Asia, to ensure that our audience could relate to them and their stories. We decided to identify and activate a group of 30 sustainability advocates, dive into their stories and shine a spotlight on them through the 100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution campaign.

The content that we developed was a mix of static tile images, moving tiles and videos to be posted as Instagram tiles and Instagram Stories.

At the heart of the “100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution” campaign was a showcase on Instagram of a variety of sustainability advocates who share inspiring activities and calls to action for people in South-East Asia to join the #BeatPlasticPollution movement.

- The UN Environment Programme Instagram page: [@unep](https://www.instagram.com/unep)
- The UN Environment Programme Events page:

<https://www.unep.org/events/campaign/100-days-beatplasticpollution-cleanseas>

- The SEA circular website: <https://www.sea-circular.org/>
- The MeshMinds Foundation Instagram page: [@meshminds](https://www.instagram.com/meshminds)

2. An AR-focused digital toolkit

The toolkit consisted of 4 AR Effects hosted on UNEP’s Instagram Effects page. Due to the high interactivity and multiple plays that AR Games encouraged, we decided to develop 2 AR Games, 1 AR Face Effect and 1 AR World Effect. The toolkit was further supported by digital stickers and templates that our audience could use across other communication platforms like WhatsApp, to engage with and pledge their support for 100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution.

Campaign Hashtag

#BeatPlasticPollution

Campaign Calls-to-Action

Through the campaign touchpoints, the target audience was led to calls-to-action that drive real action and achieve the overall results of less plastic “wasted” in South-East Asia.

Sample call-to-action across all Instagram postings:

Start your 100 days to #BeatPlasticPollution today!

- 🔍 Go to @unep and find the Effects tab ✨
- 👉 Use the AR Effect, take a photo or video and share on your Story
- 🔔 Share it and tag 3 friends to join the movement to #BeatPlasticPollution
- 🍀 Bonus: Tag @unep and @meshminds for a chance to get featured!
- 🔥 Hot Tip: Search “unep” for stickers to add to your pledge

In addition, the target audience was also invited to take the [Clean Seas Pledge](#) and post it on their Instagram Stories.

Campaign Measurements

The campaign targeted to reach approximately ‘double-digit’ millions of people with the Spark AR analytics dashboard as the key source of audience engagement reporting. The intention was also to conduct a survey of university students in Singapore to assess their feedback and propensity towards behavior change to avoid single-use plastic.

Campaign Characters

A [3D character-specialist](#), was selected to develop the campaign characters. We set out to develop a set of campaign characters that would appeal to the target audience and provide a consistent visual identity. The characters would be used throughout the various campaign touchpoints from social content to the AR toolkit.

Following guidance from the UNEP team, we chose to create campaign characters from seven “Polluting Plastics”, which represent seven everyday single-use plastics (bottles, bags, straws, cutlery, takeaway containers, masks and bubble tea cups), and seven corresponding sustainable alternatives, known as “The Reusables”. “The Droplets” were also developed to become the educators who would guide our audience through the campaign.

Spotlighting Sustainability Advocates

The MeshMinds team actively researched and shortlisted a list of Sustainability Advocates (SAs) that we would spotlight as part of our social media campaign. The key criteria that the team considered when selecting the SAs were (1) their focus on the message of sustainability (2) their documented efforts, success and interest in curbing the use of everyday polluting plastics in order to eliminate plastic waste, (3) their social media following to ensure that featuring them would result in a ripple effect on their immediate community.

Translating their stories into inspiring Instagram content

Once the SAs registered their interest to join our campaign, they were interviewed and their stories were translated into Instagram content through carousel tiles. These SAs spearhead individual causes which were then promoted on MeshMinds and UNEP’s social media channels, which shone a spotlight on their causes and efforts; enabled us to inspire our audience through the voices and stories of inspiring, local role models. The alignment of Antoinette Taus as a Goodwill Ambassador had an influential voice on the campaign as well.

In total, we engaged 30 SAs from our target markets of the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore and Cambodia. We collected and shared their stories to inspire our audience to embark on their own journey to #BeatPlasticPollution. We also activated the SAs to actively promote our digital toolkit to their followers through Instagram.toolkit to their followers through Instagram.



Figure 2: Overview of the campaign characters.

Social formats

To drive the campaign, we developed different content formats and used a variety of posting strategies. The most commonly used posting strategy was through the use of the carousel post, illustrated by the example below. This post featured the answers SAs gave in response to a few interview questions asked over email. This would then be created in a series of tiles, some even featuring a 30-second introduction audio clip, to be posted on Instagram and Facebook.

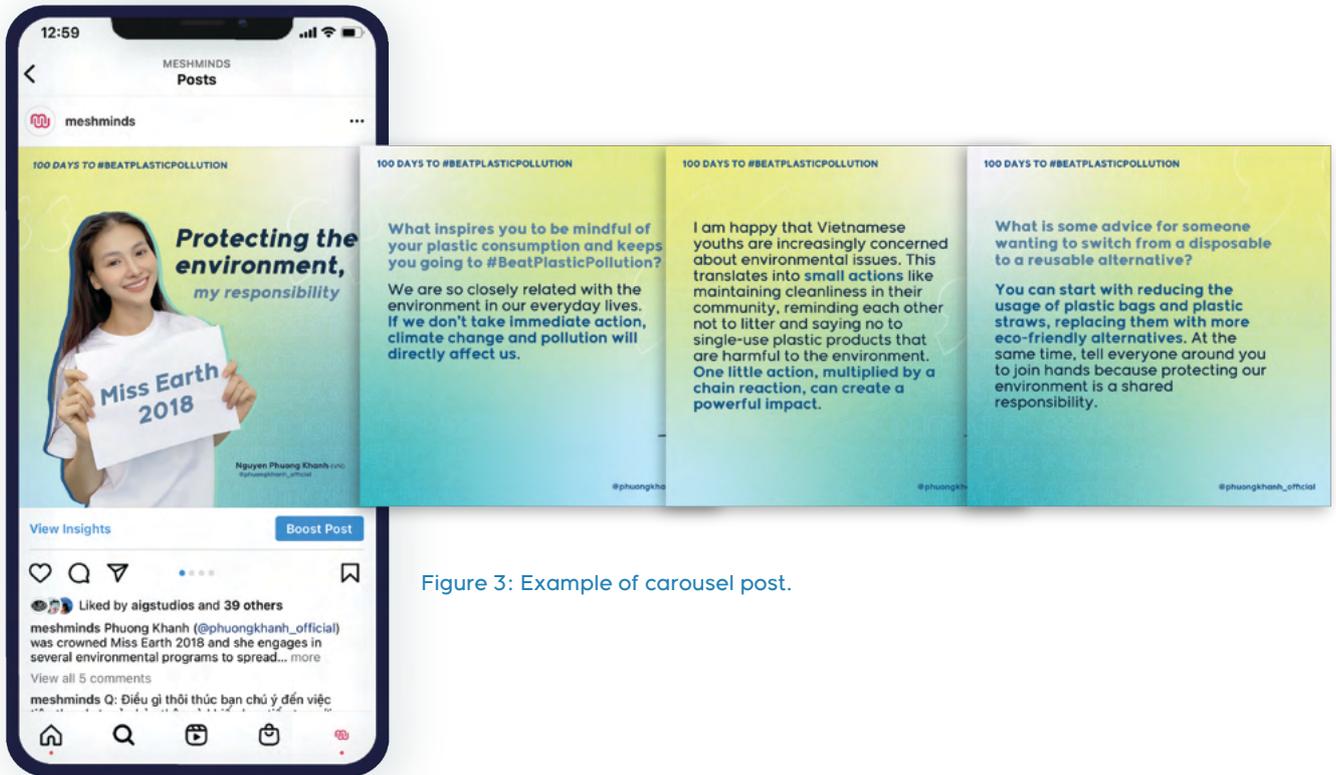


Figure 3: Example of carousel post.

Supporting social content

We further developed additional supporting educational and informative content in static tile and video formats, to pique interest amongst youth. An example of this form of content is the “Did You Know” tiles illustrated by the example below. These tiles served snippets of factual information regarding the use of polluting plastics and the various impacts they have on the different communities.

Collaborating with the Spark AR Partner Network to build the AR Effects

The social content toolkit was supported by an AR-focused digital toolkit containing four augmented reality (AR) Games, Face Effects and World Effects. These AR experiences harnessed the power of mobile gaming to engage the target audience and enable them to share interactive stories on social media that can be shared widely around the world.

In addition to quality content, it was important for this campaign to be a collective effort by the wider creator community. The MeshMinds Foundation formed a partnership with Meta who supported the campaign by sharing the AR brief with the Spark AR Partner Network (SPN), which is a global network of the top AR creators. The results were extremely uplifting - we received 19 responses from around the world. With the help of the UNEP team, two Asian AR creator companies, GOWAAA from Singapore and Shadow Factory from Hong Kong were eventually selected to develop the AR Games. They were selected on the merits of their proposals and portfolios.



Figure 4: Example of supporting content, “Did You Know” tile.

Campaign AR Effects

The four AR experiences in the digital toolkit that were created can be accessed directly at the UNEP Instagram account under the Effects icon using a smartphone, or by clicking the links on a smartphone or, if you are using a desktop computer, by clicking the links and sending the notification to your smartphone.

1. Say No To Single-Use: <https://l.ead.me/bpp-sntsu>
2. Clean Our Oceans: <https://l.ead.me/bpp-coo>
3. Drowning In Plastic: <https://l.ead.me/bpp-dip>
4. Meet The Reusables: <https://l.ead.me/bpp-mtr>

Play and pledge using our **AR EXPERIENCES** on Instagram to **#BeatPlasticPollution**

Say No To Single-Use

People are presented with both Polluting Plastics and Reusables that pop up on screen. They must smile when Reusables show and shake their head when Polluting Plastics appear.

Clean Our Oceans

People are invited to clean an unhealthy ocean by tapping on each Polluting Plastic as fast as they can against the clock.

Play and pledge using our **AR EXPERIENCES** on Instagram to **#BeatPlasticPollution**

Drowning In Plastic

People are buried in a deluge of Polluting Plastics. They must say no to single-use plastic by shaking their head to reveal The Reusables.

Meet The Reusables

Show friends you support reusable and sustainable alternatives over single-use plastics. Capture photos and videos placing these friendly reusable items anywhere in your world.

Figure 5: Overview of the 4 AR Experiences.

What We Achieved

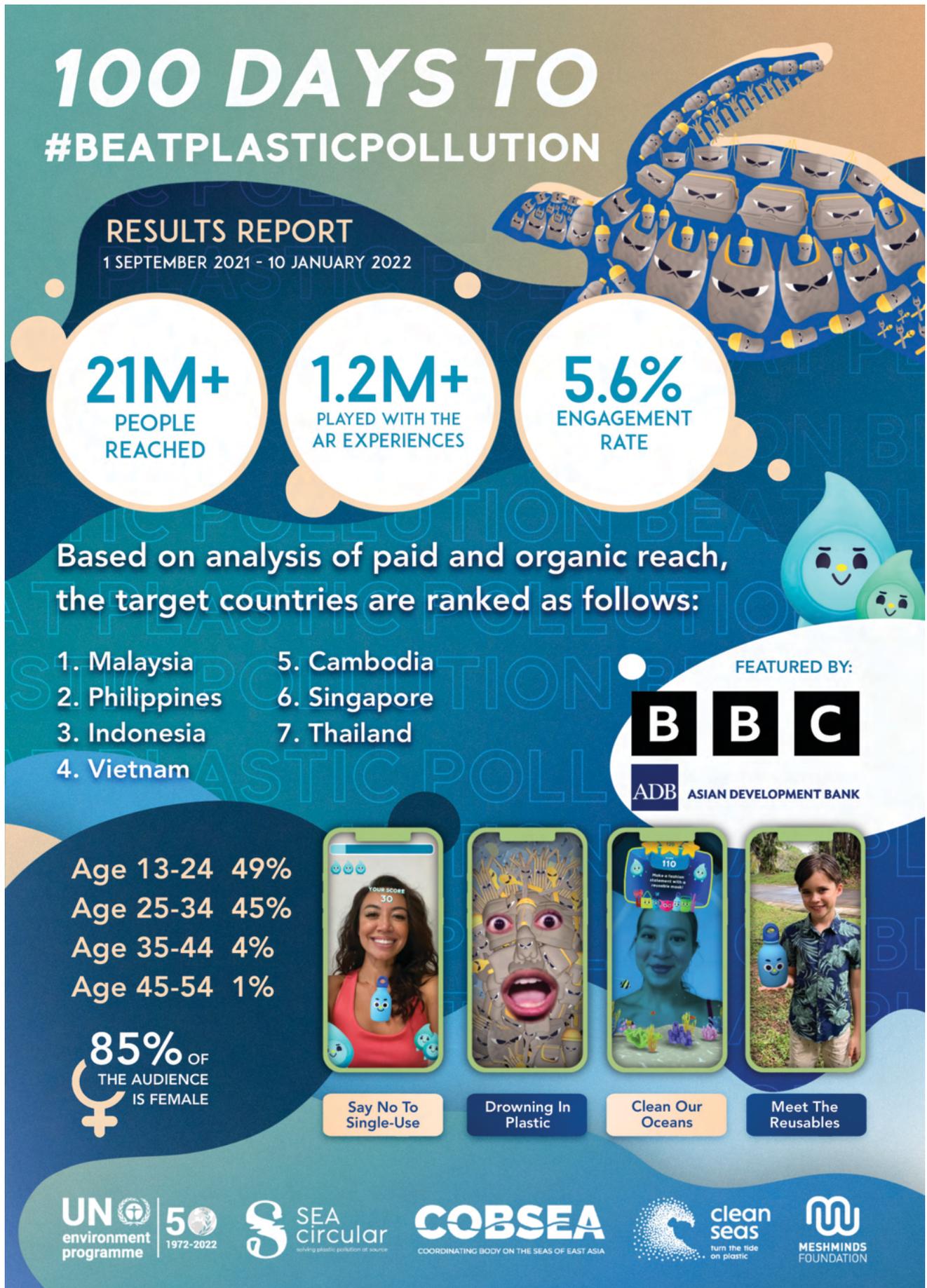


Figure 6: Campaign Report Infographic.

Conclusion

Top 3 Key Recommended Actions At A Glance

1. **Develop an educator's toolkit:** Use the digital toolkit to build an interactive learning journey rich with video content, using smartphones, for schools and community leaders to activate grassroots education that can take place during face-to-face lessons or door-to-door visits.
2. **Deepen relationships with young Sustainability Advocates in the South-East Asia region:** Further localize the 100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution campaign by focusing on the Sustainability Advocates with whom relationships have already been built, and empower them to use the medium of video and the digital toolkit to spotlight their activities and raise their voices as young climate champions. Ask them to use the latest platforms (e.g. TikTok) and tools (e.g. Instagram Reels) to widen the audience for their call-to-action based messaging.
3. **Unify young South-East Asian voices:** Develop an online petition to ignite a "South-East Asia Youth Movement" to influence the government to adopt policies for addressing and reducing plastic waste.



An end to plastic pollution in South-East Asia

Through in-depth and constructive dialogue at the SEA of Solutions 2021 virtual conference, the event closed with 10 acceleration solutions (see right), which set the benchmark for stepping up collective actions to end plastic pollution.

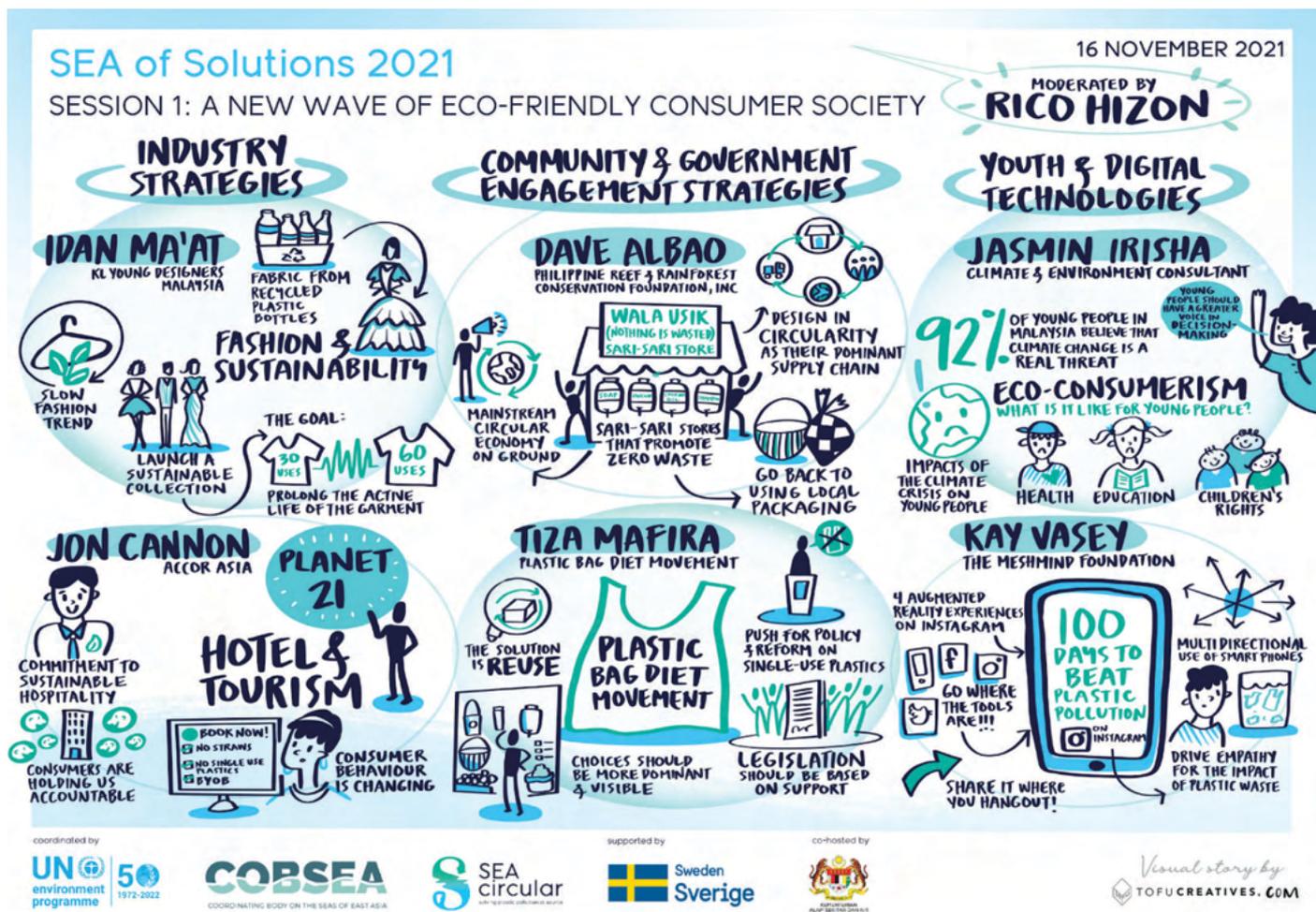
Voices from the various sessions, including delegates who contributed to the online chat and polls, not only highlighted the urgency for collective actions to get back on track and address marine litter and plastic pollution but shared rich, practical and day to day realities of inspiring initiatives that were already happening across South-East Asia and around the world.

The ten solutions were identified during a three-day programme, and were later detailed in the outcome report, "[Accelerating solutions to reduce plastic waste](#)". The solutions echo the urgent call of the UN Environment Assembly for "more action, more cooperation, more finance and more ambition and more sustained commitment".

Ten acceleration solutions:

1. Enhancing collective responsibility;
2. Mobilizing impact investments;
3. Leveraging partnerships;
4. Acting for nature;
5. Engaging with communities and youth;
6. Functional circular solutions;
7. Enabling policy;
8. Education, sharing and clear communication;
9. Embracing innovation; and
10. Cities are solution leaders.

Kay Vasey, Founder of The MeshMinds Foundation was invited to share on the campaign as part of the session titled, "A New Wave of Eco-Friendly Consumer Society":



The outcome report recognized that “Plastic pollution has an outsized effect on young people, impacting health and education outcomes, according to a study by UNICEF. Young people, especially, should have a greater voice in decision-making around environmental management and pollution control as their future will be the most vulnerable against polluted lands and oceans. To engage young people in environmental issues, policymakers and businesses could use creative ways to get messages across to tackle climate apathy, and instead drive empathy for the impact of plastic waste. Key recommendations arising from the session include promoting sustainable choices for consumers through awareness-raising, sustainable alternatives, legislations and leveraging online campaigns for higher engagement.”

Further, it was noted that, “Southeast Asian governments are taking measures to tackle plastic pollution, such as Malaysia’s National Marine Debris Policy and Action Plan 2021-2030, and Indonesia’s plan to be plastic-pollution free by 2040, with new ways to engage the private sector.”

Of specific relevance to the 100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution campaign are solutions 3, 5 and 8 of the ten acceleration solutions, which set out below:

Solution 3. Leveraging partnerships. Partnerships, transboundary cooperation, best practice examples and knowledge exchange are enabling and supporting collective actions to test, innovate and demonstrate effective solutions. Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) play a part in connecting actors along the value chain and filling up gaps in waste management infrastructure. New solutions led by partnerships are overcoming barriers to enable technical, operational, financial and business model solutions. Partnerships and collaborations can lead to scaling up and acceleration of solutions.

How the campaign leveraged partnerships: The strategic partnership with UNEP allowed MeshMinds to leverage collaboration opportunities with Meta, ADB, and the BBC that resulted in a donation of software development services and international media coverage which raised the overall reach and status of the campaign.

Solution 5. Engaging with communities and youth. To fight plastic pollution, inclusive partnership of youths and members of society along with informal sectors and vulnerable members of the community is necessary. Young people, especially, should have a greater voice in decision-making on environmental management and pollution control, as their future will be the most vulnerable to polluted lands and oceans. To engage young people in environmental issues, policymakers and businesses could use creative ways to get messages across to tackle climate apathy, and instead drive empathy for the impact of plastic waste. Greater visibility of the Youth Heroes in the Asia-Pacific region is needed.

How the campaign engaged with communities and youth: The campaign focused on 30 sustainability advocates who are operating at the grassroots level to beat plastic pollution. These are 'real' people, not celebrities, who live day-to-day with the plastic pollution crisis and are setting an example of acting and sharing their actions on social media to inspire others to join them.

Solution 8. Education, sharing and clear communication. Policy is important but education is key. To catalyze behavioral change, language used to communicate to consumers must resonate with the local context. Greater efforts should also be made to communicate messages about the risks of plastic waste and the potential solutions at local level to ensure greater success.

How the campaign offered education, opportunities to share and used clear communication: By steering away from the use of words and focusing on visual communication techniques, the campaign was able to educate more people in an inclusive manner, ensuring that the messages were clear and accessible, regardless of nationality, age or gender. Gamification of the messaging and invitations for youth to challenge their friends was also used to increase the shareability of the campaign.

An end to plastic pollution across the world

The United Nations adopted a resolution that will hold member nations legally accountable for their contributions to the global plastic pollution crisis. On 2 March 2022, Heads of State, Ministers of environment and other representatives from 175 nations endorsed a historic resolution at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) in Nairobi to [End Plastic Pollution](#) and forge an international legally binding agreement by 2024. The resolution addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, including its production, design and disposal. In addition, it specifically notes with concern the specific impacts of plastic pollution on the marine environment. Of further relevance to the **100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution** campaign, the legally binding agreement shall have provisions to increase knowledge through awareness-raising, education and information exchange.

In summary, the **100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution** campaign has set a benchmark with its creative work and successful outreach plan. It has specific relevance to the identified solutions of engaging with communities and youth via education, sharing and clear communication. The campaign is a paradigm of how to combine visual literacy, social media and augmented reality technology to successfully engage with target audiences across South-East Asia aged 13-25 years to change their habits on single-use plastic and to keep those habits for life. Such campaigns should be continued widely in the future, especially across the countries of South-East Asia, to help the consumers adopt a life-time habit of eliminating single-use plastics from their life.