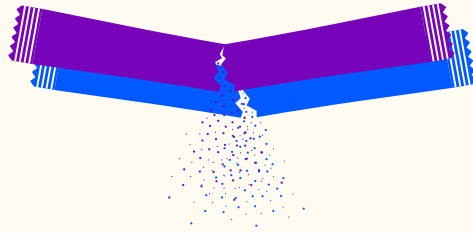


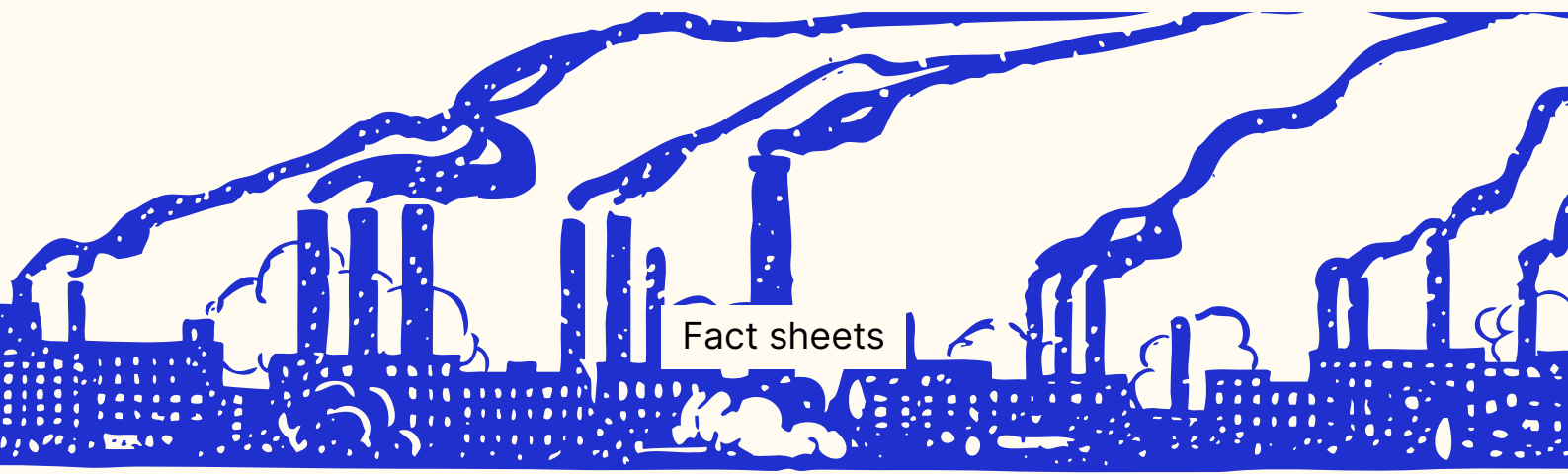
#BreakFreeFromPlastic

Unilever -Files Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in Indonesia



#QuitSachets



Fact sheets

#BreakFreeFromPlastic

Hidden in Unilever's logo are icons that speak of its core business values, sustainable living is among them.

The DNA helix is about their legacy of positive change, and another squiggle represents their commitment to find new and innovative packaging that is better for the consumer and the planet.

This fact sheet presents evidence of the widening gap between philosophy and practice - especially, when it comes to plastics in Indonesia.

#QuitSachets



Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation on sachets in Indonesia

CreaSolv - a chemical recycling pilot

IN 2017: UNILEVER UNVEILED ITS CREASOLV TECHNOLOGY AND OPENED A PILOT FACILITY AT SIDOARJO.

DESIGNED TO RECYCLE POLYETHYLENE (PE), WITH THE RECOVERED PLASTIC INTENDED TO MANUFACTURE SACHETS.

DURING ITS PILOT OPERATIONS,

THE CREASOLV FACILITY PRODUCED 5 TONNES OF CLEAN DRY PELLETS PER MONTH...

IN FEBRUARY 2019, HANNEKE FABER, THEN THE PRESIDENT OF UNILEVER EUROPE, CLAIMED...

[SACHETS ARE] EVIL BECAUSE YOU CANNOT RECYCLE IT."

CREASOLV IS A PROVEN [RECYCLING] TECHNOLOGY!

...COMPARED TO IT'S PROMISED CAPACITY OF THREE TONNES PER DAY.

FACTORY CLOSED

IN 2021, UNILEVER DROPPED PLANS TO SCALE UP THE CREASOLV PILOT PROJECT DUE "LOW COMMERCIAL VIABILITY," AND QUIETLY CLOSED THE FACILITY INSIDE THE PT TRIAS SENTOSA FACTORY COMPLEX IN SIDOARJO.

WASTE BANKS WERE STUCK WITH SACHETS COLLECTED UNDER AN EARLIER UNILEVER SCHEME, WITH SOME OPERATORS RESORTING TO BURNING THEM.

Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in Indonesia

CreaSolv - What did we learn?

Limited effectiveness.

Unilever claimed that sachet waste can be remanufactured into new packaging. In reality, at least 40% of sachet residues from a CreaSolv testing facility in Indonesia were incinerated at PT Putra Restu Ibu Abadi (PRIA) in Mojokerto.

Low financial viability.

[GAIA \(2020\)](#): Recycling plastic into new plastic through repolymerization requires significant energy and resources, including the careful sorting and cleaning of post-consumer waste and extensive product decontamination and enrichment. These factors make the process expensive and inefficient compared to producing new plastic, which ultimately makes chemical recycling a less competitive option.

CreaSolv and other chemical recycling technologies “**distract us from pursuing genuinely sustainable solutions.**”

Quotes by [Unilever CEO Alan Jope](#):

“We have solvolysis and pyrolysis technologies that can just about process current multilayer materials but they're really not very economical and so the short answer [is that] we've got to get rid of them [sachets].” (July 2020).

During the Unilever AGM, Alan Jope said Unilever is “determined to find a solution” to end sachet waste while also continuing to serve low-income consumers. (May 2022)



Yet there have been no solutions to sachets forthcoming!

**#Break
Free
From
Plastic**

MYTH 1

Unilever supports the use of Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) technology to convert waste into technology to burn waste as an alternative to coal in the cement industry.

Reality



Burning plastic, whether for energy or fuel, spells disaster for the climate. According to the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#), "there is no significant climate benefit to be gained from substituting plastic for coal, and that burning this waste in cement kilns can create harmful air pollution that must be monitored."

Unilever [plans to collect and burn 50,000 metric tons](#) of plastic by 2022, which will produce 55,000 metric tons of harmful carbon emissions. This goes against Unilever's promise to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, without using offsetting methods.

MYTH 2

A Unilever Sustainability Report (2020) committed to shifting to containers made from recycled content, for brands like Rinso, Molto, Wipol and Sunlight brands. Unilever's 2025 targets include:

- Ensure all of their plastic packaging is designed to be fully reusable, recyclable, or compostable
- Help to collect and process more plastic than they sell



Reality

Unilever is only two years away from their target deadline. [Studies about the amount of virgin versus recycled plastic](#) in Rinso bottles are inconclusive, and Unilever has not volunteered this data. Even now, most of Unilever's containers are still designed for single-use and cannot be reused. While the company has at least two sachet products that are sold in mono-material packaging, but it doesn't guarantee that they will be effectively recycled because of the diverse waste management infrastructure in Asia.

Solutions to sachets? Or idle industry-speak?

**#Break
 Free
 From
 Plastic**

Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in Indonesia

Zero emissions

Unilever, globally, has committed to achieving zero emissions across their operations by 2030. By 2025, Unilever aims for a 70% absolute emissions reduction.



Flipside

Unilever's zero emissions pledge focuses on reduction, not offsetting, but it overlooks emissions from plastic packaging production and disposal, as well as emissions from co-incineration to burn plastic waste. Unilever burned 3,070.44 metric tons of plastic waste through co-incineration, and aims to reach 50,000 metric tons by 2022, which would result in 55,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

**Think Unilever is on track for zero emissions or emission reduction?
We didn't think so!**

Reuse & Refill Pilots



"Our approach to reuse and refill is building momentum, with real-world pilots providing the insights needed to 'test, learn and scale'. We know we can't do this alone; global change needs a whole system behind it. It requires buy-in from retailers, manufacturers, delivery services, civil society and, of course, consumers."

- [Unilever's progress report](#) in the EMF-UNEP Global Commitment:

Globally, Unilever has launched 11 pilots and introduced 55 product lines with applicable reuse models, including Saruga's refill-on-the-go setup. However, the company has yet to announce expansion plans for these pilots. In Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy Global Commitment Report for 2021, Unilever reported its share of reusable plastic packaging as zero.

Flipside

Refill pilots are a step in the right direction, yet they are insufficient. Corporations should make significant investments in refill-reuse systems and phase out single-use plastic packaging, particularly sachets.

**#Break
Free
From
Plastic**

Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in Indonesia

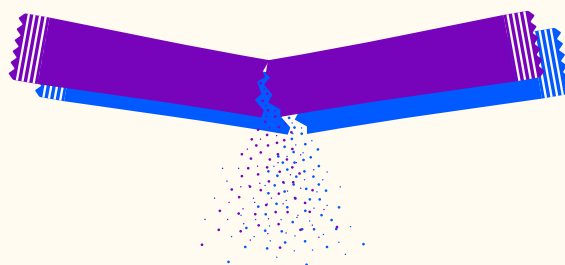
Conclusion

Chemical recycling, refuse-derived fuel, zero emission plans, reuse and refill pilots, and more containers with recycled content will not end the use of sachet packaging.

Instead of pursuing ineffective solutions, **corporations like Unilever should eliminate single-use, non-essential, hard-to-recover, highly polluting sachets.**

Unilever would achieve its sustainable business goals faster, while setting the benchmark for other corporations to follow.

Be the first mover, Unilever. #QuitSachets!



**#Break
Free
From
Plastic**

Unilever X-Files
**Planet, Society
& Sachets**
debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in Indonesia

References

[Chemical Recycling: Distraction, Not Solution \(GAIA 2020\).](#)

[Refuse-Derived Fuel in Indonesia \(IPEN 2022\).](#)

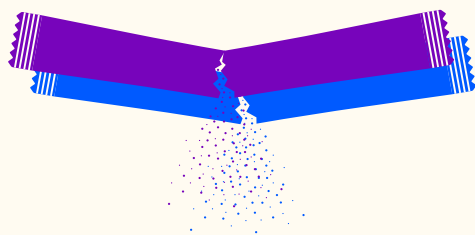
[Trash and Burn: Big brands stoke cement kilns with plastic waste as recycling falters \(Reuters 2021\).](#)

[Missing the Mark: unveiling corporate false solutions to the plastic pollution crisis \(Break Free From Plastic\).](#)

[New Plastics Economy Global Commitment Report \(Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021\).](#)

[Global Commitment Progress Report \(Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022\).](#)

[Waste-Free World, Unilever Indonesia](#)



Unilever X-Files: Planet, Society & Sachets: debunking myths & misinformation on sachets, Break Free From Plastic (June 2023).
<https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org>

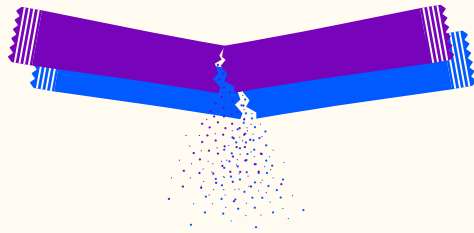
**#Break
Free
From
Plastic**

#BreakFreeFromPlastic

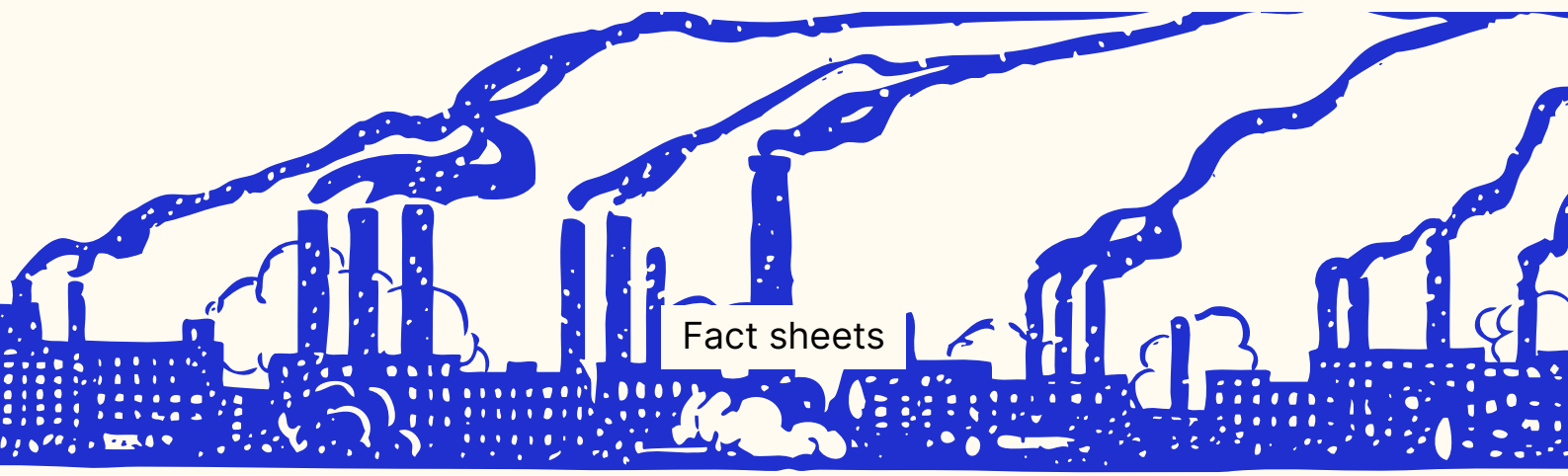
Unilever -Files

Planet, Masyarakat & Sachet

membongkar mitos & informasi yang salah
dalam kemasan sachet di Indonesia



#QuitSachets



Fact sheets

Unilever X-Files Planet, Masyarakat & Sachet

membongkar mitos & informasi yang salah
dalam kemasan sachet di Indonesia

Referensi

[Chemical Recycling: Distraction, Not Solution \(GAIA 2020\).](#)

[Refuse-Derived Fuel in Indonesia \(IPEN 2022\).](#)

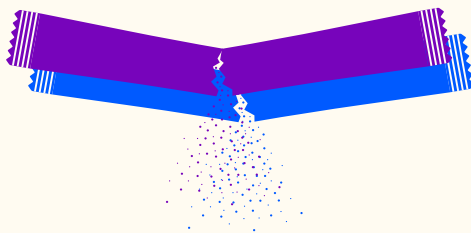
[Trash and Burn: Big brands stoke cement kilns with plastic waste as recycling falters \(Reuters 2021\).](#)

[Missing the Mark: unveiling corporate false solutions to the plastic pollution crisis \(Break Free From Plastic\).](#)

[New Plastics Economy Global Commitment Report \(Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021\).](#)

[Global Commitment Progress Report \(Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022\).](#)

[Waste-Free World, Unilever Indonesia](#)



Unilever X-Files: Planet, Society & Sachets: debunking myths & misinformation on sachets, Break Free From Plastic (June 2023).
<https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org>

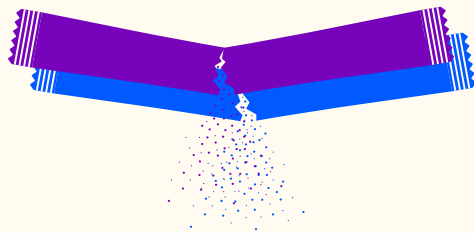
**#Break
Free
From
Plastic**

#BreakFreeFromPlastic

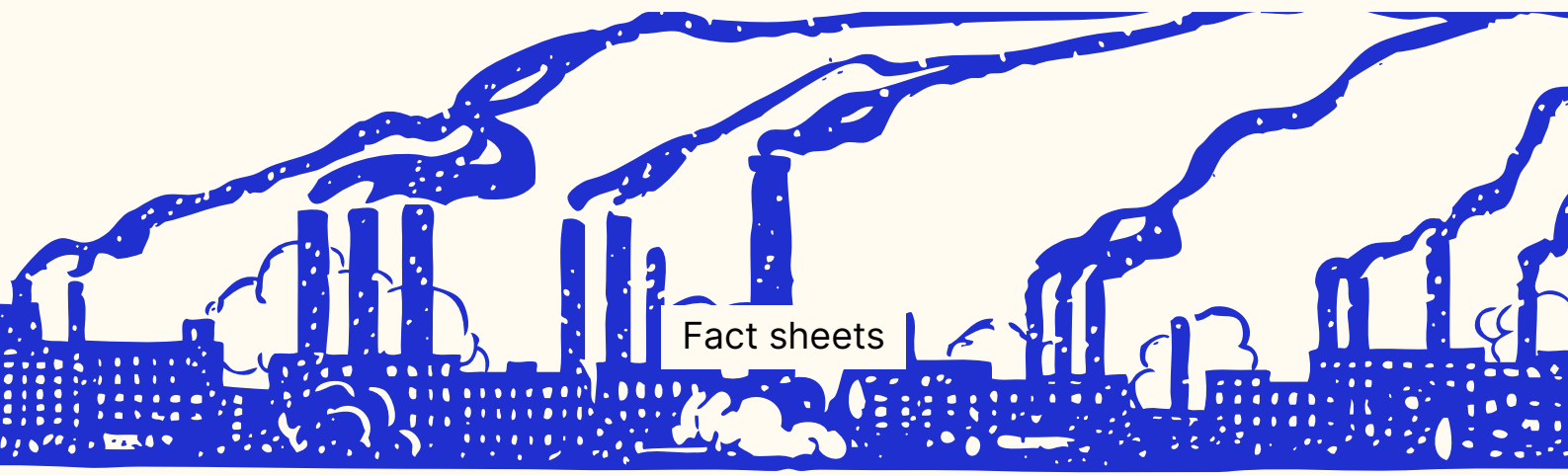
Unilever -Files

Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in India



#QuitSachets



Fact sheets

#BreakFreeFromPlastic

Hidden in Unilever's logo are icons that speak of its core business values, sustainable living is among them.

The DNA helix is about their legacy of positive change, and another squiggle represents their commitment to find new and innovative packaging that is better for the consumer and the planet.

This fact sheet presents evidence of the widening gap between philosophy and practice - especially, when it comes to plastics in India.

In India, Unilever operates under the name of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), with the same 'sustainable' business model and false solutions to plastic packaging, as in other parts of Asia.

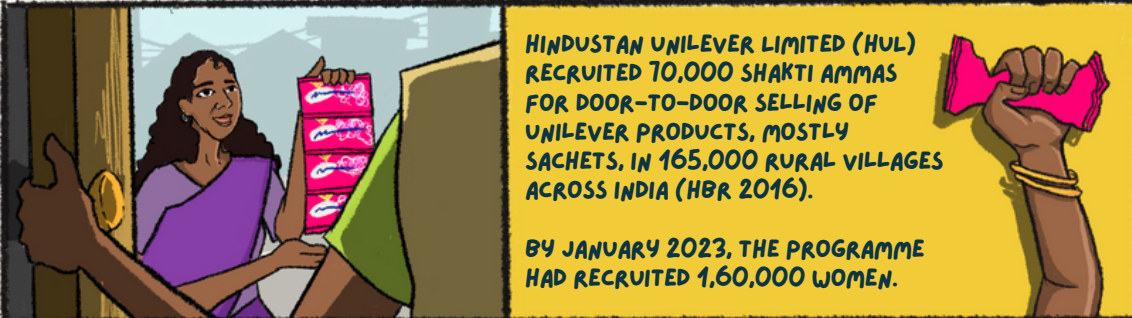
#QuitSachets



Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation on sachets in India

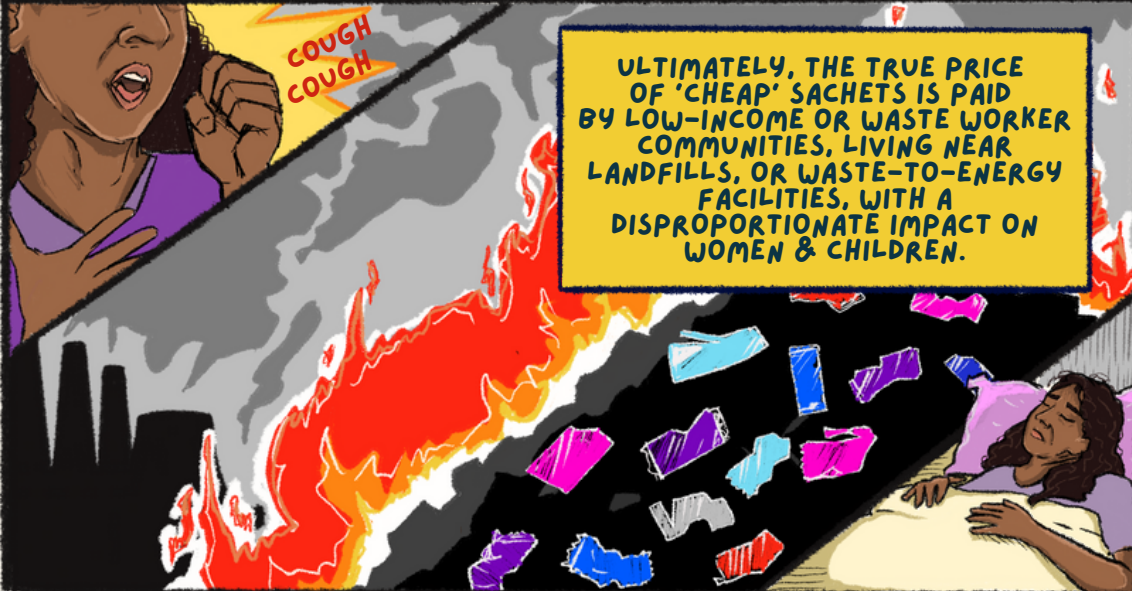
Project Shakti: empowering women while creating a market for sachets



HINDUSTAN UNILEVER LIMITED (HUL) RECRUITED 70,000 SHAKTI AMMAS FOR DOOR-TO-DOOR SELLING OF UNILEVER PRODUCTS, MOSTLY SACHETS, IN 165,000 RURAL VILLAGES ACROSS INDIA (HBR 2016).

BY JANUARY 2023, THE PROGRAMME HAD RECRUITED 1,60,000 WOMEN.

TAPPING INTO WOMEN'S SELF HELP GROUPS IN RURAL INDIA IS AN INSPIRED IDEA BUT ONE OF THE DOWNSIDES IS THE INCREASED CONSUMPTION OF SINGLE-USE SACHETS. IN REMOTE AREAS, WHERE REUSE-REFILL MODELS EXISTED AND THRIVED, HUL'S SACHET EXPANSION SCHEME LED TO A SACHET DEPENDENCE.



ULTIMATELY, THE TRUE PRICE OF 'CHEAP' SACHETS IS PAID BY LOW-INCOME OR WASTE WORKER COMMUNITIES, LIVING NEAR LANDFILLS, OR WASTE-TO-ENERGY FACILITIES, WITH A DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT ON WOMEN & CHILDREN.

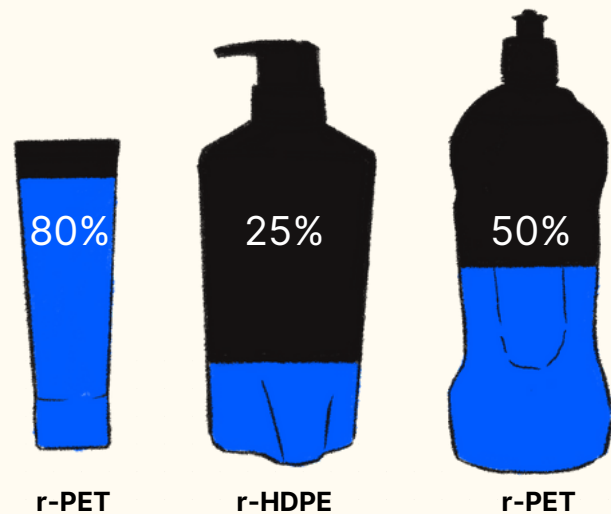
Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in India

**For products marketed to urban consumers,
HUL promotes recycled packaging:**

HUL's recycled content includes:

- 80% r-PET in personal brands like Pepsodent toothbrushes and Glow & Lovely cream
- 25% r-HDPE for Surf excel laundry liquid, Sunsilk and TRESemmé
- 50% r-PET in Vim liquid bottles



They also claim to have their shampoo sachets, soap wrappers and Vim bars' flow wrap now sold in recycle ready packaging.

However, these options are only available to a specific segment of society.

The majority of HUL's containers remain designed to be disposable after a single use.

While some Indian cities have waste collection infrastructure, plastic recycling cannot address the issue of sachets, and faces limitations due to contamination and the addition of cheaper virgin plastic to recycled material.

Despite these efforts, HUL is not on track to achieve its 2025 sustainability target of making 100% of its plastic packaging reusable, recyclable, or compostable.

**#Break
Free
From
Plastic**

IDEA 1


Unilever supports co-incineration in cement kilns

In 2018, HUL partnered with cement companies, like ACC and Ultratech Cements, **to co-incinerate plastic waste.**

In partnership with certain NGOs, they collected 5,500 tonnes of plastic waste for co-incineration in more than 20 cities.

In 2021, HUL claimed that [it achieved plastic neutrality](#) by collecting over 110,000 tonnes of plastic waste, more than its reported total plastic packaging footprint of 106,000 tonnes. It's unclear how much of these were recycled, burned, or landfilled.

Flipside



Burning plastic for energy or fuel is a climate disaster. Burning one tonne of plastic waste releases nearly 1.1 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. [According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#), “there is no significant climate benefit to be gained from substituting plastic for coal, and that burning this waste in cement kilns can create harmful air pollution that must be monitored.”

If 100% of HUL's collected plastic waste in 2021 was co-incinerated in cement kilns, the company would have produced 121,000 tonnes of greenhouse emissions, which runs in conflict with their global commitment to reaching zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 without offsetting.

IDEA 2

Plastic waste into polymer oil? How slick!

In 2012, [HUL partnered with MK Aromatics Ltd](#) to process plastic waste into polymer oil, but the partnership was terminated within two years due to commercial unviability.

Flipside 

The initiative highlighted the **limitations of pyrolysis** as a solution to plastic waste and suggested that Unilever may not have fully considered the limitations of technology solutions. The unviability of recycling underscores **the need for Unilever to explore alternative packaging solutions**.

Smart Fill

Refill pilot or publicity stunt?

"We're getting drastic with plastic" said Alan Jope, CEO - Unilever.

In July 2021, HUL launched its first in-store vending model, [Smart Fill](#) in Mumbai.

The [ad campaign](#) stated that Unilever products reach 9 out of 10 Indian households, and that Unilever had sacrificed its most valuable branding asset: packaging.

HUL claimed that 150 litres were sold per hour, leading to 57.2 kgs per day plastic reduction!

Flipside 

Smart Fill only offered household cleaning products, like Surf Excel, Comfort and Vi at retail stores across Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Chennai.

Yet after September 2021, there has been no news of Smart Fill - no expansion plans, no success stories, nothing.

**Why would HUL stop such a 'successful' pilot?
Perhaps, this was just a PR stunt?**

**#Break
Free
From
Plastic**

Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in India

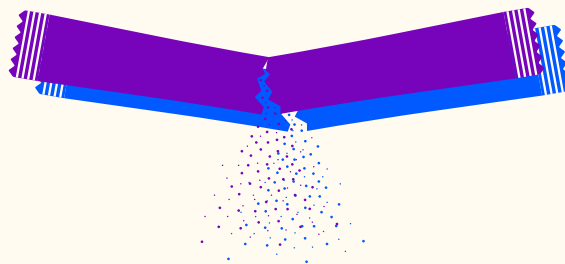
Conclusion

Co-incineration, pyrolysis, and recycled or recycle-ready packaging will not end the use of sachet packaging. If HUL had spent half as much time and money scaling up and promoting their Smart Fill model, as they had spent on Project Shakti, they might be closer to their waste-free world vision.

Instead of pursuing ineffective solutions, **corporations like Hindustan Unilever Limited should eliminate single-use, non-essential, hard-to-recover, highly polluting sachets.**

Unilever would achieve its sustainable business goals faster, while setting the benchmark for other corporations to follow.

Be the first mover, HUL. #QuitSachets!



**#Break
Free
From
Plastic**

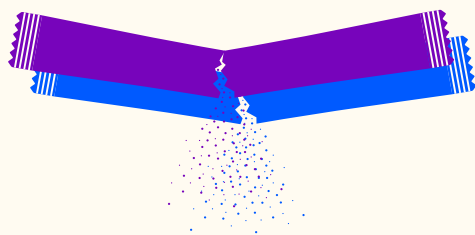
Unilever X-Files
**Planet, Society
& Sachets**
debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in India

References

[How Unilever Reaches Rural Consumers in Emerging Markets \(Harvard Business Review, 2016\).](#)

[Trash and Burn: Big brands stoke cement kilns with plastic waste as recycling falters \(Reuters 2021\).](#)

['Smart Fill' empowers consumers to reduce plastic waste \(Hindustan Unilever Limited, 2021\).](#)



Unilever X-Files: Planet, Society & Sachets: debunking myths & misinformation on sachets, Break Free From Plastic (June 2023).
<https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org>

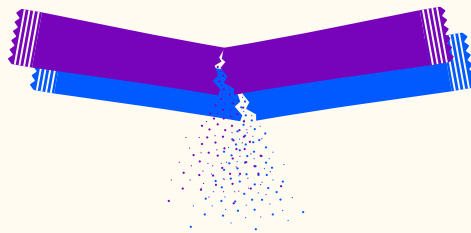
**#Break
Free
From
Plastic**

#BreakFreeFromPlastic

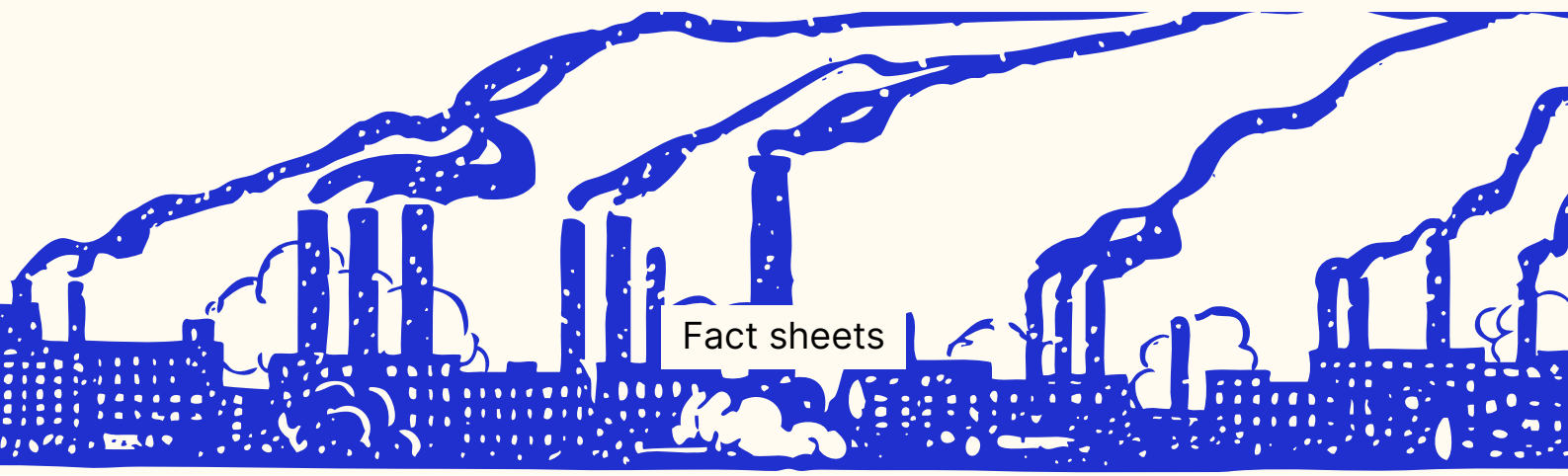
Unilever -Files

Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in the Philippines



#QuitSachets



Fact sheets

#BreakFreeFromPlastic

Hidden in Unilever's logo are icons that speak of its core business values, sustainable living is among them.

The DNA helix is about their legacy of positive change, and another squiggle represents their commitment to find new and innovative packaging that is better for the consumer and the planet.

This fact sheet hopes to highlight just how they've fallen far short of the mark between philosophy and practice - especially, when it comes to plastics in Philippines!

#QuitSachets



Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation on sachets in the Philippines

Misis Walastik - a sachet collection scheme



#Break Free From Plastic

Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in the Philippines

Misis Walastik- What did we learn?



Limited effectiveness.

After more than a decade, **Misis Walastik** operations are limited to just over [400 barangays](#), or less than one percent of 42,029 barangays in the Philippines. It is unclear how this has helped improve collection schemes, unlike in proven zero waste models like the [City of San Fernando](#) where 95 percent of residents do their waste sorting at home.

According to the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#), "there is no significant climate benefit to be gained from substituting plastic for coal, and that burning this waste in cement kilns can create harmful air pollution that must be monitored."


Yet due to congested landfills, cities and businesses sometimes resort to burning plastic in cement kilns - a surefire climate disaster.

**All we've heard is more sachet burning,
thus creating more landfills in the sky.**

#Break
Free
From
Plastic

IDEA 1

Aside from cement co-processing, Unilever Philippines partnered with The Plastic Flamingo (PLAF) to collect 16 tons tonnes of plastic waste. PLAF claimed to turn collected plastic into construction materials and donate them to a public school. Breeze x PLAF drop-off centres are located in supermarket chains.




Flipside

Delaying Disposal. Plastic extrusion and transforming plastics into other products may be considered as a transitional solution. However, these initiatives will not change the system, nor it addresses the root of the problem: plastic production. These products will eventually be burned or landfilled at the end of their life, and should be classified as downcycling.

IDEA 2

In 2017, Unilever tapped Senator Cynthia Villar of SIPAG (Social Institute for Poverty Alleviation and Governance) Foundation to train women to make handbags out of sachets. They also ventured in processing sachets and other plastic waste into chairs that were later donated to schools.



Flipside

Compromising Plastic Legislation. SIPAG founder Senator Villar has been accused of giving in to Unilever lobbying by excluding sachets in proposed plastic use regulations. Villar, who is also the chairperson of the Senate Committee on the Environment, pursued the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act, which sets plastic waste collection and recovery targets for consumer brands. The EPR law described as polluter-friendly, enables Unilever and other corporations to continue their plastic collection and co-incineration schemes, without the need to significantly reduce their plastic footprint, ideally through reuse systems and packaging-free formats.

#Break
Free
From
Plastic

Planet, Society & Sachets

debunking myths & misinformation on sachets in the Philippines

All Things Hair Refillery

In April 2019, Unilever launched a [pilot refilling project](#) “[All Things Hair Refillery](#)” for brands like Cream Silk, Sunsilk, Dove and TRESemmé at three locations. Sadly, these lasted only a couple of months.



Flipside

In [Unilever's progress report](#) in Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy Global Commitment, the company banked on “building momentum” for reuse and refill through pilots, where it aims to “test, learn and scale.”

However, the limited nature of such pilots only showed a lack of ambition from Unilever, with no clear plans for scaling up.

Reuse pilots

Globally, Unilever has launched 11 pilots and introduced 55 product lines with applicable reuse models, including those in the Philippines, India, and Indonesia. The company, however, has yet to announce expansion plans for these pilots. In the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Global Commitment Report for 2021, Unilever reported [its share of reusable plastic packaging as zero](#).



Flipside

Refill pilots are a step in the right direction, but often fall into token traps due to the lack of bold commitments to making refill-reuse systems happen and phasing out plastic packaging, particularly sachets. Unilever and other businesses should update their commitments, focusing mainly on reuse-based and packaging-as-a-service business models.

#Break Free From Plastic

Planet, Society & Sachets

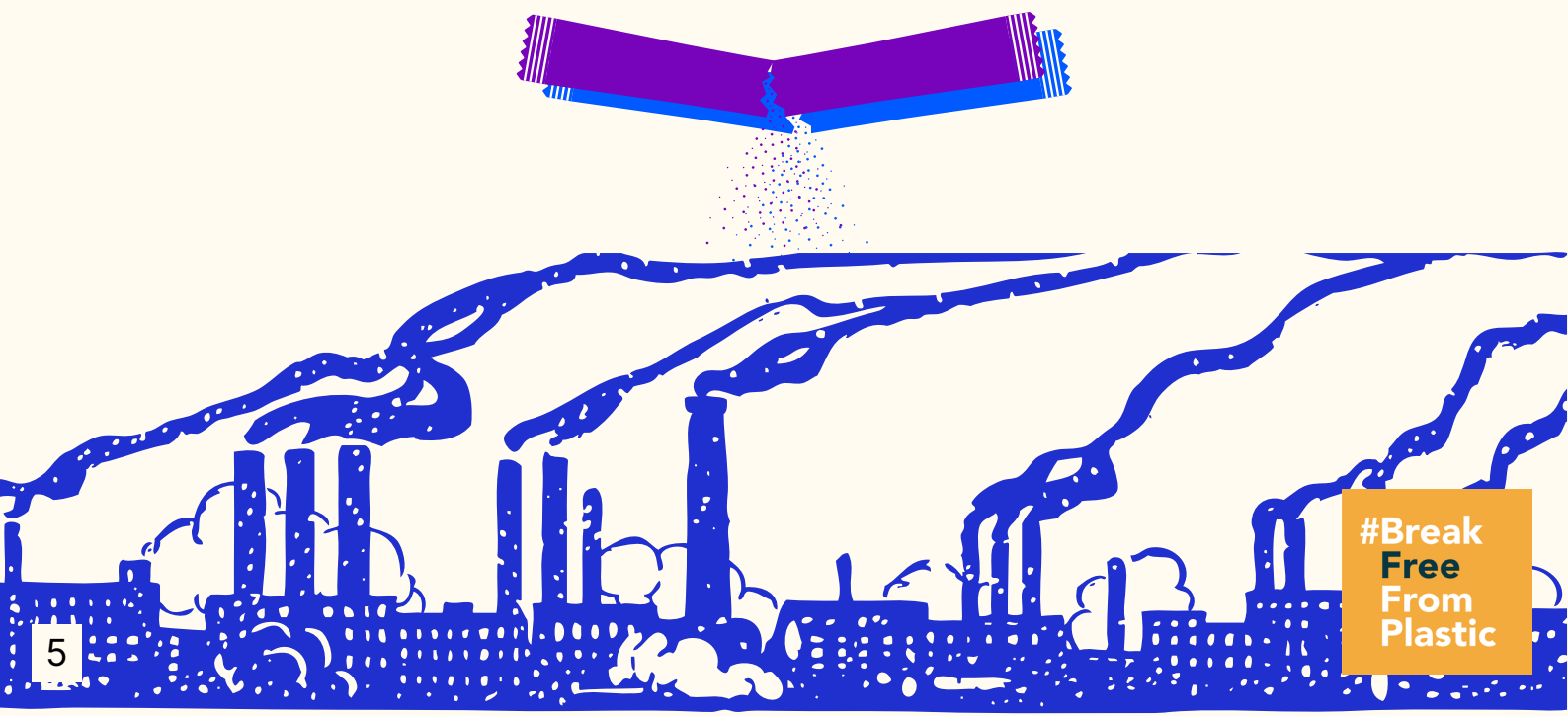
debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in the Philippines

Conclusion

Sachet collection programs, token livelihood programs, co-incineration, downcycling projects, and short-lived refill pilots will not end the use of sachet packaging. The *tingi* culture in the Philippines, where you could buy as much as you needed using reusable containers, has been hijacked by a twisted culture of convenience in the form of sachets. The *tingi* culture could be reclaimed from sachets by pursuing more reuse and refill models.

Instead of pursuing ineffective solutions, **corporations like Unilever should eliminate single-use, non-essential, hard-to-recover, highly polluting sachets. Unilever would achieve its sustainable business goals faster, while setting the benchmark for other corporations to follow.**

Be the first mover, Unilever. #QuitSachets!



**#Break
Free
From
Plastic**

Unilever X-Files
**Planet, Society
& Sachets**
debunking myths & misinformation
on sachets in the Philippines

References

[Unilever Philippines to give incentives for sachet collection under 'Walastik na Pasig' \(CNN, Philippines 2021\).](#)

[Trash and Burn: Big brands stoke cement kilns with plastic waste as recycling falters \(Reuters 2021\).](#)

[Picking Up The Baton: Political Will Key to Zero Waste \(GAIA 2019\).](#)

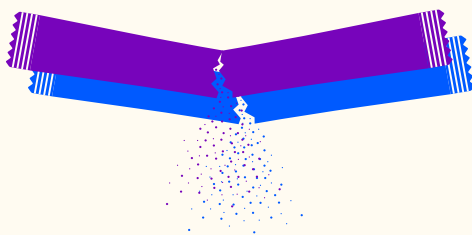
[Unilever's 'Linis Pilipinas' wants to make eco-conscious habits easier for you \(Rappler 2022\).](#)

[Unilever Strengthens Waste Recovery Efforts: Introducing Surf Misis Walastik Program \(Unilever 2017\).](#)

['Polluter friendly': Duterte urged to veto bill on management of plastic waste \(ABS-CBN News 2022\).](#)

[The All Things Hair Refillery Station \(Unilever 2019\).](#)

[New Plastics Economy Global Commitment Report \(Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021\).](#)



Unilever X-Files: Planet, Society & Sachets: debunking myths & misinformation on sachets, Break Free From Plastic (June 2023).
<https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org>

**#Break
Free
From
Plastic**