



SUCCESS STORY

Blessed Water Saves Lives

Indonesia finds a new resource for clean, safe drinking water



Photo: USAID/Virginia L. Foley

Muslim prayer group leader Hindun Hidayah demonstrates how to add “blessed water” treatment solution to household water at a meeting in north Jakarta.

“This is not only helpful for poor people, but also for those among us who are not so poor,” said Hindun Hidayah, a member of a prayer group that is spreading the word about an affordable solution for treating contaminated water and preventing disease.

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“You must cover the water immediately after treating it to prevent contamination, just as with boiling water. Then wait 30 minutes. It’s better to use a small-mouthed jug, but a washbasin will do if you cover it.” Hindun Hidayah is talking about Air RahMat, a

solution that purifies water and makes it drinkable. In the Indonesian language, *air* means water and *rahmat* means blessing. Hence the blended name, Air RahMat, or “blessed water.” Air RahMat is an affordable, practical, user friendly water treatment technology that is suitable for use at home.

More than 100 million people in Indonesia lack access to safe drinking water. Even in places where water is piped into homes, that water is not necessarily safe. Indonesian women know that to protect their children from diarrhea, the number two cause of death among Indonesian children under five, they must find safe water. They boil contaminated water or buy bottled water.

Gathering enough fuel for boiling can take half a day and kerosene for gas stoves is expensive.

USAID is supporting the manufacture, promotion, and distribution of this life-saving solution. One of the partners in the program is a Muslim women’s prayer group called Pengajian Ass-Sallam in Tanjung Priok, north Jakarta. Some group members, like Hindun, have been using Air RahMat for several months. Others want to buy it. A *halal* certificate from the Indonesian council of Ulama, a group of Muslim leaders, has certified official religious approval for its use. The USAID program is also approaching non-traditional retailers for opportunities to distribute the product.

With her demonstration concluded, Hindun begins distributing the attractive bottles. One bottle serves the average household for one month. The price is very reasonable. Her sister has traveled a long way from another region just to buy it. The women share stories about how their families are reacting. “This is not only helpful for poor people, but also for those among us who are not so poor,” says Hindun.