

Evaluating perceptions of plastic bag use and opportunities for change in Galapagos

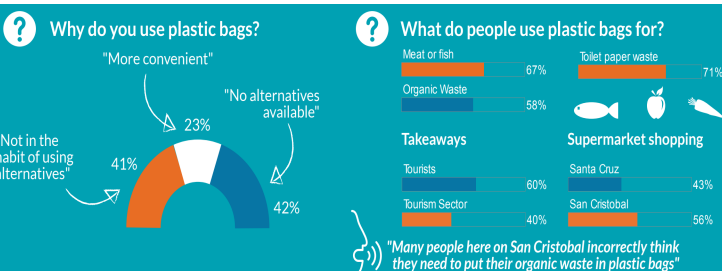
INTRODUCTION

Escape of disposable plastic bags into the local Galapagos environment represents a major threat to vulnerable endemic species such as turtles and sea lions. An attempt to reduce their use was made in 2015. This study is the first evaluation of the perceived barriers to its success, and investigates what characteristics a strategy should have to be effective.

METHODS

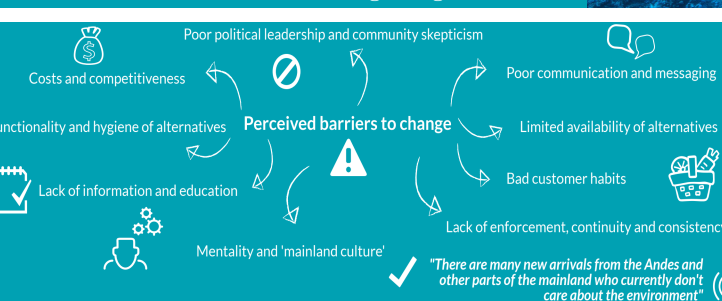
- Study area: the most populous islands Santa Cruz (pop. 15,701) and San Cristóbal (pop. 7,199).
- Initial workshop informed stakeholder analysis and survey design.
- Qualitative semi-structured key stakeholder interviews and broad quantitative questionnaire surveys of the local and tourist populations.
- Utilization-focused evaluation (Patton 2008).

RESULTS

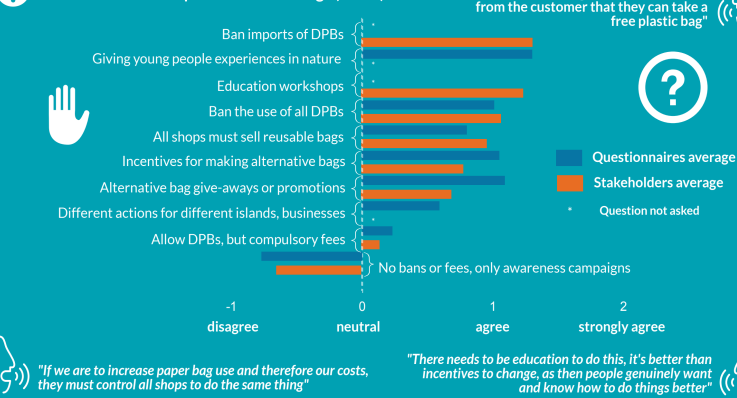


Questionnaire plastics action rankings: TOP 5!

1. Education of local people, about the issues and alternatives
2. More communication, information and engagement
3. Strong laws prohibiting use of disposable plastic items
4. Education of tourists about the issues and alternatives
5. Actions need to be consistent and long lasting



What is next for Disposable Plastic Bags (DPBs)?



CONCLUSIONS



Strategy suggestions



1. Wide consultation with all stakeholders



2. Awareness and information campaign to show links between



3. Improve economics of alternatives supply



5. Encourage political leadership from the Mayors



6. Implementation: consistent and with monitoring

7. Long-term 'Galapagos' Vision' 3E program
 - Engage and collaborate
 - Educate with environmental experiences in the park
 - Empower communities to act and listen to them

How to?

Gradually ban all plastic bags with how/when/what based on stakeholder consultations. Consider fines for some types of common plastic bag as a transitional measure prior to banning

New arrivals, farmers and fishers: "what is the issue, why and how to change" events, workshops and adverts

Tourists: Pre-arrival info from agents. Presentation and sustainability kit at arrival airport

Make locally (new cloth, old clothes, sacks, baskets)

Businesses cooperation forum for joint cheaper imports

Campaign to avoid use of plastic bags for waste disposal

Introduce compostable bags or have collection from reusable containers in every house

Highlight social and economic benefits of using alternatives to plastic bags: new jobs, income, tourism, health and happiness

Regular long-term monitoring of all businesses, fines and fees go to special community environmental action fund

Collaboration: Municipality, CGRES, PNG, NGOs

Fund local plastic action groups

Plastic-free competitions, awards and ratings: stars for businesses - website and map showing where to avoid plastic