



# Empowering Students to Combat Plastic Pollution in Cox's Bazar

SUCCESS STORY | JANUARY 2025 | UNIDO

In the coastal town of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, a quiet revolution is taking place in schools. Alifa, a senior student, leads the charge as part of her school's eco-club, a key initiative under the "Integrated Approach Towards Sustainable Plastic Use and Marine Litter Prevention in Bangladesh" project. Supported by UNIDO and funded by the Norwegian government, this project aims to tackle the pervasive issue of plastic pollution, particularly in educational institutions.

The eco-club at Alifa's school is one of ten established across the region. These clubs bring together students and teachers to actively participate in reducing plastic waste. Alifa recalls how the streets and schoolyards were once littered with plastic. Today, through organized cleanup drives, her club has collected significant amounts of plastic waste almost 1,500 kg, and turned it into a valuable resource. The collected plastic is sold, and the proceeds are reinvested into further club activities, creating a sustainable waste management model.



Leadership Development Seminar, Cox's Bazar

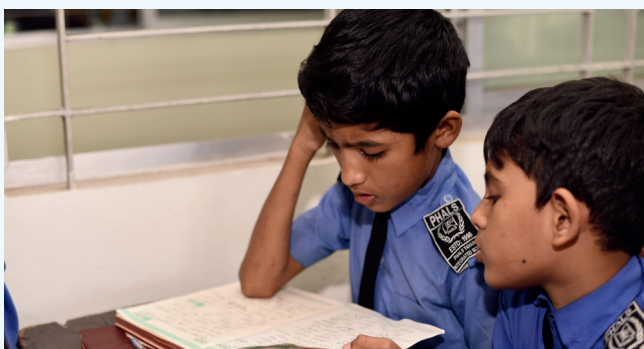


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**A standout feature of the initiative is its focus on inclusivity.** Madrassas have been integral to the program, with 08 schools and madrassas alongside with Programme for Helpless And Legged Society (PHALS) actively participating, ensuring that students from diverse educational backgrounds are involved. This has fostered a sense of community and collective responsibility. The involvement of young women like Alifa is particularly impactful. By stepping into leadership roles, they are driving environmental change and promoting gender equality within their communities.



Students taking part in plastic pollution , Cox's Bazar

**The project's reach is impressive, with approximately 10,000 students and community members engaged in various activities.** This extensive involvement underscores the growing momentum of the eco-club movement, transforming it into a budding institution of environmental advocacy.

**Despite these successes, challenges remain. Plastic pollution continues to be a significant problem in Cox's Bazar.** However, the project's holistic approach—combining education, community engagement, and practical action—ensures that progress is sustainable. The schools serve as hubs for environmental education, with students receiving training on effective waste management and the importance of reducing plastic use.

**The project also provides necessary tools and resources, such as waste collection equipment, to support the clubs' activities.** This comprehensive approach has transformed schools into centers of environmental advocacy, spreading awareness beyond the classroom to families and local communities.



Training workshop on leadership development for students.

**This growing network of eco-clubs has also initiated partnerships with local government bodies and environmental organizations to amplify their impact.** Regular seminars and interactive sessions provide students with insights from environmental experts and opportunities to showcase their progress. These collaborations enhance the clubs' capabilities, helping to integrate their efforts into broader municipal waste management strategies and foster a collective approach to tackling plastic pollution



Eco Clubs recognized for their efforts in recovering legacy litter.

*Integrated Approach Towards Sustainable Plastics Use and Marine Litter Prevention in Bangladesh*



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