

Involving volunteers in cross-border projects: feedback from EcoPeace Middle East

EcoPeace Middle East is an organization working to protect the environment. Their projects include ShaREDSea, which aims to combat plastic pollution in the Red Sea. **They try to foster leadership and volunteering within their program by engaging young people, young professionals and teachers to organise local actions.** The project also build a network of strong changemakers with a long term commitment in order to make a lasting impact. Each year they train 90 people through 20 trainings.

👏 Alumni program and volunteer engagement

To ensure long term efficiency of their project: creation of an alumni program with an education team.

- It's a real community created to empower them to lead projects and activities for the Red Sea.
- **Alumnis benefit from each other's** knowledge and from international exposure via EcoPeace.
- Successful stories are highlighted.
- **Alumnis can shape policy at the municipal or regional level** by engaging in roundtables with stakeholders.
- EcoPeace provides help in meeting businesses and stakeholders to help alumnis continue their projects and stay active (**mentors**).
- **Every relevant opportunity is shared** to the alumnis (academic, publishing, etc.). If the budget is available, they can pay them.
- Struggles are identify to provide help.

📌 Good practices to engage volunteers on the long-term

- **Dedicating time and budget**
- **Create a mentorship system**
 - An association is a place where students and PhD students can be mentored by the association's experts.
- **Selecting alumni to take part in round table** and exchange to stakeholders
- **Organised events and share opportunities** to keep the alumnis engaged
- **To send new materials** and all to keep them updated on plastic issues
- Celebrating during events and give them a place to express themselves.
- **Organize trainings**
- **Engage young people through sport**, especially water sports (e.g. rafting on the Skhumbin River in Albania).
- Adopt a beach - Phase-out of single use plastic bags ([link](#))

ShaRedSea Project in Aqaba

Project to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags in Jordan.

- Work with business owners and with housewives.
- Organized workshop for 40 women who have small businesses. Single-use plastic bags are replaced by fabric bags.
 - Feedbacks are positives for owners and customers.
- An alumni wanted to empower women, so they created **Eco Bazaar**. It's an event for women who have small plastic free businesses.
- They also organized recycling workshops and educational activities for children.
- To continue to be more sustainable, they organize annual workshops with other alumni.
- They organise youth meeting with the regional team to exchange knowledge, experience, progress, etc.
- The relationship forged with ASEZA makes it possible to advocate for the environment.

ShaRedSea Project in Eilat

Project to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags in Eilat through different projects :

- **With diving centers** : Campaign to dive in a respectful way to the underwater ecosystem. They had the opportunity to raise awareness.
- **Philip the polyp** : A poetic book written by an alumni to spread awareness on corals composition.
 - They helped her to make the book
 - Thank to the municipality they can go to kindergarden to share this history.
- **Policy paper on the impact of sunscreen and cosmetic products on coral reefs** : They paid an alumni to help them, they found in their community the right person for this job.
- **Regional work** : To learn at the level of the Red Sea, 30 alumni are involved in the project.