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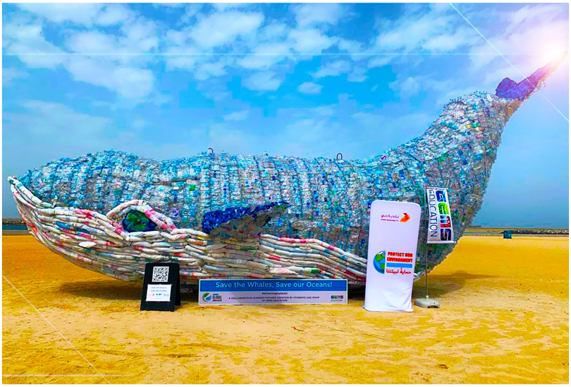
PREPARE TO BE WOWED! FORGET THE MULTI-MILLION-DIRHAM SUPERYACHTS – GEMS STUDENTS CREATE *** AMAZING *** LIFE-SIZE WHALE SCULPTURE LINKING CUTTING-EDGE ART, INNOVATION AND DESIGN TECHNOLOGY TO SAVE OUR WORLD. SEE IT NOW AT AL MAMZAR BEACH!

by TABITHA BARDA
APRIL 5, 2023



GEMS Education has partnered with Dubai International Boat Show (DIBS) to build an extraordinary, and quite beautiful, life-size sculpture of a blue whale with a twist in the tail. The artwork is made entirely from… discarded plastic bottles and plastic bags.

The stunning, towering 18-metre work of art was designed and created by GEMS students to raise awareness of the dangers of ocean plastic pollution and its impact on sealife.

Taking more than 800 hours to build, the colossal structure was transferred to Dubai Marina, where it took centre-stage at Dubai International Boat Show from 1 – 5 March,

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towering over the many multi-million-dirham superyachts on display and being admired by thousands of visitors and VIPs.

UAE authorities were *so impressed* with the awe-inspiring sculpture that it has since been placed on display at Al Mamzar Beach in Dubai, so that it may be appreciated by even more visitors and to raise further awareness of its marine-sustainability message.

dibshow
Original audio
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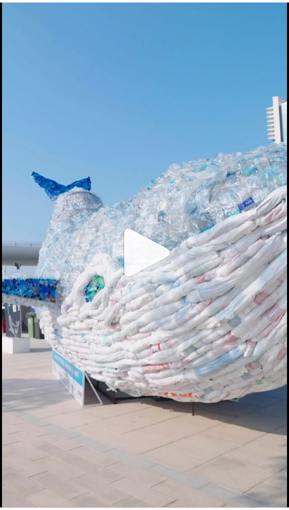

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dibshow

Let's preserve our world around the ocean! Head to #DubaiInternationalBoatShow and learn more about sustainability.
📍 Dubai Harbour
#DubaiIntlBoatShow #DIBS23 #DubaiHarbour #UAE #Sustainability

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Entirely made of discarded plastic, the blue whale project was undertaken by students and teachers at GEMS Education schools, part of the group's GEMS *Global Ambassadors Programme*. The model puts into perspective not only the size of these majestic marine creatures, but also the scale of plastic pollution and its impact on our environment.

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A blue whale can weigh 300,000 pounds (136,000kg) – which is equivalent to the amount of plastic that scientists say enters the ocean every nine minutes. It was first revealed in time to coincide with World Whale Day, which happens on the third Sunday in February each year (19th February in 2023).

Following its impressive showcase at the Dubai Boat Show, the sculpture was moved to Al Mamzar Beach in collaboration with Dubai Municipality, where is it is now on display to teach more UAE residents and visitors about the importance of recycling, upcycling and reducing plastic waste.

Save the Whales, Save our Oceans!
PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT
EDUCATION

The whale sculpture is currently on display at Al Mamzar Beach

When it is finally dismantled all of the plastic that went into making the piece will be re-cycled/up-cycled by DULSCO – although *we would like to see it kept and made a centre piece in one of Dubai's many museums.*

Whale Sustainability Artefact
Copy link
Watch on YouTube

Mohammad Affan Khan, Grade 6 student at GEMS Legacy School, explains about the building process:

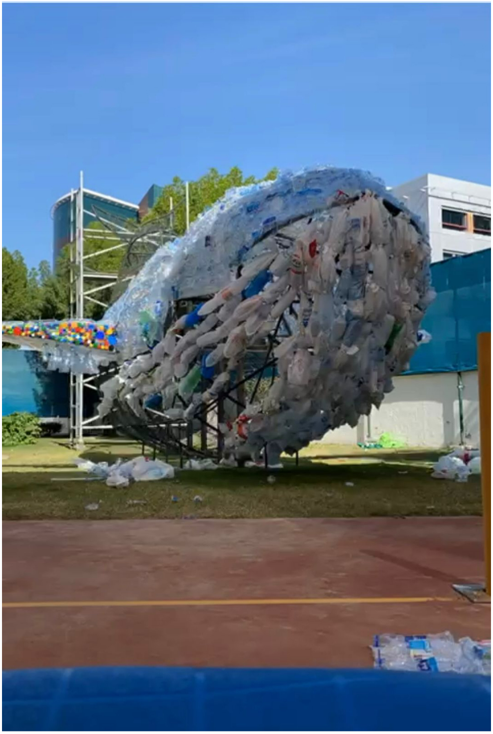
> "The whale project represents pollution in the oceans and how whales end up eating it as their food and eventually die. The whale project is connected to SDG 13 – Climate Action and SDG 14 – Life Below Water. The whale is made through the crushing of used plastic bottles further covering them with old plastic bags and then sticking them on the structure of the whale that has been made with waste metal pieces. The bottle caps are fashioned to make the whale's eye, fin and other parts."

Hana Mohamed Suneer, Grade 6 student at GEMS Legacy School shares what building the sculpture meant to them:

> "The whale project to me is a sign, a message of how plastic is severely endangering marine life. Collecting all the plastic we have and using it to create a sculpture of significance made me realise that even though we are making a model of the blue whale – the biggest mammal in the world – we have enough and probably more than the plastic items we need to make this. Imagine how much plastic we generate if we weren't using it to make the whale. This is just a minuscule amount of the actual plastic that lands in the ocean, and I believe each one of us, young or old, should be contributing to something that could make a huge difference as we move forward. In the journey of sustainability, each one of us has to be the change."

Adham Moemen Abdel Hamid, Year 9 – Student Council of WSD, adds:

"This brought us together to work as a team and to connect our minds to work towards a community goal. Watching a whale artefact made out of plastic waste around us has been an eye-opening moment. It forces me to reflect on how we have to be proactive in setting targets to meet the larger goal ahead of us."



Facts about the whale project

Materials used in the construction

- 6000+ plastic bottles on the whale;
- 2000+ inside and below the whale;
- 1000+ plastic bags

Dimensions of the finished whale

- The length is 17.8 m.
- The Fin to Fin Width is 6.5 m.

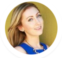
Total number of hours used to make the whale

- 800+ man-hours

Schools involved

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tabitha Barda



Tabitha Barda is the Senior Editor of SchoolsCompared.com. Oxbridge educated and an award winning journalist in the UAE for more than a decade, Tabitha is one of the region's shining lights in all that is education in the emirates. A mum herself, she is passionate about helping parents - and finding the stories in education that deserve telling. She is responsible for the busy 24x7 News Desk, our Advisory Boards and Specialist Panels - and SchoolsCompared.com's The School's Report - the global weekly round up of what matters in education for parents which is published every Friday, reviewing schools across the UAE - and features on issues that really matter. You can often find Tabitha on Parents United - our Facebook community board, discussing the latest schools and education issues with our parent community in the UAE - and beyond.