

K2's glacier comes clean

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The Italian NGO [Ev-K2-CNR](#) is famous for studying and protecting the world's highest alpine environments. This year they accomplished a massive "clean up" of the [Baltoro Glacier](#) at the base of [K2](#) in Pakistan. Here is a link to their [report \(in Italian\)](#). Below is an English translation of the report, courtesy of [Sara Sottocornola](#) of [Montagna.org](#).

ASKOLE, Pakistan - "Thank you for all your work. I'm very happy you start to make understand people the problem of garbage! I am for the first time climbing in Pakistan and I will be very happy to come back in this great environment. Please keep working! Best regards, Ueli Steck". The famous Swiss mountaineer wrote this message last month in the memory-book of the "Keep Baltoro Clean" headquarters, based on the Concordia glacier: this is an EvK2Cnr Committee's project, started a few weeks ago to clean up the Karakoram glacier from waste. Till now, hundreds of people have been learning how to collect items for recycling by attending the lessons taught by the Pakistani staff in Concordia. Here we publish photos and messages left over this summer by tourists and climbers who took part to the project, like the 14x8000er Viekka Gustafsson, Jorge Egocheaga and others.

In early August, "Keep Baltoro Clean" had already collected eight tons of waste - including paper, plastic, cans, glass and toxic materials- from basecamps and higher camps on the mountains. The project has continued over the following weeks with great success, both in collecting waste and in teaching recycle and waste disposal to people and tourists.

"Keep Baltoro Clean" staff teaches lessons to everybody passing by the tents of its headquarters, located at Circo Concordia, 4700 meters aslm. Porters, trekkers, alpinists of the expeditions can attend their "school of environment", where they give information and practical demonstrations about collecting waste for recycle. The result is amazing: everyone is

enthusiastic about the project and ready to help, as the attached messages show.

"Great to see that something is happening around our common problem - writes Finnish climber Gustafsson -. We climbers should show an example of good behaviour in this issue. I think we don't have a right as visitors in this great area to leave any rubbish behind. One idea to make this continue: It would be enough to have 1 liaison officers for each glacier: less expenses and less pollution and more money to be used for developing a long lasting system to clean the Baltoro. You are doing a great work, keep it going on!"

"We just arrived in Concordia - writes Jorge Egocheaga, Spanish, heading for K2 - and we met Baltoro Clean staff. We think that it's really a nice and great project also hard. We hope success and we give all our support".

The memory-book is full of messages from expeditions coming from all over the world. Spain, Argentina, Nepal, France, Austria, USA, Korea. But there are also messages from Pakistani liaison officers. Canadians Bruce Normand and Don Bowie left a long message thanking for the work and giving suggestions for the future. The Iranian leaders particularly appreciated how the project is carried out by local people.

In the attached photo gallery you can see loads of garbage collected in the area and stored in the Askole "ecological island" created by EvK2Cnr. Most of the garbage has already been disposed by Earth, the ecological disposer built and installed in the village by EvK2Cnr and the Italian company Actelios. Photos, taken by Agostino Da Polenza, EvK2Cnr President during his trip to K2 this summer, show also the "environmental lessons" held on the Concordia Glacier and the messages left by the climbers.

---*Linda McMillan*

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