



Students Lead Plastic-Free Movement in Hyderabad Schools, Religious Leaders Join Social Awareness Drive

May 18, 2026



COVA programme inspires schools in Hyderabad to go plastic-free

Under COVA's Compassionate Citizenship Programme, students in Hyderabad are leading a campaign for plastic-free schools and elder care awareness. Several schools have pledged to eliminate plastic use by 2026, while students are also engaging faith leaders to spread awareness. By [Telangana Today](#)

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Hyderabad: In a remarkable example of youth-driven social transformation, students associated with the Compassionate Citizenship Program of [COVA Peace Network](#) have achieved two major milestones by spearheading campaigns on climate action, plastic-free schools, elder care and social awareness through religious platforms.

The initiative, implemented by the Hyderabad-based organization, encouraged students to study pressing social challenges such as climate crises and the growing need for care and support for elderly citizens. After extensive discussions and community engagement activities, the students formulated 12 actionable points aimed at addressing these critical concerns.

Hyderabad: As a part of its 'Compassionate Citizenship Programme', the Confederation of Voluntary Organisations (COVA) organised a unique programme for school children on creating plastic-free schools and taking care of elders.

On the topic of Climate Crises and Care of Elders, school students in Hyderabad and districts understood the key problems to be addressed for these two critical social issues and evolved actionable points required to mitigate them, a COVA press release said.

Students urged their respective school managements to make their schools plastic-free. A COVA press release said that some of the school managements agreed and started informing the students and parents that their schools will be plastic-free from June 2026. Motivated by this, 50 more schools in Hyderabad resolved to become plastic-free by mid-May 2026, and many more schools are likely to join this campaign, Mazhar Hussain from COVA said.

Hyderabad Schools Move Towards Plastic-Free Campuses

One of the most significant outcomes of the campaign has been the growing movement towards plastic-free educational institutions in Hyderabad. Students from three schools formally approached their respective school managements and appealed for complete elimination of plastic usage within campuses. Responding positively to the students' initiative, the school administrations agreed to implement the proposal and informed students as well as parents that their institutions would become plastic-free from June 2026 onwards.

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Students also met with different faith leaders, including Archbishop of Shamshabad, president of Arya Samaj, Telangana and president of Jamaat e Islami, Telangana, to spread awareness on 12 actionable points on care of elders and climate crisis, within their communities through the weekly sermons.

Some of the actionable points developed by students include respect and dignity, spending quality time, taking care, medicine, and food for elders. Some of the suggestions on climate crisis developed by students included saying no to plastics, planting and protecting trees, among others.



Inspired by the initiative, nearly 50 more schools across Hyderabad have reportedly resolved to adopt plastic-free practices by mid-May 2026. Organizers say several additional schools are expected to join the movement in the coming weeks, potentially making it one of the largest student-led environmental campaigns in the city.

Faith Leaders Join Awareness Campaign

The second major achievement of the program is the successful outreach to leaders of different faiths to promote awareness about the 12 actionable social points through weekly religious sermons and community gatherings.

Students submitted representations to prominent religious institutions and community leaders requesting support in spreading awareness on issues related to climate change, environmental protection and care for elders.



ARCHBISHOP PRINCE ANTONY PANENGADAN
Archdiocese of Shamshabad

26th April 2026

To,

Parish Priests / Heads of Institutions / Religious Superiors / Lay Leaders,

Greetings and Wishes from the Archdiocese of Shamshabad!

Some students from different schools of Hyderabad, Telangana State, who are participating in the Compassionate Citizenship Program of COVA (being implemented in association with the Department of Education, Government of Telangana) met and gave a Representation to me on the issues of Care of Elders and Climate Crises requesting understanding and responsible action by all.

It is commendable that the students studied these two issues closely, interacted with different stakeholders and have identified twelve Actionable Points that can help mitigate the problems involved if people at large can adopt and implement these Actionable Points.

Five Actionable Points for Care of Elders include Respect and Dignity for Elders; Spending Quality Time with Elders; Taking Care of Elders' Health, Medicine, and Food; Helping Elders in the Neighbourhood and formation of Senior Citizens Groups to address their mental wellbeing and recreational needs.

The Seven Actionable Points identified for Climate Crises are: No to Plastics, Planting and Protection of Trees, Avoiding Wastage of Water, Saving Energy, Use Public Transport, Offering a Glass of Water to Gig Workers and Delivery Boys and Spreading awareness about the Actionable Points.

As part of our social commitment and responsibility to humanity, The Church has always propagated and promoted these and many other values for a compassionate and virtuous society. The request from these sensitive and conscientious young students for support for their Campaign to propagate their Twelve Actionable Points deserves consideration.

I request you all to give your full cooperation to make this campaign successful by speaking about one or two of these Actionable Points during different sermons as the occasions permit, so that our Catholic Community is able to undertake the proposed actions to make our communities, society and the country humane and pious.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely in Christ,

+ Prince Antony Panengadan
Archbishop of Shamshabad



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Responding positively, senior faith leaders including the Archbishop of Shamshabad, whose network extends across 16 states, the President of Arya Samaj Telangana, and the President of Jamaat-e-Islami Telangana issued circulars to clergy members, institutional heads and community leaders encouraging them to discuss these issues during weekly sermons, satsangs, mosque gatherings and church services.

Organizers described the development as a powerful example of interfaith cooperation for social responsibility and sustainable living.

Youth as Catalysts for Social Change

According to COVA Peace Network representatives, the twin achievements demonstrate how young students, when provided with proper guidance, awareness and platforms for action, can become effective catalysts for societal transformation.

The campaign continues to gain momentum with expectations that more schools, educational institutions and community organizations will join the movement in the coming months.

Hyderabad Mail

HYPERLOCAL NEWS HUB

Students Lead Plastic-Free Schools, Faith leaders join social awareness drive

HYDERABAD: Students participating in the Compassionate Citizenship Programme of the COVA Peace Network have secured commitments from schools and religious leaders to support campaigns on plastic-free campuses, climate action and care for elders.

According to COVA, students working on climate crises and elder care identified key concerns linked to the two issues and developed 12 actionable points aimed at mitigation and public awareness.

As part of the initiative, students from three schools approached their managements and urged them to declare their campuses plastic free. The school managements agreed and informed students and parents that the campuses would become plastic free from June 2026.

Encouraged by the response, nearly 50 more schools in Hyderabad resolved to become plastic free by mid-May 2026, COVA said. The organisation added that more schools were likely to join the campaign in the coming weeks.

The second phase of the initiative involved students meeting faith leaders from different religions and requesting them to spread awareness on the 12 actionable points through weekly sermons and community gatherings.

According to the organisation, the Archbishop of Shamshabad, whose outreach extends across 16 states, the president of Arya Samaj Telangana, and the president of Jamaat-e-Islami Telangana issued circulars to clergy members, heads of institutions and community leaders to promote the awareness campaign through sermons and community interactions.

Mazher Hussain of the COVA Peace Network said the initiative demonstrated how sensitised and motivated students could contribute to social transformation when provided proper guidance and platforms for action.

The detailed report of the initiative has been published by COVA on its official website.

[COVA Peace Network report](#)

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