



VOICES FOR CHANGE

STORY REPORT FORM

This form should *accompany the stories* of challenge / change that you collected from your partners, stakeholders, staff, community members and volunteers (one form for each story). The stories themselves can be written up or take the form of photos, short videos, drawings, poetry, etc.

The Story of a Lake:

I look at Lake Burdur now, and my heart aches for what it once was. It stood as one of the largest and deepest lakes in Turkey, a sanctuary not only for its shimmering waters but for the countless bird species that depended on it. But today, it is a shadow of its former self—a landscape marred by pollution, exploitation, and negligence. The water, once pristine and teeming with life, is now tainted with waste. Plastic litters the shoreline, agricultural runoff poisons its depths, and excessive water extraction has drained its vitality. The balance that once sustained an entire ecosystem has been shattered.

The destruction didn't happen overnight, nor was it caused by a single mistake—it was a slow, relentless assault on the lake's integrity. Garbage was discarded carelessly, solid waste accumulated, and toxic chemicals seeped in from nearby agricultural fields. Pesticides and pollutants suffocated the life within, disrupting the fragile web of species that depended on its waters for survival. The birds that once soared above its surface are disappearing, their numbers dwindling as their habitat collapses. The lake, once a lifeline, has been left to decay, forgotten by those who had the power to protect it.

Now, standing at its edge, I see not a thriving wetland, but a dying swamp. The vibrant ecosystem has faded into silence, replaced by murky waters and remnants of what once flourished here. It is painful to witness, knowing that this wasn't inevitable—it was the consequence of human disregard. We failed the lake, and in doing so, we failed the birds, the wildlife, and the delicate balance that makes nature whole. And I wonder, will we ever learn? Or will we continue to turn a blind eye until there is nothing left to save?

Name of the organisation and person collecting the story:
The story collected for CCIVS by S. Fehmi Agduk, who works as an advocacy consultant at GSM Turkey.



Who provided the story and in which form:

The story was shared in the form of interview by Asuman Korkusuz, an environmental engineer who was a former GSM camp participant and currently working as an expert on environmental issues in Turkey.

When and where did the challenges/changes illustrated in the story take place:

The changes took place in the Lake of Burdur which is among the largest and deepest lakes in Turkey, located in the Turkish Lakes Region in south-western Anatolia and an important wetland site for many bird species.

In terms of the problems, there is not just one problem but many environmental problems. She said that the lake was polluted by dumping garbage and solid waste. Plastics were thrown away and excessive water was drawn. She added that it was used as agricultural land and agricultural waste and pesticides polluted the lake. As a result, a very important lake was polluted, and it also effected the bird species as well. She was sad that the lake was completely left to its own devices when it turned into a swamp.

What kind of projects were implemented by your organisation in the place the story refers to:

GSM organized an online workshop on Climate Change, Sustainability in the context of Global Education Week in November 2025. There was not a direct project in the place the story refers to but every year in the context of Global Education week GSM organizes, this topic is being discussed with the participants with the facilitation of an expert.

What does the storyteller believe is the significance of the events described in the story?

Asuman explained that this is only an example, but many lakes in Turkey have faced similar problems. She emphasized that there is little awareness about the ecosystem in the public and this makes the situation more complicated. Asuman told there needs to be a better communication with the public, in terms of the importance of protecting environment and she added that it needs to be looked at holistically.