

PRESS RELEASE

Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust awarded 2024 UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Conservation

Paris, 20 November 2024 – Today, the **2024 UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Conservation** was awarded to the **Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET)**, a non-profit organization dedicated to sustainable development and environmental education. It recognizes NaDEET's significant contributions to promoting sustainability and environmental education in Namibia.

“The Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust embodies the fundamental spirit of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere programme and of UNESCO’s core mandate to ‘Build peace in the minds of men and women’. It does so through a constant commitment to building environmental commitment, centre by centre, community by community” said Mr. **Xing Qu**, Deputy Director General of UNESCO.

During a ceremony at the World Science Forum in Budapest (Hungary) on 20 November, the UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize was awarded to the Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET), a non-profit organisation established in 2003 which operates environmental education centres in and around the NamibRand Nature Reserve.

The Centre’s immersive, hands-on programs work with adults and children to build sustainable practices, including solar cooking, water conservation, and recycling. Their activities encourage participants to live sustainably in one of the world’s most fragile ecosystems. Over 16,000 Namibians have already participated in a NaDEET Centre programme since its founding.

In addition to its Centre-based programs, NaDEET is also extending its impact nationwide through initiatives on education for sustainable development. The 2-year program has trained hundreds of teachers, leading to the implementation of over 740 activities on education for sustainable development in schools across Namibia, reaching more than 75,000 students and teachers.

NaDEET has also played a key role in shaping Namibia’s environmental policies. From 2017-2019, NaDEET was a lead organisation in the drafting and finalisation of the Namibian National Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development (EE/ESD) Policy, the first stand-alone policy of its kind in southern Africa. The organization’s efforts have been recognized through various accolades, including the 2018 UNESCO-Japan Prize on education for sustainable development.

About the UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Conservation

Launched in 1991 through a generous donation from Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said of Oman, the UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Conservation recognizes, every two years, outstanding contributions to the management and conservation of the environment and raising awareness on the importance of environmental conservation for human well-being. The prize includes a US\$100,000 award.

About UNESCO

With 194 Member States, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization contributes to peace and security by leading multilateral cooperation on education, science, culture, communication and information. Headquartered in Paris, UNESCO has offices in 54 countries and employs over 2300 people. UNESCO oversees more than 2000 World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks; networks of Creative, Learning, Inclusive and Sustainable Cities; and over 13 000 associated schools, university chairs, training and research institutions. Its Director-General is Audrey Azoulay.

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed” – UNESCO Constitution, 1945.

More information: www.unesco.org

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