

## CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH INTERACTIVE GARDEN AT DOHA ENGLISH SPEAKING SCHOOL

*DESS Community Garden Provides Children with Practical Learning Opportunities across Multiple Subjects*

**Doha, Qatar, 16 November 2016:** DESS Community Garden, an interactive sustainability education project jointly developed by Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC), Doha English Speaking School (DESS), Gulf Contracting, and Friends of DESS (FOD), was opened yesterday as part of Qatar Sustainability Week.

Located at DESS, the project provides children with practical learning opportunities across multiple subjects such as the environment, science, math, computing and art. Combined with the school's state-of-the-art curriculum, the DESS Community Garden helps students learn about the environment in a number of ways, including the use of renewable energies, recycled materials, and the role of plants and vegetation.

The community garden project is to be rolled out to other schools across Qatar in an effort to provide members of the wider community with practical learning opportunities around sustainability and environmental protection, in line with the sustainable development goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Commenting on the launch of the project, Dr Alex Amato, Head of Sustainability at QGBC, said: "The completed garden installation provides the children with a proactive and practical way to learn about how plants and food are grown, about Qatar's unique flora and natural environment, and about sustainability, including renewable energy, recycling, and the water cycle. This project exemplifies QGBC's practical support of Qatar Foundation in its mission to develop a much wider understanding of sustainability at a grassroots level in Qatar, which is, of course, a core goal of the Qatar National Vision."

In addition to serving as a learning tool, the DESS Community Garden project will produce various sets of data, which will be used as part of environmental research by Qatar Foundation in the future.

Mr Sean Sibley, Head Teacher at DESS, said: "This new garden provides great ways of introducing environmental topics into our curriculum and, in doing so, helps to develop a creative learning environment for all pupils involved. Using the garden will help us deal with real in-school issues and deliver cross-curricular themes. The planned programme of work ties into virtually all school topics, encouraging everything from scientific review through to cultural understandings and even data analysis."

The development of this project is unique as it engages the wider community as part of its initial concept. DESS children and their parents have been involved in creating the garden from its inception.

Sian Beswick, from Friends of DESS, said: “One of the things I love most about DESS is that it’s a strong community school. This garden project has seen that community feeling extend beyond the parents and teachers into the wider community, through collaboration with other schools and stakeholders.”

In addition, Mr Andy Ford from Gulf Contracting, commented on the launch of the project: “We embraced the idea from the start as it fits within our global sustainability initiative. Starting with a blank piece of paper, with just some general ideas, we collaborated with QGBC to develop the design into a workable scheme. We believed the scheme had the possibility to add value and benefit to both DESS and the wider community. 95% of the materials used were recycled from our old stock which adds character and shows users that surplus materials should not be considered as waste.”

### **Image Caption**

**Image 1:** A Doha English Speaking School (DESS) pupil with Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC) experts during the launch of ‘DESS Community Garden’, aimed at teaching children about sustainability.

**Image 2:** Children of Doha English Speaking School (DESS) at the weather station of the ‘DESS Community Garden’ launched in collaboration with Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC).

**Image 3:** Children at Doha English Speaking School (DESS) at the launch of ‘DESS Community Garden’, a project designed alongside Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC)

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### **About Qatar Green Building Council:**

Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC) is a non-profit, membership-driven organisation providing leadership and encouraging collaboration in conducting environmentally sustainable practices for green building design and development in Qatar. QGBC also aims to support the overall health and sustainability of the environment, the people, and economic security in Qatar for generations to come. The council, a member of Qatar Foundation, was formally established in 2009 by a decree signed by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser and is helping Qatar on its journey to establish a post-hydrocarbon, knowledge economy and progressive society. Through QGBC, Qatar is part of a network of 80 countries that run active national green building councils under the umbrella of the World Green Building Council.

QGBC’s members include, representatives from government, real estate developers, investors, facilities managers, consultants, constructors, manufacturers & suppliers, oil & gas, professional firms, financial services, telecom/technology, academia, NGOs & media.

QGBC is setting up operations from its HQ, organising awareness events, knowledge seminars, training, forums, and networking sessions with the like-minded. To learn more, please visit [www.qatargbc.org](http://www.qatargbc.org).

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