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NU-Q students launch groundbreaking website to probe environmental issues

Doha, Qatar, 22 February 2014: Students enrolled in the advanced online storytelling course at Northwestern University in Qatar are launching a multimedia news website, www.qatarvironment.org, which investigates Qatar's environmental issues and the initiatives the government is taking to tackle these problems.

Qatar may be small in size but not when it comes to its environmental footprint. Excessive energy consumption, skyrocketing carbon dioxide emissions and poor food security are all problems facing the country. But Qatar is taking initiatives to become a more environmentally friendly nation.

"In 2012, Qatar hosted the COP18 conference, which I thought was really informative," said Christina Paschyn, instructor of the NU-Q journalism course. "Qatar has the highest carbon emissions per capita in the world, and I think it is important for people to cover the story and what Qatar is doing to lower its environmental footprint."

According to the World Bank, Qatar emits an estimated 40.3 tons of carbon dioxide per person. One of the steps Qatar is taking to tackle this issue is to build one of the first passivhauses in the region—these are energy-efficient buildings, emitting 50 percent less carbon than a traditional house.

Despite Qatar's sustainability efforts, issues such as overfishing and overconsumption of energy are underlying concerns that the student-produced website investigates.

This project proved a learning experience for Angel Polacco, an NU-Q junior on the website's print team. "I found out that there's a lot of miscommunication in the recycling industry, and there isn't a central source that provides information about it."

For others, this project was a reality check. “Covering these stories allowed me to dig deep into issues that I knew very little about, issues that will greatly affect my future as a Qatari citizen,” said Maha Al Ansari, an NU-Q junior on the video team.

Neglecting our environment might not have an immediate effect on us, but it will definitely affect future generations. Visit www.qatarviroment.org to learn what the major problems are and what you can do to preserve Qatar’s future.

Keywords: QATARVIRONMENT, QATAR, QATAR FOUNDATION, NU-Q, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY IN QATAR, ENVIRONMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, CHRISTINA PASCHYN, passivhaus, COP18

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About Northwestern University in Qatar

Northwestern University in Qatar draws from its parent organization, [Northwestern University](http://NorthwesternUniversity.edu) (Evanston, Illinois), a distinguished history, famous programs and an exceptional faculty. Founded in partnership with Qatar Foundation, NU-Q provides a framework through which students explore the world and, ultimately, shape its future through its distinguished schools of [communication](#), [journalism](#), and [liberal arts](#).