



# Environmental ambassadors

For RasGas 2010 is the 'Year of the Environment'. One initiative focuses on educating children – tomorrow's citizens – about the many ways they can make a real, sustainable difference

The Qatar National Vision 2030 explicitly acknowledges that the country's meteoric growth needs to be sustainable – economically, socially and environmentally. As the earth's natural resources dwindle and the effects of pollution and environmental degradation take their toll on the planet, it will become more important than ever for Qatar to work with regional neighbours and the international community to protect the environment. The National Vision recognises that citizens, technology, public institutions (including the legal system) and the private sector need to unite to create sustainable and sustaining policies.

Clearly, the task of transforming Qatar in line with the National Vision requires a strong commitment from business. Companies need to embrace their corporate social responsibility to

preserve and develop the natural environment for generations to come. One highly effective way that businesses can reinvest in the communities in which they operate is through the environmental education of children.

When companies 'bring to life' the issues around sustainability – for example, the need to conserve the earth's finite resources, the importance of reducing waste and so on – it can have a ripple effect in local communities. Communicating these important messages in a child-friendly way helps ensure they are understood from an early age, and encourages the development of lifelong habits. Children, in turn, influence their families in sustainable habits, leading to better health and an improved environment all round.

**The next generation**

RasGas is leading the way in the environmental arena through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme, which aims to make a positive and sustainable impact on Qatari society in the spheres of community, education, environment and health. This includes contributions to a variety of educational initiatives in private and public schools throughout the country.

RasGas has shown that there are many different and imaginative approaches to educating children about the environment from an early age. During 2009 representatives from the company’s Safety, Health and Environment Group delivered a series of waste recycling presentations to students in the Indian and British streams of the Al Khor Community schools (the majority of whom are the children of employees from RasGas and its sister company Qatargas). The presentations discussed the different types of household waste in Qatar, how the figures have risen in recent decades, and where the waste ends up, which is mostly in landfills. Burying rubbish in this way can lead to significant environmental problems, including the production of methane (a potent greenhouse gas) and soil contamination as the waste materials break down.

**Green alliance**

The theme of the RasGas school presentations was that “Together we can make a difference”. Children were introduced to the ‘3 Rs’ of recycling theory – reduce, reuse and recycle – which aims to cut down the amount of waste produced in the first place. They also learned about the importance of recycling for the sustainable development of Qatar, in line with the 2030 National Vision. The children were encouraged to get involved in the RasGas Housing Recycling Project, which the company launched in June 2009 to increase recycling rates of waste paper, plastic and cans in Al Khor Community. About 20 per cent of the community has participated so far, but even this contribution has already saved at least 17 trees through paper recycling, and reduced potential air pollution by 73 per cent, compared to virgin paper production. The message that RasGas wanted children to take away was that by starting small and recycling more, they can affect the future of the planet.

The presentations ended with a ‘waste facts’ quiz and a competition to encourage children aged 11 to 13 years old to produce a poster, slogan or device (such as a can crusher) to promote recycling in the community. The strongest poster entries from each school were sent to RasGas for judging. From these, RasGas

employees were then asked to ‘e-vote’ for the 10 best posters. This interactive aspect of the initiative also helped to raise awareness of environmental issues internally within RasGas.

**Planning ahead**

Knowledge and education form one of the pillars of the National Vision to turn Qatar into a robust, sustainable economy that is no longer reliant on oil and gas. By investing significantly in education, the intention is that Qataris will have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the many challenges of sustainable development in the coming years.

RasGas recently participated in the 2010 Qatar Petroleum Environment Fair, held in Doha in April, which focused on educating children and families on the importance of the environment. RasGas is also planning to take part in UNESCO’s initiative to plant 10 billion trees to help mitigate global climate change. Finally, throughout the year, the company will be introducing various ‘Environment Moments’ for employees, in line with international United Nations days.

Underpinning all RasGas’ ‘Year of the Environment’ activities is the key message that meeting the requirements of today must not compromise the ability of the next generation to meet theirs. The future of the planet lies in our hands.

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A selection of entries received from children at Al Khor community schools as part of the RasGas student recycling educational programme

