

CONNECT WITH NATURE

ANNUAL
REPORT
2019

FOUNDING PARTNERS



STRATEGIC PARTNER



ABOUT EMIRATES NATURE-WWF

Emirates Nature-WWF is a non-profit organisation established to drive positive change in the United Arab Emirates to conserve the nation's natural heritage. Founded in 2001 under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Ruler's Representative in the Al Dhafra Region and Chairman of the Governing Board of the Environment Agency–Abu Dhabi, Emirates Nature works in association with WWF, one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organisations.

For almost two decades, Emirates Nature-WWF has been a prominent and active partner in environmental conservation, working to alleviate the most pressing threats to nature and wildlife throughout our nation and the region by partnering with government, businesses and civil society on multiple conservation initiatives to protect the UAE's natural heritage – our seas, lands, climate and the biodiversity they support.

ABOUT ENVIRONMENT AGENCY – ABU DHABI (EAD)

Established in 1996, the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) is committed to protecting and enhancing air quality, groundwater as well as the biodiversity of our desert and marine ecosystem. By partnering with other government entities, the private sector, NGOs and global environmental agencies, EAD embraces international best practice, innovation and hard work to institute effective policy measures. EAD seeks to raise environmental awareness, facilitate sustainable development and ensure environmental issues remain one of the top priorities of our national agenda.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR HOUBARA CONSERVATION (IFHC)

Continuing an initiative by the late Sheikh Zayed, Abu Dhabi has undertaken the task to rescue the threatened houbara bustard. A global conservation strategy was developed and implemented over the past forty years with the objective of ensuring the species has a sustainable future in the wild through effective and appropriate conservation programmes and management plans. Since 1995, the conservation strategy adopted consists of an integrated approach combining sound ecology, protection measures in the wild, conservation breeding, and effective reinforcement programmes. The IFHC was created in 2006 to further the original programme by managing international assets and securing partnerships across the range of the houbara, which encourage sustainable practices to ensure the species' conservation.

For more information please visit: www.connectwithnature.ae

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Connect with Nature (CwN) is an innovative and interactive movement for youth in the UAE, co-founded in 2018 by Emirates Nature–WWF and the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD), in strategic partnership with the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC).

Emirates Nature–WWF and the Connect with Nature team presents the following Annual Report for the programme. **This report covers the period January 2019 – February 2020.**

Targeted at an audience between the ages of 15 and 30 years old, the CwN programme is designed to educate and inspire young people in the UAE to experience, celebrate and respect the UAE’s natural heritage. It aims to increase environmental awareness, build a public movement for change through outreach initiatives and create an appreciation for nature that translates into living a more sustainable lifestyle. The programme’s goal is to equip young people with the experiences, knowledge, skills and opportunities to become the next generation of leaders for the environment, continuing the legacy of the late founding father of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

The messaging and calls to action that underpin CwN are deliberately and conscientiously aligned with local and global thought-leadership, scientific research, and international frameworks related to conservation and sustainability, including the:

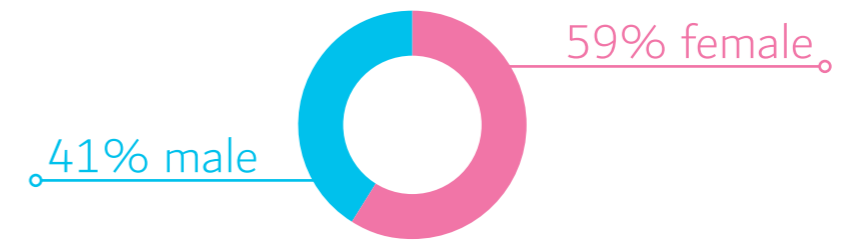
- UAE Vision 2021
- Abu Dhabi Environment Vision 2030
- UAE Centennial 2071 Plan
- UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets
- UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development
- WWF Global Youth Empowerment and Leadership Strategy
- WWF Living Planet Report 2018
- UN Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

OBJECTIVES AND KPIS

Pillar	Objective	Results to date	Percentage of KPI to date
Reach	By 2022, reach 500,000 UAE youth with conservation messaging and calls to action through marketing and communications	1.2 million reached, exceeding the target	240%
Explore	By 2022, influence the values, attitudes and behaviour of 10,000 UAE youth through experiential learning, bespoke outreach experiences, engaging digital activities, dialogue and citizen science opportunities	A community of more than 4,000 youth are members of the movement, which is on target to reach 10,000	40%
Impact	By 2022, 70% percent of individuals report that CwN has positively influenced the way they prioritize and value nature in their lives	Currently at 86%	122%
Lead	By 2022, develop the skills and capacity of 300 of our highly engaged members to enable them to become influential conservation role models in their communities through leadership development	20 Ambassadors will pilot the Leadership programme, launching in June 2020	TBC

DEMOGRAPHICS

The data has shown that our active members are mostly between the ages of 25-34years old.



The gender breakdown shows a breakdown of 59% female and 41% male.. 29% of the CwN youth community are based in Abu Dhabi.



The majority of CwN events occur in Abu Dhabi and youth have participated over 3,000 times at CwN events there.

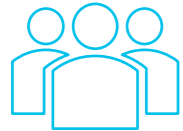
BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Studies show that awareness does not necessarily lead to action. CwN employs a theory of behaviour change through its activities that enables people to not only enjoy nature but protect it too. The framework guides participants towards feeling that they are part of the natural world, rather than nature being a commodity. The programme uses experiential learning through nature to encourage pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours and to instil intrinsic values and emotional connections to the natural world.

ECO-TOURISM

With our six ecotourism vendors, Adventurati Outdoors, Noukhada Adventure Company, Husaak Adventures/Sea Hawk, Al Mahara Diving Center, Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort and Mleiha Archeological Center, we co-designed and developed custom signature experiences, embedding sustainable practices and techniques in their work. To date, CwN has had 35 events with Eco-tourism partners.

ACHIEVEMENTS



4,500 participations

More than 4,500 participations at 90+ outreach events.



5,000 hours

Youth have spent more than 5,000 hours engaging with CwN outreach events.



20 Youth Ambassadors

In the midst of selecting 20 UAE youth Ambassadors to pilot the leadership programme.



910 kgs

Through our Citizen Science beach clean ups, more than 5,000 pieces of marine debris has been collected, weighing 910 kgs and covering 15 km of coastline.



6 Emirates

Outreach events and activations held across 6 of the 7 Emirates.



US\$ 239,000+ Earned Media

We reached over 34,743,637 through top tier UAE publications including Al Ittihad, The National, Al Bayan, Gulf News, and more often making front page headlines!



LEARNINGS

Authenticity is key. Feedback showed that when the CwN team organised and hosted events themselves, rather than through a third party, participants are more responsive and eager to change their behaviour.

For youth, by youth. By creating personalised communications and small community groups on social media, the team has created a sense of ownership amongst those who engage. Discussions and conversations are often led by youth, and they have even contributed ideas towards outreach programme opportunities.

Youth are eager to have an Impact. The team expected “fun” and “adventure” to be the pull factor to entice youth participation, but discovered youth are more intrinsically motivated by making a real impact. Activities like beach clean-ups, as part of our Citizen Science initiatives, has been one of the most popular activities.

CwN team inspires Youth. Interacting with the passionate and experienced CwN team has proven to be a key motivating factor in youth engagement. Participants are more likely to download the App, collect badges, and take part in self-guided challenges after interacting with the team.

“Being a part of Connect with Nature has made me more involved. I think the App is well made; everything is easy to follow. Pair that up with the WhatsApp group and you’ve got an amazing initiative going.



You have amazing representatives for the program, really friendly and welcoming.”

FAYAZ, MALE, 20 YEARS

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Since launch in January 2019 the media exposure generated for CwN and partners includes:



\$239,000+
WORTH OF EARNED COVERAGE.



34,743,637+
REACH THROUGH MEDIA PUBLICATIONS.



77+
MEDIA STORIES ACROSS DIGITAL AND PRINT PUBLICATIONS.



22+
TV AND RADIO INTERVIEWS WITH OUR SPOKESPEOPLE.

15+

KEY OPINION LEADERS ATTENDED AND REPORTED LIVE FROM OUR EVENTS.

INTRODUCTION TO CONNECT WITH NATURE



CwN aims to empower and inspire UAE youth to become future leaders of sustainability and to be part of the movement shaping an optimistic future for the planet.

The programme was co-founded in 2018 by Emirates Nature–WWF and the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD), with our strategic partner the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC). Through conservation messaging and experiences, CwN promotes meaningful and impactful opportunities to influence the way youth value and prioritise nature in their lives.

MISSION

To equip and inspire UAE youth to join the movement shaping an optimistic future for the planet.

VISION

UAE youth naturally CwN and engage in meaningful action as future leaders of sustainability.

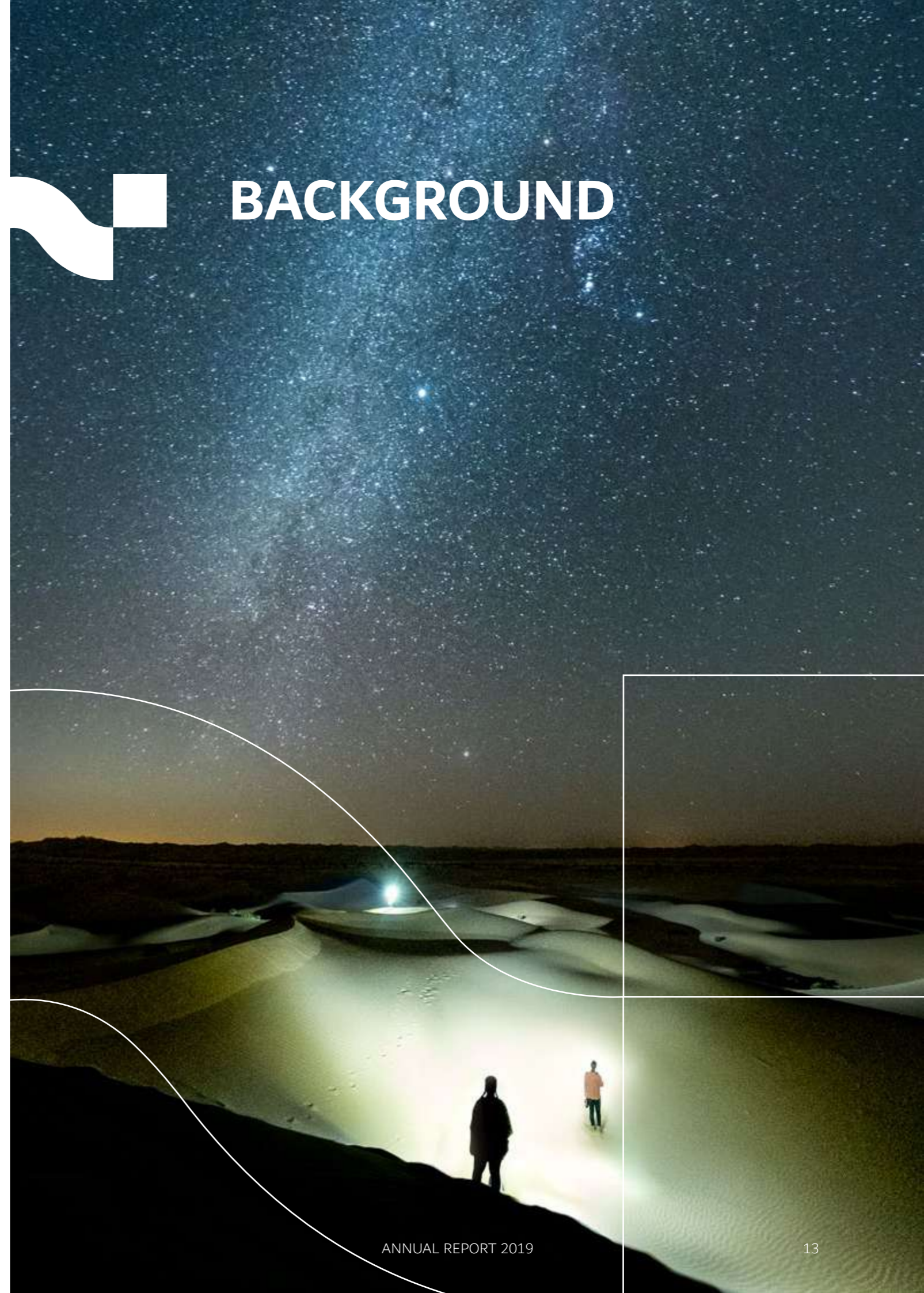
OBJECTIVES

By 2022, our goal is to reach a critical mass of 500,000 UAE youth through conservation messaging and engage a further 10,000 in impactful opportunities to influence the way they value and prioritise nature and to shape them into future leaders of sustainability.

Key elements of the CwN programme include:

- Four strategic pillars of the programme – Reach, Explore, Impact, and Lead
- Digital engagement – web platform, mobile App, gamified challenges, rewards and incentives, local protected areas as geolocations, tailored online learning, online knowledge hub, community event listings
- Transformational journey – Re-wild, Re-think, and Become the Change
- Leadership development – real world learning to encourage the participant to change the world

BACKGROUND



THE LAUNCH

In January 2019, the programme officially launched; firstly with the community launch at Umm al Emarat Park followed by the Ministerial launch at World Future Energy Summit 2019 (WFES), both in Abu Dhabi. The period January to April 2019 was the programme's pilot outreach season. A host of acquisition events were conducted to spread the word about CwN and a series of outreach experiences in nature were delivered in partnership with our eco-tourism vendors.

In March 2019, the CwN mobile App was piloted to support the user journey and to further engage participants in different ways. The App underwent further optimisation and reconfiguration to better support gamification and improve the user experience in readiness for CwN's "re-launch" to the public in October 2019.

VERSION 2.0 – OCTOBER 2019

Upon completion of the pilot outreach season in April 2019, the Education team regrouped to review lessons learnt, assess what worked well and identify areas for improvement. Additional focus groups were conducted to test new concepts, update brand collateral, and dig deeper into audience motivations and preferences. The feedback enabled the team to refine the target demographic and shift its focus from Emirati youth aged 15-24 to open it up to include all youth in the UAE aged 15-30 years old.

The team took this opportunity to reassess programme management approaches and implement adaptive management processes in response to the lessons learned. Please refer to figure 1, the new strategy, on page 16.



THE CONNECT WITH NATURE STRATEGY



THE CONNECT WITH NATURE STRATEGY

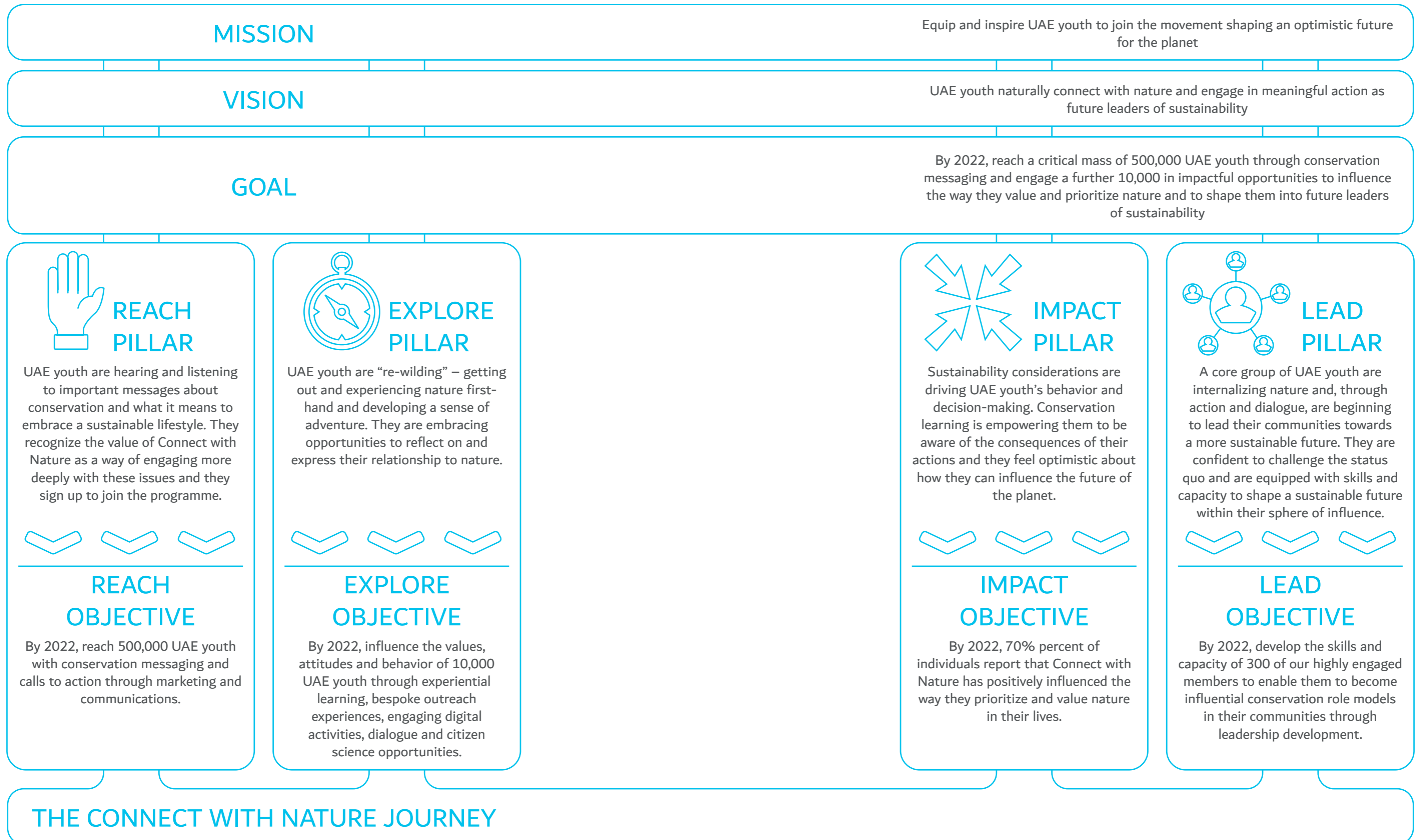


Figure 1. The Connect with Nature Strategy.

PROGRAMME PILLARS



1. REACH

This pillar forms the first step of the CwN journey. Raising awareness about the programme to youth across the UAE. While ensuring we are creating value for youth every step of the way.

AN ENGAGING DIGITAL APP AND WEBSITE

acts as an interactive hub to engage the community in learning and outreach experiences.

A BRAND THAT APPEALS TO YOUTH

has been created based on focus group insights from youth, a 'for youth, by youth' approach is implemented across marketing and communications to acquire and retain the community.

FOCUS ON PR AND EVENTS

we are staying top of mind through features across media outlets, and spokespeople participation at key events and through school and university visits.

SOCIAL FIRST

we keep in touch with our community through active and always-on social media, emailers and dedicated whatsapp groups.

2. EXPLORE

UAE youth are "re-wilding" through the explore pillar— getting out and experiencing nature first-hand, developing their emotional and intellectual connections with nature and fostering a sense of adventure. **They are embracing opportunities to reflect upon and express their relationship to nature through these core techniques:**



INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

is shared and discussed through dialogue. Youth gain self-confidence in sharing their ideas and experiences, communicate and learn to understand others and make themselves understood, and learn to appreciate differences and diversity.



PEER TO PEER LEARNING

allows youth to work collaboratively towards a common goal where they learn with and from each other about what they think, feel, and experience. The process allows them to confirm, question, and/or enrich what they know and build knowledge together.



REFLECTION

supports youth to reflect on a question or statement that allows them to re-assess their attitudes and values.



ENGAGING THE SENSES AND MINDFULNESS

to help youth connect with nature the CwN outreach activities and events draw awareness to nature across all the senses, enabling mindful connections to be made.

3. IMPACT

At this pillar, youth have engaged for a consistent length of time and across a variety of activities. The goal here is to embed sustainability elements to guide them and apply in real life, resulting in long term, behaviour change and decision-making. Conservation learning creates awareness of the consequences of their actions to feel optimistic about how they can influence the future of the planet. They take personal and collective action in order to be part of the solution.

Youth are nudged towards adopting pro-environmental focus behaviours and responsible choices are rewarded and celebrated. Through engaging hands-on citizen science experiences, youth contribute to research and data collection, whilst also learning about the environment, conservation, and sustainability. Youth use their voice and their social media platforms to inspire others and shift the social norm towards sustainability.

Citizen Science

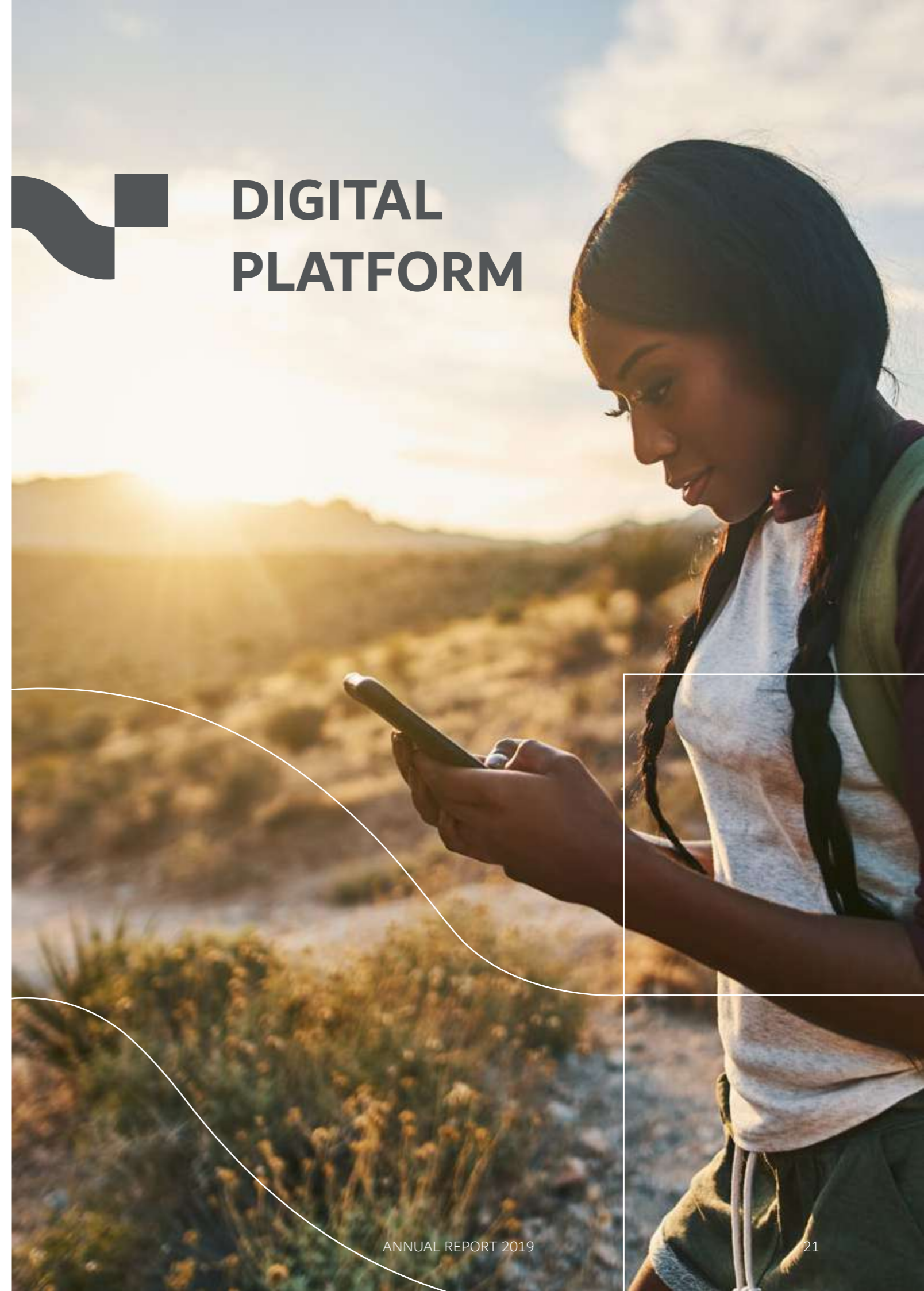
People of all ages and backgrounds can participate and contribute to real scientific research and conservation. With digital technology, people are empowered to contribute to a greater understanding of society and the natural environment. Understanding more about science can help us make better decisions in our daily lives and look after our environment responsibly.

159 people participated as 'citizen scientists' through Connect with Nature, contributing through the Clean Swell APP to EAD's 'No Single Use Plastic' policy campaign.

4. LEAD

The final pillar takes a core group of UAE youth and develop their skills and knowledge so that they are internalizing nature. Through action and dialogue, they are beginning to influence and lead their communities towards a more sustainable future. These outstanding youth are confident in challenging the status quo and are equipped with the skills and capacity to shape a sustainable future within their sphere of influence.

DIGITAL PLATFORM



CONNECT WITH NATURE (CWN) APP

The App facilitates the user's engagement with nature in an exciting and modern way. Offering youth, a new way to CwN via technology enriches the experience and fosters stronger relationships with nature by ushering youth to complete the programme. The App also helps CwN to quickly measure levels of engagement and follows users throughout the programme cycle.

The App features gamified nature locations and educational events offering users the opportunity to learn and explore UAE locations. It offers various types of challenges and badge-earning opportunities, including:

- Explore Challenges – users check-in at nature sites to earn badges.
- Scavenger hunts.
- Embarking on self-led challenges in nature that are featured on the App.
- Undertaking impact challenges that require users to take action based on behaviour change to earn a badge (i.e. bring a plastic bottle, clean up litter, etc.).



CONNECT WITH NATURE WEBSITE

The website is the primary channel for the programme, and the design is built to appeal to the target audience. A predominant feature is the 'hero carousel' focused on our three call to actions:

1. Become an Ambassador for Nature
2. Explore Nature
3. Create Impact

The homepage also displays our promotional video bringing users even closer to the programme in a visual creative way.

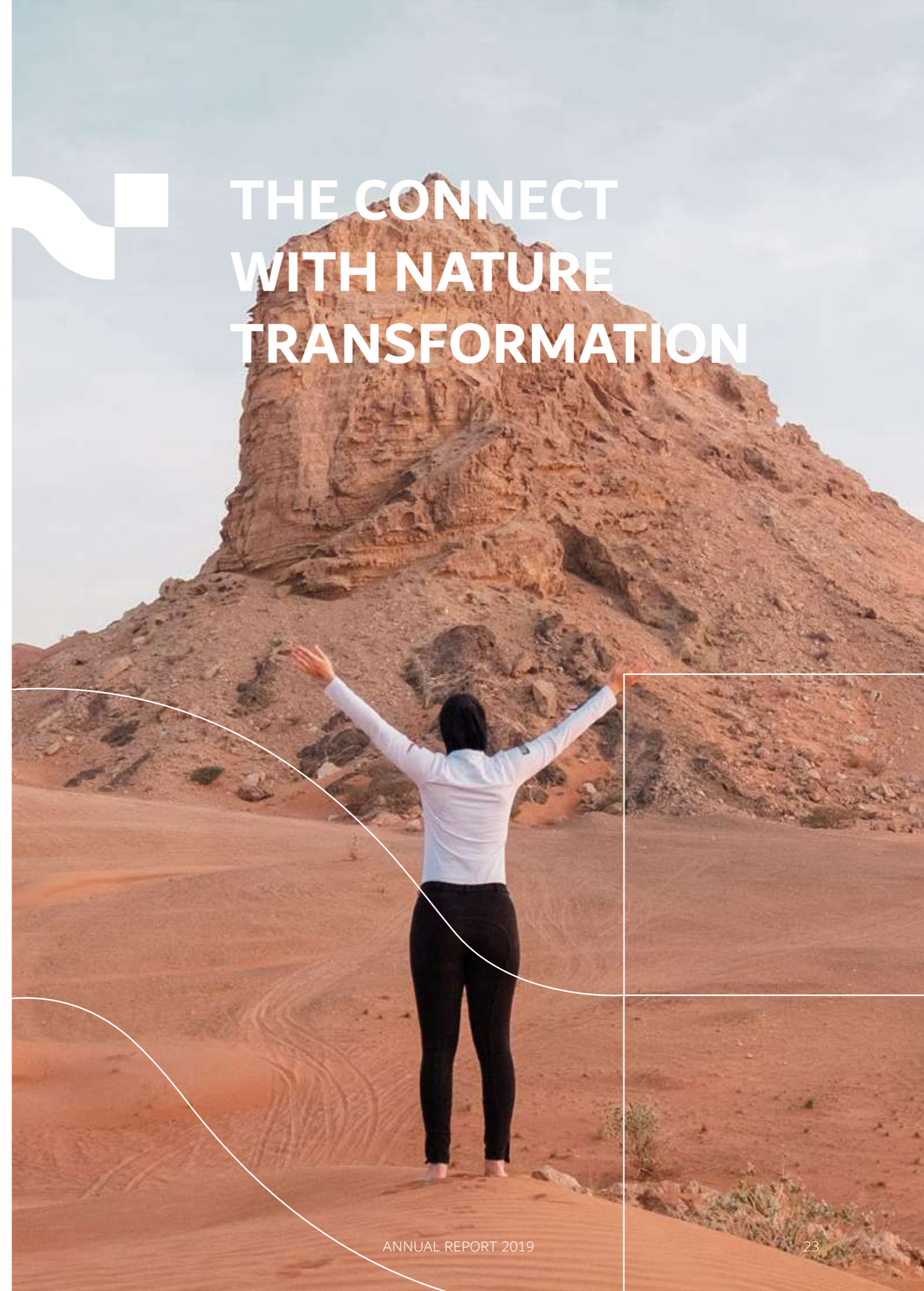
The user journey has been designed to take youth directly to the key call to actions which are to register and join the movement, get involved and download the App.

The website also offers Knowledge hub, a section offering educational articles about UAE nature.

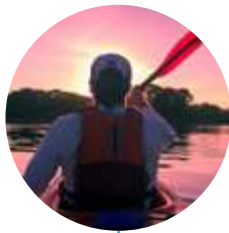
The virtual map feature for all UAE nature locations allows users an advanced search to help plan their next trip and shows the gamified locations to encourage users to participate in our mobile App nature challenges.

The website is backed up with analytical engine and CRM to help us set our goals and measure the performance as well as communicate with users on weekly basis through our newsletter and when needed to maintain strong relationship with our members.

THE CONNECT WITH NATURE TRANSFORMATION



By committing to CwN over a period of time, youth experience a transformational journey reflecting our 4 pillars:



REWILD

Explore UAE's natural heritage. Realise that nature is everywhere and fall in love with it by developing a sense of adventure through signature outreach experiences, citizen science, community workshops, curated events, field experiences, competitions and other opportunities.



RETHINK

Challenges participant's perceptions of how they fit into the natural world. Learn how much the natural world supports our survival.



BECOME THE CHANGE

Evaluate and adapt lifestyles, and reimagine participant's personal contribution to success.



LEAD THE MOVEMENT

Build participant's skills, knowledge, and confidence to lead others toward an optimistic future for our planet. This leadership development piece forms the final basis of the CwN journey by building participants' capacity to challenge the status quo and lead their communities towards a more sustainable future. This initiative occurs through bespoke internships, dialogue, multi-day field-based learning, community-based projects, and opportunities to attend global conferences and participate in international exchanges.

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS



1. REACH PILLAR

The Reach pillar is the start of the journey through CwN. This is where our audience hears about the programme and what we do through our communications and marketing, raising awareness of CwN. The target was set to reach 500,000 youth by the end of 2019, which was exceeded, through marketing and engagement mechanisms and digital communications. We reached 34,743,637+ through media publications alone, and close to 600,000 youth based in the UAE, with interest in nature and the environment, through paid social – with more than 34,000 youth who engaged with our content on social media.

MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

CwN's official launch took place in January 2019, key marketing engagements included:

- Community launch event hosted at Ripe Market in Abu Dhabi.
- Government and stakeholder launch hosted at Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week which included VIP briefings with key stakeholders.
- App version 1.0 was launched to test features and provide initial access to the knowledge hub, conservation locations, and the CwN event schedule.
- Media liaison through two press releases, interviews with spokespeople, and invitations to above mentioned events. The launch resulted in **30 pieces of coverage** in tier A publications including Al Ittihad, Al Bayan, The National, Gulf News, WAM, Abu Dhabi TV and Dubai Eye.

To mark the new CwN season post-summer, an inspirational campaign 'Rewild, Rethink, Become the Change' was launched on Arab Environment Day, 14 October, which entailed:

- Refreshed brand "look and feel"/ personality across all communications touchpoints and channels (website, social media, newsletters, etc), aligned with focus group insights from youth.
- Media announcement and interviews focusing on a research conducted in collaboration with YouGov to assess UAE youth's perceptions towards nature. The research added regional centric insights and was picked up by top publications including The National, Dubai One TV, Gulf News and Time Out Dubai.
- Brand new [promo video](#) was revealed and seen by close to **60,000 individuals**.
- Official launch of App version 2.0 – over the course of the year we acquired **1740 new App users**.
- Weekly newsletters and updates to our youth community commenced, and we managed to **grow our database to 5,734** of interested and engaged members over the course of the year.

20 for '20 UAE Ambassadors for Nature Acquisition Campaign

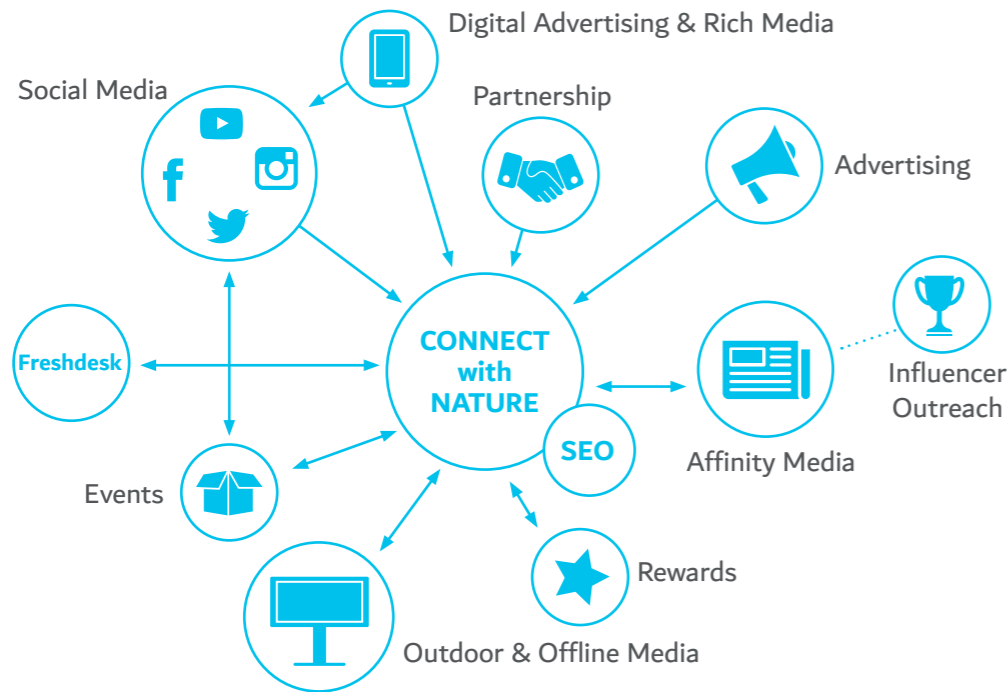
In mid-January 2020 CwN launched a nation-wide campaign to commence our search for the first 20 Ambassadors for Nature. The '20 for '20: UAE Ambassadors for Nature campaign' is aimed at providing 20 environmental advocates with the opportunity to access mentorship, skills-building opportunities and nurturing to become UAE's next environmental leaders. The campaign asked candidates to download the CwN App and earn a minimum of 10 badges for eligibility for the honourable 'Ambassador for Nature' title. The effort saw a dramatic spike in participation and interest from youth – key highlights of the campaign to date include:

- Launch of campaign at Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2020 and Middle East Youth Expo involved youth engagement through a keynote speech, workshops and dialogues.
- Media announcement and interviews with spokespeople, generated pick up in top tier media publications and got us front page coverage and broadcast reach.
- Social media dedicated ad campaign reached over **170,000 unique individuals**, using a manifesto video ([English – Arabic](#)) created for the campaign, as well as a [call to action video](#) featuring influencers and highly active community members.
- **250% increase in App** retention through the campaign to date – with the launch of the campaign seeing the highest acquisition to date with **600 new users acquired in a single month**.
- Opportunity to engage with schools and universities through newsletters (sent to database of 500) and in-person presentations reached **over 900 students**.
- All Emirates Nature-WWF corporate partners, key stakeholders and youth groups received communications about the campaign, and have been provided with collaterals to involve their young employees.

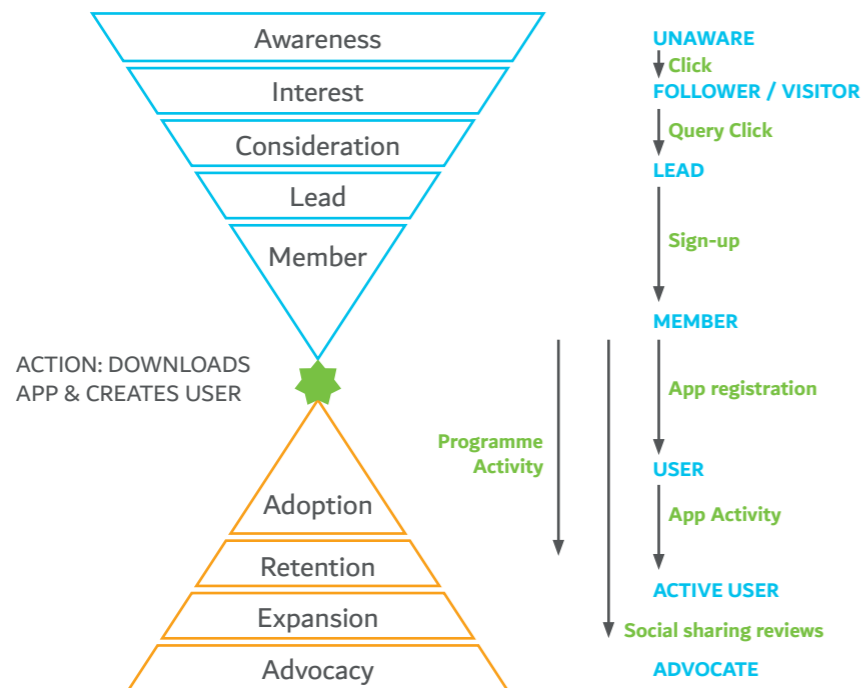


DIGITAL MARKETING

Youth are a digitally native audience, in order to better reach, engage and retain them the marketing and engagement team worked on creating a cohesive digital ecosystem in which our audience can seamlessly move from one touch point to another, with each channel designed to inspire, engage & lead our audience through the acquisition funnel.



CwN – Digital Ecosystem



CwN – Marketing Journey (Hourglass)

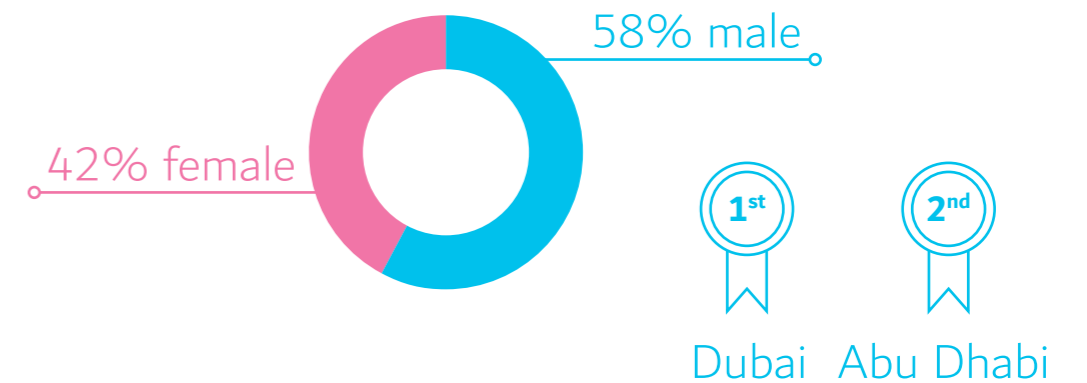
CONNECT WITH NATURE WEBSITE

At the center of our ecosystem is our website, our community hub, designed to provide visitors with all the information they need about the movement, our events and activities, as well as drive them to take action by either joining the movement or registering for our events. For the October season two launch, the website homepage and key pages were revamped with the updated messaging, and a new more fun and relatable tonality that fits our brand personality and audience.

From the official launch in January 2019, there have been over 100,000 website page views for CwN, with 34,000 unique users visiting, 5x the average for most websites.



Overall, these visitors show 58% as male and 42% female, with the most registered from Dubai, with Abu Dhabi second.



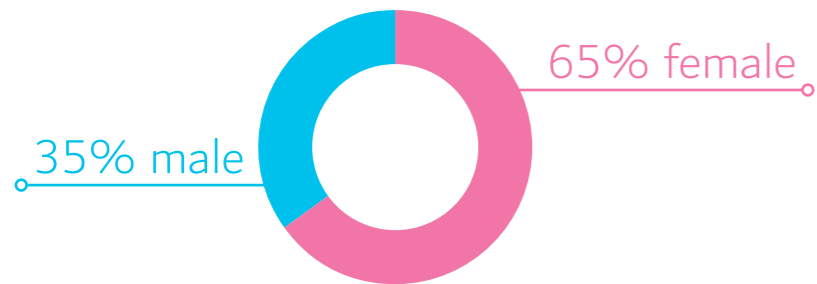
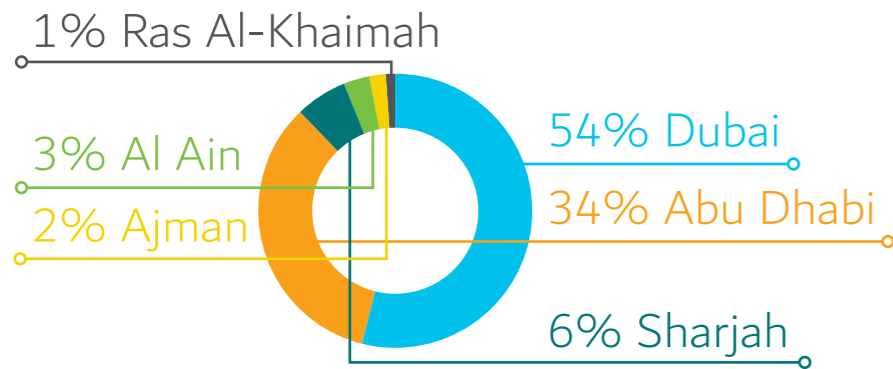
People are spending quality time on the website when they arrive, as the amount of time spent is 2 minutes 39 seconds and the global standard for a website is 2 minutes.



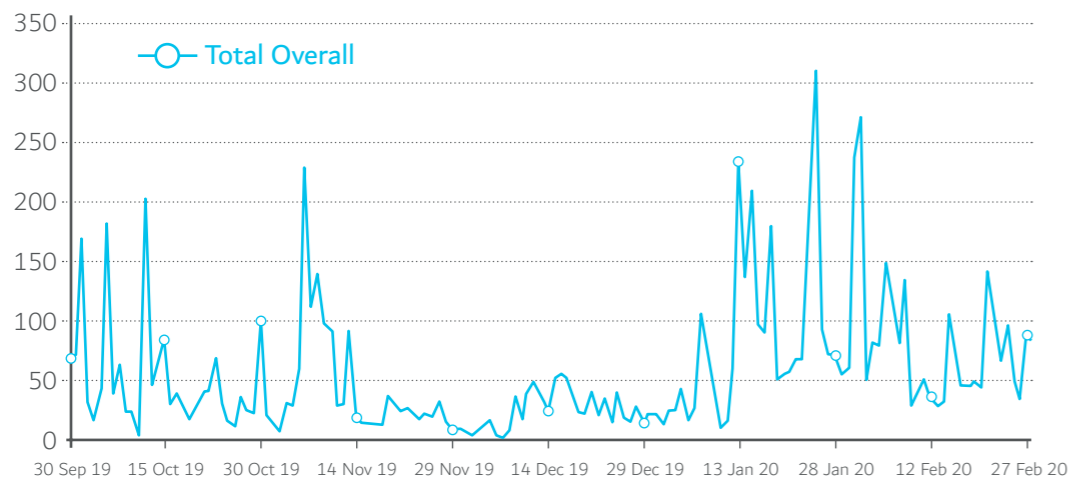
CONNECT WITH NATURE APP

The CwN App, our impact touch point, was revamped based on the results of our initial test launch, with the home-screen revamped to be more user friendly, allowing easier navigation through the different sections, with an addition of a highlights feature to drive action on our newest events and activities.

The new App was downloaded 2199 times, retaining 70% of its users, and an average of 216 people using the App on a weekly basis. Our active users spend on average 5 minutes and 32 seconds on the App every time they open it. Since October, our App users have gained a total of 640 explore badges and 298 impact badges.



CwN – App Demographics



CwN – App Usage Trends

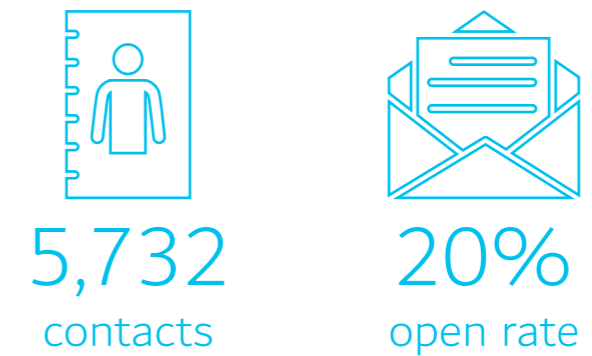
SOCIAL MEDIA

We keep our community inspired and up to date with our latest news and activities through our social media channels (3281 followers), with the majority of the ‘action’ happening on Instagram. Our community is quite engaged on Instagram, but we see the highest engagement on our CwN Whatsapp group which grew very quickly to almost 200 highly active (daily sustained activity) users by February 2020. All our social channels continue to grow organically.



EMAIL

Since launch our email database has grown to 5,732 contacts, with ongoing communication including a newsletter going out weekly promoting our activities and news. Our newsletters have an average of 20% open rate which is above industry standard (12-15%). We continue to work on cleaning the database and removing un-engaged members, and hard bounces.



Automated e-mail workflows have also been put in place to welcome new users to the community, and lead them through their CwN journey with the key objective of having them download the App. We continue to develop workflows designed to fulfill certain experience journeys as well as help increase activity attendance.

ACTIVATIONS AT HIGH FOOTFALL EVENTS

Connect with Nature: Desert Survival Escape Room

One of the most popular activations to recruit youth through is the CwN Escape Room.

The CwN Escape Room is a 10-minute experience targeting UAE youth (15-30 years old based on the CwN target audience), to give them a glimpse of CwN and solve key conservation related challenges and messages in order to escape. This self-contained, mobile escape room is a custom-built caravan, towed from one location to another to raise awareness of this innovative Education programme.



It toured the **Dubai Fitness Challenge** in Dubai Festival City before reaching **Al Hosn Festival, Al Quoz Arts Festival and the Middle East Youth Expo**. Its high demand not only stems from youth but from governmental organisations and private corporations alike willing to hire the travelling escape room for its bespoke events as well as team building and sustainability awareness-raising among their employees.

Over 2,800 people have experienced the CwN Escape Room.



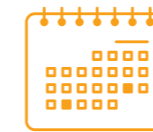
Dubai Institute of Design and Innovation (DIDI) Challenge

One recent key partnership is with the Dubai Institute of Design and Innovation (DIDI) and their Project Design Space. This initiative has been running for three consecutive years and is the largest design challenge for middle and high school students across the UAE.

This year 4,618 students, across 136 schools, enrolled in its programme to solve 'realworld' design problems for five clients, one of them being Emirates Nature-WWF.

The challenge to the DIDI Project Design Space participants is to re-design the on-line CwN "Knowledge Hub," enhancing the platform for youth to access articles and key conservation information. The participating teams have sixteen weeks to receive training and material to create five separate video design briefs about their solutions.

HIGHLIGHTS



19 citizen science events

CwN has led 19 citizen science events, including 2 citizen science workshops, 6 beach clean ups, 3 bio-blitz, 5 turtle patrols and 3 nurdle hunts.



13 talks

The team participated in talks at the Mohammed bin Zayed Majlis, Umm Al Emarat Park during Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week. UAE Youth Reacts, EAD youth circles, Masdar, The Dubai and Abu Dhabi Youth X HUB, the British Embassy, The Middle East Youth Expo, Al Serkal Avenue, Al Sidr Film Festival, Armitry University, New York university and the Higher Colleges of Technology.



7 networking events

In addition, the team attended networking events and conferences such as the UN World Data Forum, Eye on the Earth Symposium, Arabian Travel Market, EdEx Mena, GESS, DEWA's Youth Sustainability Forum, Khalifa University Community Awareness Day and 2019 WWF Education Summit in India.



2 film screenings

Presented film screenings of 'Jane' and WWF's 'Our Planet: Our Business' at Al Serkal and through Vox Cinemas for students, businesses, and the general public to raise awareness.

2. EXPLORE PILLAR

Through the Explore pillar youth move from basic awareness to taking action, progressing to the next stage of their CwN journey. Here youth sign up to the movement and attend the various outreach activities and events. It's in this section they CwN, often for the first time, and start their transformational journey.

NUMBER OF CONNECT WITH NATURE EVENTS

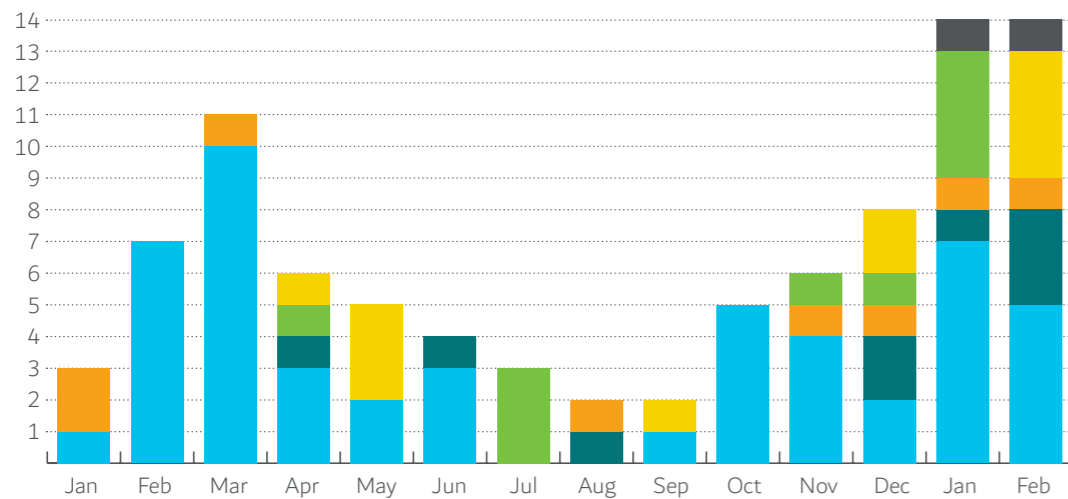


Figure 2. Total number of CwN events, January 2019 to February 2020.

Graph Legend

Paid CwN Experiences: Signature experiences designed with partner operators like Husaak, Adventurati Outdoor, etc. This can also involve paid experiences for an operator when visiting a certain facility or site (Emirates Biofarm, Captain Tony's etc.)

Free CwN Experience: An experience that does not require any payment from the participants to the operators. Although, it might include only entry fees like to a park, nature reserve, etc.

Public Speaking: Visits to schools, universities and communities to talk about the programme and any of its aspects is under public speaking.

Community Listing: Any events related to environmental conservation and/or sustainability happening in the UAE but are not managed by us.

Escape room: Our escape room activation in certain locations or on specific events.

Youth Majlis/circle: Organizing or taking part in a youth circle. It does not have to be in the federal youth authority's structure every time.

Self-guided experience: Our push to CwN community to go on their own for scavenger hunts, using toolkits, creating their own events, visiting sites.

To date, the CwN team **has organised 107 outreach experiences**, including 90 community events and a number of self-guided activities. All of these offered youth opportunities to re-wild, re-think and become the change (Figure 2).

A diverse series of methods were undertaken to engage with youth, from public speaking, to escape rooms and signature experiences in nature. Most activities came at no cost to the participants with funding coming from the programme. During the summer months, fewer events occurred as high temperatures inhibited outdoor activities and many of the community were travelling.

EXPERIENCE PARTICIPATION

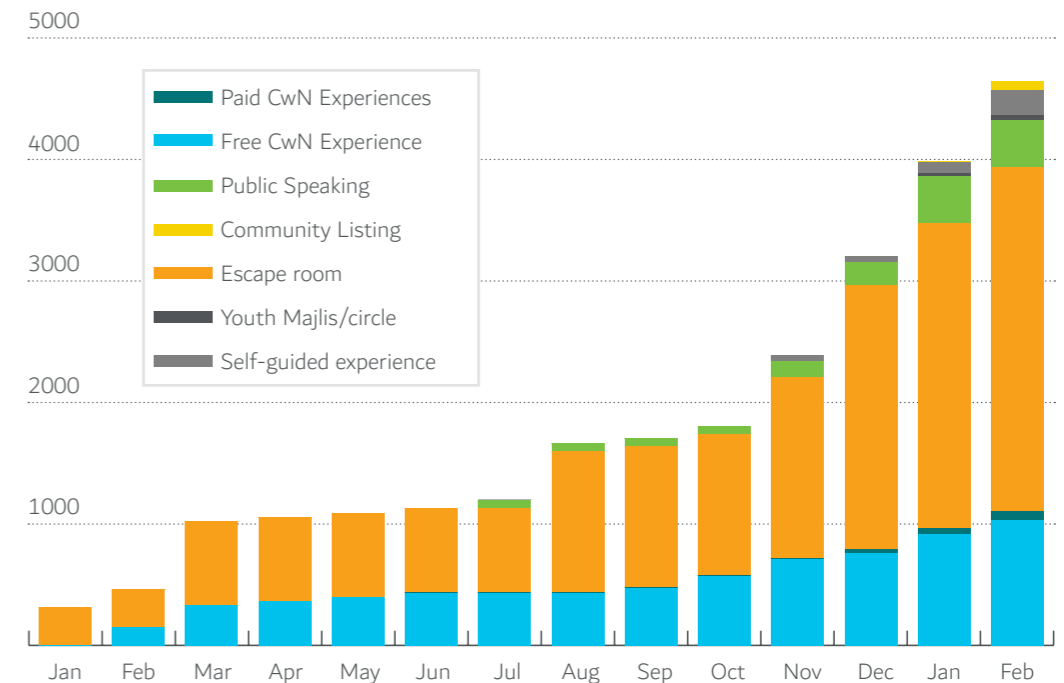


Figure 3. Total number of participations in events from January 2019 to February 2020. Participation relates to the attendance of activities

As the programme matured, and the number of activities and database increased, the participation base also expanded, reaching a total of 4,635 by the end of February 2020, including 207 through Self-Guided Challenges (see Figure 3). CwN is on target to reach the goal of 10,000 participations by April 2022.

SUMMARISED RESULTS

- Organised 107 outreach experiences
- Held 90 community events
- Youth participating 4635 times
- Contributing to over 5200 hours connecting with nature.

LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES

Figure 4 provides an overview of event locations and participation across 6 Emirates in the UAE.

Locations & Participant Total (1 Jan 2019 - 29 Feb 2020)

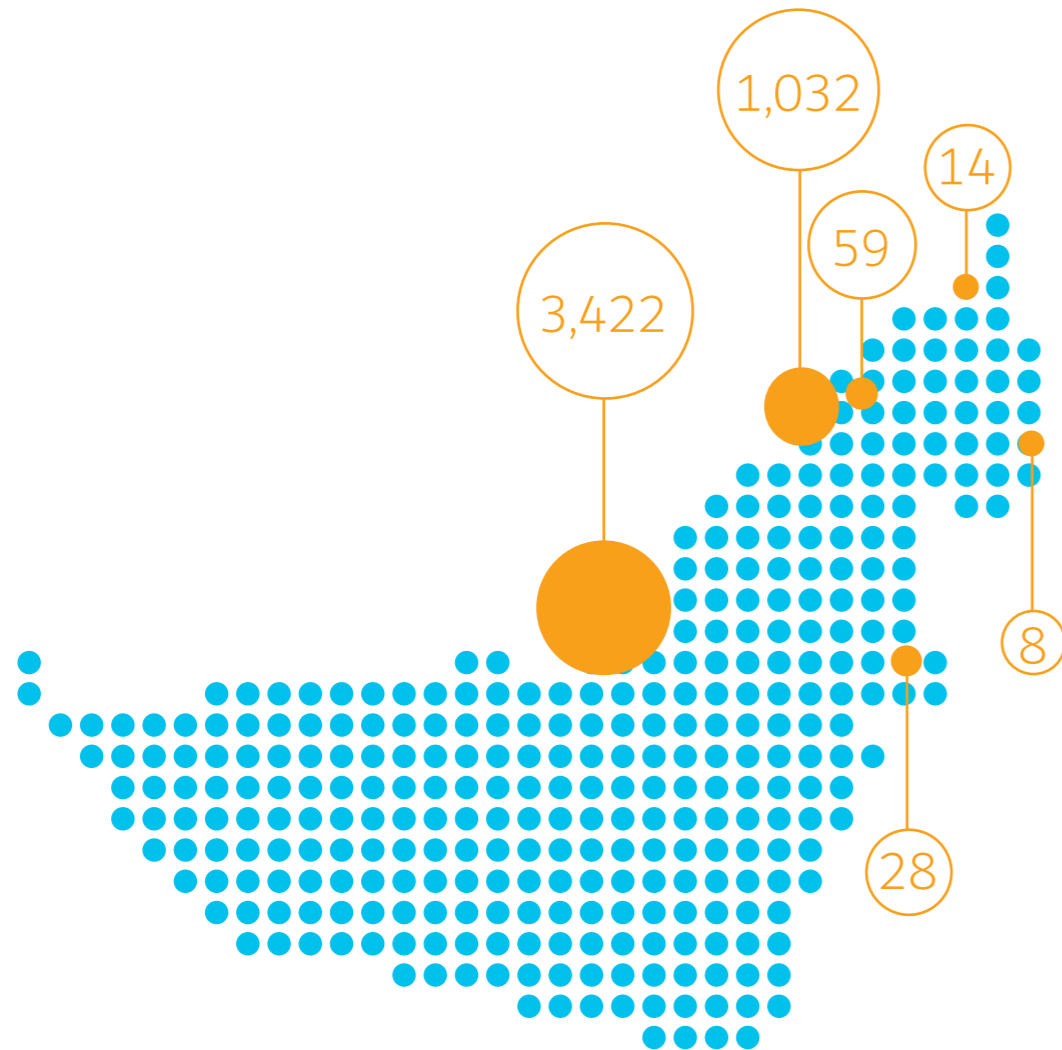


Figure 4. Event participation by Emirate.

HIGHLIGHTS



BIODIVERSITY BIO-BLITZ

Organized three bio-blitz events introducing 79 people to citizen science and recording their observations of the UAE's flora and fauna.

PROTECTED AREAS

Showcased many of the UAE's protected areas including the Al Wathba Wetland Reserve, Qasr al Sarab, Al Saadiyat Marine National Park and the Mangrove National Park.



BEACH CLEAN-UPS

We have collected 5,492 pieces (910 kgs) of marine debris over 15 km of coastline.

ESCAPE ROOM

A total of 2828 people experienced our desert and wadi themed escape rooms.



YOUTH CIRCLES

Encouraging dialogue is one of our core strategies to encourage youth to self-reflect on and re-assess their attitudes, values, views and knowledge about their relationship with the and connectedness to nature. By practicing dialogue, youth gain self-confidence in sharing their thoughts, ideas and experiences, learn to communicate and appreciate differences of opinion.

Youth circles provide an opportunity for youth to discuss challenges, solutions and have a conversation with decision makers. We have worked with the Federal Youth Authority to align to their Youth Circle standards and have participated in the EAD's Youth Circles at Umm al Emarat Park and the Middle East Youth Expo, as well as hosting our own "meet the experts" session during Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, and finally collaborating with our strategic partners the IFHC for a "Youth Now" session also at the Middle East Youth Expo.

Going forward, CwN has signed a partnership with Al Fahim to conduct four Ghaf Youth Majlis sessions in 2020.

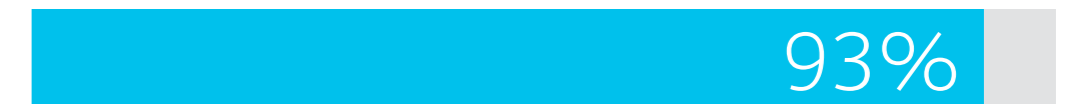


3. IMPACT PILLAR

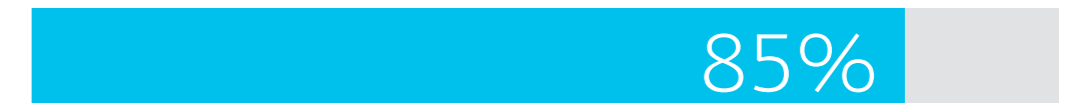
After each CwN experience youth were asked to complete a survey, to gauge how they felt the experience went and how the experience has impacted them. After each CwN event, youth were asked to gauge their interest and experience.

SURVEY DATA

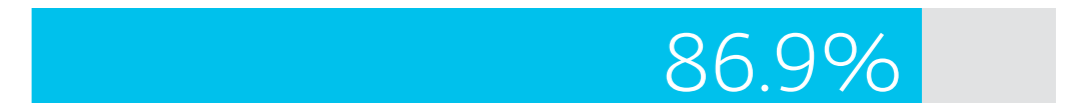
93% OF OUR PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY WOULD PROMOTE OUR EXPERIENCES TO THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY



85% OF PARTICIPANTS REPORTED THAT THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT HAS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED

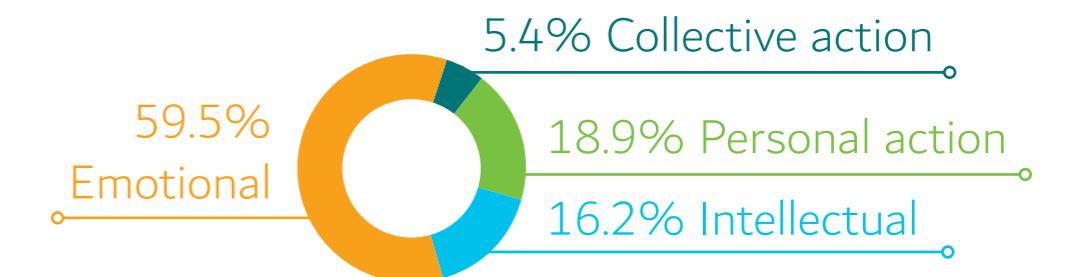


OUR PARTICIPANTS SCORE AN AVERAGE OF 86.9% ON THE NATURE CONNECTEDNESS INDEX



While monitoring behaviour change can be challenging, a stronger emotional connection is an indicator that the programme is influencing participants' values and allegiance to the natural world.

WHEN ASKED IN WHAT WAY THEIR CWN EXPERIENCE HELPED THEM CWN, OVER 50% OF INDIVIDUALS CHOSE 'EMOTIONAL CONNECTION'



BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Our experiences are distinct from other eco-tourism and educational offerings in that they put a lot of emphasis on behaviour change and personal growth.

The most common changes reported in our survey were that being a part of CwN has caused them to:

NOTICE NATURE AROUND THEM

“Now I see how much nature can be found anywhere”

CHOOSE TO SPEND TIME IN NATURE

“It’s allowed me to plan for more outdoor activities that have more impact not only within but with others”

MAKE MORE SUSTAINABLE CHOICES

“It made me proud of my sustainable choices such as having my own grocery bag and reuse my own mug while enjoying any beverage”

ENCOURAGE OTHERS IN THEIR JOURNEY

“I have started a movement at my school to limit plastic water bottle use.”

Through our App and its gamified challenges, we incentivise youth to demonstrate pro-environmental behaviours. This includes choosing plant-based meals, taking part in citizen science, ride-sharing and most successfully, eliminating single-use plastic and removing it from nature. **We have awarded the following independent actions:**



Bring a reusable water bottle to an event
X 86 badges awarded



Removing litter from nature
X 44 badges awarded



Replacing disposable plastic items with alternatives e.g. bamboo toothbrush, silicon zip lock bag
X 32 badges awarded

TESTIMONIALS

“Every time I join for an activity, I learn something new and meet new people that I learn from, their sustainable lifestyle and encourages me to do more for nature not just enjoy it as well as protect. It is always blissful to be in such a community.”



AEESHA, 25- 30YRS, FEMALE, EMIRATI



“I believe that being a part of this movement has made me more determined to conserve our planet.”

DENICE, 18-24YRS, FEMALE

“I’ve become more conscious than before for taking care of nature. It’s been quite wonderful and I’ve already got an opportunity to know about mangroves and look forward to gaining more knowledge.”



HARSH, 15-18YRS, MALE

4. LEAD PILLAR – AMBASSADORS FOR NATURE

In response to the growing demand from the CwN movement, the leadership programme will be launched in June 2020, to offer exceptional young people the opportunity to play a significant role in delivering and shaping a sustainable future for the UAE.

The first year is a pilot, with the aim to take the 20 selected individuals from the UAE Nature Ambassadors campaign and enable them to become changemakers and leaders of sustainability for tomorrow. These individuals have progressed through our successful CwN programme and demonstrated exceptional ambition to do more. Selected by our esteemed panel of judges, the final 20 will be enrolled in the programme to become the first UAE Leaders 'Connected to Nature'.

By 2021 these leaders will use their experience to promote the programme and promote others to join them, opening the Leadership programme to all members of CwN. We expect by 2021 to have secured 100 places more and by 2022 to have reached our 300 goal.

The programme will create opportunities to develop lifelong learning skills for career success and future leadership roles. Youth will engage in structured learning experiences that empowers them with:

- the knowledge of environmental concerns
- the skills to design solutions collaboratively
- analyse and propose solutions to issues
- design and implement change-oriented projects that contribute to sustainability.

The aim of the Leadership programme is to **prepare youth in the UAE to become global leaders of sustainability.**



CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED



OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

1 INITIAL ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES

At the start of the year, although registrations for events were high, actual attendance was difficult to predict and often low.

2 TARGET AUDIENCE'S LIMITED DISPOSABLE INCOME

It became clear that the youth demographic does not have the disposable income to pay the market rate in attending nature events with eco-tourism partners.

3 TRANSPORT

Many in the target age group for CwN do not drive, and as a result, are limited by transport options.

4 NEED FOR CONSISTENT MESSAGING FROM ECOTOURISM VENDORS

When working with eco-tourism vendors, the CwN brand experience could sometimes become diluted.

5 ADDED VALUE

In the initial rollout of outreach activities, participants did not always understand the value in paying for an educational piece of the excursions.

6 INTEREST FROM OUTSIDE OF TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC

While the programme has a specific target audience demographic, there is substantial interest from those who fall outside of the 15-30-year range.

7 LIABILITY CONCERNS

There will always be an element of risk when venturing outdoors and visiting nature sites. Ensuring that the programme and organisation do not face liability issues has been at the forefront of concerns since the start of the programme.

SOLUTIONS:

- Following up with registered participants via emails and WhatsApp increased attendance and the ability to predict numbers.
- Increasing the number of free or affordable “grass-roots” style activities organised directly by the CwN outreach staff and to reduce costs, promoting car-pooling options as a transport and climate-friendly solution for participants.
- Marketing the more expensive trips (AED 300+) to show the exclusive and unique nature of these opportunities.
- The outreach team now delivers most of the experiences themselves, ensuring continuity in brand and messaging. Workshops delivered with all vendors to ensure consistency in messaging and brand promotion.
- The team does welcome all ages although priorities are always given to the target age range. Where appropriate the team advises when some experiences are not suitable for children. Only those within the age range are eligible for the leadership element of the programme.
- The team has worked with lawyers and the Operations Unit to secure the appropriate legal protection. Liability releases are included in the sign-up forms and all new members sign a liability release form. The team also conducted a risk assessment and mitigation workshop and created a “Connect with Nature Minors and Vulnerable Persons Safeguarding and Protection Policy.”



COMMUNICATIONS

1 LACK OF ACTIVITIES IN ARABIC

While the initial strategy prioritised both English and Arabic, during organised youth focus groups over the summer, gave a preference to English as the preferred language. The outreach team focussed on building English activities first with Arabic to follow.

2 CREATING A BRAND THAT RESONATES WITH TODAY'S YOUTH

We identified during the focus groups that the brand look and feel and personality did not resonate as well as hoped with today's younger generation and needed an update.

3 GETTING PR TRACTION

Initially there was not a dedicated PR agency on board to launch the programme and instead stakeholder agencies were relied upon, which often led to a disjointed approach. While this ensured good traction with corporate media outlets, there was less pick up with youth-oriented lifestyle and digital press.

SOLUTIONS:

- A priority has been given to hiring individuals with Arabic expertise who are part of the target audience demographic to give the programme a 'by youth, for youth' perspective. Communication with the CwN community alternates between English or Arabic when required and event activations are also conducted in Arabic if participants are native speakers. Content is created in Arabic where possible and all press engagements are bi-lingual.
- A new brand look and feel and personality was created, following several focus groups with youth from across three Emirates, we were able to pinpoint how to position our brand so that our values reflect those of today's youth.
- A PR agency was brought on board to handle the relaunch of the programme at the end of 2019 – with a focus on both youth and corporate media.

DIGITAL

1 PROGRESS TRACKING

Technical limitations within the App's coding made it challenging to oversee the progress of individuals through the programme during the first half of 2019.

2 TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

While the team could track the number of participants at each event, it has been difficult to assess how many unique individuals this represents in total for the year (i.e. which people attended one versus multiple events).

3 REVISED APP GAMIFICATION

The original vision for gamification was quite complex and did not fully meet the needs of the programme's learning and transformation requirements.

4 ARABIC INTEGRATION OF APP AND WEBSITE

As described above, the focus groups chose English as the preferred language to communicate in. Therefore, the marketing and outreach team focused efforts on establishing the English template for the website and App.

5 BOOKING SYSTEM ISSUES

Some of the signature experiences delivered by CwN required individuals to book through a third-party website. There were several issues with integrating our digital platforms and these booking systems including interrupted user experience, unable to track users once they leave the CwN website, activities on third-party websites could offer variations and differ in value, no visibility on those who have registered prior to the event and no control on data captured through third party website.

SOLUTIONS:

- Outreach offerings have been adjusted or designed around the existing technology. For example, A QR code was created for each experience, and participants scan this to earn their badge in the App.
- The App was adapted to be more efficient as a progress tracker tool and the gamification elements were simplified for ease of use. The concept of gamification was adapted to become more of a learning journey/ progress tracker than a traditional game.
- Utilize large events to promote the App and Website (i.e. – WFES, Mother of the Nation, Middle East Youth Expo, Al Quoz Arts Fest etc.)
- Launched the 'Ambassador's 20 for '20 campaign' to drive traffic to the App and website.
- Translation will start with the website in 2020 and the App in 2021.

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, the team followed UAE protocol that advised cancelling group activities in March and April 2020. All activities were then moved to virtual platforms, with the team creating new and engaging ways for youth to connect with nature including, virtual youth circles, debates, challenges and exercise programmes.

SOLUTIONS:

- Establishing creative solo, self-led challenges on the App to earn badges. For example, the team will be awarding badges for photos of Ghaf trees or Google-based surveys.
- To continue delivering an exciting line-up of experiences, the team created a calendar of virtual and #StayHome activities.

2020 AND BEYOND



Our future plans include:

REACH

- Grow our existing membership base through campaigns, school engagements and utilising our network of youth.
- Use the announcement of our successful 20 Ambassadors to generate media and PR interest around CwN on 5th June, World Environment Day.
- Post this announcement continued engagement by creating content around the winners, profiling them and following their journey through the Leadership programme.
- Produce a strategy to engage schools with CwN and the App.

EXPLORE

- Maintain and develop momentum with an exciting and diverse range of experiences and badge earning opportunities, focus on more indoor activities and self-guided challenges over the summer months.

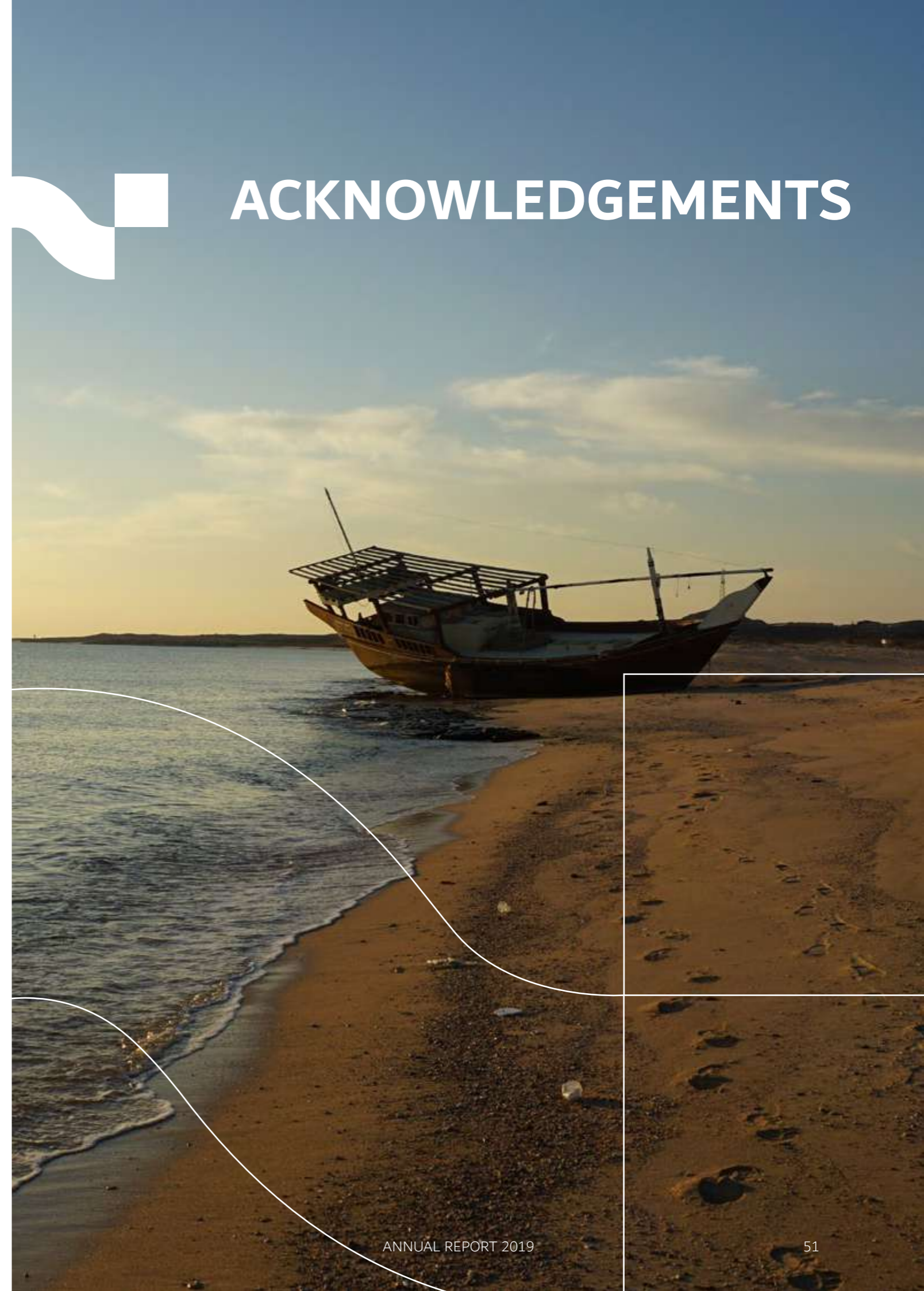
IMPACT

- Continue to nurture existing members to continue moving forward with their journey (i.e. newsletter, social content, etc.) and continue qualifying new people for the leadership programme 2021.
- Through our eco-tourism vendors, we will continue to look at offering co-branded signature experiences, with a particular focus on corporate/organisational employees.
- Through this partnership the CwN team will deliver in-situ training to embed sustainable tourism principles and values.

LEAD

- Launch and roll out the Leadership programme pilot with 20 Ambassadors in 2020
- Build partnerships to provide funding, with a view to open this up to more youth in 2021 and beyond.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all our esteemed partners and sponsors to create the CwN programme allowing us to inspire, motivate and enable youth to be part of the solution to change the world.

Co-founding Partner

The Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD)

Strategic Partner

The International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC)

Sponsors

Dubai Water and Electricity Authority (DEWA)

Husaak

Pico International

Technology Partner

IQ Data

Annalect

Prototype

The Gamifiers

Delivery Partners

Abu Dhabi Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition (ADIHEX)

Adventurati Outdoors

Al Mahara

Annalect, an Omnicom Media Group Company

Bon Education

Dubai Institute of Design and Innovation

Dubai Tourism

Emirates Bio Farm

The Hanging House

Hamad Al Jawdar

IQ Wifi

Jumeirah Saadiyat Island Resort

Ministry of Community Development (MOCD)

Mleiha Archeological Center

Mother of the Nation Festival (MOTN)

Noukhada Adventure Company

Paws Trails

Prototype Interactive

Ripe Markets

SeaHawk

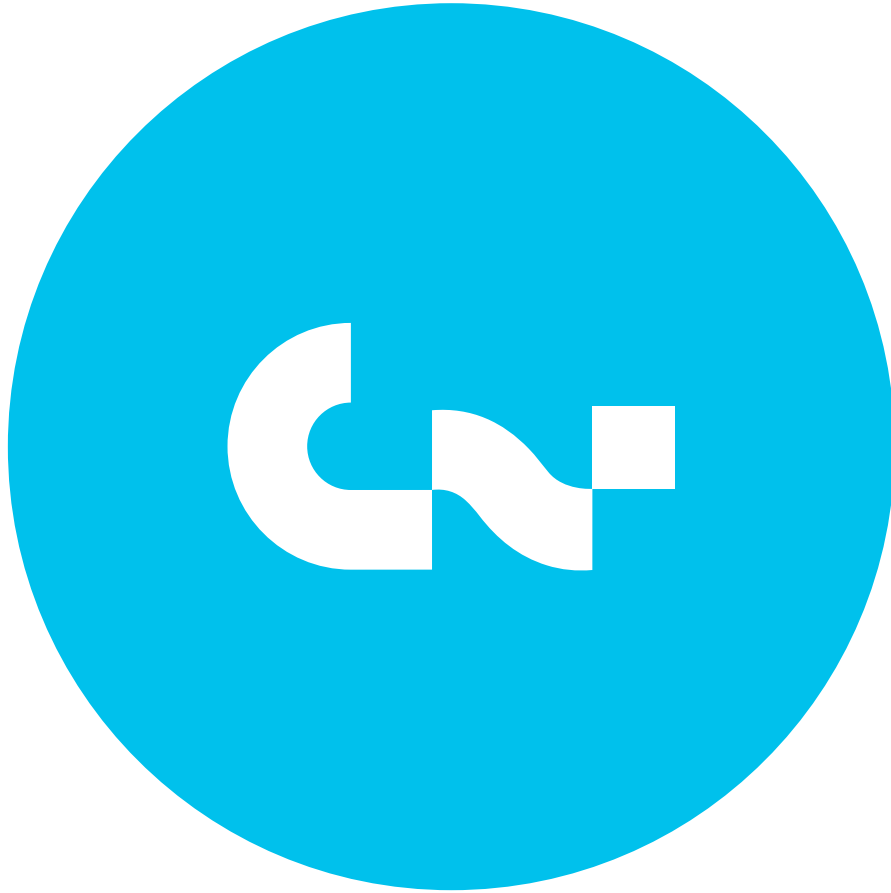
TOH Public Relations

Umm al Emarat Park

VOX Cinemas

World Future Energy Summit (WFES)





Emirates Nature-WWF is a non-profit organisation established to drive positive change in the United Arab Emirates to conserve the nation's natural heritage. Established in 2001 under the generous patronage of H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Ruler's Representative in the Al Dhafra Region, we work with partners to devise policies, educate communities and implement conservation solutions to ensure the future health of the Earth, its ecosystems and inhabitants. We are part of the global WWF network, which has a 50-year legacy of environmental conservation and is supported by more than five million people worldwide.

For more information about Emirates Nature-WWF, please visit emiratesnaturewwf.ae