



Connecting Cultures

Background Information

- Established in 2004, Connecting Cultures is a unique educational initiative that seeks to promote face to face dialogue with young people from the western and Arab world via short wilderness journeys in the desert of Oman. The aim of this dialogue is to celebrate cultural diversity, break down stereotypes, identify shared values and in so doing promote understanding and help reduce the polarisation of cultures.
- Based in the Sultanate of Oman, Connecting Cultures works in close partnership with the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science. The programme is formally endorsed by UNESCO, and supported by the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre, and the MBI Al Jaber Foundation. Connecting Cultures is Oman's gift to UNESCO and the UNAOC.
- Since foundation, sixteen journeys have taken place in Oman. On each journey there are 18 young people, nine from the Middle East, nine from Europe. The young people chosen are those who we feel have the potential to make a difference in society, and influence others; social status and academic ability are not important factors in participant selection.
- By taking young people into remote locations, Connecting Cultures enables focused dialogue amongst young opinion formers in an environment where there are few distractions, or doors to hide behind. Key questions discussed on a Connecting Cultures journey include;

- **How** I feel my culture is misunderstood by others; **Why** I feel my culture is misunderstood by others; **What** do we as young people think can be done to reduce cultural misunderstanding, What are the **causes of extremist behaviour** in our respective societies, and what are the **solutions?** What can I do **to make a difference** in my own community?
- Each year three Connecting Cultures journeys take place in Oman.

Key Partners of Connecting Cultures



*Diwan of Royal Court
Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science*



MBI AL JABER
Foundation

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