

## ESCOLA DE NATUREZA (Nature School)

Environmental Education is a process that aims to raise the awareness of communities and individuals, with the objective of actively involving them in the preservation of the environment and natural resources that surrounds them, at the same time that promotes new sustainable models for the development of the communities.

The preservation of the environment depends on how present and future generations act, and on what we are willing to do to reduce the impact of our actions. Therefore, environmental education is key for the long-term sustainable coexistence of humans and nature. Integrating environmental education at the very beginning of the learning stages is crucial to instill environmental awareness that will transcend generations.

Thanks to its geographic location, Cabo Verde has many precious natural resources. However, those resources are limited and fragile, and are under constant pressure due to the fast development of the archipelago. On the other side, many families are dependent on those resources. In Sal Island, where the tourism industry related to nature is increasing every year, the conservation of the coastal ecosystem is crucial for the sustainability of these economic activities. It is only through the transfer of knowledge and the awareness that kids, youth and adults will understand the value of the natural resources of the Island.

Since 2015, Project Biodiversity has prioritised environmental education activities in schools, high schools, social centres and other communitarian groups. Until now, **all the activities depend on other institutions and their ability to let us use their spaces**. For many years, this has challenged our team, reducing the diversity of activities and even cancelling some of them. With the expansion of the organization, we are looking to improve our Environmental Education Programme, increasing the number of activities and its variety, and **making sure that we can reach all the kids of Sal Island as well as other community groups**.

With these objectives we will launch “Escola de Natureza” (or Nature School), **our own space that will become the heart of all educational and capacity building activities of Project Biodiversity**, and ultimately the core of our annual Environmental Educational Programme. It will also welcome activities from other organisations that are in line with our philosophy and objectives.

This new hub of environmental education will allow us to increase the range of activities and the audience participating, ultimately contributing towards a society that is more conscious, aware and engaged with the environment, and that is more equipped to have and active role in conservation.

The space will be well equipped to guarantee the performance of a variety of activities of different kind, from classic theoretical lessons to fully interactive experiences. Those activities will include, but not be limited to:

- Weekly environmental education activities with kids and youth (lab experiments, virtual reality...)
- Workshops for the general public, such as recycling;
- Capacity building action for Project Biodiveristy staff, Protected Areas guards, fisherman (Guardians of the Sea Progamme), tour-guides and other professional groups with links to nature;
- Film/documentary passes;
- Other activities planned accordingly to the annual Educational Programme and the rest of the projects of the association.



The beneficiaries of the school will be the kids of Sal Island, with up to 1.000 children from 6 to 18 years old participating in the activities. Besides them, capacity building initiatives will target other communitarian groups such as 1) tour-guides and excursion providers through Best-practices training on nature activities; 2) fishermen of Sal island through their associations; and 3) Protected Areas staff, City Hall, and other local institutions.

Overall, all the population of Sal will be benefitted thanks to the transfer of knowledge and through the improvement of tourism with better prepared tour-guides and new eco-tourism initiatives.