

Sea the world through Senyar's eyes



By Hussain Al-Qatari

Senyar environment group is a voluntary work organization that is concerned with marine environmental issues and projects. It was established in 2004, and is chaired by Hussain Al-Qallaf. The word Senyar is an old word used by Kuwait's seafaring people. It is the name of any group of ships that sail through the ocean as a team on their travels. The duties of the ships in a Senyar is to work together in sync to ensure that they reach their destinations and sail back home safely.

Q: What about Senyar today?

A: Today, we at Senyar find it our duty to advocate for the co-existence of man and nature. To achieve this co-existence, we have to be like the Senyar ships of the olden days, in sync and harmony with nature and our surrounding environment. We believe that only by doing this we will be able to improve the quality of our life. We, the members of Senyar team think that it is our obligation today to salvage the damage done onto the environment by man.

Q: What are some of the achievements of Senyar?

A: We have numerous achievements to date, thanks to God and to the strong will of our team members and volunteers. For example, we lifted many sunken boats. This reduces the damage done by these foreign objects to underwater life, especially since many of them contain fuel which destroys the lives of many creatures. This also helps return these damaged boats to their owners, giving them a chance to fix them if possible or recycle them if not. We have also lifted many fishing nets that were dumped into the ocean due to accidents. These nets suffocate coral reefs, which disturbs the balance of marine life. We

also built numerous underwater farms to balance the disturbed water life. Our team was also responsible for carrying out several campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of sea creatures and the necessity of treating the ocean carefully since it is a vital part of our life, culture and history. We gave several lectures in schools and education institutes to raise the students' awareness about this subject matter. We have also managed and participated in the rescue operation of a trapped shark whale at the Marina Crescent boat dock last year. We also had a notable role in solving the recent Mishref sewage problem, which attracted the attention of local and regional news media. One of our very recent projects concerns the life of sea turtles. It is a joint project with Total Foundation from France, Kuwait's Scientific Center, and the Kuwait Voluntary Work Center. The aim of our project is to protect these sea creatures from extinction.

Q: What are the goals of Senyar?

A: There are quite a lot of goals; we are very ambitious. The most important is to protect the marine environment. We also aim to let as many volunteers as possible volunteer to

A tete-a-tete with an environmental group concerned with marine life's preservation in Kuwait





Various images show Senyar's team at work.

work in this field. Also, we wish to have a front that would produce university graduates specialized in the field of marine life and environment. The sea is an important part of our life and culture.

Q: Education plays an important role in producing aware citizens. How do you see the status quo in Kuwait in terms of education and environment?

A: We started to give seminars in schools to raise awareness soon after the establishment of our team. We also hold beach cleaning campaigns with the participation of students very often throughout the school year. Recently, we began to work jointly with the Ministry of Education to develop courses about voluntary work in the students' curriculum, as well as establish extra curriculum environmental activities for them. We want to make it easy for the kids to participate. We also give training courses in diving and marine environment.

Q: How can the readers participate in preserving the environment, on a personal scale?

A: A person can have a substantial effect on the environment. Small things like recycling and not littering, keeping Kuwait clean are very crucial and have a very positive impact on the environment. We are a voluntary team,

and we can use all the professional help we can get in all fields. We see that people nowadays are more aware of the effects of pollution on our everyday life, but we hope for more participation. We can't say for sure that people's current attitude towards the issue is 100 percent positive; there are a lot of people who see that littering for example is still not that much of a deal. But we have hope; we see change that is significant and this keeps us hopeful.

Q: What is the role of companies and governmental bodies in supporting the team and its goals?

A: Companies have a lot to give to the environment. Whether by encouraging employees to recycle or by supporting environmental projects financially, companies can always give back to society. We currently don't have any joint projects with companies, but we welcome anyone who is willing to help in any way.

