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Pakistan

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Making the Difference

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Investing in Tomorrow's Leaders

Proteus: biodiversity data management in Pakistan

Proteus was a minor the Greek god of the sea, was interesting in his ability to transform himself to any material or animal, instantaneously! At times he could be water, other times fire, a rock, a tree, a lion, a bird...Proteus had the great ability to change his shape at will. He was also known as a type of mystic and would answer your questions if you managed to capture him.

Stepping out of the fascinating world of Greek gods, Proteus is now the name given to a federated system of databases on the world's living resources, which will deliver its services UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) launched the Proteus project at the Natural History Museum, London in early October 2003. Other partners in this project include: Premier Oil London, Premier KUFPEC Pakistan B.V., and LEAD Pakistan. This project will ensure that biodiversity data and conservation initiatives from Pakistan are fully represented in the Proteus system.

The extensive LEAD network in Pakistan will help strengthen Proteus. Besides this LEAD Pakistan has productive links with national procedures for reporting to Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) within Pakistan, having developed the first national report on biodiversity to CBD. LEAD Pakistan also has close links with both national and international environmental non-governmental organizations that will further help augment this project. The Proteus launching ceremony will be held on 15 December 2003 in Islamabad. Further details on Proteus are available at www.lead.org.pk.



How the oil industry saved the whales: Contributed by Dr M. Pervaz (LEAD Fellow-Cohort 9)

Prior to the 1800s, torches provided light, candles made from tallow and lamps, which burned oils rendered from animal fat. Because it burned with less odor and smoke than most fuels, **whale oil**, particularly oil from the nose of the sperm whale, became popular for lamp oils and candles. However, sperm oil, widely known as "spermaceti", was very expensive but it was the illuminant of choice for those rich enough to afford it. The demand for whale oil took a tremendous toll on whales, and some species were driven to the very brink of extinction.

When a clean-burning kerosene lamp invented by Michael Dietz appeared on the market in 1857, its effect on the whaling industry was immediate. Kerosene, known in those days at "Coal Oil", was easy to produce, cheap, smelled better than animal-based fuels when burned, and did not spoil on the shelf as whale oil did. The public abandoned whale oil lamps almost overnight. By 1860, at least 30 kerosene plants were in production in the United States, and whale oil was ultimately driven off the market. When sperm oil dropped to 40 cents a gallon in 1895, due to lack of demand, refined petroleum, which was very much in demand, sold for less than 7 cents a gallon.

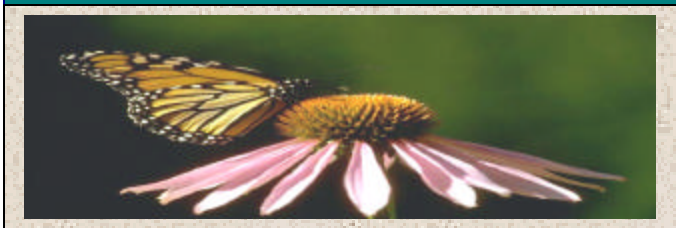
If petroleum products, such as kerosene and machine oil, had not appeared in the 1850s as alternatives to whale oil, many species of whales would have disappeared long ago. Clearly, the expanding population and economy of the 1800s, together with the development of more deadly hunting tools, would have driven the whaling industry to even greater heights than the banner year of 1856. The September 3, 1860 edition of the "California Fireside Journal" sums up the attitude of the times:

"Had it not been for the discovery of Coal Oil, the race of whales would soon have become extinct. It is estimated that ten years would have used up the whole family".

But the question is that who will save the rest of the planet from impacts of oil industry?



Developing a partnership to promote traditional medicines and herbal technology



Herbal tradition goes back to thousands of years. It actually laid the foundations for modern medicine, botany, pharmacy, aromatherapy and chemistry. Its contribution to the healing structure is simplicity, great depth, effectiveness and less cost. It is not just the knowledge about healing plants; it is the experience and wisdom from the relationship with humans and plants.

The significant contribution made by herbal medicines to human health has led to increased popular, official and commercial interest. Annual sales of herbal products were 1 billion in 1991, and in 1997 3.24 billion in the USA. The interest of herbal medicine has increased immensely in the last few years, which is great, unfortunately the herbal knowledge has not increased as rapid as the sales, meaning that there is a great number of people using herbs without the appropriate level of knowledge to use them, not only safely but effectively.

In developing countries medicinal practitioners at small workshops and factories, which may not meet WHO guidelines, are manufacturing these herbal medicines. As safety, efficacy, quality of products play a vital role in curing diseases, so herbal preparation for human use requires standardization on scientific grounds.

In Pakistan, The Hussein Ebrahim Jamal (HEJ) Research Institute of Chemistry has taken a lead in this field and signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Asian and Pacific Center for Transfer of Technology (APCTT). This partnership will promote the transfer and utilization of traditional medicines and herbal technology. HEJ Research Institute will provide the hardware and software facilities, and ensure connectivity with the relevant agencies or departments in Pakistan dealing with various aspects of traditional medicines, herbal drugs and medicinal plants'

Asian Pacific Traditional Medicine and Herbal Technology Network (APTMNET), a nodal station to promote herbal medicines, is established by United Nations in China.

Acting Director, HEJ Research Institute Prof Dr Iqbal Choudhary (LEAD Fellow, Cohort 5) will lead APTMNET in Pakistan in organizing the technological exhibitions, exchange programmes for the transfer of technology on the pattern of APCTT models.

This is a great initiative taken by Dr Choudhary due to which the reputable research institute of our country, HEJ, will join hands with the world community for the standardisation, quality control and protection of traditional knowledge.

LEAD Pakistan's Events Calendar: 2003

13 November	Board of Governors Meeting	LEAD House
28 November	A lecture on WTO by Dr. Asad Maieed, Director Foreign Office	LEAD House

Helping young people to become eco guards by Mr. Aftab Rana (LEAD Fellow, Cohort 8)

It was last year on the occasion of International Year of Mountains-2002 when this idea came to my mind to launch a program for young people who could practically involve them to interact with the mountain environment and its people to gain valuable experience to become environmentally conscious and well-awarded citizens.

I gave this project the name of **National Children Mountain Conservation Meet (NCMCM)** and organized first meet of young children under the banner of my parent organization Adventure Foundation Pakistan. One hundred children from all over the country participated and gained valuable experience. Not only for the young participants but also as a leader of this expedition it was a source of great satisfaction and achievement. Therefore it was decided that this project should be held on regular basis and each year there will be an addition of 100 to 140 young boys and girls who will get the title of Eco Guards.

The highlight of this year meet was the launching of a campaign under the title of "**Saiful Maluk Naran Pollution Control Programme**" by involving local community and Tehsil government of Balakot. Main objective of this program was to introduce a proper waste collection and disposal system on self-help basis to keep Naran and Saiful Muluk area clean and to protect River Kunhar from indiscriminate waste dumping. Installation of large size waste bins at various locations in Naran and Saiful Muluk Lake, preparation of waste-dumping site with the help FWO, which is involved in the road construction in Kaghan Valley and a clean up day celebration in Naran with participants along with the local hotel/restaurant owners and shopkeepers to remove all the waste from the bazaar of Naran town were major activities of this year.

The Closing Ceremony of the NCMC-Meet 2003 was held at Islamabad chaired by Federal Minister for Environment Maj. (R) Tahir Iqbal. The selected participant children presented their papers based on their personal study & observations during the Meet and made number of recommendations to improve the environment of our mountain area and the life of the people living in these areas.

Our partners for this meet were WWF- Pakistan, LEAD-Pakistan, NWFP Wildlife and Forest Departments, Pakistan Natural History Museum, Serendip Production and Tehsil Government Balakot.

Atom Bomb: An invention to end all inventions. 😊

Opportunist: A person who starts taking bath if he accidentally falls into a river.

Politician: One who shakes your hand before elections and your Confidence after. 😊

Criminal: A guy no different from the rest... except that he got caught.

Fellows and Associates can send us details of their achievements, job alterations, or any other news they wish to share with the LEAD Family. All contributions will be an asset to the bulletin. Write to us at: ldp@lead.org.pk