

DelPHE marine programme

University of Karachi, Chittagong University, University of Stirling and University Marine Biological Station – Millport linked to promote marine sciences under DelPHE programme

Development of Partnership in Higher Education (DelPHE) is an initiative of the Department for International Development (DFID) UK administered by the British Council to promote science and technology in the southern countries and at the same time benefit UK scientists by providing new opportunities for research and training collaboration. The objective of the DelPHE round I project is to promote biodiversity research, aquaculture and fisheries technologies. Institutional capacity and staff development is the core target of this programme. DelPHE promises to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The launching of this project in Pakistan (PK) and Bangladesh (BD) has supported the governmental initiatives to develop a national conservation strategy and reduce poverty in these countries.

A short course on aquaculture has been developed and offered at the University of Karachi. The course was organised by Dr Pirzada Jamal Siddiqui and the course leader was Anton Immink of the Stirling University. Twenty five students took the course and found it very informative. This course aimed to start formal teaching of aquaculture and it is hoped that this will lead to a full course at MS level in the future. Pakistan is a coastal country and yet marine aquaculture is non-existent at commercial levels. The government of Pakistan has initiated a new mega project and the objectives of the DelPHE project will support the development of this very important technology in Pakistan by

producing trained manpower.

A one day seminar on biodiversity and aquaculture launched the programme's activities in BD. The seminar was inaugurated by the Commissioner of Cox's Bazar and Dr Jamal Siddiqui (PK), Anton Immink (UK) and Dr Maruf Hossain (BD) were among scientists who presented papers with reference to PK and BD. Three other PK staff attended and delivered the papers in the seminar. The seminar was followed by a short training on shrimp hatchery technology for PK scientists. PK and BD staff and students visited shrimp hatcheries and a shrimp processing plant at Cox's Bazaar where more than 60 hatcheries are in operation.

Launching of the DelPHE project in PK was planned in May 2007 but had to be postponed due to a security situation in Karachi. It was subsequently organized in November 2007. Dr Rupert Ormond, Anton Immink and Dr Maruf Hossain also attended the one day seminar and spoke on the issues of biodiversity and aquaculture. A total of 12 papers were presented on the topic. The seminar was followed by the training of BD and PK students in plankton collection and assessment techniques and underwater biodiversity assessment methods. The courses were led by Dr Jamal Siddiqui and Dr Rupert Ormond, respectively.



St. Martin's coral biodiversity and its associated fish fauna conservation are the main aims of BD in this DelPHE partnership. An expedition of scientist and students to St Martin's island took place 3-11 January 2008. The team included of Dr Rupert Ormond (UK), Dr Pirzada Jamal Siddique (PK) and Dr Maruf Hossain (BD). In addition five graduate students (BD) also attended the expedition.

The five day survey around the island revealed 34 hard corals and 6 soft coral species and a number of coral reef related fish species. Similarly, coral research continues in PK as a follow on from a previous HE Link with UMBSM. An M.Phil. thesis has just been submitted where over 35 hard coral and other associated fauna have been described from the Pakistani coast. The best coral are at Astola Island where no significant reefs are present, but rich reef forming corals may be seen.

Shellfish link with Pakistan

A British Council- Higher Education Commission of Pakistan funded link between the Centre of Excellence in Marine Biology, University of Karachi and the Institute of Aquaculture was established in July 2007 and the first visit under the link took place in October when Dr Zarrien Ayub and Dr Ghazala Siddiqui spent 2 weeks in Stirling. Janet Brown's follow up visit to Karachi took place the week after the election there in February 2008 and the team is pictured after an inaugural lecture by Janet in front of an invited audience and students of the Centre. As can be seen from the picture, the aim of the project is to help development of shellfish aquaculture in Pakistan.

