

GLN AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



MEHJABEEN ABIDI HABIB (Pakistan) — Mehjabeen Abidi Habib is an academic researcher interested in the field of human ecology, which explores the linkages between human and natural systems. Her Ph.D. research on ecological resilience is based in Pakistan at the Government College Lahore and is linked through a fellowship with Oxford University.

She arrived at research and teaching after almost two decades of work in community development, starting her profession in the remote Karakoram mountain areas in 1986, where she worked with rural women in farming and forestry with the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme.

Following years of rural development work, she joined the UN system, first in UNICEF and later in UNDP's Global Environment Facility Pakistan.

The powerful influences that shaped her perspectives have been learning from the lives of the rural communities with whom she has continual contact, coupled with the personal mentoring of an inspired development thinker in Pakistan.

Before leaving her native country in early childhood, she acquired an enduring love of nature, which led to university degrees in the natural sciences, always geared to coming back to serve the land of her birth. With an international schooling in Jordan, Italy, the U.S. and UK, she returned to Pakistan as an adult, and was cautioned about the primitive and limiting state of affairs awaiting her. Instead, she has found enrichment and meaning in her work and life as a professional woman in a somewhat unconventional field.

Mehjabeen's first book was published by UNDP Pakistan in 2002 and is entitled *Green Pioneers*. It presents 20 stories of little-known pioneers who have achieved extraordinary works for nature and society in Pakistan. She was awarded a grant to do a lecture tour in the UK on this publication; the book is being serialized for international television. Currently, she is working on a second book on Pakistan's freshwater ecologies and the native peoples who inhabit them, intended to inspire protection for these ancient and fragile areas. Spanning the wilderness coast, desert and mountains of Pakistan, she has led research and photography field expeditions for the past three years.

She has a number of honorary involvements, including the Vice Chairmanship of LEAD International, of which she is a Fellow, and a trusteeship of an educational fund for girl's education in Pakistan. She is married to a conservationist, has two adolescent daughters, and lives in an extended family home in Lahore which occasionally serves as a half-way house to various wild animals in need of a sanctuary.