



PLANT INFORMATION CENTRE FOR NE BRAZIL

PNE is about to introduce a new approach to the organisation, exchange and delivery of information about plant biodiversity through its Information, Dissemination and Training Subprogramme (SIDT). A £1.8 million award from the UK's Department for International Development (DfID, formerly ODA) will, over the next five years, fund the creation of a Plant Information Centre for Northeast Brazil. This new initiative will be managed by Dr Everardo Sampaio of the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE) and will have three inter-dependent units.

The Plant Information Centre (CNIP), based at the UFPE, and run by Eduardo Dalcin, will:

- offer advice to PNE projects and partners about biodiversity data management;
- build a regional documentation centre to serve scientists, foresters and agronomists;
- collate and coordinate the results from PNE's projects together with existing data from the literature, collections and databases;
- disseminate information of practical value to those working with local communities;
- provide a technical information service to scientists and those agencies responsible for planning, development and conservation;
- train Brazilian scientists in the delivery and management of information.

Eduardo Dalcin, during his training visit to Kew, together with Angela Cordeiro (AS-PTA) and Dr Bob Allkin, seconded from Kew for four years as a member of SIDT staff.

Woman in Ceará State making hats from leaves of Copernicia prunifera, a local palm grown for its edible wax (used for example, in chocolate manufacture).

The Extension Unit, based in AS-PTA (an alternative agricultural development NGO in Recife) and run by Pablo Sidersky and Marcelino de Souza Lima, will:

- coordinate dissemination to PNE's priority target users in poor rural communities and to intermediary agencies who work with them;
- establish pilot projects to work directly with farmers and promote and assess their use of PNE's information;
- hold user needs and feedback workshops, to ensure the demand-led nature of the service and to multiply the benefits of PNE throughout the region;
- produce a non-technical newsletter to promote lateral communication between users.

The Information Repatriation Unit at Kew, run by the Information and Repatriation Officer, Clive Beale, will:

- repatriate information about plants of Northeast Brazil from Kew and other European institutes. This includes electronically stored data and images, and text information stored in specialist libraries and collections;
- link relevant expertise at Kew and other European institutions to the project in Brazil;
- support Brazilian visitors and staff at Kew, and accumulate and transfer

data about plants of Northeast Brazil in electronic form.

For further information about PNE's Information, Dissemination and Training Subprogramme, please contact: Dr Everardo Sampaio, UFPE, Av. Prof. Luis Freire 1000, Recife, PE, Brazil 50740-540. e-mail: esampaio@npd.ufpe.br

What is PNE?

PNE is a multidisciplinary research programme contributing to the identification and sustainable use of plant resources in Northeast Brazil. PNE combines conservation and improvement of ecosystems with positive socio-economic benefit to the local community.

PNE raises funds independently to support its activities. It is managed through the Association (APNE) by Jair Virginio, Av. Gen Martin, 1371 IPA - Bloco 7, Bonji, 50761-000 Recife, PE, Brazil. Tel/fax: + 55 (0)81 445 3008 e-mail: pne@netpe.com.br

President and Vice-President of APNE: Dr Maria Regina Barbosa from the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB) and Dr Isabel Cristina Machado from the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE).

UK participation in PNE is co-ordinated through the PNE Office in RBG Kew.

✠ A PNE project involving Dr Maria do Socorro Bona do Nascimento, EMBRAPA, Teresina, Piauí and Steve Renvoize, Kew, started in April. The main objective of the project is to prepare a manual on the 50 most widely occurring forage grasses in Piauí and Maranhão. Each species will be identified, described in non-technical language and illustrated. Additional information will be provided on ecology, geography, local names and forage value. The book is intended for use by rural people and agro-technicians.

Dr Maria P. Socorro do Nascimento and Steve Renvoize working in the Kew Herbarium.

Steve spent one month in Brazil, working with Maria do Socorro preparing vouchers and discussing the illustrations with the artist, Airton Lopez, who is curator of the herbarium at the State University in Teresina.

✠ The Kew Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place recently received Angela Cordeiro (AS-PTA) for a three month study visit to investigate the practical and environmental constraints on conserving seed at the community level. Angela's training was funded by Kew and she worked under the supervision of Dr Robin Probert and Simon Linington. Combining seed conservation theory with her local knowledge and with information from five local seed bank case studies, Angela's initial conclusions are that:

1. communities increasingly wish to use and conserve a wide range of agricultural and non-domesticated plant species;

2. there is a deficit of relevant information locally to guide the conservation of seed, especially from wild species. There is a particular need to develop low cost seed drying techniques which prolong seed life.

Angela intends to produce a technical seed management brochure for local use. Such a resource will help improve the management of seeds at community level, and contribute to better conservation of local plant genetic resources, one of the common objectives of PNE and the Millennium Seed Bank project. Her knowledge will be particularly useful to PNE projects through SIDT/AS-PTA.

Eduardo Dalcin (PNE's SIDT), Angela Cordeiro with Roger Smith, head of the Millennium Se-

(AS-PTA), Marcelino S. Lima (PNE's SIDT) Bank.

PROJECT FLORA DA BAHIA

Last year, the Conselho Superior of PNE approved the inclusion of the Projeto Flora da Bahia as part of its Biodiversity Subprogramme. The overall objective of the project is to prepare an account of the flora of Bahia in a series of published volumes.

The project is based at the State University of Feira de Santana and coordinated by Ana Maria Giulietti (UEFS), with two Assistant Coordinators: André Maurício de Carvalho (CEPLAC) and Raymond Harley (Kew). Participating institutions are: Centro de Pesquisa do Cacau (CEPLAC/CEPEC), Empresa Baiana de Desenvolvimento Agrícola (EBDA), Fundação Chapada Diamantina (FCD), Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Universidade do Estado da Bahia (UNEB), Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana (UEFS), Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia (UESB), Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz (UESC) and Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA).

Other participating institutions outside Bahia are: Centro Nacional de Pesquisa de Recursos Genéticos e Biotecnologia (CENARGEN), New York Botanical

Garden (NYBG), Universidade de São Paulo (USP) and Kew. The project initially aims to extend the collecting of material to cover the whole state of Bahia, concentrating on areas of known high biodiversity which are poorly collected, and to prepare an account of all known collections from Bahia and herbaria of participating institutions, leading to a species check-list for the state.

The second stage will include the publication of a detailed Flora of the vascular plants of Bahia in a series of volumes, vegetation maps, and priority areas for conservation. Finally there will be the publication of a book on plants of economic importance and those which are endemic or endangered.

Bahia, the largest of the nine north-eastern states, has one of the richest range of ecosystems of anywhere in Brazil, including Mata Atlântica, Restinga, Cerrado, Caatinga, various type of Dry Forest, as well as the vegetation of the Chapada Diamantina mountain range rising to over 2000 m, which has large areas

of Campo Rupestre and a rich endemic flora including many species of orchids, vellozias, bromeliads and many other interesting groups of plants such as the everlasting flowers.

The Flora of Bahia project will benefit from the support of the new PNE Plant Information Centre in Recife for managing its data and has agreed to adopt PNE data standards and methodologies both to facilitate data exchange within Northeast Brazil and to ensure the maximum dissemination of the results of the project.

Three committees have been set up, Herbaria, Field Collections and Publications. These are headed respectively by Luciano Paganucci de Queiroz (UEFS), André Amorim (UESC) and Lígia Funch (FCD).

For Ray Harley, this project is the realisation of a dream of many years. Since 1974 Kew has been collaborating with institutions in Bahia in studies on the state's flora. The next stage of the project will be to seek funding. Various organisations have expressed interest.

VISIT BY BRAZILIAN FIRST LADY IN KEW

During the Brazilian President's state visit to the UK last December, the first lady, Senhora Ruth Cardoso, visited Kew. She was received at the PNE office in the Centre for Economic Botany (CEB) by Professor Sir Ghilleen Prance, Director of Kew. Dr Cardoso was introduced to the PNE team members, Amélia Baracat, PNE's activity coordinator at Kew, Eduardo Dalcin, Clive Beale and Angela Cordeiro (AS-PTA). Dr Bob Allkin gave a presentation summarising the various aspects

Prof. Prance, receiving Senhora Cardoso in the PNE office at the Centre for Economic Botany.


of PNE. He mentioned in particular the role of AS-PTA and other participating NGOs in disseminating PNE's information to target users in rural communities and other intermediary agencies who work with them.

Soon afterwards Prof. Prance and Dr Simon Mayo conducted Senhora Cardoso to the main entrance of the building, where other aspects of Kew's work in Brazil were presented. She was introduced to Tânia R. S. Silva and

Cássio Van den Berg, doctoral students from USP working at Kew. Brian Stannard presented her with a copy of the *Flora of the Pico das Almas* volume that he edited. She also met a number of English school children, winners of the 'Brazil in the School' Awards. The first lady was given a tour of The Princess of Wales Conservatory by Nigel Taylor, Curator of Kew's Living Collections Department, before being entertained to luncheon by the Director.

Brian Stannard, Kew Herbarium, presenting the Pico das Almas volume to Sra. Cardoso.

NEWS

 The Living Pharmacy of Quatro Varas project was shortlisted among six other projects involving children by delegates in an annual global event organised by the Disney Magazine Network in co-operation with UNESCO and The Conservation Foundation. The top prize of US\$30,000 was later awarded to Quatro Varas at the Children's Summit in Paris in May.

The project operates in the largest *favela* (slum district) in Northeast Brazil. It engages street children in the cultivation of medicinal plants to provide them with a positive and constructive occupation whilst safeguarding the knowledge about herbal medicine held by older members of the community.

This project is part of a larger Programme of Living Pharmacies - a major element of PNE's Economic Botany Subprogramme - established by Prof. Francisco de Abreu Matos 15 years ago, and was the first in Brazil to provide cheap and reliable medicines to needy communities. Kew has, in collaboration with PNE, provided financial and logistic support as well as specialist skills over the last six years for

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NEWS


the Living Pharmacy Programme. A film featuring the six shortlisted projects will be shown on TV around the world. We would like to thank David Shreeve from the Conservation Foundation in London for making this possible and also congratulate all the people from Quatro Varas.


Film on PNE

Brian Earley, Alexander Productions, has recently been awarded a grant by the UK's Foreign & Commonwealth Office to make a Local Plants for Local People documentary on PNE. The film will feature places, events and key PNE people from Northeast Brazil.

After successfully completing his filming in Northeast Brazil in May, Brian spent two days in Kew filming members of the PNE Group involved with the programme. The film will be available to foreign TV/cable channels to promote UK science and its work abroad. It is also an excellent opportunity to promote PNE.

VISITS TO BRAZIL

 Sarah Edwards, MSc medical anthropology student at University College London, and previously of Kew's Computing Section, travelled to Brazil in June to visit Prof. Francisco de Abreu Matos' Living Pharmacy project. She also visited the Quatro Varas project, coordinated by Adalberto Barreto. She was gathering data for her medical anthropology dissertation.

 Denise Elliott, who is studying for a BSc Environmental Toxicology degree at Anglia College, Cambridge, has received an award to travel to Brazil and visit PNE's medicinal plant projects including Prof. Matos' Living Pharmacy project. She is also visiting the medicinal plant project of Paraíba, coordinated by Dr Fátima Agra (committee member of the PNE Association) from the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB) and the medicinal plant project in Alagoas, co-ordinated by Dr Antônio Euzébio Goulart Sant'Ana from the Federal University of Alagoas (UFAL).

✠ Dr Maria Regina Barbosa, President of the PNE Association, was invited to Kew to take part in an internal PNE workshop held by the PNE team in Kew last September.

Dr Barbosa talked about the Brazilian perception of the programme, what has been achieved so far and some of the lessons that have already been learned. Prof. Prance, Director of Kew, made the introduction followed by a presentation from Dr Simon Mayo on the history of PNE whilst Dr Bob Allkin outlined PNE's Information, Dissemination and Training Subprogramme (SIDT).

Dr Hew Prendergast, Head of the Centre for Economic Botany, rounded up by asking whether PNE could be seen as a model for collaborative interdepartmental programmes for Kew in other parts of the world.

Jair Fernandes Virginio, PNE's General Coordinator, and Clive Beale, the Information and Repatriation Officer for PNE at Kew.

✠ Jair Fernandes Virginio was appointed by the Brazilian selection board of the Plantas do Nordeste Association (APNE) as the new General Coordinator for PNE last November. Their decision was based on Jair's good knowledge of the region and his previous experience in project management and fund-raising.

provide technical support to PNE's Information, Dissemination and Training Subprogramme in Brazil as part of the British Government's bilateral aid programme. Bob views this as an exciting opportunity to join an energetic multidisciplinary team exploring the process by which biodiversity information is gathered, translated and delivered to target audiences.

✠ Clive Beale, PNE's UK Information and Data Repatriation Officer, travelled to Brazil in July to attend a project management course, run by the Department for International Development (DfID). The week long course will be attended by various PNE personnel, who will learn how to use techniques such as 'logical frameworks' (a tool used to manage and administer DfID-funded programmes) in the context of the PNE. He will also attend the National Botanical Congress in

Jair's particular skills and local expertise coincide with key areas of interest for PNE and should help further develop future projects. After completing his forestry degree at The Federal University of Parnaíba in 1986, Jair travelled through South America, after which he spent six months as a trainee with a dendroenergy

Salvador. Clive sees this trip as an invaluable opportunity to meet and work with PNE's SIDT team members, to gain a better understanding of the working of PNE/SIDT, and to see first-hand how repatriated data are being used within the programme.

✠ Dr Francisca Soares de Araújo of the Laboratório de Fitogeografia, Federal University of Ceará, Fortaleza, worked at the Kew Herbarium from 1 May to 17 July on the identification and mapping of species from the Carrasco vegetation of Northeast Brazil, on which she is an authority.

Francisca is planning further studies to establish in greater detail the composition and origin of this vegetation, which until recently had been only very poorly understood and yet shows notable species endemism. Francisca's visit was made possible through a CNPq grant allocated for the PNE project

project developed by UNDP/FAO/IBDF. His wide experience covers the elaboration of forestry management plans in Mato Grosso do Sul and the co-ordination of a Brazilian government forestry programme for the Northeast involving UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and IBAMA.

He was involved in an ecological movement in defence of the Vale do Araguaia in Mato Grosso do Sul state and of ethnic minorities such as the Baroros and Xavantes Indians in 1987 and was elected member of Conselho Estadual de Defesa do Meio Ambiente in Mato Grosso do Sul state.

In 1991 Jair was invited to be technical assessor of the Secretária de Agricultura in Pernambuco state. From 1994 he worked on a consultancy basis for the Belgo-Brazil forestry enterprise, UNDP/environmental ministry, APNE, Kew, state of Bahia, IICA and Banco do Nordeste.

Flora Xerofila do Nordeste Setentrional do Brazil, Caatingas e Carrasco, coordinated by Prof. Maria Angélica Figueiredo da UFC.

✠ Adenide Sachet is working at the PNE office once a week voluntarily. Adenide took a degree in Chemistry and completed her MSc in Environmental Science in 1997 in London. We would like to thank Adenide for her invaluable help to PNE.

Compiled by Amélia Baracat

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Please send any comments or contributions on this publication to Amélia. Articles for the next issue should reach us (on a disk or by email) no later than 30 October 1998.

Dr Maria Regina Barbosa at the opening of the Medicinal Plant Workshop, Recife funded by CNPq in December last year.

The internal PNE workshop at Kew was well attended and was considered a great success. Colleagues in Kew from a wide variety of departments not directly involved with the programme were made aware of recent achievements and progress.

✠ In May Bob Allkin joined, for the next four years, the SIDT team in Recife, Brazil. He will
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