



Natura

A quarterly magazine of WWF-Pakistan

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VOICES OF TOMORROW



EDITORIAL

"We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

This issue of *Natura, Voices of Tomorrow*, is built around that idea, but with a deeper truth at its core: young people are not just the future caretakers of nature, they are already shaping its present.

Across Pakistan, youth are redefining what conservation looks like. From cycling tracks to classrooms, and from digital platforms to riverbanks and forests, they are stepping forward as storytellers, athletes, educators, artists, activists, and practitioners of change. This issue brings together their voices; diverse, grounded, and deeply connected to the landscapes they are working to protect.

Inside these pages, you will meet young conservationists turning passion into purpose, school ambassadors discovering environmental leadership early in life, and storytellers using narrative to spark empathy and action. You will also read about youth activism in the digital age, innovative ideas for climate-positive narratives, and hands-on tools like the Indus River Dolphin education toolkit that bring conservation into classrooms through play and creativity.

Together, these stories show that conservation is not limited to one discipline or one form of action. It lives in sports, in education, in science, in storytelling, in art, and in everyday choices that shape how we relate to the natural world. *Voices of Tomorrow* is a reminder that young people are not waiting to be included in environmental conversations, they are already leading them.

As you turn these pages, we invite you to listen, reflect, and rediscover conservation through the eyes of a generation that is not only imagining change, but actively creating it.

Editorial by Shahgan Hummayoun Butt, Coordinator Communications, WWF-Pakistan.



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Editorial board

Rabia Tahir
Rab Nawaz

Editor

Shahgan Hummayoun Butt

Designer

Muhammad Ahsan Tariq

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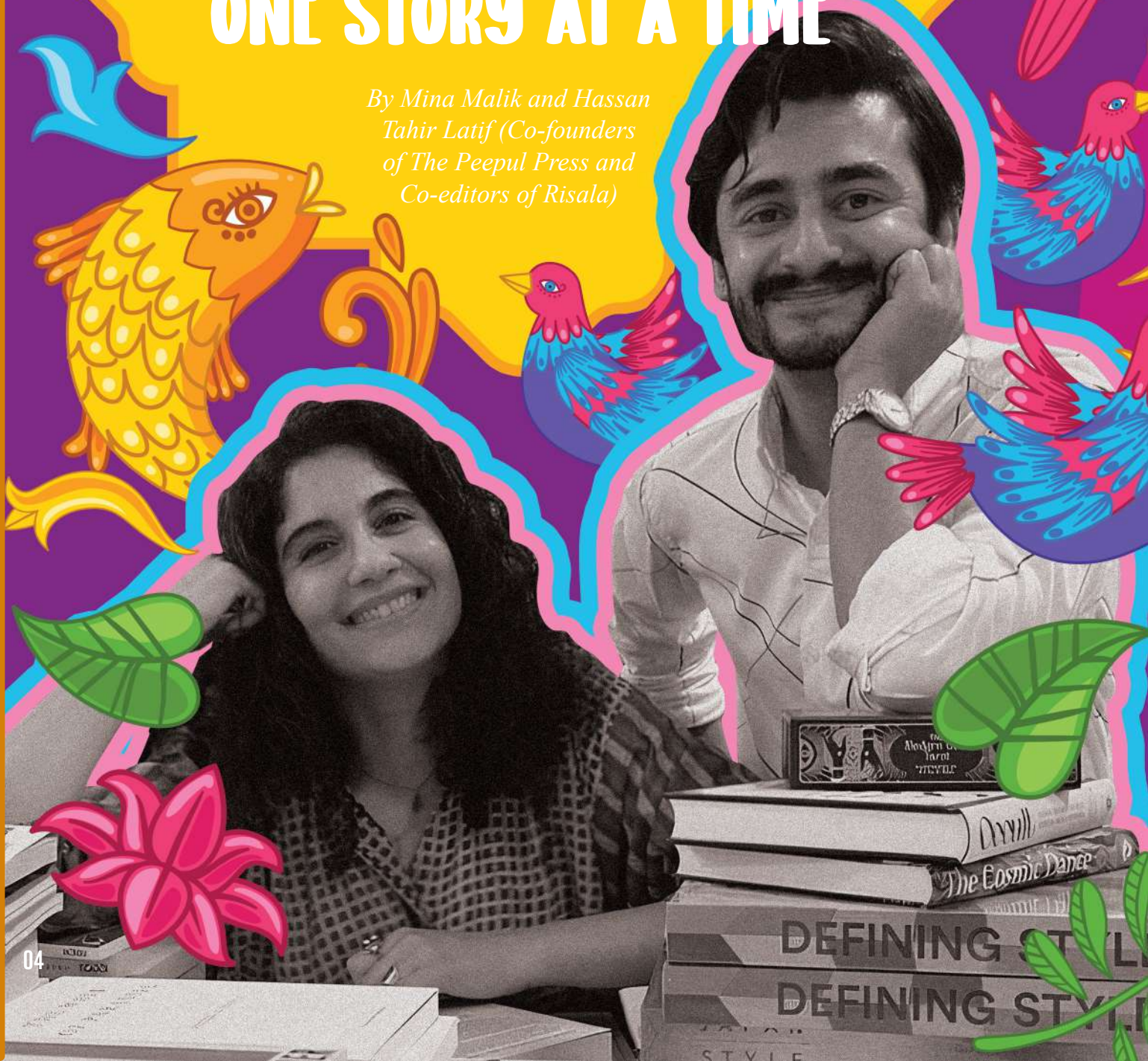
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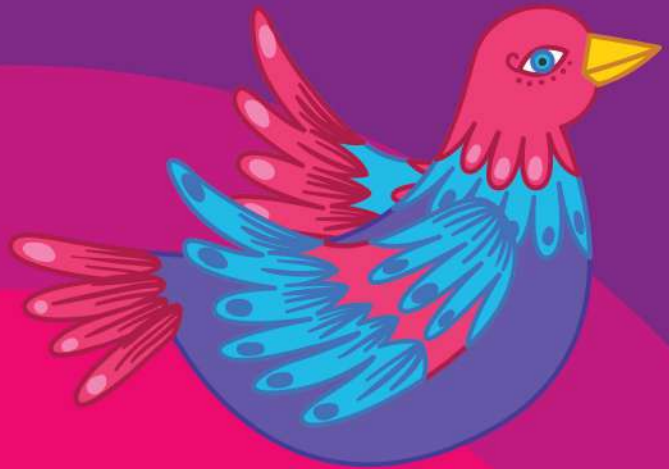
More Than Just a Safari

Syeda Aaleen Hussain, Grade 11, Lahore American School

SAVING THE WORLD ONE STORY AT A TIME

*By Mina Malik and Hassan
Tahir Latif (Co-founders
of The Peepul Press and
Co-editors of Risala)*





Picture this: a group of people sitting around a fire, some younger ones huddled close to each other for extra comfort, all listening intently, their eyes wide open with wonder, as an elder tells a story. It is night time and beyond the circle of light thrown by the fire, it is dark. The sounds of the night provide the background score to the story being told—chirping of insects, rustling of leaves high in the trees, the sighing of the wind. Above, the sky is littered with stars. They are still, not really twinkling, because there are no cities nearby, hence very little pollution interfering with the light of the stars that has travelled millions and millions of miles to get to this group of people sitting cosily around a fire.

Now, this circle can be anywhere, and in fact, at any time.

It could be taking place right now, in the middle of a field somewhere in Pakistan, as part of a camping trip; or somewhere on the savannah thousands of years ago, as part of the evening activities of our early human ancestors after a long day of hunting and gathering.

Stories and storytelling remain a cornerstone of human civilisation. Those told around fires thousands of years ago mutated into stories told around hearths inside crude dwellings; in opulent courts, with nobility in attendance; on stage, on film and television screens; and now, on handheld devices.

The campfire may have become proverbial, but our need to share stories with others—as a form of community building, of sharing knowledge, or simply as entertainment—has not diminished.



The stories that the hunter-gatherers told allowed them to better understand the natural world around them and their place in it. Through these tales they explained away phenomena, such as the movement of the stars above, the changing of the seasons, the origins of various flora and fauna; they also passed down wisdom and knowledge, such as what to hunt and how to do it, what to gather and what to avoid, allowing their future generations to continue surviving and to build upon this plethora of information by adding their own.

Eventually, many of these stories gave rise to humanity's earliest myths and belief systems.

Entire mythologies were constructed that continue to inform our contemporary narratives and influence our faiths; myriad knowledge systems stem from these stories that were told centuries ago, from ancient spiritual practices, to folklore, natural remedies and even our relationship with the world that we live in.

That is the power of storytelling. It works not merely as entertainment, but as a crucial tool to impart knowledge and propagate ideas generation after generation. These ideas may turn into superstition or be discredited, our belief systems may change, but they are records of our collective intangible cultural heritage. They are archives of our ways of being and the storytellers are the archivists.

A great tragedy of our time is that these archives are in danger. Who gets to tell the stories, who gets to record them and, more importantly, what is told—all of these decisions are beginning to be controlled by an increasingly small group of people. It is doubly worse when these people are science-deniers and actively work against the interest of nature and nature conservation. Unfortunately, this is not new.

A lot of indigenous knowledge around nature and climate was ridiculed and not deemed important by colonial authorities. Subsequently, this knowledge and ancient wisdom did not make it to textbooks and other such literature.

Fortunately, though, storytelling conserved these important ideas and ensured that they were passed down through generations, simply via word of mouth. However, the old ways of oral storytelling are threatened when younger generations are not interested in the stories of their elders, or of different ways of living.



This is where youth storytellers come in—a new generation of conservationists, not of the tangible natural world, but keepers of its intangible heritage. It is crucial that our youth record stories of our elders; stories of those who work with the land and on the land; stories of flora and fauna as they battle to survive in urban spaces that have encroached upon their habitats; stories of how ancient techniques of weather forecasting allowed a non-technological peoples to live harmoniously with the natural world around them.

Stories such as these can be a testament to the ever-changing world around us.

The fun thing here is that such stories come in all shapes and sizes. They do not necessarily need to be direct accounts or acute anthropological assessments. Fiction works too! Fictionalised versions of observations of the natural world! The archives that are created by the young storytellers can come in the form of a story of a dolphin befriending a fisherman, a snow leopard being the protector of a herder, a turtle coming and relaying stories of her journey to her best friend, which just happens to be a mangrove tree. All these count as ways for young people to be part of nature conservation efforts. Because all good fiction has versions of real life embedded in it.

But why do we need young people to document or imagine such stories?

Well, if children's literature has taught us anything, it is that adults are often cynical and have lost the magical eyes of childhood. It is, therefore, up to our youth to take up the mantle of storytelling, especially stories that have to do with us losing touch with the natural world. The world through the eyes of a child is a wondrous place, full of possibility; it is a place where rainforests thrive, endangered animals live peacefully, and cities are not engulfed in thick blankets of unbreathable smog. These imagined worlds can tell us a lot about the real world that we are living in!

Our natural world is slowly dying due to manmade disasters and with it the millions of species of flora and fauna that have existed in harmony with it for millennia. By telling the stories of the natural world, real and imagined, young people can join the long legacy of storytellers who safeguarded ancient wisdom and encouraged people to look beyond the concrete facades and reconnect with nature.

By recording, preserving, and sharing these stories, young people can help ensure they are not lost or erased.

DON'T JUST SCROLL ACT

By Shazeen Saeed

*Youth Climate Activist and Co-founder of
'She Leads Pakistan' | Student at Beaconhouse National
University*



The first time I began the movement of climate action in Gujranwala I did not know what I was doing. I was only trying to make sense of my fear and build hope and resilience in my people. But somewhere I learnt something that changed everything for me.

I understood how much power the youth holds. I discovered that when young people find their voice, they don't just process the imminent crisis, rather they use it as a tool to challenge it.

In the midst of global climate catastrophe, Pakistan is highly vulnerable ranking among the top 10 countries affected by climate change. Youth-led climate action, in this age of uncertainty, is not only transformative but revolutionary.



According to demographic data, Pakistan has one of the world's youngest populations making up to 60-65 per cent of its citizens. Almost two-third of this youth are active on social media. This makes social media potentially an effective tool for mobilizing youth and raising climate awareness.

In the face of precarious situations like climate change, youth activists can play a pivotal role by acting like a bridge between government bodies, civil society organizations and vulnerable communities. Through digital and on-ground youth led workshops, educational sessions and social media campaigns, climate action takes the frontline. Resistance becomes imperative, and adaptation becomes a survival skill. Throughout my journey of climate education and climate action, social media and youth networks gave me agency and identity.

From digital content to documentaries, short reels to infographics, social media campaigns to digital communities, the science of climate change is disseminated. Complex climate science is turned into accessible narratives. When climate change is not shared just as an abstract idea but the lived experience of millions, it becomes hard to ignore. Through digital storytelling, local issues like smog, heatwaves, floods and droughts are brought to the forefront as people's shared experiences. The local narratives and stories are brought to global media. It makes vulnerable communities feel seen and heard. It does not just create a well-aware audience, rather it builds a community.

Social media assists in bringing forward strategies and solutions to tackle the climate crisis. From small indigenous groups of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to local or national organizations, social media has become a strategic partner to mobilize the masses, share policy and amplify the message. While digital activism heightens the message, the plausibility of misinformation and performative activism also increases. With information available around the clock, curating the right resources and information is imperative. When used thoughtfully, social media can move from awareness to action.

Through youth activism and the right digital tools, individual concerns can be turned into collective action.

With the rapidly changing world, hope for climate action seems like a fallacy. While deeply caring about climate, there is constant uncertainty and lack of accountability by the institutions. For many young activists this leads to anxiety and a sense of helplessness. But this notion is naive. Hope is not the absence of fear, it is the act of showing up despite fear. For me, hope does not exist independent of action.

Hope does not arise only through mega changes in structures but through small meaningful changes. Hope emerges through small victories like a successful digital campaign or a short documentary which changed someone's perspective. The resilience to fight against this catastrophe strengthens with the realization that you are not alone in this fight.



Shazeen Saeed

© Shazeen Saeed



Resilience is built through community and connection. The intersection of youth with digital activism offers a powerful and groundbreaking framework for climate action. But this framework will remain ineffective if the government institutions do not offer support or if the policy makers do not bring in youth voices. The hope to see a just and equitable future is possible if the youth, policy makers and the institutions collaborate in the climate space.

But climate action is not just about policies, technology or devising new tools; it is about people and their lived realities. The climate crisis is not an avoidable issue anymore, it is hovering over us.

The fight against climate change has already begun, and youth are fighting it with conviction. But it must be met with meaningful support, policy and on-ground action. This is a call not just to youth, but to institutions, policy-makers, and communities: invest in young voices, trust their leadership, and create spaces where their ideas can translate into impact.

The hope for a sustainable future begins with collaborative youth action. A just and sustainable world is possible by acting now.



CLIMATISTAN



Reclaiming Climate Conversations for Young People in Pakistan

By Mustafa Tariq Wynne

Youth Influencer and Founder of Climatistan

Climatistan was born from a simple but urgent observation: young people in Pakistan are deeply affected by climate change, yet climate conversations rarely include them in meaningful ways. More often than not, engagement means asking young people to sit quietly and listen.

It is rare to see them leading panels, shaping discussions, or questioning policy, or see them empowered enough to be part of a decision-making platform.

Climate discourse in Pakistan usually swings between two extremes. It is either highly technical, filled with policy jargon, mitigation targets, and COP negotiations, or it is reduced to rhetoric and symbolism.

Both approaches create distance. Neither builds real understanding.



© Mustafa Tariq Wynne



Climatistan exists precisely to bridge that gap.

We moved climate conversations out of closed rooms and into open public spaces. Our Climate Circles bring together students, young people, women, children, community elders, and technical experts to sit in the same space and speak in a language everyone understands.

The goal is not to impress, but to connect.

Our work focuses on climate literacy, climate storytelling, and climate justice. Through interactive workshops, digital campaigns, and youth led dialogues, we unpack climate change beyond headlines and buzzwords.

We challenge dominant narratives and redirect attention toward policy implementation gaps, governance failures, and accountability.

Climatistan also challenges the way climate change is framed in the public sphere. Through digital media, including reels and carousels, we question who is being left out of the conversation, where responsibility is being diluted, and how certain narratives are twisted to avoid accountability.

We break down complex climate phenomena such as the urban heat island effect during heatwaves, water and air pollution, and increasingly torrential rainfall in ways that are simple, visual, and accessible for the wider public.

In our climate circles we begin by asking participants what they think about a specific climate issue. Then we examine real scenarios together. Through discussion and practical exercises, participants start identifying what is broken and why.

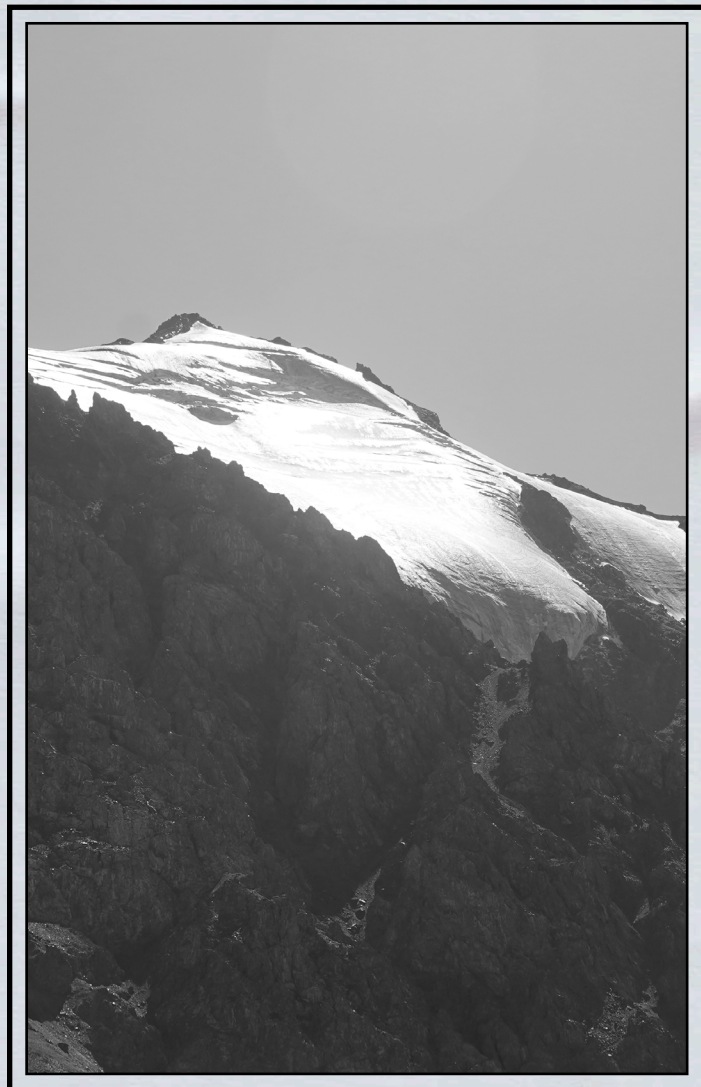
The process pushes them to think about systems, not just symptoms.

There is a common assumption that ordinary people are not climate literate. That is not true. People know the climate is changing because they experience it. They feel heatwaves. They see the floods. What is often missing is the understanding that climate change is not just an environmental issue; it is a governance and planning issue. Climatistan addresses this narrative gap.

When young people begin to see climate change as a matter of policy, accountability, and institutional decision making, something shifts. They move from anxiety to agency, and that shift matters.

Narratives shape policy just as much as data does.

The way climate change is described, interpreted, and communicated directly influences how institutions respond to it and how citizens understand their role within it.



In Pakistan, climate change is frequently framed as an unfortunate natural disaster. Nature is often portrayed as something to be reckoned with, an all-powerful force that humans can do little to influence. Floods, heatwaves, and glacial melt are described as acts of nature, as though they exist beyond systems of governance and human decision making. This framing suggests inevitability and removes agency. Yet the relationship between human societies and nature is not one of the helpless confrontations alone.

It is symbiotic.

For centuries, communities have lived in relative harmony with their environments, relying on mutual balance between land, water, climate, and settlement patterns. When that balance is disrupted by poor planning, unchecked urbanisation, weak enforcement, and extractive development, climate impacts intensify. Treating nature as an uncontrollable adversary obscures the reality that governance choices shape vulnerability.

A climate positive narrative does not mean denying a crisis or downplaying urgency. It means reframing the conversation around responsibility, resilience, and possibility. It requires asking uncomfortable but necessary questions.

Who benefits from weak environmental enforcement? Why are informal settlements consistently the first to flood? Why are development and planning decisions rarely screened for climate risk? Why do we celebrate development projects that increase vulnerability instead of reducing it?



Effective climate storytelling brings these structural questions to the forefront while also highlighting viable solutions. It connects environmental events to institutional choices.

It exposes inequities embedded in systems, yet it avoids paralysis by pointing toward reform and innovation.

Young people play a particularly important role in this space because they operate within digital ecosystems that shape contemporary public consciousness. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn are not merely tools for visibility; they are arenas where narratives are formed, contested, and amplified. A well-constructed digital explanation can travel faster and reach further than many traditional reports.

A climate-positive narrative in Pakistan must therefore achieve three outcomes. It must link climate to justice, ensuring that environmental degradation is understood within the context of inequality and power.

It must connect policy decisions to lived experience, helping people see how planning, budgeting, and governance directly affect their daily realities.

Such a climate-positive narrative brings nuance to the apocalyptic tone that often dominates climate discourse. Doom laden narratives may capture attention, but they can also produce paralysis and despair. A climate positive narrative must confront the crisis honestly while also communicating that solutions exist, and pathways are known.

Millions of young people need that sense of direction and possibility.

They need to know that all is not lost and that with informed policy, accountable governance, and collective effort, we understand what must be done to fix it.

Youth innovation in climate action is often narrowly defined as start-ups and hackathons. While green entrepreneurship obviously matters, innovation extends far beyond enterprise. It includes rethinking climate education so it moves beyond rote learning, building local climate data narratives, strengthening community resilience networks, designing affordable urban cooling responses, and using digital tools to counter misinformation.

Across the country, youth led climate initiatives are emerging in clean technology, circular economy models, and digital climate communication.

However, they face structural barriers such as limited access to climate finance, regulatory obstacles, bureaucratic red-tapism, access to information, safety concerns, and institutional gate-keeping.

The answer is not to romanticise youth energy but to formalise youth participation, by giving them the financial resources they need and by mentoring them and enabling them to lead the new green revolution.

The climate crisis is fundamentally a matter of intergenerational justice. The generation currently holding political, economic, and institutional power has benefited from decades of carbon intensive growth, extractive development, and weak environmental enforcement. Younger generations, or those not born yet, did not design these systems, and yet they will live with their consequences. Older generations owe young people more than symbolic inclusion. They owe them structural representation in decision making.

The next phase of climate action in Pakistan will be defined by whether we cultivate a generation that understands climate not just as an environmental concern, but as a matter of governance, justice, and opportunity.

Young Voices for Nature

Transforming Environmental Awareness into Action

By **Taseer Ali Mirza**
Head of Corporate Engagement and Environment
Education, WWF-Pakistan



For over four decades, WWF-Pakistan has believed that conservation is not only about protecting species and ecosystems - it is about nurturing people who will champion nature for generations to come. Today, as environmental challenges intensify - from climate change and biodiversity loss to water scarcity and pollution - the role of youth has shifted from future leaders to present-day changemakers.

Across Pakistan, young people are not waiting for tomorrow. They are leading awareness drives, restoring habitats, conducting citizen science, influencing policy discussions, and reimagining sustainable lifestyles.

At WWF-Pakistan, building a generation for nature is not a campaign for us. It is a long-term institutional commitment rooted in education, strengthened through partnerships, and scaled through systems. Our role has been to provide the strategy, scale, and structure that allow this energy to translate into systemic, long-term impact.

Four Decades of Environmental Education

Since the 1980s, environmental education has been at the heart of WWF-Pakistan's work.

What began as awareness sessions in classrooms has evolved into immersive, skills-based, action-oriented programming across the country.

Through structured environmental education programmes, teacher training initiatives, and curriculum support, WWF-Pakistan has partnered with hundreds of educational institutions, from primary schools to leading universities, embedding sustainability into academic culture. These partnerships go beyond one-off activities.

They focus on building environmental literacy, critical thinking, and practical problem-solving skills.

Over the years, WWF-Pakistan has engaged hundreds of thousands of students across major cities and remote regions alike. Spellathon, Nature Clubs, Green School Programme, Youth for Nature, and Youth Volunteer networks have provided platforms where students do not just learn about conservation — they practice it.



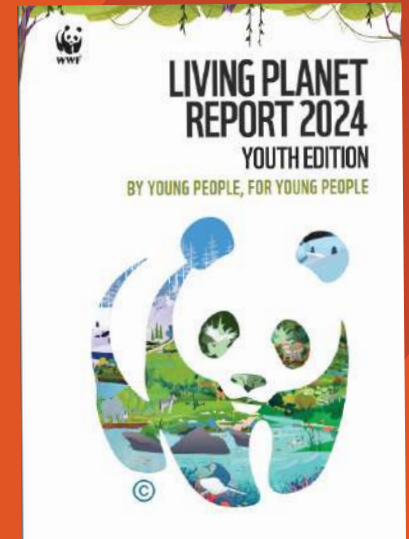
From Exposure to Empowerment: A Structured Youth Pathway

Over the years, we have refined a clear progression for youth engagement:

1. Literacy and Awareness

We introduce young learners to climate science, biodiversity, freshwater conservation, circular economy principles, and sustainable consumption - not as abstract ideas, but as lived realities.

Our collaboration with WWF-UK on the Living Planet Report – Youth Edition 2024 brought global biodiversity science into accessible, youth-friendly language - incorporating voices of 24 young people from 12 countries. This ensured Pakistani youth see themselves as part of a global conservation movement.



2. Skills and Leadership Development

Through our Youth for Nature (formerly known as Eco Internship Programme), we engage over 3,000 youth annually, aged 15–30, through virtual and in-person sessions covering climate change, circular economy, illegal wildlife trade, biodiversity, and ecopreneurship.

Young participants develop and pitch eco-solutions including edible cutlery, eco-friendly pencils, and organic soaps - demonstrating that environmental responsibility can intersect with innovation and enterprise.

Additionally, students are educated through certified workshops in storytelling for conservation, AI for environmental protection, and sustainable business models. These forward-looking skills are critical as the green economy evolves.

3. Youth-Led Action

In the past year alone:

- 1,000+ student volunteers mobilised for climate awareness through the Cyclathon by Pedal Pulse.
- Thousands of students engaged in mangrove restoration, urban plantation, coastal clean-ups, bird feeder installations, and biodiversity awareness campaigns.
- Under our Student Ambassador Network, 42 ambassadors across eight cities are championing sustainability within their institutions and peer groups.

This is youth leadership in motion.



Linking Youth to WWF's Broader Conservation Work

What makes WWF-Pakistan's youth engagement unique is its integration with on-ground conservation efforts.

Whether it is climate adaptation in vulnerable communities, protection of endangered species, sustainable fisheries management, freshwater stewardship, or promoting renewable energy solutions, young people are given opportunities to contribute meaningfully.

For example:

- Students participate in tree plantation and ecosystem restoration campaigns aligned with broader landscape-level conservation goals.
- Youth volunteers support waste management drives linked to plastic reduction strategies and circular economies.
- University interns contribute to research, communications, and community engagement components of conservation projects.
- Young advocates amplify awareness on climate resilience, biodiversity protection, and sustainable consumption through social media and campus forums.
- By connecting youth initiatives directly with WWF-Pakistan's conservation programmes, we ensure that learning is grounded in real-world impact.



Preparing Youth for the Green Transition

As we look ahead, our strategy is focused on preparing youth for the environmental realities of the next decade. We are prioritising:

- Climate literacy linked to green career pathways
- Digital advocacy and youth-driven communication
- Ecopreneurship and circular economy innovation
- Inclusion of rural and climate-vulnerable youth
- Youth participation in sustainability policy dialogues

Pakistan's environmental challenges - from water stress to biodiversity loss - demand not only awareness, but competence. We must prepare young people to be scientists, sustainability managers, climate communicators, green entrepreneurs, and ethical decision-makers.



A Call to Act Together

For over 40 years, WWF-Pakistan has invested in environmental education not as an accessory to conservation but as its foundation. Building a generation for nature requires collective effort - the next few years will demand even more courage, creativity, and collaboration. Therefore, we invite educational institutions to institutionalise sustainability, encourage corporate partners to embed youth engagement and empowerment within ESG plans, and encourage students to step forward to join Nature Clubs, apply for internships, volunteer in restoration drives, and drive innovative solutions.

Our responsibility now is to strengthen the structures that allow it to thrive.

Hear from our Student Ambassadors

Our Student Ambassadors bring diverse perspectives shaped by their experiences and engagement with WWF-Pakistan. In their own words, they reflect on how environmental challenges, community engagement, and hands-on action are shaping their understanding of conservation.



Growing up in Karachi, I've seen both the beauty of nature and the environmental challenges caused by plastic waste. These experiences have shaped my understanding of how we are connected to the environment. Conservation matters because it's about protecting our surroundings for cleaner air, healthier communities, and a better future for all. Through my role as a student ambassador, even small, sustainable actions can create meaningful impacts. It's important that if we take responsibility now, we can build a stronger, greener world for generations to come.



The most rewarding part for me has been connecting with communities and listening to their stories—understanding how conservation, especially of wildlife and mangroves, is improving their lives. From tree plantation drives and beach cleanups to working on sustainable alternatives like eco-friendly cutlery, these experiences have strengthened my confidence and belief that conservation and sustainability are not just buzzwords, but critical issues—especially for the youth of Pakistan to lead and act upon.



Saad Salam



For me, conservation is about raising awareness and making environmental education accessible and engaging. What I have enjoyed the most is promoting these ideas through fun and interactive activities. Setting up awareness kiosks at conservation fundraisers, farmers' markets and events like Women of the World Festival has not only strengthened my understanding but also built my confidence to connect with people and engage them in meaningful conversations about sustainability.



Rafiya Amin

M. Ali



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Being from Sindh, I have witnessed how environmental challenges impact both communities and ecosystems. Conservation matters deeply to me, as it is essential for sustaining our natural resources and securing a better future. My experience with WWF-Pakistan has further strengthened my commitment to raising awareness and driving meaningful change. I believe today's youth have the power to protect and preserve our planet for generations to come.

”

Syeda Nimra Batool



“

Growing up in Islamabad, nestled between the Margalla Hills and the bustle of a growing capital, I've always felt the tension between development and nature. Conservation matters to me because this city's green lungs: its forests, trails, and wildlife are not just scenic backdrops, but lifelines that keep our air clean and our spirits grounded. Protecting them is our responsibility as the youth of a city that sits at the crossroads of Pakistan's past and future.

”

M. Basil Maqbool



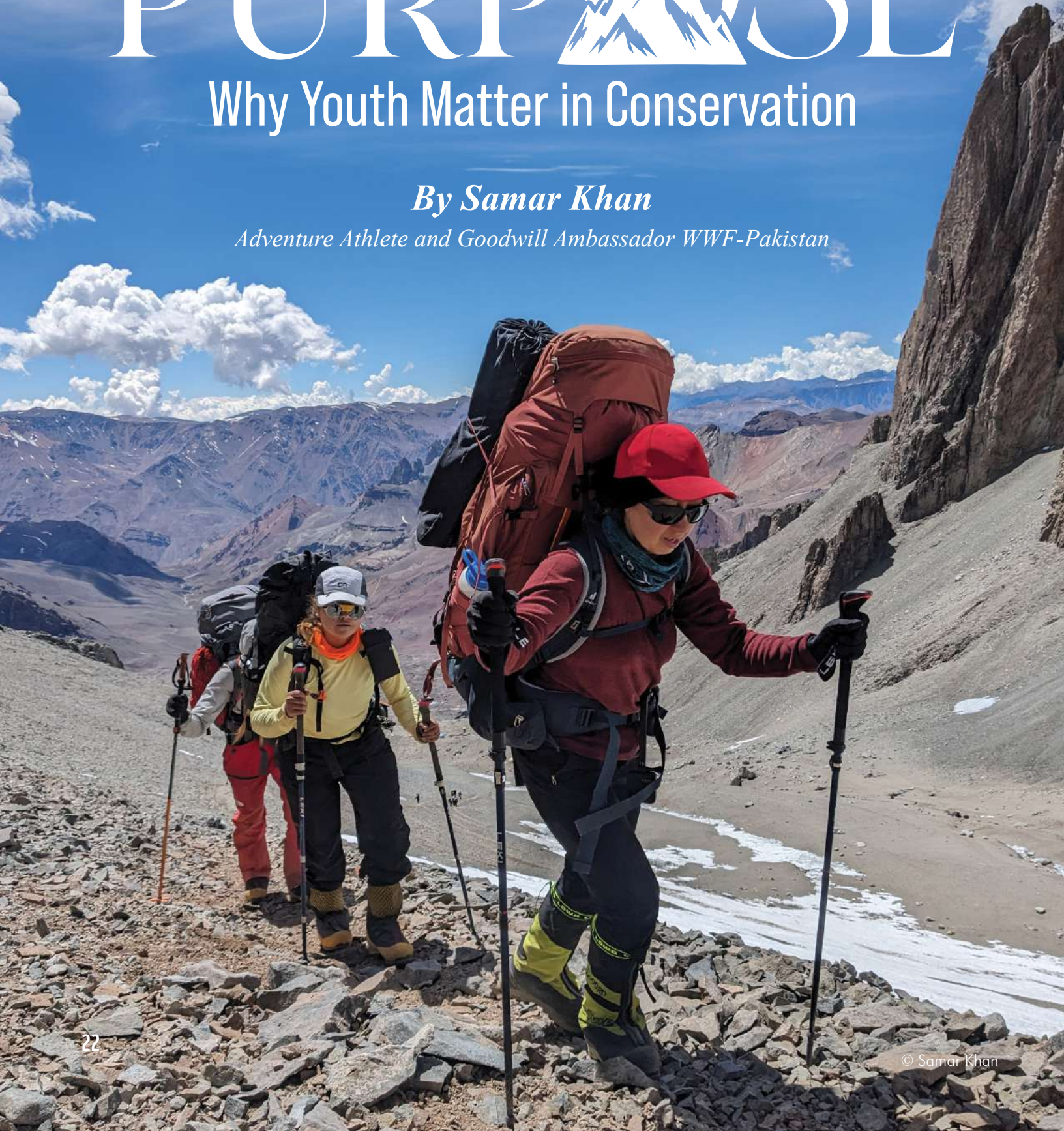
All photographs featured in this section were contributed by WWF-Pakistan Student Ambassadors.

FROM PASSION TO PURPOSE

Why Youth Matter in Conservation

By Samar Khan

Adventure Athlete and Goodwill Ambassador WWF-Pakistan



There is a moment, somewhere between exhaustion and awe, when nature stops being a backdrop and becomes a teacher.

I have felt it on the icy silence of the Arctic tundra, while crossing 300 kilometres on a dogsled during Fjällräven Polar 2026. I have felt it high above sea level on the slopes of Mount Aconcagua, where every breath is a negotiation. And I have felt it in the Karakoram mountains of Pakistan, where raw, untamed landscapes remind you how small and yet how responsible you are.

I am Samar Khan, a professional adventure athlete from Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. My journey into extreme environments and high altitudes did not begin with the intention of becoming a voice for conservation.

It began with curiosity, a desire to push boundaries, and a deep, almost instinctive connection with the outdoors. But over time, that passion evolved into something greater, something with purpose.



The Journey: Action Sports and Connection with Nature

Adventure sports, for me, have never just been about adrenaline. They are about resilience, discipline, and understanding the environment in its purest form.

When you spend days navigating glaciers, climbing and snowboarding open mountains, or sledding frozen landscapes, you begin to notice the subtle shifts; melting ice, unpredictable weather patterns, and fragile ecosystems under stress. These are not abstract concepts discussed in reports; they are lived realities.

In Pakistan, I have trained and explored in regions that are both breathtaking and vulnerable. The northern areas, home to some of the world's highest peaks and longest glaciers are also on the frontlines of climate change.

Glacial retreat, water scarcity, and environmental degradation are no longer distant threats, they are happening now.

As an athlete, I realized that my presence in these environments came with a responsibility. I was not just a visitor; I was a witness. That's why I have always designed my expeditions in a way that I leave no trace behind and stay aligned with the natural ways of the outdoors.



Aligning with WWF-Pakistan was a natural step in my journey.

Their work in conservation, community engagement, and sustainable development resonates deeply with what I have experienced on the ground. They are not just protecting wildlife; they are empowering communities, preserving ecosystems, and creating a framework for sustainable coexistence.

For me, this partnership is about amplifying impact.

As an adventure athlete, I have a platform; a way to reach people who may not typically engage with environmental issues. By collaborating with WWF-Pakistan, I can bridge the gap between adventure and advocacy, turning personal sports experiences into stories that inspire awareness and action.

Sports as a Tool for Climate Awareness

Sports have a unique power. They capture attention, evoke emotion, and create connection.

When people see an athlete pushing limits in extreme conditions, they are drawn to the story. But what if that story also carried a message about conservation?

During my expeditions, I have made it a point to document not just the achievements, but the environment itself, the beauty, the fragility, and the changes I observe. Social media has become a powerful tool in this regard. A single image or video from a remote glacier can spark conversations about climate change, sustainability, and responsibility.

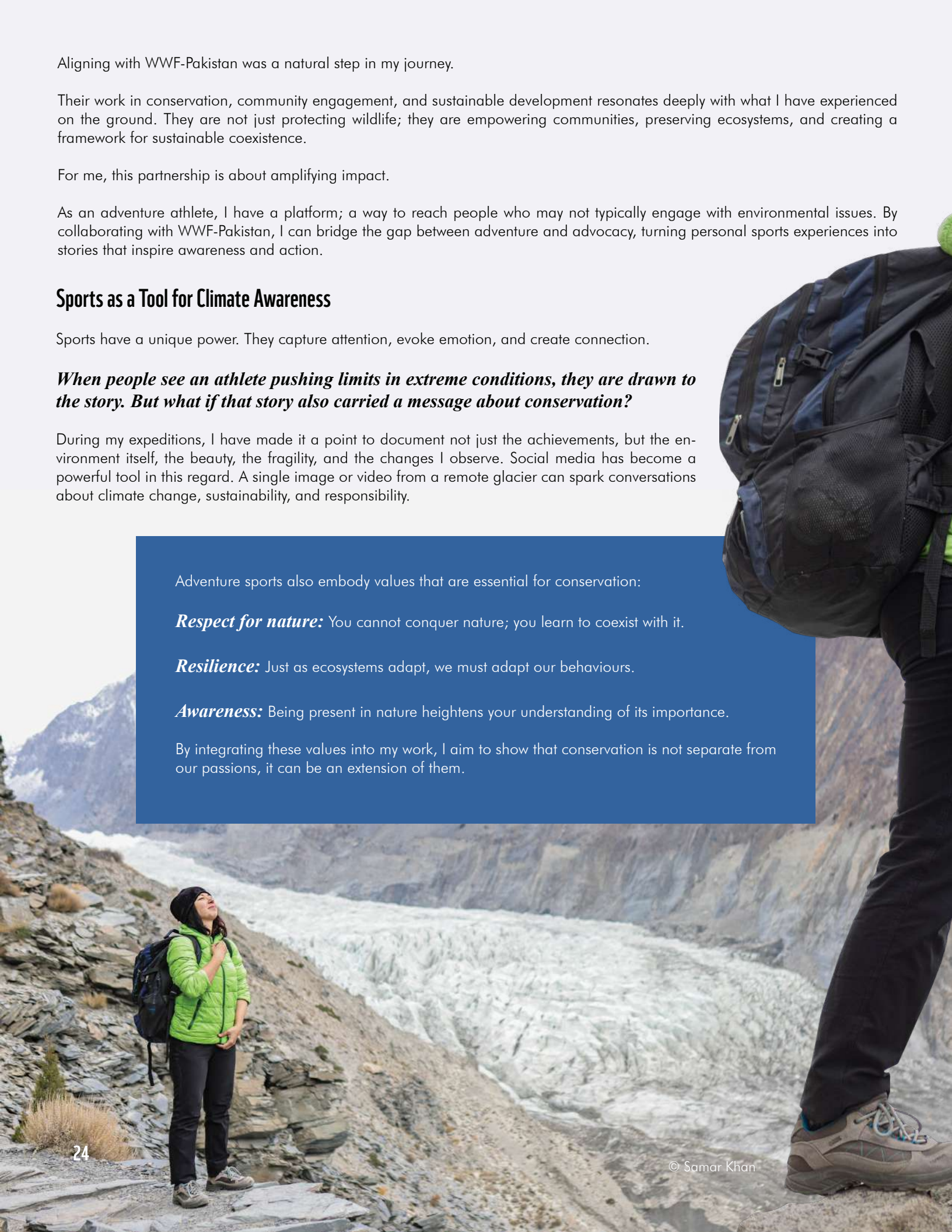
Adventure sports also embody values that are essential for conservation:

Respect for nature: You cannot conquer nature; you learn to coexist with it.

Resilience: Just as ecosystems adapt, we must adapt our behaviours.

Awareness: Being present in nature heightens your understanding of its importance.

By integrating these values into my work, I aim to show that conservation is not separate from our passions, it can be an extension of them.





Resilience: The Common Thread

Resilience is at the heart of both adventure sports and environmental conservation. In extreme conditions and altitudes, resilience is what keeps you moving forward when your body wants to stop. It is the mental strength to endure uncertainty, discomfort, and risk.

Similarly, conservation requires resilience. It is a long-term commitment, often with slow and unseen results. It demands patience, persistence, and the ability to keep going despite challenges.

As youth, we are uniquely positioned to embody this resilience. We are adaptable, driven, and unafraid to challenge the status quo. These qualities are essential in addressing the environmental challenges we face today.



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From Passion to Purpose

One of the most important lessons I have learned is that passion alone is not enough. Passion is the spark, but purpose is what sustains the fire. For young people, the journey from passion to purpose begins with a simple question: What do I care about, and how can I use it to make a difference?

You do not have to be an athlete to contribute to conservation. Your passion could be art, technology, education, or community work. What matters is how you channel it.

If you are an artist, you can tell stories that inspire change.

If you are a student, you can advocate for sustainable practices in your community.

If you are an entrepreneur, you can create solutions that reduce environmental impact.

The key is to start where you are, with what you have.

Youth are not just the future of conservation, they are its present. Across Pakistan, young people are already leading initiatives, raising awareness, and driving grassroots action. They are challenging norms, innovating solutions, and building communities around sustainability. What we need is more support, more platforms, and more opportunities to amplify these efforts.



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Organizations like WWF-Pakistan play a crucial role in this ecosystem by providing resources, mentorship, and visibility.

But the momentum must come from us, from our willingness to step up, speak out, and take action.

My journey as an adventure athlete has taken me to some of the most remote and extreme places on Earth. It has tested my limits, shaped my perspective, and given me a deeper understanding of the natural world. But more importantly, it has shown me that every experience carries responsibility. We cannot separate our passions from the world we live in. The mountains we climb, the trails we ride, the oceans we explore, they are all part of a delicate balance that needs our protection.

To the youth of Pakistan, I say this: your passion is powerful. It has the potential to create change, to inspire others, and to protect what matters. Turn it into purpose. Because the world does not just need dreamers, it needs doers. And there is no better time than now.



SMALL BEINGS, BIG CHANGE



By Poday Wali (Aamina Hashmi)
Freelance Artist



Around six years ago, I picked up gardening as a form of self-therapy. It was not something I had planned in a very structured way. My family simply encouraged me to look after a few plants on our terrace, around five or six pots that needed watering and basic care every day. At that time, I did not realize how deeply those few plants would change my life. I started waking up early in the morning to water them, because that is usually the best time to water plants. That small daily ritual slowly fixed my sleep schedule and brought a sense of calm and positivity into my life. I remember how excited I used to feel when those tiny plants bloomed. It felt like watching life unfold in slow motion, and I became deeply attached to them.

Gardening gave me something to nurture, something to look forward to every morning, and it slowly turned into a passion.

As my plants grew, something unexpected began to happen. My small terrace garden started attracting visitors. At first, it was a few honeybees hovering around the flowers, then butterflies, moths, flies, spiders, and even hornets. I remember one day when I noticed a beautiful moth sitting quietly on one of the pots, and that moment stayed with me. My curiosity took over, and I started observing these creatures very closely. I often describe the experience as adopting a National Geographic approach to filming. I would watch how they moved, how they interacted with plants, and how they behaved in this tiny ecosystem that had formed on my terrace.

Through this observation, I realized something very important: these creatures were not random visitors. They were playing vital roles in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem.



This realization completely changed my relationship with gardening.

From the beginning, I decided that I would not use insecticides or pesticides in my terrace garden. Many people assume that insects are harmful and immediately look for ways to eliminate them, but my experience taught me the opposite. A large number of insects are beneficial and help maintain natural balance. For example, ladybugs feed on aphids, which are one of the biggest threats to plants. Praying mantises help control insect populations, and even hornets, which are often feared, play a role in managing pests. Nature already has its own systems in place. When we use chemical insecticides, we disrupt that balance.

These chemicals do not just kill pests; they also harm pollinators like bees and butterflies, and they destroy beneficial insects that keep ecosystems functioning.



© Aamina Hashmi



© Aamina Hashmi

By allowing biodiversity to thrive in my small terrace garden, I saw how nature manages itself beautifully and organically.

As my garden slowly grew from six plants to more than a hundred, I started sharing my journey online. Initially, my intention was very simple. I wanted to document my experience and share gardening tips with people who might want to start growing plants in small urban spaces. I would show how to care for plants, how to arrange them, and how even a small terrace or balcony can be turned into a green sanctuary.

But as time passed, my message naturally began to grow into something broader. Through my observations, I had learned so much about insects and their roles in nature, and I felt that this knowledge needed to be shared.

Most people already understand the importance of honeybees when it comes to pollination, but very few realize that pollination is carried out by many other creatures as well. Flies, beetles, moths, butterflies, and many other insects contribute significantly to pollination and ecological balance. Unfortunately, many of these species are overlooked or misunderstood. Some of them, are often seen as scary or unpleasant. I began to realize that fear is very often connected to ignorance. When we do not understand something, we are more likely to fear it or reject it. I wanted to help change that mindset by encouraging people to look at these insects with curiosity rather than fear.

As someone who has always been more comfortable expressing myself visually, art became one of the ways I communicated these ideas. I am a self-taught artist and have been drawing since childhood, so when I started sharing my gardening journey online, visual storytelling naturally became a part of it. I began by sharing photographs of my plants arranged in beautiful layouts, then moved on to botanical illustrations and other visual art forms such as collages, sculptures, traditional paintings, and digital artwork. Eventually, I even started dressing up as insects and creating humanoid insect characters.

This creative approach helped people engage with the subject in a completely different way.



© Aamina Hashmi

Normally, when people see insects like mantises or hornets, their instinctive reaction is fear. But when they see a human figure embodying those insects, something interesting happens. Instead of fear, they feel curiosity. They pause, they observe, and they start asking questions.

In a way, these humanoid insect characters became bridges between the human world and the insect world. They helped people empathize with creatures they would normally avoid or destroy.

Over time, as my platform grew, I started feeling a stronger sense of responsibility as a content creator.



© Aamina Hashmi



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Social media has the power to influence perspectives, and I realized that I could use that platform to raise awareness about biodiversity and the importance of respecting nature. I began encouraging people to create small green spaces of their own, whether it was a terrace garden, a balcony garden, or even a few plants by a window. You do not need a large farm or a big backyard to support biodiversity. Even a few plants can attract pollinators and beneficial insects, turning a small space into a living ecosystem.

One of the most fulfilling aspects of this journey has been the response from people who follow my work. Many of them send me photos and videos of their own plants and gardens. Some share clips of butterflies or ladybugs visiting their plants, while others tell me that they have started observing insects with curiosity instead of fear. Those messages are incredibly meaningful to me because they show that awareness is spreading in small but powerful ways.



The more I learn about ecosystems, the more I realize how interconnected everything is. A tiny insect that we might ignore or dismiss can be responsible for pollinating plants, controlling pests, or recycling nutrients back into the soil. Without these small beings, entire ecosystems might just collapse! Nature is incredibly balanced, and every creature has a role to play.

When I look at my terrace garden today, I do not just see plants. I see an entire ecosystem that exists within that small space. Birds visit, insects pollinate, spiders weave their webs, and life interacts constantly in ways that are both delicate and powerful. All of this exists in the middle of a busy city, proving that nature can survive and thrive even in urban environments if we allow it the space to do so.

This is why I believe that small beings can truly create big change.

When we start respecting insects, protecting biodiversity, and gardening responsibly, we rebuild our connection with nature. Sometimes all it takes is curiosity, empathy, and a willingness to observe the small worlds that exist around us.



ART FOR CONSERVATION

Inspiring and Educating Young Guardians of the Indus

By Muhammad Ahsan Tariq

Creative Coordinator, WWF-Pakistan

Art has been a part of human communication since the earliest days of civilization. Long before written language existed, humans used drawings to share stories, document their surroundings, and express ideas. Even today, art remains a universal language; one that transcends borders and cultures without requiring translation.

In conservation, this language holds remarkable power. Art can build emotional connections with nature, translate complex scientific concepts into accessible stories, and inspire people to care about the environment. When conservation messages are communicated through art, they often resonate more deeply. A powerful image or story can spark curiosity, empathy, and ultimately action.

Where Art Meets Conservation

As a child, I spent countless hours immersed in wildlife books, carefully studying illustrations of animals. The artwork in those books fascinated me; their distinctive styles not only inspired me creatively but also helped me learn about wildlife more quickly. I would often try to replicate the drawings, copying the techniques and forms to better understand the animals.

One book, in particular, left a lasting impression. At the time, publications on Pakistan's wildlife were rare. I remember buying it from a WWF stall when I was quite young. What made the book unique was its creative approach to sharing information. Each page featured an illustration of an animal alongside a stencil that allowed readers to trace and draw the same animal themselves. This interactive design transformed learning into an engaging activity. It showed how art could create a meaningful connection between children and nature, making the process of discovery both enjoyable and memorable.

Many years later, when I joined WWF-Pakistan, I had the opportunity to revisit this idea from a completely new perspective. I became involved in a creative educational initiative under the Indus River Dolphin Conservation Project, supported by the Engro Foundation. The initiative focused on developing and designing an educational toolkit for children living along the Indus River, communities that share their landscape with one of Pakistan's most remarkable yet vulnerable species.

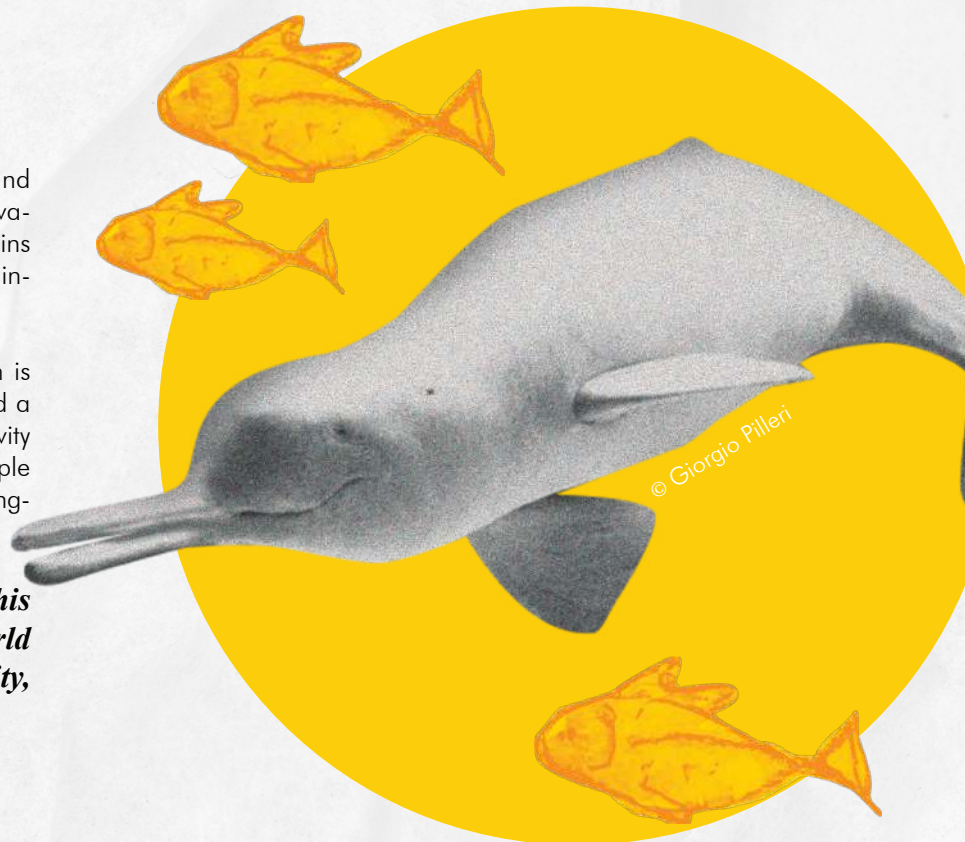
For me, the opportunity felt deeply personal. The child who once learned about wildlife through drawing was now contributing to a project that aimed to inspire the same sense of curiosity and connection in a new generation. My aim was to design it in a creative and colorful way, using illustrations that capture the curiosity and imagination of young audiences.

A Dolphin Found Nowhere Else

The Indus River Dolphin is endemic to Pakistan and found only in the Indus River system. Despite conservation successes in recent decades, the species remains endangered, with a population of just over 1,900 individuals.

For communities living along the river, the dolphin is both a symbol of the river's ecological richness and a reminder of the fragile balance between human activity and wildlife. Raising awareness among young people in these communities is therefore a key part of long-term conservation efforts.

The educational toolkit was designed with this goal in mind to introduce children to the world of the Indus River dolphin through creativity, storytelling, and play.



LEARNING THROUGH CREATIVITY

The toolkit brought together a variety of interactive learning tools designed to make conservation engaging and memorable for children.

STORYBOOK

At the heart of the kit is an illustrated story about a young dolphin who becomes entangled in a fishing net, one of the most common threats faced by the species. The story follows the baby dolphin and the efforts of friends from a nearby village who help it escape. Through storytelling, children are introduced to real conservation challenges while also learning about compassion and coexistence.



INFORMATIVE CARDS

A set of educational cards presents fascinating facts about the Indus River Dolphin, its unique adaptations, and the threats it faces in its river habitat.



BOARD GAME

Inspired by the classic “snakes and ladders,” the board game allows players to guide a dolphin safely through the river. Positive environmental actions help the dolphin move forward, while harmful practices set it back, turning conservation lessons into an engaging game.



JIGSAW PUZZLE

An underwater puzzle depicting the Indus River ecosystem with Indus River Dolphin and its neighbours (otters and freshwater turtles) helps children visualize the dolphin's habitat while developing problem-solving skills.



ACTIVITY BOOK

The activity book encourages creativity and curiosity through colouring pages, drawing exercises, spot-the-difference puzzles, and a labeling activity focused on the dolphin's anatomy.



BUTTON BADGE

A button badge featuring the campaign's key message, designed for students to attach to their school bags and help promote awareness wherever they go.



CAP

A cap for children, designed with the campaign's key message to promote awareness while offering protection from the sun.



DRAWSTRING BAG

All materials are packaged in a practical drawstring bag, allowing children to carry the toolkit easily between school and home.



Reaching Communities Along the River

To ensure the materials were accessible to local communities, the entire toolkit was translated into Urdu and Sindhi.

This allowed children to engage with the stories and activities in languages familiar to them.

The kits were distributed through eco-clubs established in schools along the Indus River. In total, over 470 toolkits reached students who live in close proximity to the dolphin's habitat. Through these eco-clubs, children not only learn about the Indus River Dolphin but also begin to understand the broader importance of protecting river ecosystems.

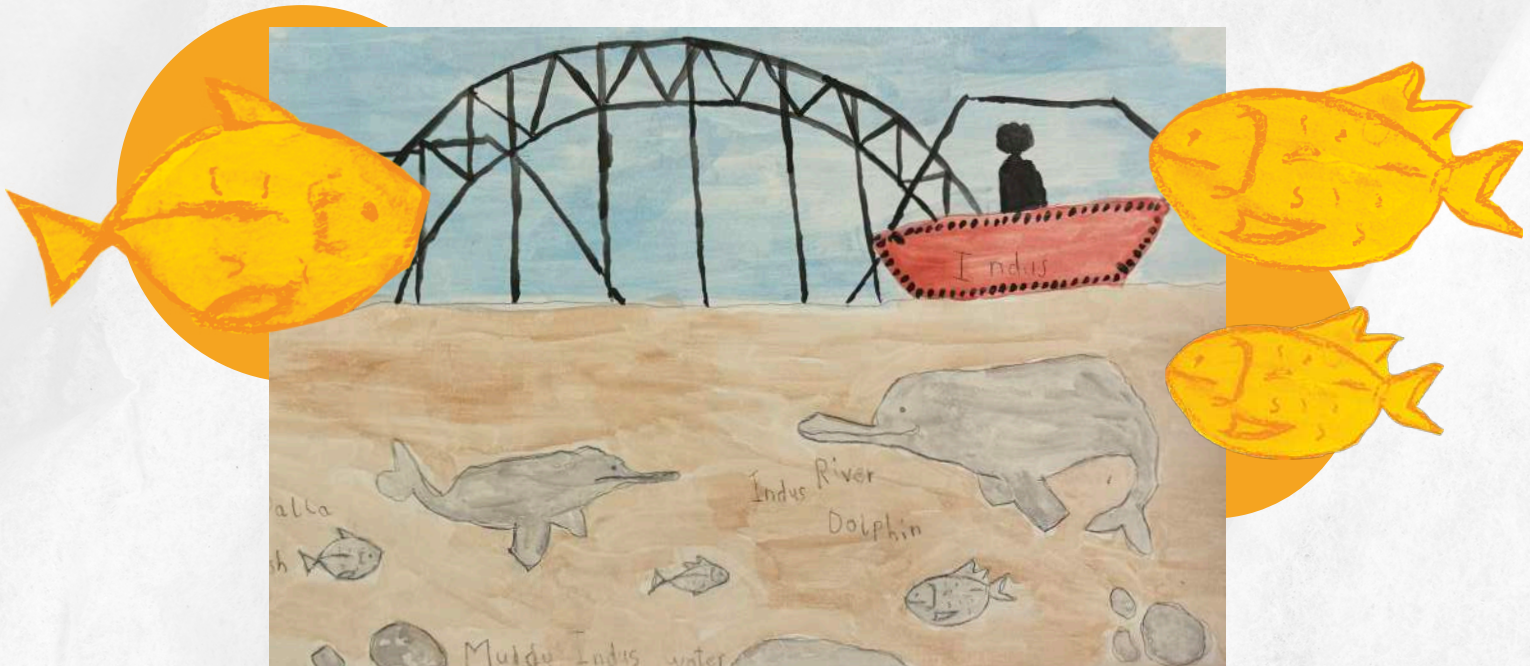
Inspiring Future Conservationists

Conservation is ultimately about people as much as it is about wildlife. Long-term protection of species depends on awareness, empathy, and stewardship within the communities that share landscapes and ecosystems with them.

Educational tools that combine science with creativity can play a powerful role in shaping these attitudes from an early age.

For me, this project has a special significance. The same kind of illustrated wildlife book that once inspired my childhood curiosity had now come full circle. Through this toolkit, we hope to spark a similar sense of wonder and responsibility among children living along the Indus River. Perhaps among them are future scientists, conservationists, storytellers or artists, who will continue to protect Pakistan's remarkable natural heritage.

Art may be one of humanity's oldest forms of expression, but it remains one of the most effective ways to connect people with nature. When art and conservation come together, they have the power not only to inform but also to inspire the guardians of tomorrow.



'Dolphin and friends' by Bakhtawar Bilal Tarar of Learning Alliance International depicts the life in the Indus River, inspired by the Bhulan Toolkit and its mission to raise awareness about conserving the endangered Indus River dolphin.

CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION: WINNING STORIES

1ST POSITION



THE SILENCE I AM LOSING

Written By Syeda Ayesha Kamran, Grade 5

I am the shadow you almost never see. High in the mountains of Pakistan where the air is thin and the world feels untouched, I move like a whisper across the rocks. You would call me a snow leopard but I am more than a name. I am the heartbeat of those mountains. There was a time when this place belonged only to us. The snow was deep and endless covering the land like a soft promise. The rivers below sang gently and the wind carried stories not smoke. Every step I took felt safe every breath felt pure, I knew where to find food, where to rest and where to watch the sunrise paint the peaks in gold.

But now something has changed. The snow melts too quickly, the rivers rush louder, and the beautiful silence is breaking. I heard sound I do not understand. Machines, voices, and footsteps that do not belong here.

You. Yes, you.

I see the lines you carve into mountains, roads cutting through ancient paths, I smell the smoke that poisons the cold air. I feel the ground tremble in the ways it never did before my home is no longer just mine and I am afraid. Food is harder to find now. The animals I once followed are disappearing just like the snow. I do not come as a threat because I must survive but when you see me your eyes fill with anger, not understanding.

You call me dangerous, but have you ever wondered what I call you?

The wind touched my fur, but it no longer felt clean. It carried something heavy and something wrong.

I close my eyes and try to remember the world as it was. My mother told me, "These mountains will always protect us." I believed her I still want to believed her.

When you cut down forests, when you dig into the earth and when you fill the air and water with what does not belong you are not only changing your world you are erasing mine. I cannot fight you, I cannot speak your language but I can only fade quietly, slowly until one day I am nothing but a story.

I am still here and still hoping.

Will you save my silence before it disappears forever?



2ND POSITION

THE BIRDS AND THE MISSING TREES

Written by Rabia Shahzad, Grade 2

Every morning a little brown sparrow with bright eyes sat on my window sill. Usually he sang a happy song, but lately he seemed restless. One Tuesday morning he didn't sing at all. He just looked at me and then flew a short distance waiting for me to follow. I put on my shoes and followed him while we walked the busy streets until we reached the edge of the old park. I hadn't been there in a long time, not since I was very small. I remembered this place being a sea of green.

As I stepped into the park, my heart cracked. The big shady Banyan trees were gone. Most of the tall pines had been cut down too. Instead of a cool forest there were mostly brown stumps and dusty ground. The air felt hotter here without the leaves to block the sun. The sparrow landed on a small lonely branch left on the ground. He looked at me and let out a long mournful cry. I realized then why he was so sad. This wasn't just a park to him, it was his home. It was where his family built nests and where he found food. Now there was nowhere to hide from the hawks or the heat.

"I'm sorry," I whispered to the little bird.

Standing there, I understand that when we lose trees, we don't just lose wood or shade, we lose the music of birds and the breath of the earth. I promised the sparrow that I would start small. I would plant a sapling in my own garden and tell my friends at school that the birds are losing their homes. We need to protect what is left. If we don't, the morning songs on our window sill might disappear forever.



3RD POSITION

TALKING PLASTIC BAG

Written by Muhammad Mohid, Grade 6

While walking down a busy street, I hear a strange voice calling out to me. As I turned around, I realized it was a tattered plastic bag caught in a tree. As it speaks, it tells me about where it travelled and what affect it had on the environment. As I stood beneath the tree, the plastic bag sighed gently in the wind, like it was remembering something far away.

"My story began in a loud factory," it said softly. "Huge machines melted tiny plastic pieces and shaped them into bags like me. Everything happened so fast. One moment I was nothing, and the next moment I existed." The bag rubbed against the branches.

"Soon I was packed with hundreds of others bags like me and sent to a supermarket. I waited there until one afternoon when a shopper picked me up. I carried fruits, bread, and a bottle of juice. It felt like I finally had a purpose." It paused for a moment, as if sighing.

"But that purpose lasted only a few minutes. When the groceries were taken out, I was thrown away without another thought." The wind blew, making the bag tremble.

"I landed in a trash bin and a strong wind flew me away and carried me across the street. I was dragged along the road like a tumbleweed when I slipped into a drain. When the rain came, the rushing water pushed me through dark tunnels and into a river." I imagined the cold water carrying the bag away.

"In the river I floated for days. Fish swam near me, curious about this strange visitor. One little fish tried to bite me, thinking I was food." The bag sighed sadly.

"The river carried me far from the city and into the ocean. Out there, I saw thousands of other plastic pieces drifting in the waves. Bottles, wrappers, and bags like me formed a floating blanket of pollution. Sea birds pecked at us, and turtles swam through us, confused." Its voice sounded heavier now.

"The sun beat down on me day after day. Slowly, I began to break into tiny pieces called micro plastics. Those pieces mixed with the water and were swallowed by fish and other sea creatures. Even the air around the ocean carried tiny bits of plastic dust." Another breeze shook the tree branches.

"Months later, a storm pushed me back toward land. I traveled across beaches, roads, and fields until the wind finally trapped me in this tree. And here I am, hanging and watching people walk past me every day." For a moment, everything was quiet.

"I was created to be useful for only a few minutes," the bag said gently. "But my impact on the world will last for hundreds of years and it would destroy the earth's ecosystem."

I looked at the plastic bag differently now. It was no longer just a bag of trash caught in a tree. It was a traveler. The bag rustled one last time in the wind. "If people could hear stories like mine," it whispered, "maybe they would think twice before throwing plastic like me away." And as I walked away from the park, the strange voice faded behind me, but its message stayed in my mind and I never forget that sad story by a plastic bag.

MORE THAN JUST A SAFARI

By Syeda Aaleen Hussain
Grade 11, Lahore American School



© Aaleen Hussain

Going to a place like Lahore Zoo Safari is not just about having fun, it's also a great way to learn about nature and the animals that live in it. When kids get to see and experience the natural world, they start to care about it and want to help take care of it. These days, we're all stuck to our screens and gadgets, so it's really important to get out and see the beauty of the world around us. Lahore Safari Zoo was a trip to remember - I learned a lot about the animals and how we can help protect them, and it really made me think about how important it is to take care of our planet.

As you step inside, you're immediately surrounded by the sights and sounds of nature - the chirping of birds, the gentle swaying of tall trees in the breeze, and a sense of peace that's hard to find elsewhere. With its sprawling animal enclosures, natural landscapes, and greenery, this park is a haven for families, students, and tourists alike, offering a unique blend of entertainment and education. What strikes you most is the calm atmosphere, which makes it an ideal setting to observe animals in environments that mimic their natural habitats, allowing you to connect with them on a deeper level. Whether you're looking to learn something new or simply unwind, this park is a must-visit destination.



The deer enclosure was one of the most serene parts of the park, with a diverse range of deer and antelope roaming freely, including blackbucks, which moved with incredible elegance. As they wandered, they would occasionally stop to rest in the shade of trees or quench their thirst from the small ponds, creating a sense of tranquility. It was clear that the animals were well looked after, with ample space to roam, and the setting was designed to mimic their natural habitat, which made the experience feel incredibly authentic and immersive, allowing visitors to connect with nature in a meaningful way.

The bird area was so full of life and colour. There were ducks, parrots, and peacocks all over the place, making a lot of noise and putting on a show. The parrots were especially cool, they could mimic human voices, and it was funny. And the peacocks were just strutting around, showing off their amazing feathers. Even though the bird area was vibrant and full of life, I couldn't help but feel that the experience could be improved. It would be great to see better upkeep of the enclosures and less litter around the area. Adding more information about the birds—such as what they eat, where they come from, and their role in the ecosystem—would also make the visit far more engaging and educational for children and other visitors. With these small improvements, people could connect more deeply with these incredible species and truly appreciate their importance.



© Aaleen Hussain

What really stood out to me during my visit was the lion exhibit - it was truly unforgettable. To get up close and personal with these creatures, we climbed aboard a special vehicle that was basically a big cage on wheels, which made the whole experience feel like a real safari adventure. As we made our way through the enclosure, our guide was sharing all sorts of fascinating facts and insights about the lions, which really added to the excitement. But the absolute highlight had to be when it was feeding time - watching those powerful animals chow down was both thrilling and a little bit scary at the same time.

It was impressive to see how the park managed to strike a balance between ensuring visitor safety and allowing people to observe the lions' natural behaviour up close. The entire experience felt thoughtfully designed and well-executed, making it both exciting and memorable—something I'll carry with me for a long time.



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The aquariums were immaculately clean and well-lit, recreating a serene underwater environment that was both calming and captivating. As I watched the fish glide effortlessly through the water and the sharks swim with graceful precision, I felt a sense of wonder and relaxation wash over me. This exhibit added a delightful layer of variety to the overall experience, making it an enjoyable destination for visitors of all ages. With its unique blend of education and entertainment, the aquarium was a memorable part of the park that left a lasting impression.

What really caught my attention was the coexistence area. It was fascinating to see how animals like ostriches and zebras could thrive together in the same space. You don't usually expect these species to live side by side, yet there they were, sharing the same environment and coexisting peacefully. It was quite surprising and really highlighted how different species can live in harmony when the conditions are right.

My trip to Lahore Safari was a meaningful experience. I had fun and learned a lot about animals and their habitats. It was interesting to observe wildlife up close and understand more about how different species live and interact. The visit also highlighted the importance of caring for nature and respecting wildlife. Even with some areas that could be improved, it offered valuable lessons on conservation and the need to protect the environment for the future.

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