

# Voice <sup>OF</sup> Rainwater Harvesting Users



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Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum

**Legal Form:**

Non-Government, Nonprofit Organization

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Lanka Rain Water Harvesting Forum (LRWHF) established in 1996 to bring professionals and practitioners together to promote, research and foster rainwater harvesting in the country. LRWHF is registered as a non government organization under the Act No. 17 of 1982 Registration No. of G.A. 209 (former N (A) 599), and as Social Services organization under Ministry of Social Services No.L06402

As a pioneer organization promoting rain water harvesting in Sri Lanka, LRWHF has been involved in conducting awareness programs, socio - economic research studies, research and development on new designs, water quality testing, training programs for masons and technical staffs, providing technical and other information through leaflets, brochures, manuals, articles, radio and television programmes etc. Demonstration rainwater harvesting systems were constructed in all the districts of Sri Lanka ([www.lankarainwater.org/projects](http://www.lankarainwater.org/projects)).

During the past few years, the experience gained by LRWHF has made it possible to influence the government and other stakeholders to take on rainwater harvesting as a possible and feasible option for domestic rural water supply, which lead to a National Rain water harvesting Policy and strategy in 2005.

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# Message from the Chairperson

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## Mr. R. D. S. Ariyabandu



Rainwater user Mr. Ravichandra, Alankani, Kilinochchi

Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum (LRWHF) has come a long way and since its humble beginnings in 1996. It is my great pleasure to be associated with the LRWHF once again after nearly a decade. Over the past two decades the forum has served the poorest of the poor in finding solutions to their water problems. Many poor households in the dry zone districts and in the Central hills suffer from lack or inadequate water for survival. The introduction of 5000-liter tanks became an instance success with the poor households. They could survive the most difficult 4 months in a dry year with the collected rainwater. Success of rainwater tanks increased the demand from the poor and from variety of others like temples, community centers and schools. The overall achievements of the LRWHF were recognized by the government. This led to the formulation of a rainwater harvesting policy in Sri Lanka and amendments to the Urban Development Authority act to make rainwater harvesting mandatory for building construction especially in urban areas. While many donors have supported the LRWHF over the past two decades, USAID has been one of the consistent donors over the past 8 years. This e-book on rainwater harvesting depicts success stories from projects supported by USAID. My sincere appreciation to USAID for their unhindered support to the Forum and to the vast rural population who suffer from lack of potable water. It is my pleasure to be the Chairman of the Forum and I salute all the staff of the Forum who dedicated much of their time to bring the LRWHF to what it is today.



# Message from the Mission Director - USAID

## Mr. Reed Aeschliman - USAID Mission Director to Sri Lanka and Maldives

Water scarcity is one of the leading challenges the world is facing today. It is also one of the leading challenges for sustainable development. As the population and consumption of water increase worldwide along with extreme weather patterns from global climate change, greater stress is placed on existing water resources.

In this backdrop, rainwater harvesting becomes a viable alternative to access clean water, especially during severe droughts and floods that have affected many parts of Sri Lanka in recent years. The technology is low cost, uncomplicated, and user-friendly, making it a sustainable method to manage present day water issues. Partnering with the Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum (LRWHF) in Sri Lanka, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) - the development arm of the U.S. Government - is very proud to support this initiative. LRWHF has been raising awareness on rainwater harvesting techniques and its many benefits; building domestic and community rainwater harvesting tanks; providing technical assistance on construction, operation, and maintenance of these tanks; and supporting research and development activities. Thanks to these interventions, nearly 50,000 individuals have benefitted from clean water at their doorstep or in their community, helping them to restart livelihoods like home gardening, improve their health, save their meagre earnings; and protect the environment.

This publication is a compilation of selected success stories from those who benefited under USAID's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) project. USAID is proud to partner with LRWHF to revive an

ancient technology used in Sri Lanka in 15 of the island's 25 districts. Our fervent hope is that rainwater harvesting will be replicated in many households and community facilities across the country.

We hope you will enjoy these stories, spread the word, and help us to take rainwater harvesting to every nook and corner of Sri Lanka!



Watering home garden using rainwater Mrs. S. Sivakowri,  
Alankani, Kilinochchi

# Message from the CEO



Clean drinking water for my family through rainwater harvesting.  
Mrs. S. Inbarathi Musurampitty, Kilinochchi

## Dr. Tanuja Ariyananda

The success stories reported in this publication is a result of a 3 year project commenced in 2016 in partnership with USAID and Districts authorities to provide safe disaster-resilient drinking water to floods and drought prone areas in the island. The project sought to provide more efficient disaster-resilient water supplies to vulnerable communities, strengthen the capacity of disaster - prone communities and institutionalization of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policies and practices related to flood and drought management.

The project was implemented in war effected and drought and flood prone area of North and Uva Province of Sri Lanka. The 3 district selected to implement this projects Kilinochchi, Moneragala and Badulla districts were selected on the basis of high drought & flood hazard areas (UNDP Report 2012), having high poverty head count index (Census and Statistics - Sri Lanka August 2015), low percentage of people without access to improved / safe water.

“Through rainwater harvesting systems it was possible to provide safe drinking water to 17,900 people from 391 households”, 48 schools and 10 rural hospitals in the target areas. Around 98 awareness programs were conducted to nearly 4500 community members and school children, 83 operation and maintenance training programs were conducted to 2770 householders, school children and teachers. In addition, around 334 officials and 93 professionals were trained on rainwater harvesting.

It has been reported that during the drought and floods in recent years these households and institutes installed with rain water harvesting systems were able to cope better. In this publication you will hear from the beneficiaries of various stakeholders of how they benefit from the project activities.



## Disaster Resilient Safe Drinking Water in Floods and Drought Prone Areas in Sri Lanka

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### Impact of the Project During the Period 2016 - 2019

- 391, Domestic rainwater harvesting systems built - benefiting 2,008 householders
- 10, Rainwater harvesting systems built at rural hospitals (10m<sup>3</sup> /16m<sup>3</sup> capacity tank)- benefiting 2,810 patients and staff
- 48 Rainwater harvesting systems built at schools (30m<sup>3</sup> capacity tank) -, benefiting 17,343 school children and teachers
- 400 Rainwater harvesting systems rehabilitated -, benefiting 1,633 householders
- 5, Training programs conducted for professionals and government officials - building capacity of 507 professionals and government officials

# Water at the Door Step



Mrs. K. Siyam of Maharampaikkulam, Vavuniya



# Motivation

E.G Jayasoma is a farmer who lives in Serana which is in Rideemaliyadda DS Division in the Badulla District. Rideemaliyadda DSD is a high - risk district for Chronic Kidney Disease of unknown etiology (CKDu). There are more than 325 kidney patients identified in the DSD by the Health Ministry. E.G Jayasoma too suffers from a urinal disease which is suspected to be an early stage of the kidney disease.

LRWHF has been working at Serana since October 2016. The causes of CKDu are not identified yet, nevertheless it is presumed that the well water of the area might be the causes for the disease. According to the villagers, the well water is not drinkable as it is hard water (containing a high content of minerals). Therefore, in order to purify and supply the water to the households, the number of RO plant (reverse osmosis) units have been installed in the area by the government under the supervision of the Sri Lankan NAVY. However, a RO plant can provide only 20 liters per day for 75 families only. Therefore, RO plant could address only a small portion of the overall kidney issue in the DSD.

LRWHF had conducted an awareness program in Serana village on the importance of RWH. Jayasoma also participated in the awareness session and was impressed very much and had decided to request for one RWH system for his house. While the project was ready to provide him the system he was injured in an accident while he was going in a tractor. Although he was injured, he wanted to receive the system by fixing the valance board (which require contribution from beneficiaries) himself. While he tried to fix the valance board with the help of a carpenter, he found that the roof was not tall enough to fix the pipe with the RWH tank. Also, the roof was made with wild wood, thus the carpenter recommended to replace the roof with better quality timber and to raise the height of it. Even though due to his injury Jayasoma could not afford the cost of the roof repair and fixing of valance board, Jayasoma decided to rebuild the roof amidst the various challenges he faced. Finally, he got the RWH system and now enjoys the benefit of clean drinking water.

This is what he said about his experience:



Mr. Jayasoma with his two daughters,  
Serana GN, Badulla

*“Since I suffer from a urinal issue, I want to protect my three children and family from the severe kidney disease. There are around 12 kidney patients in the surrounding houses. The kidney issue has spread to that extent here. Thanks to the RWH tank, we now have clean drinking water unlike the hard water we used to drink”*

# Clean Water for Health & Wealth

Badulla District is in the Uva Province of Sri Lanka. The entire land area of the Badulla District is 2,861 km<sup>2</sup> and the total population is 837,000. It is largely agriculture and live stock-oriented district.

Access to drinking water has been an issue due to the droughts in the area. People living in Kandaketiya DSD, face a lot of water borne diseases due to lack of clean drinking water.

According to the Assistant Director of planning, more than hundreds of CKDu (Chronic Kidney Disease of Unknown Etiology) patients were identified in 5 DSDs of the Badulla District. With no access to proper medical care in the area, these patients are forced to travel to hospitals in Mahiyangana and Kandy 30 - 100 kms away.

The rainwater harvesting system (RWH) introduced by the Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum (LRWHF) brought much relief to the villagers. As the Assistant Director - Planning of Kandaketiya DSD notes, rainwater harvesting is a huge success because of its sustainability.

M.P. Chithra Manamenthra with her two children and husband live in Wasanagama. Her husband is a government officer. Their younger child is 7 years. He continuously suffered from urine infections which eventually led to stones in the kidney which were surgically removed.

*“We met GA and GNs of the Badulla District to seek support to solve the drinking water problem which was causing us physical, mental and social stress. GN recommended requesting for a RWHS from LRWHF. It has brought a lot of relief to us. Today*

*not only we have access to clean drinking water, but we can also practice sustainable water management in our premises. While rainwater can be a perfect primary water source for many uses and situations, it's also a great backup water supply for emergency situations,”* says Chitra.



Mrs. Chithra Manamenthra showing the bottle which carries the removed kidney stone, Wasanagama GN, Badulla



Mrs. Chithra Manamenthra and her happy family at the RWHS



# No More Long Walks for Water

People of Musurampitti village were badly affected by the civil war. They have not only lost their loved ones but their properties too. The damaged houses in the DSD of Kandawalai were rehabilitated, under a housing scheme by the Indian government. The housing scheme has 85 houses. Drought and lack of drinking water are the most pressing issues of the villagers. Despite the open public well and tube wells. High calcium levels in water in some of the households is a major issue.

*“It is not uncommon for children in the area to be affected by the kidney issue as a result of this hard water,”* says Selwara-sInparasi from Musurampitti. There are six members in my family. My husband passed away during the Mulliwaaikkaal civil war. There are four school going children in my family.



Mrs. S. Inbarathi of Pulliyampokkanai, Kilinochchi

If we want to get drinking water, we have to travel 500m to reach the public well. During the floods our lives become a nightmare as we cannot reach this well because roads are all under water.

LRWHF came to our rescue and built 20 rainwater harvesting tanks in our Musurampitti village. Each tank has the capacity of 8000L which can last for 400 days. Today we have safe drinking water thanks to LRWHF and USAID.

During the floods of December 2018, we used the water in RWH tanks for all our necessities. Besides providing us with clean water, LRWHF also conducted O&M training programs and awareness programs on safe drinking water. Today we are fully aware of the importance of rainwater harvesting. While appreciating the good work of LRWHF we hope that they can expand their services to build 40 more RWH tanks in Musurampitti village.

# Rain Water System Solved our Water Problem and Saves Money

Rainwater harvesting is considered the answer to Sri Lanka's water woes. This practice has been sporadic in many parts of the country but an experiment carried out in Badulla with the alternative water conservation technique is a rare success story.

The Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum (LRWHF) with USAID funded DRR project, was launched in 2016 in an effort to rejuvenate water sources and improve ground water levels in the Uva province.

Mr. Upul Widyaratna is an owner of an electrical shop in Mahiyangana, in the Badulla District. He heads a three - family member home. Prior to having a RWHS the difficulties they faced were many.



Mr. Upul Widyaratna at the RWHS, Arawatta GN, Badulla

09 Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum

The RWHS was constructed and handed over to Upul in August 2017. During construction they provided unskilled labour support and meals for masons. Ferro cement water tank was washed four times before using rainwater.

*"We started using the RWHS in November 2017 until now rainwater tank hasn't run out of water. Rainwater is clean. We are using it for drinking and cooking purposes only. Our neighbors also depend on our rainwater tank during the months of June / July 2018 because their wells have gone dry. During the drought at the beginning of this year (February – April), we didn't purchase extra water for our household. LKR 3000 spent monthly on purchasing water is saved now and used for family welfare."*

Quality of this rainwater was tested over a period of three months by LRWHF with the support of Sri Lankan Agricola Qld (SLAQ) Inc, Brisbane, Australia. The following parameters- colour, turbidity, BOD, Total Coliform and E. Coli were tested twice a week from 29th November 2017 to 28th February 2018. It revealed that at the initial stage of the rainfall a significant amount of E-Coli was present in the water of the tank. This could have been due to poor maintenance of the system and not adhering to the 'first-flush' system properly. However, later the quality of the water in the tank improved and there was no E.Coli bacterial recorded in the tank.



# Rain Water Brought Them Happiness

The 30 - year war had impacted the lives of people in Alankeni unlike any other disaster. However, their lives returned to normalcy after the war ended in 2009. Even though they resettled, their houses rebuilt, their lives were not comfortable due to unemployment. The lack of a good water supply for cultivation forced farmers to depend on rainwater.

The Alankeni area has an adequate supply of ground water, but that too is salty. Thus, the ground water of Alankeni can neither be used for drinking nor cultivation. Whether rainy or dry, the villagers of Alankeni could not take advantage of the ground water supply for large scale cultivation. They could only use it for small home gardens. However, some of the villagers engaged in paddy cultivation depend on the seasonal rains. Ravichchandran in Alankeni, engages in farming during one season and in labour work during the other. His family too suffers a great deal due to the lack of water. His children fell ill frequently as they were forced to drink impure well water.

There are only a few wells in the area that have good water. They are located further away from households. Thus, villagers had to go there each day to fetch water. Most of the time those wells too do not have enough water to fulfill the water requirement of the villagers. In such situations they returned home with empty water cans. There were times when the water issue resulted in disputes as well. Competition to fetch water led to clashes amongst the villagers.

In the dry season the water issue became severe with the drying up of the wells. People had to be at the mercy of the water bowzers supplying water from the Water Board. They had to pay large sums of money for it. The poor and the marginalized had no way of paying these bowzers for the water. The Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum (LRWHF) identified the area as the most

vulnerable in terms of risk during the drought. They launched a project to provide rainwater harvesting tanks for the households, schools and hospitals in drought prone areas of Kilinochchi. Hundreds of families including Ravichchandran's benefitted from the project.

Expressing his views Ravichchandran said:

*"We have suffered much from this water issue since resettling in Alankeni after the war. There is ground water, but it is unusable. There is a well around 2 km away. We queue at the well. On certain days I go to fetch water by three in the morning to avoid this hassle. During the rainy season we obtain water only from that well. During the drought when the well dries up we depend on water bowzers which cost Rs.1200 per 2000 liters. That is also enough only for a week. This water has to be used for our home gardens too. I was aware that rainwater harvest-*



Mr. Ravichandran, Alankani, Kilinochchi

*ing was the alternative solution, but we could not afford the tanks. We expected a helping hand. Thanks to the LRWHF now we have received a rainwater system. It's a gift for us. I will maintain it well and look after it as it is indispensable."*

Alankeni people who received rainwater tanks feel happy as their burning issue has been solved to a certain extent.

# School WASH Program



School RWHS at Silavathura GMMS, Mannar



# Clean Water for School Children

Mr. Gamini Amarasinghe is the Principal of B/ Orubendiwewa Maha Vidyalaya in Arawatta in the Badulla District. Arawatta is located in the Rideemaliyadda DS Division of the Badulla District. Rideemaliyadda DSD is recognized as a high-risk district for Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). There are more than 325 kidney patients identified in the DSD by the Health Ministry.

Bd/Orubandiweewa Central Vidyalaya is one of the Central Colleges in the Badulla District. There are 1825 students and 65 teachers in this school. There are classes from Grade 6-13 and has the facilities of computers, internet and science laboratories. School has an open well which is 40 feet deep. But its water is not consumable because it contains an oily layer on the top and it tastes foul. Children used to travel about five kilometers to fetch bring water from their homes.

LRWHF started working in Arawatta in October 2016 concerning the kidney issue. The causes of CKDu are not identified yet, however it is presumed that the well water of the area might be the cause for the disease. According to the villagers the well water is not drinkable as it is hard water. Therefore, in order to purify and supply water to school and households, a few reverse osmosis (RO) units have been installed in the area by the government under the supervision of Sri Lanka Navy. However, one RO plant can provide only 20 liters per day for 75 families. Therefore, RO plant could serve only a small proportion of the community with the kidney disease. They are unable to use this water plant during the drought because the capacity is insufficient, and it is expensive.

LRWHF conducted an awareness program at the B/Orubendiwewa MahaVidyalaya on the importance of RWH.

Mr. Gamini Amarasinghe Principal of B / Orubendiwewa MahaVidyalaya recollects his experience:

*“Initially although I accepted to build this rainwater tank, it was questionable for me whether the water in it was sufficient for the daily consumption of the students. After harvesting the rainwater into this newly built RWHS, we tested quality of the water. After receiving the water quality report, I was very satisfied of the quality of the water in this tank.*

*We faced many difficulties to obtain clean drinking water. Now we drink from this tank only. Today many government officials and parents inquire about the benefits of rainwater harvesting. They are also interested in building their own RWHS at homes.’*

LRWHF not only created awareness about collecting rainwater but also guided in the proper maintenance of the water harvesting tanks. LRWHF also provided training on weather stations for our children and teachers. Now our children give a metrological update every day during the assembly time. With the help of these weather stations now we can



Students of B/Orubadiwewa Maha Vidyalaya using rainwater, Arawatta, Badulla

access metrological data on our mobile phones. I sincerely thank the LRWHF and wish them good luck to extend their services to our school as well as other needy schools in the country.

# Safe Drinking Water During Drought

Moneragala District is in the Uva Province of the island. It is the second largest district out of the 25 districts. The district is home to both natural and historical places of interest. As its name suggests, Moneragala is 'the land of peacock habitat'. Cultivation is the main livelihood people of the district. There are several schools in the Habarugala village of the Thanamalvila DSD. MO/Habarugala K.V. comes under the purview of the Wellawaya Education Zone of the Moneragala District. There are classes up to Grade 11 and at present, there are about 172 pupils.

Lack of water was the main grievance of this school. As the Principal says:



RWHS at M/Habarugala K V, Moneragala

*"We have a well within the school premises and also piped borne water connection; however, there is no water during the drought. Even though a stream flows by the well, there is little use of it as that too dries up."*

The 30000L capacity RWH tank which was made possible by the LRWHF with the support of USAID solved their water problem. A rain fall of about three hours can fill up the tank. Parents support to maintain the tank by cleaning and taking care of it.

LRWHF also provided the school with a bio-filter unit (donated by the US Navy) to enable safe drinking water for children and the staff. This filters rain water making it safe to drink.

*"Thanks to this water filter, now we can drink water without any health issues. We are grateful to LRWHF and USAID for providing us with safe drinking water."*



RWHS handing over to students of M/Habarugala KV by Mr. Reed Aeschliman, Mission Director, USAID Sri Lanka



# Gift of Love

The drought is one of the major issues experienced by many rural Sri Lankans. Danagiriya is a remote village located between Moneragala and Ampara Districts. The village is isolated and not highly populated as it is located far away from the main town of Siyambalanduwa. The village faces two main predicaments: the severe drought and the wild elephants.

Danagiriya receives little annual rainfall. In the dry season, even though each house has a well, villagers have to fetch water from neighbouring villages and ponds. The task is very challenging and risky as wild elephants roam about freely. Women are the most vulnerable under the circumstances as they are the ones often who engage in this task. As the small ponds dry up during the drought two new ponds were dug up by the government a few years back. Nevertheless, those ponds too show signs of drying up. The lake in Pannalagama, however, around 10 km away from Danagiriya shows a stable water level even during the dry season. Unfortunately, people keep away from this resource in fear of wild elephants.

The main source of income of the villagers is chena cultivation. The drought not only destroys their crops but also leads to poverty and starvation.

The Government School in Danagiriya also suffers a similar fate. Students and teachers could not find clean water during the dry season. Thus, their attendance was poor.

Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum (LRWHF) identified the needs of the Danagiriya Village as it launched a project in the

Moneragala District on Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) to help villagers of this drought-stricken area. Under the project LRWHF has donated a Rainwater Tank to the Danagiriya School. Today the schools' staff, parents and children are very happy.

Mr. Sunil, a parent of the students of the school shared his views:

*“Our village water issue is a double challenge because in the dry season we cannot go and fetch water due to wild elephants. So, we are faced with many hardships during the drought. Our school has a well, its water is also good, but in the dry season there is no water in it. The school had no other alternative until we received this RWH tank. Thanks to LRWHF now the water problem in our school is solved”.*



School RWHs at Dhanagiriya MV, Moneragala

# Capacity Building and Education



Unskilled labour support at Keselpoth Maha Vidyalaya, Badulla



# Knowledge Enhancing Water Quiz

A Water Quiz for school children was organized to mark the World Water Day in Kilinochchi, Badulla and Moneragala Districts. 2496 school children participated in the first round. These children were drawn from 11 schools in the Badulla District, 10 schools in the Moneragala District and 11 schools in the Kilinochchi District. The quiz was conducted in both Tamil and Sinhala medium and for two levels; Primary (grade 4-5) and Secondary (grade 8-10) 1248 students from Kilinochchi and Badulla Districts answered the quiz in Tamil and 1248 students from Badulla and Moneragala Districts answered in Sinhala.

All 32 schools that took part in this quiz have 30,000 litre capacity rainwater harvesting systems constructed by LRWHF with the support of USAID.

The second round of the quiz was held at district level to adjudge the student with the highest score at both levels from each school. A total of 160 students took part in the second round of the water quiz held during the first week of July 2018. For the final round three students from each district were selected for primary and secondary levels. The final round was held at the Rain Center in Pelawatta on the International Children's Day falling on the 1st of October. A total of 18 students took part in the final round.



Water quiz participants at Rain Centre, Pellawatta

The quiz tested the general knowledge on water, at both local and global level. It was conducted under the



Panel of judges at the water quiz 2018

supervision of Mrs. Nisansala Waidyaratna, Assistant Director-Planning Ministry of city planning and water supply, Mrs. Rehana Cuttilan, Project Management Specialist Office of Governance and Vulnerable Populations USAID / Sri Lanka, Dr. C. S. Weeraratna, Director, LRWHF, Mr. M. M. Aheeyar, Researcher, IWMI participated this event as panel of judges.

## Winners of the final round - Primary Category

- \* 1st place - Kaveesha Lakshani, Grade 05, B/Maliyadda Maha Vidyalaya
- \* 2nd place - Dedunu Thathsarani, Grade 04, Mo/Hambegamuwa Colony Primary School
- \* 2nd Place - B. Abinaya, Grade 05, KN/Thampirasa Vidyalayam

## Winners of the Final Round - Primary Category

- \* 1st place - M. Pukalan, Grade 09, KN/Piramanthanaru M.V.
- \* 2nd place - Pabodani Hasanika, Grade 09, Mo/Mariarawa Secondary School
- \* 2nd Place - Sachini Madushika, Grade 10, B/Mahi / Medaoya Vidyalaya

The certificates and prizes for participants and winners of the Water Quiz 2018 were distributed at the closing ceremony by Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena Member of Parliament, Mrs. Samanmal-iSakalasuriya, Member of Provincial Council Gampha, Ms. Alena Tansey, Acting Office Director, Office of Governance and Vulnerable Populations USAID- Sri Lanka. Board members, school children, teachers and parents from the three districts also attended this event.



Mr. Punniyaraj – Teacher, Kn/Piramanthanaru M.V

**Mr. Punniyaraj - Teacher, Kn/Piramanthanaru M.V**

*I'm Punniyaraj, working as a teacher in Kn/ Piramanthanaru M.V. Pukalan is my student. He participated in all three rounds of the water quiz and won the First prize. Through this water quiz program, we were able to gain knowledge on the importance of rainwater. This was a good opportunity to speak with other teachers and get to know how rainwater is being used in their schools and districts. I would like to thank LRWHF and wish them good luck to continue with their good work."*



Mrs. A.S.M. Anulawathe – Badulla District

**Mrs. A.S.M. Anulawathe - Badulla District**

I'm A. S. M. Anulawathe. I'm mother of Kaveesha Lakshani. My daughter expected to win right from the beginning of the water quiz. Kaveesha says: *"when I was facing the 1st round, I was not much confident but when I won the 1st round and got selected to the 2nd round, it made me confident about myself. Then I started to work hard to achieve my target. Now I'm so happy as I won the 1st place of the final round. My ambition is to be a doctor"*

We Cannot forget the support given by school Principal of G.W.S.M. Jayasundara, class teacher Ms. Manel and all teachers who supported my daughter to achieve her dream.



Mrs. K.M. Warnakanthi – Teacher, Mo/ Mariarawa Secondary School, Moneragala District

**Mrs. K.M. Warnakanthi - Teacher, Mo / Mariarawa Secondary School, Moneragala District**

We never expected these children to come this far in this competition. We highly appreciate the support given by Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum.

Student: Prabodini Hasanika- Mo / Mariarawa Secondary School: I'm really happy that, I won the 2nd place of this competition. Warnakanthi - Teacher, Mo/Mariarawa Secondary School, Moneragala District.



# Building Capacity of Government Officials - Moneragala

A training session for the government officials on the 'Importance of Rainwater Harvesting as a Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy on Water Resources' was conducted on 15th & 16th of March 2018. The training focused on present status and future plans of water supply schemes for domestic purposes in Moneragala, impact of drought and floods (climate change) on water resources and adaptation measures, overview and present status of rainwater harvesting and policies in Sri Lanka, design and construction of rainwater harvesting systems, impact of water quality on health- (CKDu in Moneragala) mobile weather stations and its application as a disaster mitigation tool.

The two day intense training entailed a series of lectures, presentations of group exercise, video presentations on rainwater harvesting, group exercises to design a rainwater harvesting system and a field visit to demonstrate RWH sites in schools and hospitals in Ethimale. The objective of the training program was to provide knowledge on the importance of RWH as a DRR strategy on water resources for government officials and project coordinators of local NGO's. The training programme was inaugurated by Mrs. D.S. Pathmakulasooriya Government Agent of Moneragala District. Representatives from the National Water Supply and Drainage Board, UvaWellassa University and health officials also participated.

Mr. Priyantha De Silva - Regional Program Coordinator of FISD, Moneragala I'm R.M.Priyantha De Silva.



Participants at the government officials training program in Moneragala

*"I'm working as a Regional Program Coordinator of FISD, Moneragala District. I got the*

*opportunity of participating in the Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum's training program for the government officials.*

*During this program I gained a lot of knowledge about rain water harvesting technology, especially with regard to*

*climate change and Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). Moreover, I also got insights into*

*how we can optimize the use of water resources. I'm working with people at the grass root level. Now, I can share my knowledge about rainwater harvesting among them and how to protect water which is reducing rapidly. If this program could be extended to other areas of the country, it will benefit a larger community. I'd be happy to join hands with Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum to volunteer in similar training programs.*

*Mr. Ranjith - NGO Coordinator, Badulla I found the training session to be very enlightening. Moneragala District from which I come, is facing increasing climate change problems. This training will help us as government officials to empower people to brave climate change challenges more confidently. I like to thank the LRWHF and wish them good luck to continue their good work."*

Initially Thanamalwila Zonal Education office staff didn't show any interest in the Rainwater Harvesting Project. Two government officials participated in this training from Thanamalwila. When LRWHF conducted a water quiz to mark the International World Water Day, they provided their fullest support to coordinate with schools to conduct the water quiz.



Mr. A. H. Ravindra Kumara, District Director, Disaster Management Center Moneragala District presenting the certificate at the Government officials training program in Moneragala

# Building Capacity of Government Officials - Kilinochchi

Wasanth is a humanitarian worker who has been serving the vulnerable and needy people in Sri Lanka since 1998. He has worked with UNICEF, UNHCR and many other organizations. He started working in the Kilinochchi District in 2002 and is currently working for a World Bank project in the district.

Kilinochchi is one of the districts vastly affected by the drought from time to time. Besides having to travel many kilometers in order to fetch water during this season, they must, await their turn to go to the well. Thus, there is a great waste of time and energy by these hapless people. What is worse is that in extreme drought seasons the wells and ponds too dry up leaving the people of the area desperate and helpless.

In his efforts to find a solution, Wasanth consequently found rainwater harvesting systems. Unfortunately, there was no organization working in the district that could either assist technically or financially to establish a rainwater harvesting system. Then in 2014 Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum (LRWHF) chose the Kilinochchi District to establish rainwater harvesting systems for households and schools.

While LRWHF was constructing rainwater tanks for house holds, hospitals and schools, they also conducted a two-day training program for officers of government and non-government organizations on 19th and 20th December 2018, in Kilinochchi in which there were around 42 participants. The aim was to create awareness on RWH and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The training included a field visit.

Wasanth who represented the World Bank project in Kilinochchi also took part in the training program. He said:

*“for years we wanted to introduce a rainwater harvesting system in the Kilinochchi District as we found it to be a good solution for the water issue during the drought. But the district had no organization which could supply us with the technical support to implement it even though we had enough funds to invest in water projects. We could not choose the rainwater harvesting system as a result. I kindly request the LRWHF to continue to give us assistance in implementing water supply projects while introducing various rainwater systems in the district”.*

Parthipan Kumudini, who is a Development Officer, had also participated in the training session representing the Kandawali DS office.



Taking notes by Mr. Wasantha at the government officials training program in Kilinochchi



She said: *“this training program was very useful to me. Recently I selected beneficiaries to provide rainwater tanks but was forced to omit many of them as their houses were roofed with asbestos and tin sheets due to a misconception that they were not suitable to retain water. Only after taking part in the training program did I come to know that asbestos and tin sheets were also suitable to collect water. Now I would have to review and revise my selection of recipients for rainwater tanks.”*

She further said: *“we were not aware of the importance of rainwater. I also thought that the rainwater tanks were not useful and that constructing one was meaningless. But after the training I realized that construction of a tank was a matter that required a large amount of technical support. Using rainwater for drinking was a new concept. Now I feel like constructing a tank for my own home even though I do not have major water issue.”*

Harithas, who represented ZOA had this to say: *“I am an agriculture engineer and am currently working with farmers on an agricultural project. This workshop has greatly helped me to update my knowledge on what I have studied in university on ground water recharging, climate change and DRR. Establishing a mobile weather station will be useful to us to provide updates to farmers on changing weather without being dependent on other forecasts. The session explained using a map where ground water recharging was available in the district. Its potential was the most important part to me in the training. I thank LRWHF. I will need its support from time to time for future projects.”*

During the field visit trainees were very keen to know how water tanks were constructed and operated, therefore some of them climbed to the top of the tanks and inspected them. They listened to comments made by recipients regarding the usefulness of the tanks and what they had experienced in the past in obtaining water. They also commented on how clean and clear the collected rainwater was.

Now government and humanitarian aid officers are able to initiate similar projects, on rainwater harvesting in the district. They are aware of the support and advice that can be obtained on the subject from LRWHF.



Field visit to Alankani GN by participants of government officials training program, Kilinochchi

Supported By



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