LINDHA LANGA

Around the well ළිඳ ළඟ கிணற்றடி

WATER, DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN SRI LANKA
FROM THE INTERNATIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE (IWMI)

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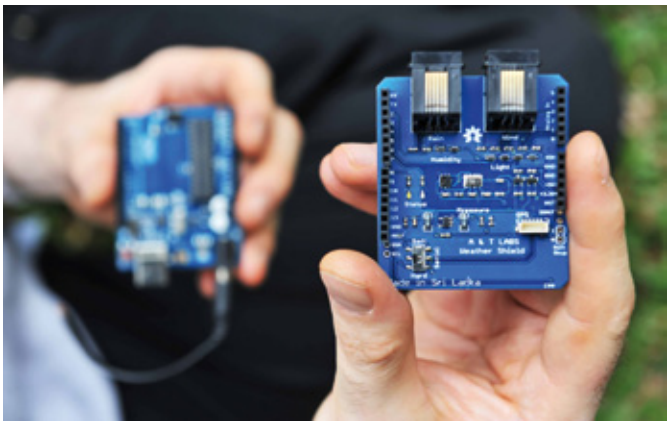
IWMI's Yann Chemin (left) and Niroshan Bandara test a locally-developed weather station that can be connected to the mobile phone network. (PHOTO Neil Palmer/ IWMI).

Mobile weather stations could help Sri Lanka prepare for extremes

Sudden changes in weather in Sri Lanka make it difficult to accurately predict natural hazards like floods and landslides. But now a low-cost portable weather station, designed by scientists at IWMI, could raise the alarm before these events occur and help communities prepare.

The new devices capture and transmit near real-time weather data. They are made primarily from locally-sourced materials, cost about Rs 32,000 each, and the designs will be freely available online for anyone to use.

For more on climate and vulnerability see page 3



The weather station circuit boards, made by an electronics company in Colombo (PHOTO Neil Palmer/IWMI).

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second edition of the *Lindha Langa* newsletter. Here we aim to give you a glimpse of the International Water Management Institute's online discussion forum on water, development and the environment in Sri Lanka.

All of these stories can be read in full at **www.iwmi.cgiar.org/sri-lanka**

If you have suggestions for articles, please send them to **iwmi-comms@cgiar.org**

International Women's Day 2015

To mark International Women's Day 2015, *Lindha Langa* spoke to Badra Kamaladasa, a leading voice in the water sector. She is the current chair of the Sri Lanka Water Partnership (SLWP) and was previously Director General of the Government of Sri Lanka's Irrigation Department, where she was the first woman to take the helm.

Badra Kamaladasa (PHOTO Manoj Jayasuriya/IWMI).

Good groundwater management – key to Jaffna's revival

In the Jaffna Peninsula the only source of fresh water for most of the year is that drawn from underground reservoirs. However, human activities are threatening these fragile and precious aquifers with contamination. Damage to this limited and irreplaceable resource would be extremely difficult or impossible to reverse. How can we ensure this does not happen?

Pumping groundwater for agriculture in Jaffna (PHOTO Hamish John Appleby/IWMI).

(PHOTO Neil Palmer/IWMI).

IN PICTURES World Wetlands Day 2015

The Thalangama wetland (pictured) in Sri Lanka's administrative capital of Sri Jayawardenapura, is a popular site for birdwatchers and nature lovers.

Sri Lanka to be better prepared for drought

Sri Lanka recently suffered a year-long drought that destroyed over 80,000 hectares of paddy. But a new drought-monitoring tool being developed by IWMI and its partners should help the country prepare for dry spells in the future, reducing the impact of food production and livelihoods. The South Asia Drought Monitoring System (SA-DMS) will be launched during 2015.

IWMI and partners train Sri Lanka's flood managers

Disaster management agencies in Sri Lanka can now assess the likelihood of future floods with up-to-the-minute data from space. That's due to a workshop and capacity building program, *Earth observation technologies for flood-risk mapping, modeling and management*, co-organized by IWMI and local partners. It will help agencies plan relief efforts in advance, and potentially help reduce the impact of floods.

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IN PICTURES

Transforming waste into wealth

IWMI is working with the Central Environment Authority (CEA) and the Kurunegala Municipal Council (KMC), on a pilot project to turn biodegradable garbage into nutrient-rich organic compost.

(PHOTO Renuka Jeya Raj/IWMI).

IWMI HYDROLOGIST RECEIVES PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Lal Muthuwatta, a hydrologist and mathematical modeler at IWMI, received the President's Award for Scientific Publications for the research article, *Assessment of water availability and consumption in the Karkheh River Basin, Iran – using remote sensing and geo-statistics*.

Can reverse osmosis help tackle CKDu?

The presence of chemicals in groundwater has been linked to the prevalence of Chronic Kidney Disease of Unknown Origin (CKDu) in parts of Sri Lanka. Some experts believe that reverse osmosis (RO) – a technology used to filter out chemicals and heavy metals in water – could mitigate the spread of the disease. But others fear that filtering out the natural minerals in water could give rise to new health issues.

IWMI's Lal Muthuwatta (PHOTO National Research Council of Sri Lanka).

IWMI helps improve livelihoods of resettled community in Mullaitivu

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), which works to rehabilitate communities in post-conflict areas, invited IWMI to use its expertise to source a regular water supply for the recently resettled people in the village of Ponnagar, Mullaitivu. IWMI proposed construction of four wells from which water could be pumped into tanks using solar power.

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