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A Production aiming to save our own people from dreadful kidney disease known as CKDu'


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I am delighted to send my warmest wishes to the organisers and contributors of the "Pure Water for All" Project. We take pride as the University of Kelaniya to be a part of this noble effort through our Alumni Association in Victoria, Australia (KUAA) and the Department of Chemistry.

The foremost responsibility of any human being is to serve the fellow humans. It is a fundamental value that indisputably contributes to the advancement of our human society. The intellectual development is fruitless in the absence of a strong value base and spiritual development. It is heartening to see KUAA's collaboration in this initiative which testifies our intellectual community's commitment for upholding such long preserved values.

The Project "Pure Water for All" responds to a long standing problem of renal failure affecting thousands of people living in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka. Our academics have researched this problem over the years and have identified the causal factors underpinning this issue and how it has affected the
communities. It is estimated that there are about 150,000 people who suffer from chronic kidney disease in the North Central Province alone and a large number of people are dying each year as a direct result of renal failure.

In the absence of a long-term solution for this issue at the national level, the Project "Pure Water for All" is a welcoming response. I am truly proud of the University's contribution to the development of the water purification system that will enable the communities in the affected areas to obtain potable drinking water. As a national center of academic excellence, Kelaniya University has made notable developments responding to the needs of Sri Lankan society and has pioneered a number of new developments in Higher Education.

Nonetheless, without KUAA's significant involvement in mobilising resources, these innovations would not have seen much impact. KUAA's partnership with some reputed stakeholders for this project has made it possible to bring this technology to the communities in need.

Over the years, KUAA has engaged in a number of initiatives to support the undergraduates of the University of Kelaniya. Donating motorized wheelchairs to the undergraduates with mobility impairments has been the most recent among them.

On behalf of the University, I am extremely thankful to KUAA for rising up to the call of need and sustaining their connection with the University and the country.

I would also like to thank all the stakeholders involved in this noble partnership and send our warmest wishes for this initiative to succeed thereby achieving the esteemed goal of "pure water for all"

## Professor D M Semasinghe <br> Vce Chancellor <br> University of Kelaniya <br> Sri Lanka




It is with great pleasure and joy that I write this message for the Vishama Bhaga - Premiere in Melbourne. As KUAA, we are honoured to be a part of the change that we are going to make in the remote areas of Sri Lanka through the project "Pure water for all".

Over the past few years KUAA has pledged our support towards a number of charity projects and in KUAA we believe that giving is not just about making a donation. It is about making a meaningful difference. This project "Pure water for all" aims to address the ongoing issue renal failure that is affecting a significant number of community members living in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka. Thus, it attempts to provide a meaningful solution for a longstanding problem in Sri Lanka. As the president of KUAA, I had the opportunity of visiting the already existing water projects and witnessing with my own eyes, the difference that "pure water" can make in the lives of people who are living at the brink of renal failure.

I take this opportunity to appreciate hard work of all the stakeholders involved in this noble project and I wish this initiative all successes.

## Amali Boralugoda

President
Kelaniya University Alumni Association Australia (KUAA)

## ROSMEIITK ICLONC

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It is an honour and privilege to write this message as one of the past students and a current academic staff member of the University of Kelaniya to congratulate the organisers of the "Pure Water for $\mathrm{All}^{*}$ project for the contribution they are making to distribute clean water for the people affected by Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) in Sri Lanka.

According to the greatest words of the Lord Buddha, our precious human birth is very rare. As a human being, we are bestowed with the greatest potential of all creatures on earth to realise the Dhamma. However, the activities of a lifetime are just like raindrops falling on a pool of water: they make a few ripples and then get disappeared. Therefore, once we realise the unique opportunity that being born as a human offers, we will surely want to direct all our energy towards fulfilling our highest potential as a human being, and at the end of our lives, we need an answer to the question whether we have truly taken advantage of this precious human birth to cultivate wisdom and compassion. With this understanding, I , as a scientist, contributed to this project, "Pure Water for All" mainly to protect people who suffer from CKDu as no long-term solutions have been taken by the authorities in Sri Lanka.

Chronic Kidney Disease with unknown etiology (CKDu) has become a major health issue in the dry zone of Sri Lanka. Farmers from the NorthCentral Province (NCP) who use pesticides for farming drink contaminated water from shallow wells and had history of drinking from abandoned wells, are at higher risk of developing CKDu. Chronic low dose exposure to multiple heavy metals and agrochemicals is hypothesized as the etiological factor for CKDu. Heat stress and chronic repeated dehydration also may be an aggravating factor in disease progression. Heavy fertilizer and pesticide use pollute public water sources and groundwater. Paddy farmers after spraying their pesticides wash their applicators in nearby streams. Many villagers use these streams for drinking, bathing, cooking and washing clothes. A possible major cause for the increased incidence of CKDu is due to water pollution that has been caused by the exposure to agrochemicals through polluted water sources. The project "Pure Water for All" helps safeguarding thousands of peoples living in these areas.

Our research findings helped to prove that water sources in the affected areas in the NCP are contaminated with agrochemicals. Since there is no long-term solution for this disease, the only alternative is to provide pure water to save the lives of affected people in the NCP. Through this project, establishment of Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants in the affected villages in the NCP is implemented to combat the problem of agrochemical pollution and the lack of access to clean water sources. The recent statistics show that providing clean drinking water reduces the possibility of CKDu among farmers. Although costly, RO process is an excellent, and a viable method of water purification in providing access to clean water. I as a member of the academic staff of University of Kelaniya was fortunate enough to contribute to this project through the research findings that we published.

On behalf of the research group and the University Community, I take this opportunity to thank KUAA for taking appropriate action to remedy one of the burning health issues in Sri Lanka.

## Senior Professor Priyani Paranagama

Chair of Chemistry, the University of Kelaniya,
Director, Institute of Indigenous Medicine, University of Kelaniya,
President, Institute of Chemistry, Sri Lanka.







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# LUXURY LIVING VIBRANT NARRE WARREN 

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Pure Water for All" project is an initiative to Provide Potable Drinking Water for Communities in Sri Lanka with a High Prevalence of Chronic Kidney Disease

## BACKGROUND

## The problem of Chronic Kidney Disease in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, a member of the Commonwealth and popularly known as the Pearl of the Indian Ocean, is home to a population of 22 million people. Data from the 2011 Government Census of Population and Housing reveal variances in the incidence of poverty across the country. Nearly 45 percent of the country's population live on less than $\$ 5$ per day. The rural sector accounted for over 75 percent of the population and over 85 percent of poor Sri Lankans nationwide. Critically, many of those below or close to the poverty line are engaged in agriculture as their livelihood with extremely lower wages and often suffering or at risk of being affected by Chronic Kidney Disease.

Sri Lanka has been going through many challenges in the recent past including the civil war that lasted over three decades. Although
overshadowed by the prolonged civil war, significant prevalence of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKDu) has been a massive threat to a large number of Sri Lankan farmers living in rural villages. Sri Lanka has not had any historical issues related to CKDu of any kind. However, the onset of this issue was evident as Sri Lankan farmers gradually abandoned the traditional farming practices in 1970s with the arrival of modern techniques and chemicals. The North Central Province (NCP) is the largest province covering sixteen percent of the country and has two districts, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. According to government statistics, more than $65 \%$ of NCP. population depend on paddy cultivation. This has been the region where early agricultural self-sufficiency was accomplished over centuries as Sri Lankan farmers dotted the land with rice fields that today produce enough rice to feed the country's 22 million people.

## Causal Factors

Experts have pointed out diverse factors underpinning the issue of CKDu which include socio-economic, financial and ecological aspects. Nevertheless, those involved in efforts to address this issue believe that the main contributor of CKDu is the community's prolonged exposure to high concentrations of toxins from the heavy usage of agricultural chemicals that began in the 1970s. Over the last thirty years, the issue of CKDu has seen a gradual increase with the ever increasing use of an agricultural chemical named Glyphosate. The onset of the CKDu can be traced back to 1980s when the condition was first diagnosed in the remote farming community of Padawiya. Known as "Rajarata Kidney Disease" in Sri Lanka. This is approximately after 10 years since when Glyphosate was first introduced in Sri Lanka. Since then, this epidemic has killed more people in the NCP than the total number of deaths from the civil war that lasted over three decades.

Residues of heavy metals such as cadmium, arsenic, lead and mercury are now present in virtually all water, soil, and human samples.

Along with chemical exposure, dehydration, contaminated water from shallow wells and tube wells, modern diet, and extreme working conditions have also been postulated as contributing factors to the disease, which is now showing up increasingly in younger generations. The fear and associated stigma CKDu elicit have unfortunately spread beyond the NCP to neighbouring provinces. According
to the World Health Organization, more than $15 \%$ of the rural population in the NCP and the more southern Uva province are struggling with CKDu. In the North Central Province alone, where people exist amid low socio-economic conditions in the many small villages, approximately 150,000 CKDu cases are currently devastating families.

## Prevalence and Gravity of the Problem

While cases of the disease affecting women and children have been reported, the majority of CKDu victims are male farmers aged 40 to 60 . The impact this problem is having, not only in their lives and that of their families but also on their communities, is profound. Within a mere two years after initial diagnosis, almost $80 \%$ of CKDu patients suffer total kidney failure and ultimately die. Since a death represents not just the loss of a loved one, but also often the loss of a family's main breadwinner, the consequences go beyond personal tragedy families left in financial ruin, children forced to work rather than attend school, and rising crime rates.

Another alarming dimension of this problem is that there are 778 schools in the NCP and the children attending these schools are suffering from a shortage of pure drinking water withoutwhich they not only risk their health and
safety but also opportunity for education. This just goes on to show how almost every aspect of those people's lives has been badly affected. While the economical state is declining, education, nourishment, social happiness, and productivity of those people have been affected drastically.
Over the past 20 years, 23,000 people have died from CKDu in Sri Lanka. Sadly, sympathy and support owed its sufferers often yield to indifference as political and economic interests shroud this vital health issue. Successive governments have failed to offer a systematic solution to eliminate this problem. Some sporadic efforts were taken by the current government to regulate the import of Glyphosate. However, these piecemeal approaches have failed to provide a holistic solution to redeem farming communities in Sri Lanka from this silent killer.

## "PURE WATER FOR ALL" PROJECT DESCRIPTION

"Pure water for All" is a project that is being implemented by Shraddha TV in response to the need of potable drinking water in the CKDu affected communities in the NCP in Sri Lanka. The project aims at providing potable drinking water to all families and communities in the Province. To date, the project has set up thirty three water purification plants in the area contributing to positive outcomes by alleviating
the spread of CKDu as testified by the ongoing follow ups made by the project team. The water purification plants with the latest technology of Reverse Osmosis (RO) has the capability to eliminate harmful chemicals in the water making it suitable for human consumption. The process of setting up a water purification system in a selected location is carried out in a number of phases as outlined below:

## Key Aspects of Setting up a Water Purification Plant

The process commences with an initial examination of water sources in a selected village. This examination is done to evaluate the quality of water and its suitability for human consumption and the entire water quality testing process is carried out in the laboratories at the Department of Chemistry of the University of Kelaniya. After having evaluated the water according to the international standards, a notice is placed certifying the
water quality for human consumption. This allows people to know which water sources are clean and which ones are contaminated. This process is done encompassing all available water sources in any given village and the evaluation is done bi-annually. A mapping of all water sources andclassification of their quality is a key component for raising community awareness on where to find potable water.


The next phase of the process is the setting up of water purification plants. Based on the data gained on the first step of the project as well as information sourced from other responsible institutions, large water filtering plants are established in areas which has a high incidence of CKDu. Also, the initial mapping helps identifying areas with fewer drinking water sources. The plants are set up in the identified areas which also have a continued supply of water around the year. The technology used for the water purification plants helps removing the elements of water such as Arsenic, Cadmium, Florid, Mercury and hardness of water which are suspected to be the harmful elements contributing to CKDu.

Raising community awareness is the next most crucial aspect of the process once the water purification plant is set up. This is essential due to a number of reasons including the proper
maintenance, protecting the water sources from further contamination and encouraging people to consume only water purified and certified by a purification plant. Part of the process also pays special emphasis on promoting natural fertiliser for farming and helping communities to understand the importance of doing so. This is a process that is carried out by mobilising community leaders and conducting regular awareness activities in community, religious and

school settings.
In addition to the setting up of purification plants, deep wells are also constructed in selected schools in the area to get water from deep layers of earth for the consumption of those school children and teachers. By this, water can be supplied throughout the year while ordinary wells dry off during non-rainy seasons.

Photo Stories of "Pure water for all" - from Tears to Smiles



## Stories of success shared by the community members



We've been very lucky to have a water purification system built in our village. Most of our villagers suffered from the kidney disease before the water plant was set up. We are so happy that we've been provided with a solution to the biggest problem we've been facing. We would like to thank everyone who supported us with this.

## Bodina, School girl from Anuradhapura District



Sadly, almost $80 \%$ of our villagers were suffering from the kidney disease. We've been asking for help from many groups, but no one came to support. The water in the public taps are also contaminated and whenever we use them, people get sick. Urine tests became an everyday reality for many of us. Many men in our community died because of kidney disease. Now that we have a water plant set up in our village, we are out of many troubles. Now we are hopeful that we can protect the younger generation from the killer disease.
K. Suvineetha, Trincomalee District


The water purification plant has been a significant relief for us. We are no longer worried about people dying from the kidney disease. Before the water plant was set up, we lost about 25 people due to the kidney disease. People from the nearby villages are also benefitting from this water plant. People from Suhadapura, Mirishena, Thissapura and Udaragama come as far as 4 kms to fetch water from this plant.
A Villager from Polonnaruwa District


There's been a significant decline of the number of people affected by the kidney disease after the villagers started to use clean water produced by the new plant. We are extremely happy that we can let our children drink water with confidence now. The water sources in our area were so contaminated that many people used to die because of the kidney disease. We are extremely thankful to the people who helped us and we hope many other villages can also benefit from this service.
A Villager from Ehetugaswewa, Anuradhapura

## PROJECT SCALING UP PHASE

## Overall Goal

Based on the notable success manifested in the initial phases, the project team aims at setting up water purification plants in all the affected villages in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka depending on the availability of financial support available for this cause. The new phase of the project will be implemented by setting up water purification plants in the villages according to the priority list completed during the initial mapping. Resource mobilisation work will continue to seek as much support as possible to ensure all villages receive a water purification plant. In keeping with
its original vision, the new phase of the project aims to contribute to the following goal:
Supporting communities in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka to lead a happy and healthy life by eradicating Chronic Kidney Disease by promoting sustainable farming practices and consumption of purified water free from harmful chemicals.

The overall goal will be achieved by conducting following activities:

- Mapping out areas with high prevalence of CKDu (completed)
- Setting up water purification systems in all communities identified by the mapping
- Setting up deep wells in the schools identified through the initial mapping
- Educating the communities about the importance of consuming safe drinking water
- Raising community awareness on sustainable and eco-friendly farming practice

The project team completed the initial mapping activity and has prioritised 10 villages for setting up water purification plants in the areas with high prevalence of CKDu. The mapping has identified a total of over 100 villages requiring a water purification system.

This project is a joint effort of Shraddha TV, Sri Lanka Civil Security Department, Biochemistry Unit University of Kelaniya and University Alumni Association in Australia (KUAA). KUAA is the project partner mobilising resources for this initiative in Australia.

## PROJECT COST (ESTIMATE PER ONE WATER PURIFICATION UNIT)

The cost of constructing one water purification unit in a village costs an estimated Rs. 1.35 million (AU\$ 11,250 ) which includes only the costs of equipment as the community members and Civil Security Department will extend labour support for the construction. Most importantly, the Civil Security Department will ensure the security of the water purification plant

We would greatly appreciate your generous contributions to this noble cause by making a direct deposit to the following account number exclusively set up for this project. All proceeds will be directed to the "Pure Water for All" project under the very strict guidance of Kelaniya University Alumni Association in Australia.

For more information about the Pure Water for All Project, please contact the following team members.

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## MELBOURNE PROJECTS LINEUP

## Pure water for All' Project Line up - Melbourne

KUAA's Primary objective is to build 10 Pure water for all projects for 10 CKDu affected villages in Sri Lanka during the first round which has started in April 2019.

Within 4 months we have got an overwhelming support from many kind hearted donors across Melbourne wo have pledged to build 7 Plants. 3 projects are on construction stage and below listed 4 projects will be commenced construction soon.

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His inimitable style of story telling through frames has set him apart from other directors. Novel themes, storylines and presentations different to the hackneyed melodramas around family problems are comerstones of Lalith Ratnayake's creations.

The award winning director of 'Arungal' and 'Teth Saha Viyali' fame recently engaged in his debut cinematic venture with 'Vishama Bhaga'(The Other Half). The film had already won recognition at a number of international film festivals - the latest being five awards at the Festigious International Film Festival in Los Angeles.
'Vishama Bhaga' won the First Time Director (Feature), Best Narrative Feature and Best Picture awards. It also earned Pansilu Wickramaratna the Best Young Actor award and the Best Supporting Actress award for Kaushalya Fernando.
*I always follow my own style of story telling whenever I take on a production. I express my feelings through a series of images captured from a camera lens. Unlike some directors who shape their productions according to the structures of certain international film festivals, I was truthful to my emotions. I believe that the jury of these film festivals recognized this feature and found it as a refreshing change," Ratnayake spelled out 'Vishama Bhaga's success.

As the lead judge of the Festigious International Film Festival, Shaw Jones puts it 'Vishama Bhaga' is a "powerful film which shines a light on environmental injustice while simultaneously celebrating the human connection and our power to overcome adversity. The cinematography is superb, and Ratnayake weaves this stirring story with stunning direction; I was blown away by the beautiful performances of the stellar cast."

This is not the first time that the film had won international recognition. It was among the best five films at the 22nd Shanghai International Film Festival. Known as the only category A international film festival in China and one of the largest in Asia, the Shanghai International Film Festival was held in China in June.

Ratnayake also made it the top five contestants competing for the Best Script Writer Award at the Asia New Talent Awards at the event. Other productions which had been nominated for the Asia New Talent Awards were from countries like Iran, Japan, India, and China. Pansilu too was among the nominees for the Best Actor Award. He competed with actors from Japan, India, the Philippines and China to earn a position among the top five.

Later the film won the titles of Best Supporting Actor (Jackson Anthony), Cinematographer (Palitha Perera), Best Director (Lalith Ratnayake) and Best Narrative Film at Asian Cinematography International Film Festival in the Philippines. They would be receiving their certificates for these accolades at the premiere of the film which will be held in Melbourne, Australia, on August 24.
'Vishama Bhaga' relates the story of twin brothers who embody different personalities and traits. The lead role, Ruwansiri, is portrayed by Pansilu while his brother, Pankaja, portrays the other twin's character, Kamalsiri.
${ }^{*}$ I interviewed 76 twins and finalized four sets of twins for the roles. However there was an unexpected issue with my final selection. Pansilu and Pankaja were the sons of one of my friends. So I finally selected them for the roles because I felt that I would be able to guide them easily through the roles. Pansilu also had the features I needed for the character. Most of the film deals with moods and emotions rather than dialogues. Pansilu was able to bring out his emotions through his facial expressions well. He was good at listening to my instructions, following my lead and giving me just what I wanted from the character," Ratnayake explained.

The film was shot in 2018 and the post production process was completed in early 2019. It was produced by Ven Aludeniye Subodhi thera on behalf of Shraddha TV under the guidance and blessings of Ven Kiribathgoda Gnanananda thera.
"It is very difficult to find a producer for an artistic film like this as they are always looking for commercial gains. However both Ven Aludeniye Subodhi thera and Ven Kiribathgoda Gnanananda thera were only interested in making a quality production embodying a meaningful message," Ratnayake said.

Speaking to the Daily News Kaushalya Fernando said that the most challenging aspect of the film was that it had very little dialogue for the cast to recite.
"A majority of the story had to be related through actions and facial expressions. It is a very sensitive tale which relates that though two people may seem alike and get the same quality of education, they embody different personalities. They are both judged through formal education. Though it may seem like a simple tale, it has a lot of depth. The director has brought out his message in such subtle manner that it is narrated to the audience like a poem," she said adding that she believes that steps should be taken to screen the film soon in Sri Lanka while the hype of winning the awards is still fresh in the moviegoers' minds.
'Vishama Bhaga' also stars Jackson Anthony as Hemachandra, Hemasiri Liyanage as the grandfather, Priyantha Sirikumara as Bandara and Thilakshini Ratnayake as the music teacher, Sakunthala.


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| $25^{\text {th }}$ August | 2.00 PM | ASTOR Theatre | MELBOURNE |
| $31^{\text {x1 }}$ August | 6:30 PM | Regal Theatre, Kensington Park | ADELAIDE |
| 1*September | 6:30 PM | Regal Theatre, Kensington Park | ADELAIDE |
| $7{ }^{\text {di }}$ Septernber | 6:15 PM | Event Cinemas, Castle Hill | SYDNEY |
| $8^{\text {b }}$ September | 6:15 PM | Event Cinemas, Castle Hill | SYDNEY |
| $14^{\text {t }}$ September | 7.00 PM | Community Centre, Hamlyn Heights | GEELONG (MELBDURNE) |
| $15^{\text {r }}$ September | 6:30 PM | Grand Signet Cinema | PERTH |
| $28^{\text {t }}$ September | 4.00 PM | AMC Auditorium, Launceston | HOBART |
| $29^{\text {t }}$ September | 4.00 PM | Stanley Burbury Theatre, Sandy Bay | HOBART |
| $13^{\text {li }}$ October | 5.00 pm | CINEPLEX Australia, Belmoral | BRISBANE |
| $3^{\text {nr }}$ November | 3.00 PM | Cultural Centre, <br> The Australian National University | CANBERRA ACT |



## New Zealand

| DATE | TIME | LOCATION | CITY |
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