

Convenient Access to Clean Water

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EDITORIAL

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I completed my first year of graduate school and had one more year left. I didn't want to take out a loan, so I applied for a research assistant position in May to get free tuition. I left the rest in God's hands.

Days passed, weeks flew by, yet I heard nothing. I prayed, believing God heard me and would answer. My family thought I should take out another loan, but I was confident that God would grant me the desire of my heart.

August came, and still nothing. I prayed, still believing God would hear and answer my request. A week later, I got a call for an interview for the research assistant job. I was so nervous but made sure to prepare for the meeting.

I showed up to the interview on time and waited. A few minutes later, a woman with the biggest smile introduced herself, then asked if I wanted cake. Cake? I was here to do an interview, but she was so nice, I obliged. I followed her into the office kitchen, and she told me the office just had a birthday celebration and proceeded to cut a slice and brought me milk.

She said, "I looked over your resume, and I like you—you're hired!" I was speechless! She told me the start date on her way out. "See you then," she said at the front door. I didn't do an interview, and she liked me? I wept as I walked to my car and silently thanked God for His grace and mercies. He answered my prayers, and I went to school for free. When you are faced with any circumstance, talk to God about your needs and your wants. He may not answer immediately, but He always will answer. It may be a yes, a no, or even wait, but trust in God; He knows what's best for His children.



Kimi-Roux James

Media Relations Manager **ADRA International**

MESSAGE COVER STORY He Always Answers Convenient Access To Clean Water

Seelavathi (48) lives with her husband and two daughters in Aharanda, a small village in the Wilagamuwa Divisional Secretariat where agriculture is a way of life. Seelavathi and her husband are farmers themselves, but since they do not have their own land for agriculture, they cultivate in another person's land and pay him half of their profit.

Seelavathi's family and six other families in her village did not have convenient access to clean water for years. Even though each household in the village has a well, they dry up between August and October every year leaving the families with no water. They had to walk more than 5 kilometers every day to fetch water from the nearby river. "For years we have been suffering without water, especially during the dry season. We had to walk kilometers and kilometers to fetch water. To get clean drinking water, we had to walk even further to the Bowser truck that has been assigned by the Government. It takes more than three hours for us to fetch the water and come back home, and it's extremely tiring," says Seelavathi describing the dreadful situation. In addition to these desperate circumstances, Seelavathi has been suffering from poor health and was recently diagnosed with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). CKD is highly prevalent in this area and is believed to be connected to the long-term consumption of unclean water.

Through the Assisting Communities in Creating Environmental and Nutritional Development (ACCEND) project, ADRA established a brandnew hand pump in Aharanda earlier this year. This pump is one of the 100 new hand pumps being established in Monaragala and Matale districts of Sri Lanka through the project, of which 60 have already been completed. Furthermore, the project has also refurbished 262 existing non-functional hand pumps and will establish ten more water pumps that will be powered by renewable energy sources.

Since the establishment of the hand pump, Seelavathi and her community have been able to easily access water to fulfill their daily needs such as drinking, bathing, washing, and cooking. "The ACCEND project has done so much for our village. I cannot express how grateful I am. Thank you so much for taking the initiative to serve people like us. We do not have to walk far to obtain water anymore, which has saved so much of our time as well," says Seelavathi expressing her profound gratitude towards the project.

Funded by the European Union, the ACCEND project is implemented jointly by ADRA Sri Lanka and Oxfam Sri Lanka. With the support of the Sri Lankan government, the project aims to improve and uplift water, sanitation, hygiene, health, and nutrition in Matale, Monaragala, and Nuwara Eliya districts.









Rasika Fernando Project Manager - ACCEND Project

I joined ADRA Sri Lanka in October 2017 as a Field Officer for the ACCEND project in Wilgamuwa, Matale. Before joining ADRA, I worked for Plan International, gaining a lot of experience in community development. Building on that experience, I have been able to offer ideas and use my skills to help the ACCEND project run smoothly.

In time, due to my work ethic and the progress that I had made during my time at ADRA, I was promoted to the position of the Project Manager. This was a turning point in my life and a chance to advance my career. I always try to do my best for the community through ADRA, and I think it's my role designed by God to use my skills to develop the communities in which we work.

ADRA has friendly staff who understand the programs and the needs of the community. They are flexible, making it easy to work together. I have had many chances to learn new things by working with ADRA, and I am very happy and privileged to be working here.

NEWS & HIGHIGHTS

Response to the Third Wave of COVID-19

In June, as part of ADRA's emergency response for COVID-19, ADRA Sri Lanka donated multipara monitors, water heaters, and trollies to the Colombo North Teaching Hospital in Ragama. ADRA also donated multipara monitors, oxygen concentrators, water boilers, electric kettles, emergency LED lamps, hospital beds, and mattresses to the Divisional Hospital in Dompe. The donation of these items – a long-prevailing need of the hospitals was made possible through the joint funding of ADRA International and the ADRA Asia Regional Office.

I Launch of the BRAVE project to Build Resilience and Vaccine Awareness

To contribute towards creating a pandemic resilient Sri Lanka, ADRA Sri Lanka launched the Building Resilience and Vaccine Awareness (BRAVE) project in June. In collaboration with interfaith groups, the project plans to raise awareness and increase access to vaccines in high-risk communities. The interfaith pandemic relief team (IPRT), which will be established through the project, will work with and increase the capacity of faith leaders to lead forums and identify families with the most vulnerable members who will be prioritized for vaccination, such as the elderly, frontline healthcare workers, and law enforcement officials. Each forum will focus its efforts to address COVID-19 preventative measures, debunk vaccine myths, and provide accessible resources about vaccines. ADRA also plans to get a Seventh-day Adventist youth group involved to translate video messages about COVID-19 prevention awareness into sign language for the deaf community.





ADRA's Response to the Recent Floods

Ten districts of Sri Lanka experienced severe floods and landslides during the beginning of June this year due to the south-western monsoon rains. According to the Disaster Management Center (DMC) of Sri Lanka, 271,110 people were affected, whilst 26,806 people were displaced. Furthermore, structural damage to several buildings were also reported in several areas.

Even after the rains subsided and the water receded, the lives of countless people had been severely affected. As families began returning to their homes, they discovered they had lost most of their belongings. Through the needs assessments conducted in the flood-affected Kalutara and Colombo districts, ADRA discovered that families needed various household, kitchen, and personal care items that could help them restart their lives gradually. As a response initiative, ADRA activated its National Emergency Management Plan (NEMP) to distribute Non-Food Item (NFI) kits to those affected in the Kalutara and Colombo districts. The NFI kits consisted of essentials such as mosquito nets, towels, sanitary pads, bed sheets, buckets, cups, and other toiletries. These kits were designed to meet SPHERE humanitarian response standards, as well as the contextual needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

ADRA coordinated with the DMC and the relevant District Secretariats in the Kalutara and Colombo districts to distribute 415 NFI kits to the most vulnerable families affected. ADRA carried out these relief efforts in the Kalutara district with the help of a local non-governmental organization called Nature Volunteers Association.

Violet Kusuma was one of the beneficiaries from Waliwita in the Colombo District who was severely affected by the floods. Most of her children have married and moved away, but she lives with one of her sons, who is a person with a disability. To earn a living, she sells coconut and other fruits from her garden in a small hut by the side of the road. "We are so grateful for your assistance. We had to move out of our house and live in the hut due to the floods. The water has receded now, and we have moved back to our house, but all our cooking utensils and other belongings have been severely damaged. So, these items that you have donated mean a lot to us," says Violet.

This emergency response was funded by ADRA International through the Disaster and Famine Relief Offering (DFRO) and the Sri Lanka Mission of Seventh-day Adventists.



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