

Livelihood Improvements and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)

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Since establishment in 2001 the Sri Lanka Water Partnership (SLWP) with its primary mission of promoting IWRM has approached it holistically and in an integrated manner addressing various segments of the target community concomitantly. This has ensured wider dissemination utilizing the active segments such as youth and gender groups, school children and farmer leaders etc while dealing with local agency staff at local and supervisory level. These groups have been seen to be more committed once convinced and often are the drivers of opinion making and influencing change within local communities. As an add-on value similar links are formed with local authorities for political and institutional support. Concurrently the availability of knowledge products in both Sinhala and Tamil provided free of cost including those of a technical nature developed in collaboration with associated state and specialist institutions give validity and legitimacy to evidence based advocacy that SLWP promotes. These approaches have received significant success rates at low cost given that SLWP is an association of Partners who contribute effort and time mostly on a voluntary basis. Its river sand mining (RSM), School "*Water Messenger*", Rain water harvesting (RWH), Urban wetlands, Drinking water quality, Gender & Youth, Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) programmes have received extensive support both from local authorities and state agencies. SLWP is one of the few non state sector players whose activities in most instances have cost sharing arrangements in place even with state agencies due to mutually beneficial outcomes. Strong links and easy access to state and local institutions have been recognized by many corporates and SLWP has been able to implement many collaborative activities under CSR initiatives covering diverse aspects such as drinking water quality, school sanitation, RWH, CCA, capacity development and employment. Some of the major sponsors have been NDB Bank, Janashakthi PLC, Brandix, Golden Key, Biodiversity Sri Lanka/Sampath Bank, Hatton National Bank, Unilever, Premier Exports Ltd etc. Service organizations such as Lions, Rotary have and do collaborate on many civic/community based activities while UNDP too has provided significant support for many of the above programmes given the extensive expert resource pool available to SLWP from its partner institutions and the fact that it is hosted by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) which provides all financial services and thus international level financial probity and auditing services by international auditors

IWRM is often misconstrued as being only about sustainable water use, better ecosystem services and improvements to productivity especially in agriculture. The better living and livelihood improvements through use of adopted best practices and health/ sanitation improvements are significant. The concern for IWRM and the environment and especially gender based capacity building on added income generating activities generally support a savings culture followed by need to access credit for improvement and consolidation. Financial savings as a habit not only provide a safety net for sustaining lifestyles but also impacts on consumption patterns. In turn reduced consumption beneficially impacts directly on natural resources use including of water resources, energy and reduced pollution including through solid waste. Promotion of savings including credit programmes that compel savings and adjustment to lifestyles have long term impact on both the individual and community. It is apparent that one of the supportive reasons for Banks and financial institutions to support such programmes are linked to such long term broadly impacting objectives.

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