

## VanLanka Community Foundation : Promoting Indigenous Rice Farming and Ancient Irrigation Rehab in Sri Lanka

Surrey, Canada Panama, Sri Lanka



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Year Founded:

2012

**Organization type:**

hybrid

Project Stage:

Growth

**Budget:**

\$10,000 - \$50,000

Website:

<http://www.vanlanka.net/Ongoing.html>

**Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/ballanmaldigana?ref=hl>

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### Project Summary

#### Elevator Pitch

**Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.**

We promote growing traditional rice free from agrochemicals in Sri Lanka. We encourage farmers to save this rice for family consumption and save seeds for next season. We collaborate with Farm organization to strengthen their management capacity by providing funds to repair ancient reservoir.

**WHAT IF - Inspiration: Write one sentence that describes a way that your project dares to ask, "WHAT IF?"**

Abundance of water in this reservoir is important to farmers but is almost a matter of life and death for wild life.

#### About Project

**Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?**

Rising cost of farming as a result of using hybrid seeds, agrochemicals, chemical fertilizer and marketing barriers have driven farmers in remote rural villages to indebtedness and poverty. Extensive use of agrochemicals has caused health risks and has been hazardous to the environment. In addition, this has decreased productivity of farm labour and created many social challenges. Farm organizations lack capacity to deal with these issues.

**Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!**

Indigenous varieties of crops have sustained human for generations in Sri Lanka. We assist farmers to grow these varieties which are scientifically proven minimize health hazards. These varieties can be grown with minimum cost. We train farmers to use natural soil healing systems, use of organic manure, integrated pest and disease management systems and the use of family labour. Repair to ancient irrigation systems allows farmers to use stored rain water during dry season. We strengthen the capacity of farm organization to implement this program.

Educating youth and women in using communication technology, we engage them in this process as a robust sustainable strategy.

## Sustainability

### **Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution's plan to ensure financial sustainability?**

VanLanka Community Foundation provides funding on collaborative basis. Current funding plan is 5000 -10,000 annually through regular supports from various means. We will expand the funding plans to scale up and scale out project activities. Volunteer's commitment is our biggest asset as 100% professional input is from volunteers. Our admin charges are less than 2% and all funds go to project activities in Sri Lanka.

### **Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?**

There are many organizations and individuals working in these initiatives. Most of them do advocacy, research, business and social support in distributing traditional seeds, marketing support which keeps farmers initiatives in the passive state. Our initiative is one hand, is a holistic approach that is looking into irrigation infrastructure, food security and health of farm families and the environmental conservation as well. Strengthening the management capacity of the village farm organization as the local implementation mechanism is the speciality our project is trying to demonstrate.

## Team

### **Founding Story**

This Project began with our youth coordinator Udeepa's interest in the ancient irrigation system in Sri Lanka. Small, medium to large rain water storage lakes, spillways, sluice gates and canals have been taken Sri Lanka's thousands of years to create. The complexity of this system is an engineering marvel that has baffled the early surveyors who gazed up on it. Unfortunately, rural farmers lack funding to reconstruct their small scale reservoirs which have been abandoned. VanLanka found one of these lakes in this remote village of Panama. Udeepa was interested donating his own money for this initiative. VanLanka saw this as an opportunity to collaborate with farmers to combine these interests with the promotion of traditional farming.

### **Team**

Sumana Wijeratna volunteers in fundraising, partner liaising, project planning & monitoring, reporting and volunteer coordination. Samantha Anderson, a board member of VanLanka, assists as the sustainable development advisor. Udeepa Wijeratna volunteers as the youth coordinator and the irrigation rehabilitation coordinator. Saminda Kumara, the chairman of farm organization of Panama is the farm coordinator of Panama Sri Lanka.

**Source URL:** <https://www.changemakers.com/node306408/entries/vanlanka-community-foundation>