

MazhaPolima	
Title/ Name of work undertaken	Participatory Well Recharge Programme
Location	Thrissur District, Kerala
Organisation/NGO/Persons responsible to undertake the work	Mazhapolima is a community based well recharge programme, initiated by the district administration in collaboration with the Panhayat Raj Institutions in the District. Networking NGOs/CBOs, households, departments and agencies, research institutions, private sector and all other key stakeholders, either as water user or as water provider/planner is fundamental to the programme.
Type of intervention	<p>In the rainy seasons, the roof top rain water is led through pipes with a filter at the end, filtered rain water is led to open dug wells to replenish the aquifers. The programme envisages recharging of about 4.5 lakh open wells in the district to ensure sustainable access to water. Mazhapolima when implemented successfully, would emerge as a global best practice in well centric approach towards drinking water sustainability.</p> <p>The overall goal of the programme is to contribute to enhanced health and welfare of the community through improved access to drinking water.</p> <p>The specific objectives of the programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) recharge ground water (ii) improved drinking water availability and service level across the year (iii) significantly reduce the impact of drought and consequent public spending on supply of drinking water in tankers to the water stressed regions in the district (iv) improved agricultural production and productivity. (v) The programme would also envisage strengthening of the decentralization programme and the PRIs, in discharging their basic mandate in water sector through community efforts that are cost effective and sustainable.

<p>Outcome</p>	<p>Mazhapolima was initiated in 2009 by the Thrissur district administration in collaboration with Panchayati Raj institutions to ensure water security to households. In the first 3.5 years, around 8500 open wells were recharged across 53 Gram Panchayats, providing drinking water to approximately 40,000 people. The programme was run by a team of dedicated people headquartered at the Thrissur district office.</p> <p>The Mazhapolima story would not be complete without Jos Raphael, a water enthusiast and leader of Mazhapolima from the very start, who is relentless in his pursuits. He is passionate, almost obsessed with the idea of recharging open wells. His infectious energy and excitement is palpable when anything remotely related to Mazhapolima, open well recharge, water conservation or rainwater harvesting is brought up. At the same time, Jos is a practitioner in the truest sense. He is disillusioned with the intricacies of science and strategy. He believes in the power of community mobilisation and dedication to a cause. His logic is simple: “if you have good intent, if you know how to mobilise people towards a cause, good things will happen”.</p> <p>Jos has worked tirelessly to maintain a strong relationship with the Thrissur district administration, keeping the passion for the programme alive through changing district officials. He grabs every opportunity to advocate Mazhapolima in public forums, puts up exhibition stalls during festivals like ‘<u>Pooram</u>’ and speaks to schools and colleges in other districts. He had help from the media too with Kerala's largest circulating newspaper Malayala Manorama publicising the initiative. He also had the advantage of a proactive bureaucrat, Kurien Baby, who was the collector of Thrissur.</p> <p>Kurien was instrumental in setting up the programme and the project team at the district. A senior civil servant, he recognised the value of decentralised water management and recharging of open wells, and was a true champion for Mazhapolima.</p>
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Photographs



Example of a typical Rooftop RWH Open Well Recharge system, setup under the Mazhapolima program, at a home in Thrissur district.

