



Munasinghe Institute for Development
making development more sustainable (MDMS)

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ISSUE 3: 2012

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This newsletter aims to disseminate information to the MIND family comprising MIND scholars, fellows and friends, who are helping us to make development more sustainable in Sri Lanka and the whole world.

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FEATURING DR. SHANAKA HERATH



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Published by the Munasinghe Institute for Development (MIND), Colombo.

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Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of MIND or the authors of articles.

Congratulations to Dr Shanaka Herath! He was a MIND scholar during 2003-2004, when he was a 3rd year undergraduate at the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo. Upon completion of the special degree in economics, Shanaka completed a master's degree in public policy and management at Carnegie Mellon University, Australia. He later joined Vienna University of Economics and Business in Austria on a funded PhD position to complete his graduate studies. He defended the PhD in 2011 (with distinction) in Regional Economics (specialization: Housing markets). He has a number of journal and conference publications in the areas of urban economics, housing economics and housing policy.

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During his doctoral studies, Shanaka travelled to several countries including Sweden, Poland, Italy, South Korea, the Netherlands and Spain in order to present his research findings in scientific conferences. His research work leading to the PhD within the specialisation of 'housing markets', focused mainly on hedonic modeling of house prices as well as issues related to the efficiency of housing markets. These studies also led to two empirical applications of the hedonic methodology to housing markets in Vienna (in Austria) and the Ede Municipality (in the Netherlands). Shanaka collaborated with Prof. Gunther Maier and Prof. Dieter Gstach (both at Vienna University of Economics and Business) in most of his research work during this period.

Shanaka is currently a Research Associate at the City Futures Research Centre. City Futures is one of Australia's top urban policy research centres, and also the research wing of the Faculty of the Built Environment at The University of New South Wales, Australia. In this position, Shanaka contributes to several research projects within the research program on housing policy and practice. One of these projects focuses on addressing concentration of disadvantage in Australia and evaluates consequences of and responses to the spatial disadvantage in Australian cities. Other projects he is involved in are on public housing stock transfers in Australia and on financing of affordable housing in Australia. These research projects are funded by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI).

Through his other collaborative research, Shanaka examines psychological aspects of housing demand as well as value of green amenities in cities. The former theme is aimed at explaining how varying preferences of individuals combine to form demand for housing as a composite commodity. In the latter, he uses spatial hedonic methods to examine impact of proximity to the green belt on house prices in Vienna. While this research can assist us in understanding how much the individuals desire to live close to green amenities, it also sheds light on important urban planning priorities.



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MAKING A PRESENTATION AT A WORKSHOP