



**WaterHealth International
Sri Lanka Tsunami Relief Project**

**Notes from the Field
11/14/04**

Last week saw us getting 5 sites up in the Batticaloa district¹, it was a great feeling to get so many systems up and running after all the work it took to get this project going! We definitely have momentum going at this point. Here are just a few of my favorite pictures and stories:

Baduria Mosque:



Baduria mosque was one of the first mosques we visited—where Tim made the discovery that mosques were siting their drinking water wells next to their septic systems. I remember us waving our hands around trying to translate the concept of groundwater flow---“in the soil, the water mixes freely”. Hygiene and cleanliness are important values in Islam, as the religion requires that you wash before prayers five times a day, so I did my best to emphasize: “This water is impure! And it can make your children sick”.

Tim configured this system so that it pumps water to tanks on the roof of the mosque, providing them with purified running water throughout the site. While he was up there, he noticed a nursery school across the wall from our new systems.

Being the lovable guy that he is, Tim soon got the children clapping and waving at him for the camera. We went to visit the school later and found out that 75 children are there. The mosque is going to arrange for them to get access to the water from our system, most likely through their own tap on the other side of the wall.



¹ A sixth system has been placed, but is not yet fully operational.

Mohideen Jumah Masjid:



Nestled among mango trees, we finished our first installation in Kattankudi here on Tuesday and the mosque held a grand opening on Friday after congregation. It was very exciting as I was asked to cut the ribbon and turn the system on for its “maiden run” (of course, we’d already filled the tanks that morning to test the water quality).



Afterwards, everyone crowded around to drink the water. We celebrated afterwards with a delicious Sri Lankan meal cooked at a member’s house and answered lots of questions about the system and how it worked. One man asked us “will I still need to boil my water?” and was astounded to find out that the water was the same quality as bottled mineral water. Another person asked if he could buy a system to start his own water store!

We’ll have to get back to him on that one.