

HARSHA M. DE SILVA

SUMMARY

Development economist, entrepreneur and member of the current parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Professional and academic focus is on fiscal policy issues on the macro side and creating efficiencies in rural markets using information and communication technology [ICT] on the micro side. Has over twenty years experience in economic policy, development finance, infrastructure financing and delivery and socio-political research. Played a catalytic role in the intellectual debate on public policy in Sri Lanka with own television show, frequent writing and public speaking for a number of years. Has been on the visiting faculties of Universities of Moratuwa and PIM Sri Jayawardenepura, Sri Lanka. Recipient of 2010 Eisenhower Fellowship awarded to twenty emerging leaders from around the world [postponed to 2011]. Recipient of Gates Foundation supported research grant through the University of California, Irvine. Featured researcher of Canada's International Development Research Centre. International adviser to pan-African university network on ICT in agriculture. Founder of Govi Gnana Seva farmer advisory service and cofounder of Survey and Market Research Team, now The Nielsen Company, Sri Lanka. Deeply involved in the management of the National Council on Mental Health [Sahanaya]. Paul Harris Fellow Rotarian.

EDUCATION

University of Missouri - Columbia, **Ph.D. Economics** [1993], M.A. Economics [1993]
Dissertation: An Investigation of a Financial Liberalization Policy in a Financially Repressed Economy: Case of Sri Lanka. Professor W Whitney Hicks.
Truman State University, B.S. Business Management [1988]
Other: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Executive Program on Evaluating Programs [2006]

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2001 - to date

**Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia,
Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand**

Consultant Economist

- Consultant Lead Economist, **LIRNEasia** since September 2004 [www.lirneasia.net]. Founded in 2004 it is an economics-of-ICT think tank active across twelve emerging Asian economies.
 - **2010-12**: Consultant intellectual lead on Teleuse@BOP4: Six-country study on use of ICT by the bottom of the pyramid to enhance their livelihoods and Inclusive Knowledge Based Economies: Study on ICT innovations to improve the efficiency and inclusiveness of agricultural chains in India, Bangladesh, Thailand and Sri Lanka.
 - **2008-10**: Intellectual lead on a large multi-country research project on impact of ICT on economic efficiency among the poor. Ongoing ICT in agriculture research in India with Institute for Financial Management and Research and in Eastern Sri Lanka with USAID. Understanding multifaceted issues on emerging mobile-based applications.
 - **2006-08**: Led Asian team of researchers on how reforms in telecom infrastructure are impacting on the use and affordability of mobile services by the poor across five countries. Studied ICT contributions in improving life conditions of those engaged in agriculture.
 - **2004-06**: Led projects on analyzing programmes to extend telecom coverage to the rural households in India; on assessing Asia's first least-cost subsidy auction designed for rural telecom connectivity in Nepal; and on designing and developing the framework to assess impact of telecom liberalization and ICT benefits to the poor across six countries in Asia.
- Consultant to Intelcon on multi-country mobile-money user study to understand the potential of this evolving concept for the **International Financial Corporation**. [2010]
- Project Leader and Principal Researcher on "Action Research Pilot on ICT for Livelihood" to understand how rural farmers use mobile phone based information to make strategic business decisions, **International Development Research Centre [IDRC]**, Canada. [ongoing]

H A R S H A M . D E S I L V A

- Principal Researcher on study on "m-Finance and Consumption Smoothing among the Poor with Irregular Income Streams" funded by the **Gates Foundation** through the **Institute for Money Technology and Financial Inclusion at the University of California, Irvine**. [ongoing]
- International consultant with **IDRC**, Canada to study the impact of ICT infrastructure and services on rural livelihoods in seven Asian countries. [2008-09]
- Founder, angel financier and implementer of **Govi Gnana Seva** [agricultural knowledge Service: GGS], an innovative ICT enabled link across the agriculture value chain to find a viable solution to the twin problems of farmer poverty and high cost of agricultural produce in Sri Lanka. In the process of creating a virtual forward market for perishable produce. [ongoing]
- International consultant with **UNESCAP** on public-private partnerships for provision of ICT infrastructure to rural and disadvantaged communities in developing Asia-Pacific. [2007-08]
- International consultant with **USAID-International Resources Group** [IRG] for Government of Nepal on private sector participation in hydropower infrastructure development. [2006]
- Senior Consultant Economist with the Public Interest Program Unit [PIPU] of the **Ministry of Economic Reform of the Government of Sri Lanka** [GoSL]. As PIPU's senior most economist, played key role in the liberalization of the telecom and petroleum sectors and in establishing the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka, PUCSL. [2002-04]
- Advisor to the Rural Knowledge Centre Project and Regional Telecommunications Network Project [rural telecom infrastructure program] of the **eSri Lanka project**. Principal contributor to the original design of "*Vishwa Gnana Kendra*" now renamed as "*Nenasela*". [2002-04]
- International Consultant with the **Asian Development Bank** to the Department of Power, Royal Government of Bhutan on rural electrification infrastructure and network expansion as a part of the liberalization of the country's energy sector. [2002-03]
- Lead Strategy Specialist [International basis] to **USAID** consultancy to design a National Operations Room [NOR] for GoSL. Funded by the World Bank. [2002-04]
- Lead Economic Consultant with **PricewaterhouseCoopers** [International basis] to **UNDP** funded thematic monitoring system to be built in to the National Operations Room. [2004]
- In the Panel of consultants to the **World Bank** funded Renewable Energy for Rural Economic Development project on providing rural citizens access to electricity. [2004-06]
- Lead Conceptualizer and Designer of **World Bank** funded Sri Lanka Development Gateway [LkDG]. Created a platform to become the centrepiece for exchange of knowledge among virtual communities in support of sustainable development in Sri Lanka. [2002-04]
- Creator of unique ICT enabled prototype for auctioning tea. Named "**electronic open outcry spot auction platform for tea**" this model was selected over a dozen global competitors by the Colombo Tea Traders Association to be implemented at the world's largest auction centre for tea in Colombo. However, implementation is delayed. [2001]
- Independent economist with a focus on macroeconomic management, poverty and economic reform in Sri Lanka. [1993-present]

1997 - 2000 **The Nielsen Company** [then OMS, before that SMART] **Colombo, Sri Lanka** *Cofounder and Joint Managing Director*

- Co-founded and built Survey and Market Research Team (SMART) that is today the **largest market and socioeconomic research agency** in Sri Lanka; The Nielsen Company. Sold the stake in the company in December 2000 to VNU (the owning company of The Nielsen Company) via ORG Marg. Besides running the firm as joint MD, led bulk of the research spanning the region for clients including multinationals, donor agencies, governments and corporate entities.
- Started the country's only retail store audit; developed the country's first business confidence index LMD-BCI; together with the **World Economic Forum**, Harvard University and the Institute of Policy Studies incorporated Sri Lanka in to the Global Competitiveness Report.

1993 - 1997 **DFCC Bank** **Colombo, Sri Lanka** *Economist, later Chief Economist and Treasurer*

- As Chief Economist of the premier development bank of the nation and the **largest long-term lender to the private sector**, advised the board on investment and funding decisions.

H A R S H A M . D E S I L V A

- As Treasurer, was responsible for sourcing best possible funding through a wide array of instruments for the Bank's investment activities; **managed a multi-billion-rupee fund**. Structured the first **tradable bond program** and other innovative funding mechanisms.

1989 - 1993 **University of Missouri** **Columbia, Missouri, USA**
Instructor [Lecturer] and Teaching Assistant [Assistant Lecturer]

As Instructor during summer sessions of 1992 and 1993 taught **macroeconomics** to undergraduates. As Teaching Assistant from January 1989 to May 1993 independently taught **monetary economics** and for third year undergraduates.

SELECTED RECENT BOOK CHAPTERS, RESEARCH PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Selected BOOK CHAPTERS

- Remedies Against the Fallout of Global Inflation: Could a More Independent Central Bank Help? in *Inflation, Competitiveness and Growth*, edited by A. D. V. de S. Indraratna and Sarath Vidanagama, Sri Lanka Economic Association, 2009
- Dumbing-down of Smart Subsidies, Nepal and Access Deficit Tax, India in *ICT Infrastructure in Emerging Asia: Policy and regulatory Roadblocks*, edited by Rohan Samarajiva and Ayesha Zainudeen, Sage India, IDRC, 2008
- Turbulence in Inflation in Sri Lanka: A Look at the Recent Past, in *Managing Financial Institutions in Turbulent Times*, Association of Professional Bankers, Colombo, 2008
- Peace Process and the Economic Initiative in *Peace Process in Sri Lanka: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by V. R. Raghavan, EastWest Books, India, 2007
- Regulation and Investment: A Case Study of Bangladesh in *Stimulating Investment in Network Development*, edited by Amy Mahan and William Melody; InfoDev, IDRC, 2005

Selected ICT AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE RELATED PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

- ICT Policy based on a Transaction Cost Approach: Some Lessons from Sri Lanka, *International Journal of ICT Research and Development in Africa*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Jan-Mar 2010
- Bottom of the Pyramid Expenditure Patterns on Mobile Phone Services in Selected Emerging Asian Countries, with Aileen Aguero, *Pacific Telecommunications Council*, Honolulu, Hawaii, January 2010
- Social Influence in Mobile Phone Adoption: Evidence from the Bottom of the Pyramid in Emerging Asia, with D Ratnadiwakara and A Zainudeen, International Conference on *Mobile Communication and Social Policy*, Rutgers University, New Jersey, October 2009
- ICT Policy for Agriculture in Sri Lanka: Some Thoughts, Proceedings of the *Joint National Conference on Information Technology and in Agriculture*, University of Moratuwa, July 2009
- Linking Farmers to High Value Markets by Mobile Phones: Experiences from Sri Lanka, Sessions of the *International Association of Agricultural Economists*, Beijing, August 2009
- Adoption of Mobile Telephony among the Poor in Emerging Asia: The Importance of Perceived Economic Benefits, *International Communications Association*, Chicago, May 2009
- Scoping Study on ICT for Rural Livelihoods in South Asia, *International Development Research Centre* [IDRC], New Delhi, India and Ottawa, Canada, October 2008
- Using ICT to Reduce Transaction Costs in Agriculture through Better Communication: A case-study from Sri Lanka, with D Ratnadiwakara, *LIRNEasia*, October 2008.
- Teleuse at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Beyond Universal Access, with A. Zainudeen, *Teletronikk*, Vol. 104. No. 2., 2008
- Benefiting from the Bottom of the Pyramid, with A Zainudeen and A. Samarajiva. *I4D*, June 2008. <http://www.i4donline.net/articles/current-article.asp>
- Perceived Economic Benefits of Telecom Access, with A. Zainudeen. *International Communication Association*, Pre-conference Workshop, Chicago, May 2008
- Teleuse at the Bottom of the Pyramid in Pakistan and four other emerging Asian nations. *Pakistan Telecommunications Authority*, June 2007

H A R S H A M . D E S I L V A

- Telecom at the Bottom of the Pyramid. *Wireless Opportunities and Solutions: LIRNE expert meeting*, Montevideo, Uruguay, March 2007
- The next billion [telephone] users. *GSM 3G India 2007*, New Delhi, India, January 2007
- Impact of inequality in access to telecoms in poverty reduction, with A. Zainudeen, *7th Annual Symposium on Poverty Research*, Centre for Poverty Analysis, Colombo, Sri Lanka, Dec. 2006
- Opportunities and new revenue streams at the 'bottom of the pyramid', with A. Zainudeen, *ESOMAR World Conference on Telecom*, Barcelona, Spain, November 2006
- Telecom use on a shoestring: Expenditure and cost perceptions among financially constrained. *World Dialog on Regulation*, May 2006. <http://www.regulateonline.org/content/view/713/31/>
- Smart Subsidies: Getting the conditions right. Experience of expanding rural telecoms in Nepal. *World Dialog on Regulation*, Jan 2006. <http://www.regulateonline.org/content/view/642/31/>
- An Innovative agricultural marketing solution in Sri Lanka; The Govi Gnana Service [GGS], *15th Annual World Food and Agribusiness Forum, Symposium and Case Conference*, Chicago, USA, June 2005. www.ifama.org/conferences/conf.asp and at *Regional Consultation on Linking Farmers to Markets: Lessons and Successful Practices*, Cairo, Egypt, January 2006
- Universal Service Funds, Access Deficit Charges & Least-cost Subsidy Auctions at Pro-poor, Pro-market ICT Policy and Regulation at the *World Summit on Information Society* conference, Tunis, Tunisia, November 2005. <http://www.lirneasia.net/wp-content/HARSHA.pdf>
- Diversifying Participation in Network Development: Moving Beyond the Market: A study of the Universal Service Fund of India, *World Dialog on Regulation*, September 2005
- The Govi Gnana Service: A Multistakeholder Partnership to Bring Dividends of ICT to Rural Sri Lanka, ITU sponsored *WSIS Thematic Meeting on Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in Bridging the Digital Divide*, Seoul, Republic of Korea, June 2005
- The role of ICT in Fighting Agricultural Poverty: GGS, *Annual Conference of the Southeast Asia Regional Computer Federation*, Malaysia, Oct. 2004. www.mncc.com.my/search2004
- The Govi Gnana Service: An ICT Intervention to Fight Agricultural Poverty in Sri Lanka, *The Annual Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization Forum*, Sri Lanka, September 2004.
- The Govi Gnana System: an agriculture info-structure to fight poverty in Sri Lanka, *National IT Conference*, Sri Lanka, July 2004. http://www.cssl.lk/conference_papers.htm
- Socioeconomic Impact Analysis of Bhutan Rural Electrification and Network Expansion Project, with Dr. Aleta Domodom, *Asian Development Bank*, unpublished, 2003.
- Innovative Mechanisms to Reduce the Digital Divide in Sri Lanka: The Vishva Gnana [global knowledge] Programme, *National Information Technology Conference*, Sri Lanka, July 2003. www.cssl.lk/it_conferences.htm
- The Sri Lanka Development Gateway, *The Baramati Initiative*, India, June 2003
- Vishva Grama [global knowledge] Fund: an effective and efficient funding mechanism for rural connectivity through multi-service platforms and rural network extension, Public Interest Programme Unit, *Ministry of Economic Reform, Science and Technology*, Sri Lanka, 2002
- E-readiness and e-needs assessment for Sri Lanka, *Development Gateway Foundation*, World Bank, <http://gateway-dev.worldbank.org/node/220151/ereadiness/downloads/ereadiness.pdf>
- Has written **numerous other reports as Team Leader of all research undertaken by AC Nielsen Lanka** from 1997 to 2000

Selected SRI LANKA MACROECONOMICS RELATED PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Several articles in the financial press and magazines; *selected writings in last few months*:
 - IMF, budget deficits and Mahinda Chintana, Daily Mirror Financial Times, 09.09.2009. http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=60837
 - IMF bailouts and conditions: Some thoughts, Daily Mirror Financial Times, 13.03.2009. http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=43144
- Fiscal Dominance of Monetary Policy and Chronic Inflation in Sri Lanka, *Economic Review*, Volume 34, No. 10, January 2009

H A R S H A M . D E S I L V A

- Supervise MBA theses focusing on developing financial markets. Selected supervisions: Development of a derivatives market in Sri Lanka: its potential and ability to stabilise commodity trade through risk management, 2003; an action plan for the Colombo Stock Exchange to increase the number of listings, 2000; and Recommendations for the development of a listed debt securities market in Sri Lanka, 2000.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES: PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS ON ECONOMICS

2006 Jan - 2010 Apr Biz 1st In Focus **Sri Lanka**

- Hosted highest independently rated weekly prime time discussion on economics and business on Channel 1 MTV and on Shakthi TV. *More than 200 shows completed.*
- Some recent guests have included 2006 Nobel Laureate Professor Muhhamad Yunus, 'Godfather of the free market revolution in Latin America' Professor Arnold Harberger, Ford Foundation Professor of Economics at MIT Dr Abhijit Banerjee, Foreign Policy Magazine's top 100 public intellectual in 2008 and Best Young French Economist Dr Esther Duflo; Founder of Transparency International Peter Eigen, BusinessWeek's top ranked management guru and University of Michigan Professor Dave Ulrich and a host of other local academics and professionals. For instance, see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9O4ByXG_btI

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

1990 - to date **Sri Lanka Economic Association [SLEA]** **Sri Lanka**
Member, ex. Council member and ex. Treasurer

As a council member of the SLEA participate actively in the promotion of study and discussion of matters of interest to the Sri Lanka economy.

1996 - to date **Ceylon Chamber of Commerce** **Sri Lanka**
Member of Subcommittee on Economic Affairs and Taxation
Member of the Power and Energy subcommittee

As a member of two important subcommittees of the leading chamber, participate in formulation of private-public strategies on economic issues in general and on energy issues in particular.

2000 - to date **Royal Asiatic Society** **Sri Lanka**

2007 - to date **American Economic Association** **USA**

2009 - to date **International Association of Agricultural Economists** **USA**

2003 - to 2004 **Consumer Affairs Authority of Sri Lanka** **Sri Lanka**
Board Member

- Appointed by the Hon. Minister of Trade and Consumer Affairs to the Board of Directors of the Consumer Affairs Authority. [CAA]. The CAA is the apex agency with wide powers to regulate all consumer related activity in the country.

2002 **Hon. Prime Minister's Committee on Globalization, Trade Development and International Economic Policy**

Contributed to the preparation of the policy document to make Sri Lanka a country of competitive value addition while making her a hub for commercial activities in the South Asian region.

SELECTED HONOURS

- Awarded the **2010 Eisenhower Fellowship**. [Postponed to 2011 due to appointment to the Parliament of Sri Lanka]
- One of seventeen researchers **profiled by the International Development Research Centre**, [IDRC] Canada. IDRC is one of the largest research organizations working across the globe [2009] http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-134973-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html
- **International Scientific Adviser** to e-Agriculture Research Network comprising of University of Nairobi, Kenya; University of Malawi; University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin; University of Ghana; and the University of Antananarivo, Madagascar [2009 -2011].

H A R S H A M . D E S I L V A

- Appointed to the **Reviewer** panel of the Information Technologies and International Development journal of the MIT Press. [2009 - ongoing]
- **Invited speaker** at numerous national and international conferences and organizations, for example at annual events of the International Communications Association, International Association of Agriculture Economists, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and many more.

SELECTED SCHOLARSHIPS AND TRAINING

- **Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab [J-PAL]** at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA. Scholarship for program in evaluating social programs, 2006. J-PAL is at the cutting edge of research techniques using scientific methods to assess the effectiveness of poverty relief and development programs around the world.
- World Bank-Development Gateway. Economic, social and legal aspects of the Internet, 2002
- National Institute of Bank Management, India. Treasury management techniques, 1996
- Euromoney, Singapore. Emerging instruments in global financing, 1995
- International Center for Monetary & Banking Studies, Geneva, Switzerland, 1994
- University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri, USA. Competitively awarded a full tuition scholarship and teaching assistantship January 1989 - May 1993.
- Truman State University, Missouri, USA. International student scholarship, August 1984 - December 1988. Maintained competitive scholarship throughout undergraduate program.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- **Charter Member of the Rotary Club of Colombo Regency.** Personally led the effort to collect funds and subsequently construct fifteen homes and a community centre for the resettlement of equal number of tsunami displaced families. See *The Rotarian*, March 2005 and http://www.rotarycregency.org/kalutara_FINALupdate_30Sep2006.pdf
- Member, **Board of Management, Sahanaya: The National Council for Mental Health.** Sahanaya is a leading charitable organization involved in the promotion of mental health in the community. Just completed establishing the nation's first large-scale privately funded residential facility for mentally disturbed persons [schizophrenia].
- Member, **Board of Governors, Sri Lanka Saukyadana Movement.** As a key decision-maker of the country's largest volunteer health camp service provider indirectly participate in treating and counseling thousands of poor annually.
- Key contributor to **Vanguard Foundation** in preparing a design for an effective All Hazard Public Warning System; NEWS [National Early Warning System] as a response to the devastating Tsunami that killed 31,000 Sri Lankans in Dec 04. www.vanguardfoundation.com and presentation to forum www.lirneasia.net/wp-content/HdeS%20Lessons%20Learnt.pdf

LANGUAGES

Excellent reading, writing and speaking ability in English and Sinhala.

REFERENCES

- Professor Rohan Samarajiva, Chairman, LIRNEasia, 12 Balcombe Place, Colombo 00800, Sri Lanka. Telephone + 94 77 735 2361. email samarajiva@lirne.net
- Professor Whitney Hicks, Emeritus Professor, Department of Economics University of Missouri, 909 University Avenue, 118 Professional Building, Columbia, MO 65211-6040, USA. Telephone + 1 573 882 0063. email hicksw@missouri.edu

PERSONAL

Male, Sri Lanka citizen. Born 30 August 1964. Married with two children. Determined golfer!