

Aquaculture without Frontiers (AwF) and Organic Life (OL): The Vakkom Aquaculture Project Journey

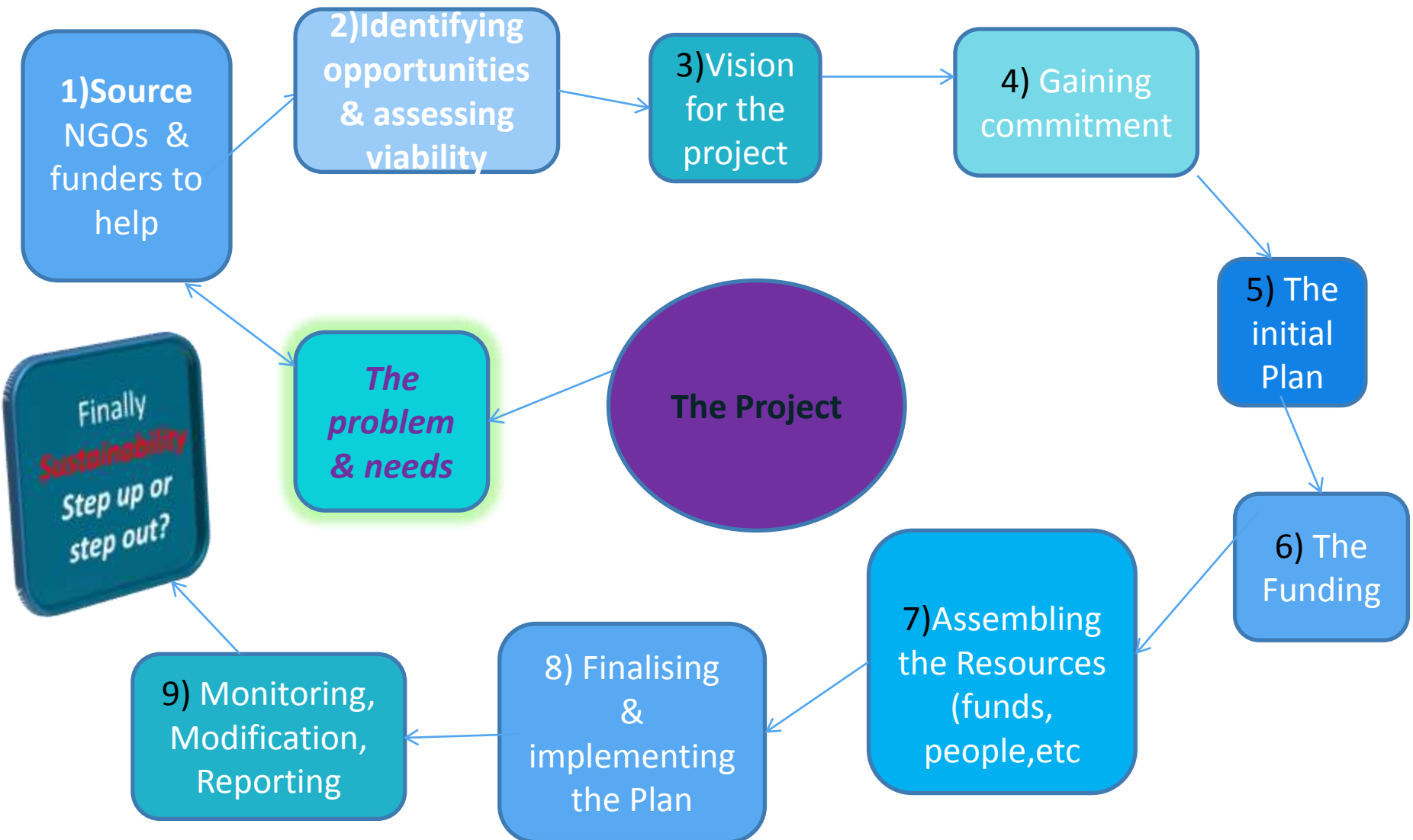


**Dr Janine Pierce
Roy Palmer
Geeji Madathil Tharanath**

The Project and Focus

- Steps in a Community Project needing funding and support
- Background to the Vakkom Project
- Steps so far
- Steps still needed
- Value of a Plan
- Gratitude board

Process of an NGO Project



The Problem

- **Vakkom** is a small coastal village located at Thiruvananthapuram District, the capital of Kerala State in south western India.
- **Vakkom used to be heavily reliant on the Coir industry for livelihood**



Vakkom has a population of around 18000 people, with approximately 55% females. Many have limited skills to use for income production



The problem:

Decline of Coir industry in Vakkom



One of last coir operations

The problem: Skills are not transferable



Many jobless and in financial distress: no financial assets

*Hundreds of small ponds constructed
near the backwater to soak the coconut
husk for coir making now empty*



NGO's to help

Aquaculture without Frontiers (AwF)



an independent non-profit organisation that promotes and supports responsible and sustainable aquaculture in the alleviation of poverty by improving livelihoods in developing countries (Key person: Roy Palmer, AwF's Executive Director)

Organic Life (OL) *a young and energetic NGO organisation based in Thiruvnanthapuram, Kerala*
(key person: Mrs. Geeji Madathil Tharanath, President, Organic Life)



Natural capital:

Three sides of the village are surrounded by the backwaters of Anchuthengu which is connected to Arabian Sea through the estuary. The lake receives an excellent daily exchange from tidal waters from the sea and has enormous potential for aquaculture if planned well.



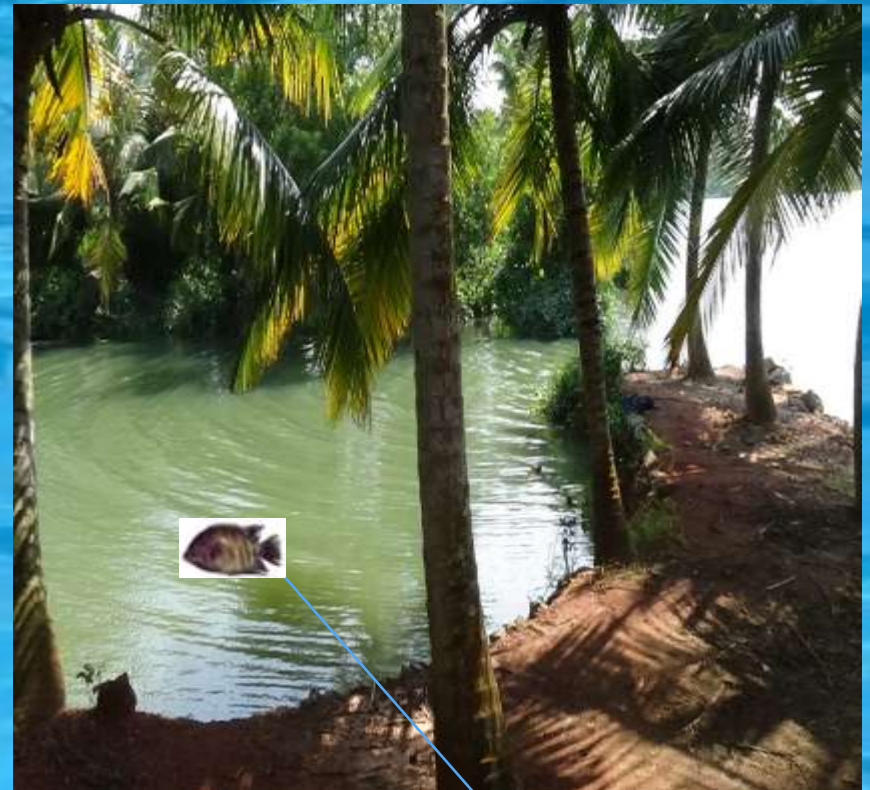
Opportunity & viability: look to your assets

Former coconut husk ponds lay idle

Coconut soaking ponds can be transformed into aquaculture ponds



Working with nature to create a new future has possibilities for aquaculture



Message: Be an entrepreneur in your community

Pearl fish

Compatible visions:aquaculture for helping to a more sustainable life

**Geeji Madathil Tharanath,
President (OL)**

- *“We are wishing to develop long term cooperative relations with international technical experts on aquaculture and especially to develop cultural and social interchange through mutual assistance in the areas of agri/aqua foods education, training and research”*

**Roy Palmer:Executive director
(AwF)**

- empowerment of unemployed local women of Vakkom Panchayath through aquaculture intervention. The present project aims at achieving a sustainable livelihood for the economically challenged women community in Vakkom through aquaculture thus improving the future for all families in the community.



Vakkom:an aquaculture proposition

- *Partial solution: Small scale Aquaculture businesses in Vakkom, particularly for women*
- *Will benefit their families also & the community*



Opportunity and viability

AwF & Organic Life (OL) partnership

- *The present project in Vakkom aims to establish aquaculture ponds to aim for achieving a sustainable livelihood for the economically challenged **womens'** community in Vakkom through aquaculture*
- *Thus improving the future for all families in the community*
- ***AwF** & **OL** working with local people Consultation, offering skills and funding*



Commitment of partners

Signing a Memorandum of Understanding with
Aquaculture without Frontiers
Organic Life (OL) & (AwF)

**Geeji
Madathil
Tharananth
(OL)**

**Dr.Saju
M.S(De
p.Dir.Fi
sheries**

**Roy Palmer
AwF**

**Shri Venuji
Village
President**



The community: Communication, consultation, commitment

*AwF executive director statement at
meeting*

*“This is your project we are just here
to help”(Roy Palmer)*



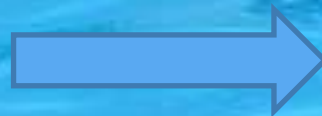
The Initial Plan:

Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail

Community projects also need to operate in many ways like a business:

A vision, a plan, funding & budget, resource & task allocation, timelines, accountability, risk management, ethical standards, reporting

The professionalism of the plan portrays you as a good risk & sells your story to funders



The Funding

What do the donors want to know?

- When they review your proposal, they will ask:
- [?] Why do you want our money?
- [?] What will you do with our money?
- [?] What will you achieve with our money?
- [?] How much of our money do you want?

(http://hrcolumbia.org/peacebuilding/cbos_manual_en.pdf)



Keep the big picture, but celebrate the steps along the way- so far:

The vision, the people, the commitment, initial plans & funding proposals. Now await funding answers



Publicising the story for funding & sharing with stakeholders & general public

AwF site : <http://www.aquaculturewithoutfrontiers.org/welcome-to-vakkom/>

OL site

Media including news

sites:http://fis.com/fis/worldnEws/search_brief.asp?l=e&id=80858&ndb=1

<http://www.aquaculturewithoutfrontiers.org/page/2/>

Public talks (e.g. Rotary and other groups)may lead to funding or other help in future

Facebook & Twitter

Films for Youtube : AwF film re Vakkom project in Vakkom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPVk9yJNAQY>

Networks:many and varied and global

Roy D Palmer December 24, 2015 · Melbourne, VIC ·

WAS Affiliate AwF activities are cranking up and we are proud of the video just finalised which can be viewed at the Aquaculture without Frontiers YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6lJobwBxflpoCYHSifFRrQ>

Thanks to all of you who are supporting the program be that through donations or volunteering your time.

Keep up with our news through the website -

<http://www.aquaculturewithoutfrontiers.org/.../IMG-20151215-W...> or join one of our social media groups

**Rabo Share4More Foundation for financial support
for Aquaculture without Frontiers (Australia) Ltd.**

***“With pleasure I can inform you that we are able to
support this project with a single donation as
requested for the training program to empower
unemployed woman through aquaculture
intervention in Vakkom”***

Well done Roy, Gigi, Renjith & Dinesh



Assembling the Resources: Which of the Five Capitals do I have & need?

Natural resources,,ecosystems, aesthetics

Human knowledge,skills,abilities

Social networks, values, trust,shared vision

Institutional public, private,non-government

Produced built environment, public assets, harvested, made, \$\$

Questions to reflect on:

Do I already have enough of all these capitals?

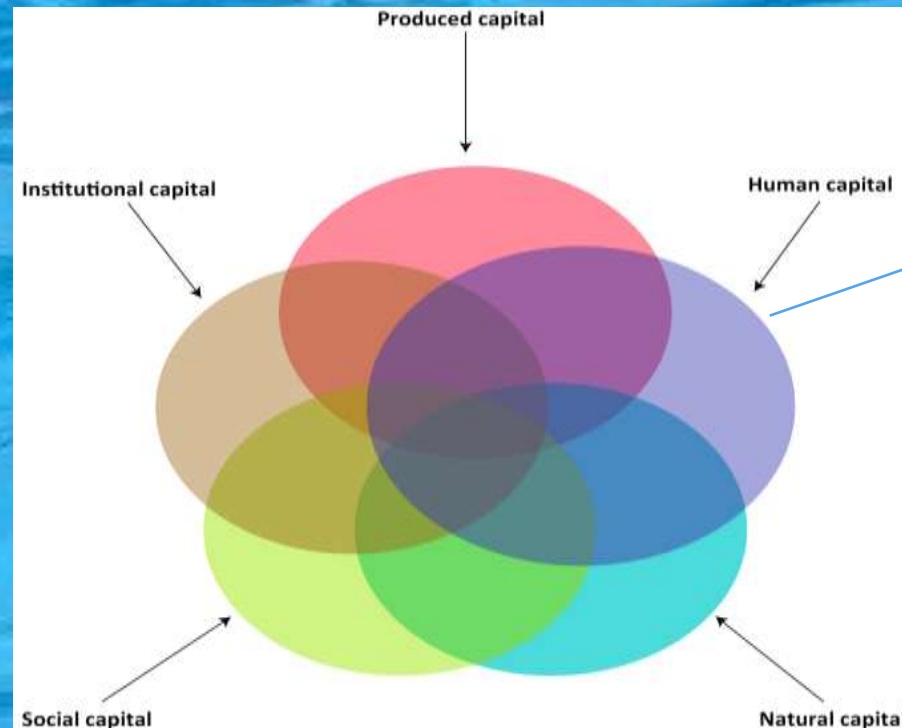
Which ones do I need to build and how?

A successful business to enhance the community needs a balance of all these capitals

Five Capitals Framework

(Cocklin & Alston 2003)

Produced: *built environment: public assets, harvested. \$\$\$*



Institutional: *public, private, and non-government*

Human: *knowledge, skills, and abilities*

Social: *networks, values, trust, and shared vision*

Natural: *resources, ecosystems, and aesthetics*

Five Capitals Analysis in North Vietnam Oyster Farming
project funded by Australian Government , partnered with
NSW Primary Industries and assessed in partnership with
University of South Australia through lens of Five Capitals
assessment found:



*Three key factors needed for a sustainable rural area that are
interdependent in oyster farming:*

Healthy natural environment

Economic base that has the potential for strong growth and
diversification,

Sufficient **social capital** to sustain and build on

*These aspects appear to be present to varying degrees in the Ben Sen
(Vietnam) commune oyster farming area at the time of this study*



*Additional **income** from
oyster farming helps
improve **living quality**,
more money to raise and
take care of **children** better*

Monitoring, modifying and reporting may find aspects that need changing and honest reporting as a start to better outcomes

In Vietnam project were found:

- Produced capital issues relating to sometimes poor seed quality, parasites
- Unpredictable oyster prices
- Lack of access to low cost loans

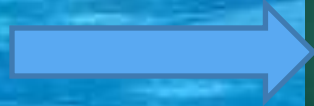
These factors will impact to differing degrees on wellbeing of aquaculture farmers, & are forces that impact on expansion for these farmers in this industry.

Note: this data was captured through Photovoice (community driven photo research) a great way to supplement Funder reporting



Farmers are not sure whether oyster seeds are good or bad, resulting in not very high quality of commercial oysters. Due to non-even development in size, it takes time to classify the oysters at harvesting

Plan progress: Finalising, Implementing ,Monitoring , Modification
Reporting
Implementing



Along the way the Plan must be evaluated to see if all is on track at regular stages, and what needs to be monitored



Remember to: Write the plan down (so you can benchmark against it) re what is working, budget, profit or loss, training or other areas such as environmental issues, commitment issues, yield expectations, etcetera

What needs modifying?

Remember: **Don't get stuck in the Plan**

The Plan is there to serve you not for you to serve the Plan

Report and comply with Funder expectations

- Each year we ask our project partners to report on their outcomes. In addition to sharing their financial data, all partners complete an online survey. These are supplemented with case studies that provide additional and more far-reaching information about our projects.
(RaboBank)



And the Plan may grow & change:

Aim: to grow fish and also grow the project

OL and **AwF** in Dec.2015 organised a Workshop:
***Nurturing the entrepreneurship opportunities in
aquarium fish seed production, culture and trade***
among the ***unemployed youth*** of Kerala State,
India at Snehasena Hall, Kaloor, Ernakulam, Cochin.

- Sponsors: International Aquafeed magazine
- Support: ***Training & continuous project support***
through the joint activity of AwF through the
team members of OL



**When have the project goals been achieved?
The Plan and the community will decide in
consultation with you**



***In the end it is the community's project to
step back from when it is sustainable,
but be there if needed***

Sometimes there is a moment when you just know what has been desired is achieved



Happiness of farmers when harvesting oysters. From this, income of my family and other farmers is more stable, my village is more beautiful (Vietnam oyster farmer's own words & photo)

Finally: or is there ever a finally?



It is the community's project, Report is done
Stepping up: Is there a next stage you can move towards together, but maybe with less support than before?

What can be built on that still needs your help?

Stepping out:
What it is time to move away from -when they are ready
To let them fly in their own way



Ensure you have captured what was learnt, that it is reported, shared, used as a benchmark for comparison & best practice

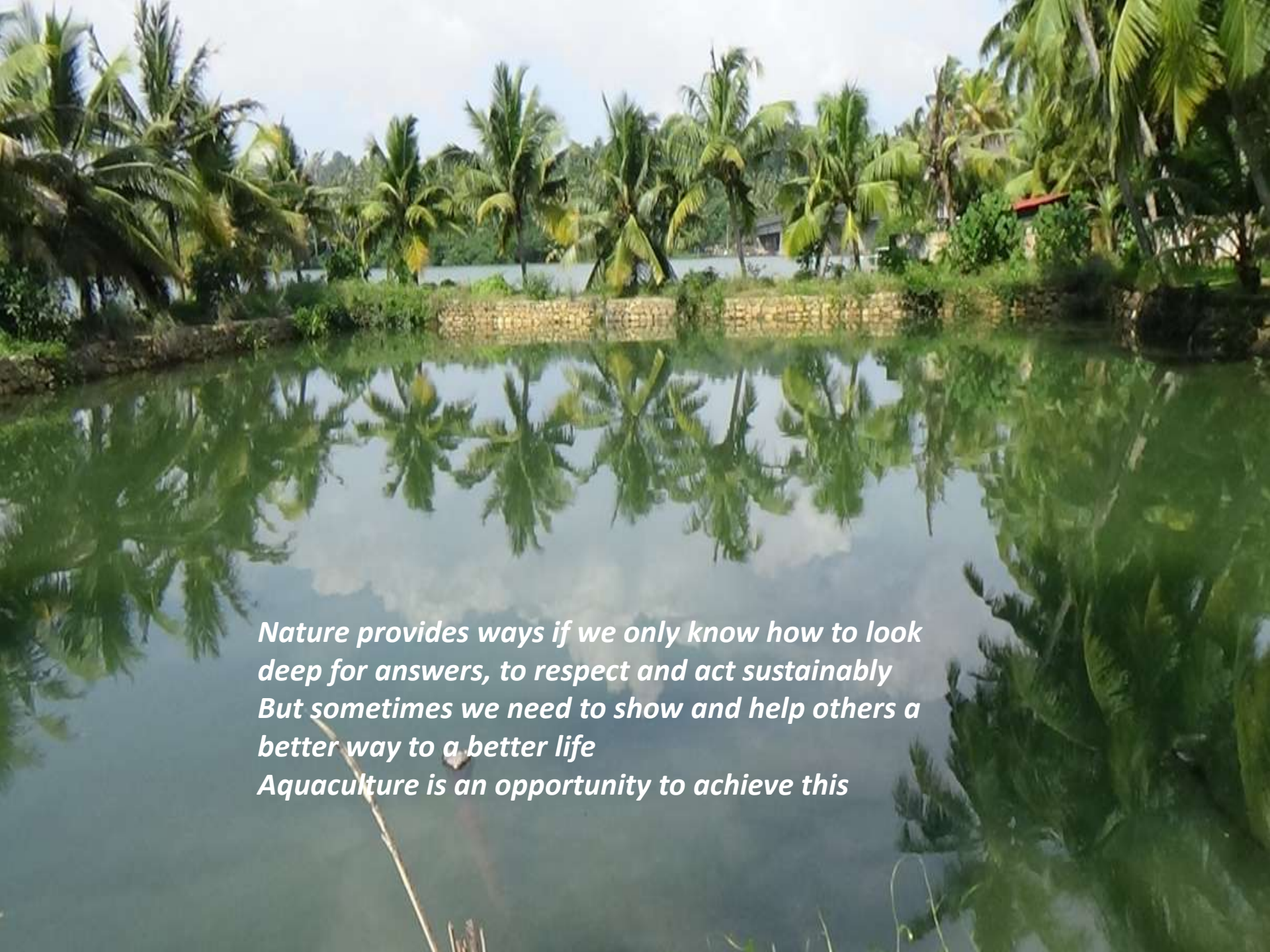
Gratitude

Always support and acknowledge those who assist- they are not being paid in most instances: Roy, Geeji, Renjith, Dinesh community members

My son Ben shot film & son David (not in photo) who helped edit 28 hours of film down to 4 minutes,



Two wonderful drivers, and advisors who made my trip around Kerala possible & safe

A tropical landscape featuring a body of water in the foreground that perfectly reflects the surrounding environment. The background is filled with numerous tall palm trees and lush greenery. A low, rustic stone wall runs across the middle ground, separating the water from the land. In the distance, a small building with a red roof is partially visible through the trees. The sky is a pale blue with soft, white clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and idyllic.

*Nature provides ways if we only know how to look
deep for answers, to respect and act sustainably
But sometimes we need to show and help others a
better way to a better life
Aquaculture is an opportunity to achieve this*