

NEWSLETTER



JANUARY
2024

HELP-O
SRI LANKA





EDITORIAL

HELP-O is a Non-governmental Organization (NGO) established in 1992 by a team of professionals with commitment to making Sri Lanka a better, happier place to live in harmony with nature.

HELP-O has the following vision: "Equitable Economic Development, Social Justice, and a Safer Environment for All

Its mission is "To identify the need of risks confronted by Sri Lankan communities and implement effective solutions through proven integrated approaches with the participation of stakeholders". The five strategies HELP-O adopts in achieving its mission include, empowering the marginalized community socially and economically, accepting the importance of community participation and leadership, dedicating for protect the environment through an integrated process, protecting human rights and justice, and ensuring sustainable development.

Mission related programs and projects launched by HELP-O focus on the following spheres:

They are Community empowerment, rehabilitation, relief assistance, and protecting human rights, community participation in local governance, community financing, livelihood development, economic resource mobilization, nurturing biodiversity, mitigating the impact of climate change, pollution prevention, waste management, and optimal utilization of marine resources and optimal utilization of forest products.

Overall, HELP-O is an organization dedicated to bringing about a sustainable positive impact on the environment and the lives of people in Sri Lanka through a series of interdependent activities.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Galle City Takes Strides Towards a Plastic-Free Future: A Collaborative Effort** 01
- **Transforming Waste into Opportunity: HELP-O Launches Innovative Waste Management Project in Karapitiya Bombay Castle Settlement** 02
- **USAID-CCBO Program Press Release on Program Closure** 03
- **Empowering Local Communities: "Right to Voice" Initiative Enters the Second Phase** 04
- **Success Stories of e-Sabha** 05
- **Volunteers of HELP-O** 06





WASTE MANAGEMENT



Galle City Takes Strides Towards a Plastic-Free Future: A Collaborative Effort

In a concerted effort to combat plastic pollution and promote environmental sustainability, the Ministry of Environment in Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Program – Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (UNEP - BRS), the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), and HELP-O, has embarked on the ambitious project of making Galle City plastic waste-free.

A significant milestone in this endeavor was achieved recently, targeting the hotel sector. On January 10, 2024, an online training session was conducted, focusing on the installation of "Micro Plastic Filters" for washing plants. This crucial measure aims to minimize microplastic pollution, contributing to a cleaner and healthier environment. The training session was successfully completed at the Jetwing Lighthouse Hotel premises in Galle.



Leading the charge in this educational initiative were Mr. Jost from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP - BRS), Dr. Premakumara from the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), and Mr. Chatura Welivitiya, the CEO of HELP-O. Mr. Asoka Siriwardena, the Executive Director, played a pivotal role in facilitating the initiative. Dr. Andrej from the Planet Care Institute generously contributed his technical expertise for the installation of "microplastic filters."



The active involvement of the management of the Galle Jetwing Lighthouse Hotel and Sunset Hotel is a testament to the commitment of the hotel sector in Galle towards addressing the pressing issue of plastic waste. By embracing sustainable practices, these establishments are setting an example for others to follow, showcasing the industry's dedication to environmental responsibility.

The initiative marks a crucial step towards creating a more sustainable and environmentally friendly community in Galle City. The collaboration between governmental bodies, international organizations, NGOs, and local businesses underscores the importance of collective action in the face of environmental challenges. By pooling resources, knowledge, and expertise, these stakeholders are working towards a common goal of reducing plastic pollution and fostering a greener, healthier future for Galle City.

The "Making Galle City Plastic Waste Free" project is not just a local effort; it is part of a global movement to address the environmental impact of plastic waste. The success of this initiative in the hotel sector sets a precedent for other industries to adopt eco-friendly practices, ultimately contributing to a cleaner and more sustainable planet.

As Galle City takes strides towards a plastic-free future, the collaboration between the government, international organizations, and local businesses serves as a shining example of how collective efforts can bring about positive change. It is a call to action for other communities around the world to join hands in the fight against plastic pollution, ensuring a cleaner and healthier planet for future generations.

Written By - Hansi Sandu Tharakla

(Project Officer - HELP-O)



Transforming Waste into Opportunity: HELP-O Launches Innovative Waste Management Project in Karapitiya Bombay Castle Settlement



Galle, in a groundbreaking initiative under the "collaborative action for clean city of Galle" waste management cooperation project, the HELP-O organization, with the generous financial support of the Clean Cities Blue Ocean Program under the USAID CCBO, has successfully implemented the distribution of indoor compost bins to 15 households in the Karapitiya Bombay Castle Settlement. The initiative, spearheaded by HELP-O Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Chathura Welivitiya, witnessed the active participation of other officials and a Community Development Officer of the Galle Municipal Council.

The primary objective of this endeavor is to introduce the Japanese BOKASHI indoor composting system, a cutting-edge and efficient method for converting kitchen waste into valuable compost. The chosen settlement, Karapitiya Bombay, is at the forefront of this waste management revolution, setting an example for other communities in Galle.

Mr. Chathura Welivitiya expressed his enthusiasm for the project, stating, "This initiative marks a significant step towards creating a cleaner and more sustainable environment in Galle. By introducing the BOKASHI composting system, we aim not only to manage organic waste effectively but also to lay the groundwork for future urban agriculture initiatives within the community."



The BOKASHI composting system, originating from Japan, accelerates the natural composting process by utilizing beneficial microorganisms. This not only reduces the volume of waste but also produces nutrient-rich compost that can be used to enhance soil fertility. The 15 households selected to receive the indoor compost bins are now equipped with a practical and sustainable solution to manage their kitchen waste.

Looking ahead, the project envisions the expansion of urban agriculture in the Karapitiya Bombay Castle. The introduction of homegrown produce not only fosters a sense of community self-sufficiency but also contributes to a greener and healthier environment. In addition, the initiative aims to establish a local market for non-biodegradable waste, including plastic, glass, and tin, fostering a circular economy within the settlement.

The financial backing from the Clean Cities Blue Ocean Program, through USAID CCBO, has played a pivotal role in making this project a reality. Their support underscores the commitment to sustainable waste management practices, aligning with the broader mission of creating clean and resilient cities.

As Galle continues its journey towards becoming a clean city, the success of this pilot project in Karapitiya Bombay Castle Settlement serves as a testament to the positive impact that collaborative efforts, innovative solutions, and community engagement can have on waste management. The "Let's make Galle a clean city" initiative, with the HELP-O organization at the forefront, is paving the way for a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable future for Galle and its residents.

Written By - Hansi Sandu Tharakla

(Project Officer - HELP-O)



USAID-CCBO PROGRAM PRESS RELEASE ON PROGRAM CLOSURE



Colombo, January 30, 2024 - Thanks to a nearly three-year partnership, supported by the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), communities across Sri Lanka successfully prevented more than 4,600 metric tons of plastic – the equivalent of 496 million plastic bottles – from entering the ocean around Sri Lanka through the Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO) program.

The CCBO program, launched in Sri Lanka in 2021, is USAID’s global flagship program to address ocean plastic pollution. In Sri Lanka, demand for single-use plastics has grown while waste management systems have struggled to keep pace with only an estimated 20 percent of households having access to public waste collection services. As a densely populated island nation, Sri Lanka faces unique challenges in managing its solid waste.

Through CCBO, the United States partnered with local organizations to design and pilot innovative, economically viable, and environmentally sustainable solutions to address each step in the waste value chain, providing technical assistance and grants totaling more than US \$1.2 million (Rs. 382.8 million). As a result of these partnerships, an additional 625,000 Sri Lankans benefitted from improved solid waste services, and communities around Colombo, Galle, and Jaffna have adopted sustainable practices that promote increased reuse and transformation of waste products into new items.

“The United States is helping Sri Lanka improve management of its natural resources to build resilience and insulate the country from the harms of climate change,” said Dennis Wesner, deputy director of Economic Growth for USAID Sri Lanka and Maldives.

“While CCBO is ending, our work will not stop. The United States will continue to work together with Sri Lankan counterparts to find locally viable solutions and reduce ocean plastics.”

“We celebrate the collaborative efforts of Clean Cities, Blue Ocean Sri Lanka program that developed sustainable solutions to reduce ocean plastic. As we confront the escalating crisis of ocean plastic pollution, CCBO has been an exemplary partner in progressing their commitment to extended producer responsibility. This initiative exemplifies our commitment to environmental stewardship, showcasing the positive impact of strategic partnerships and community engagement on creating cleaner, healthier cities for our citizens,” said Mr. Prabath Chandrakeerthi, Secretary, Ministry of Environment.

Globally CCBO’s goal is to reduce the estimated 11 million metric tons of plastic that flow into the ocean worldwide each year by targeting rapidly urbanizing areas of countries, a major source of ocean plastic pollution.





LOCAL

GOVERNANCE



Private Sector Collaboration Enhances Public Awareness: e-Sabha Application



In a commendable initiative aimed at bolstering community engagement and public awareness, Sahana United Group (PVT) Ltd. has generously funded the installation of two e-Sabha awareness boards in Galle City. This collaborative effort with HELP-O, an organization committed to community development, underscores the pivotal role the private sector plays in fostering social awareness and civic participation.

The e-Sabha application, a digital platform designed for community interaction and information dissemination, has become an essential tool for facilitating communication between local authorities and citizens. The incorporation of awareness boards strategically positioned in Galle City amplifies the reach and impact of this innovative application.

Sahana United Group's financial support for this project exemplifies a commitment to corporate social responsibility and active participation in community initiatives. By directing resources towards enhancing public awareness, the private sector not only contributes to the betterment of society but also strengthens its ties with the local community.

HELP-O's dedication to collaborating with private sector entities aligns with its overarching goal of fostering holistic community development. Recognizing the synergies between public and private organizations, HELP-O consistently seeks partnerships that harness collective expertise and resources for the greater good. The installation of e-Sabha awareness boards is a tangible manifestation of the positive outcomes achievable through such collaborations. These boards serve as conduits for disseminating crucial information, promoting civic engagement, and empowering residents with real-time updates on community matters.

ගාල්ල මහා නගර සභාව දැන් ඇඟිලි තුඩේ දුරින්

ඔබ ප්‍රදේශයේ පොදු ගැටලු දැන් නිවසේ සිටම ක්ෂණිකවම ගාල්ල මහා නගර සභාවට යොමු කරන්න අවස්ථාවක් ලැබී තිබෙනවා.

පළමුව ඔබේ ජංගම දුරකථනයෙන් Google Play වෙතට හෝ App Store වෙතට පිවිසීමෙන් eSabha App එක Download (ගාගන) කරන්න

ඉන් පසු ඇප් එකට ලියාපදිංචි වීම සඳහා ඔබේ තොරතුරු ඇතුළත් කරන්න

දැන් ඇප් එකට පිවිස ගැටලුව සමඟ ඊට අදාළ ඡායාරූප යොමු කරන්න

ඔබේ පොදු ගැටලුවට පිළිතුරු ලබාදීම සභාවේ වගකීමකි.

ඔබේ ගැටලුව තප්පර කිහිපයකින් සභාවට යොමුවනු ඇත.

මෙහෙයවීම - ගාල්ල මහා නගර සභාව
අනුග්‍රහය - හෙල්ප්-ඕ Help-O හඬට ඉබන් ව්‍යාපෘතිය

ප්‍රචාරක අනුග්‍රහය - SAHANA සහන

As we witness the tangible results of the collaboration between Sahana United Group and HELP-O, it becomes evident that private sector involvement in community development is not only beneficial but also essential for building resilient and informed societies. This synergy between public and private entities epitomizes the transformative impact that strategic partnerships can have on the fabric of our communities, laying the foundation for a more interconnected and informed society.

Written By - Lahiru Udumalagala
(Project Manager - HELP-O)





Success Stories of e-Sabha



The success story, which I have shared regarding the transformative impact of the e-Sabha app on local governance in Sri Lanka underscores the significant strides made in enhancing communication, efficiency, and transparency within communities. The app's role in narrowing the communication gap between citizens and local governments has been pivotal, fostering a more engaged and participatory civic environment.

One of the commendable achievements of the e-Sabha app is its effectiveness in streamlining issue resolution processes, thereby contributing to increased efficiency and transparency in local governance. The positive change brought about by the app has, in turn, cultivated higher levels of trust and accountability within the community. The success story of the Galle Municipal Council serves as a noteworthy example, setting a standard for other municipalities to aspire to.

To sustain and amplify the success of the e-Sabha app, active citizen participation remains a cornerstone. Encouraging users to continue utilizing the app for submitting feedback, complaints, and suggestions will be crucial in driving ongoing positive change within their respective communities. By sharing personal experiences and success stories, users can play a pivotal role in raising awareness about the app's impact, thereby catalyzing a broader adoption across Sri Lanka.



Mr. Vijitha Kandambi
Richmond Hill Galle

Furthermore, engaging with the app's developers and local councils is integral for its continuous improvement. Constructive feedback from users will contribute to refining the app's features and ensuring its responsiveness to evolving community needs. This collaborative approach between citizens, developers, and local councils will fortify the app's effectiveness and relevance over time.

In conclusion, the collective efforts of active participation, story-sharing, and constructive feedback will undoubtedly contribute to the sustained empowerment of citizens and the strengthening of local governance throughout Sri Lanka. By fostering this collaborative spirit, the e-Sabha app can continue to serve as a catalyst for building connected, responsive, and empowered communities across the nation.





e- Sabha



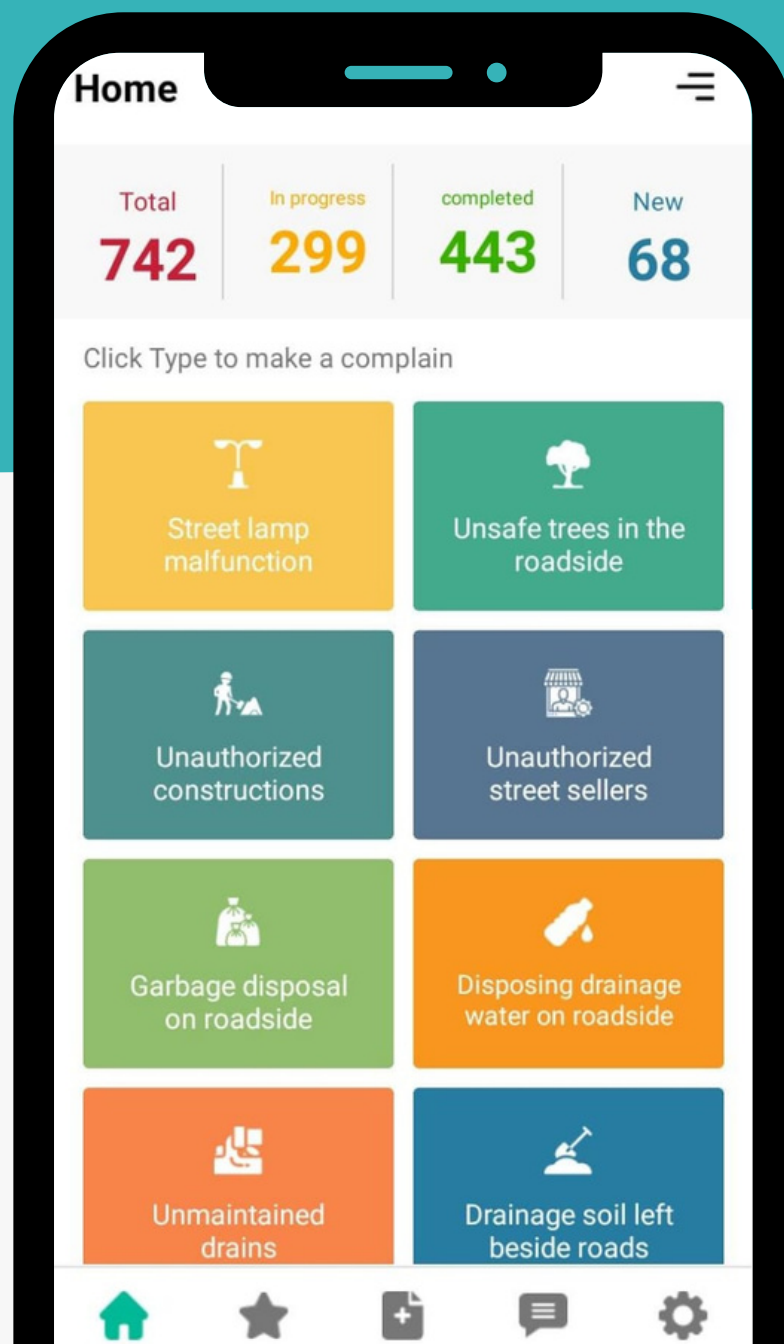
With feedback from our stakeholders, further improvements were made to the e-Sabha mobile app.

Now you can go to play store and update e-sabha mobile app.

Now you can enjoy the new experience.



Google Play





VOLUNTEERS OF HELP-O

Ruonan Wang

I am Ruonan Wang, a student from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. I participated in a volunteer project named 'Aquatica' and spent a meaningful six weeks working with HELP-O.

During these six weeks, I immersed myself in environmental protection events. I took part in numerous campaigns around Galle under the guidance of Help-O, such as a cleaning campaign in Salamiya Watta and garbage classification at the Karapitiya Teaching Hospital. Not only did I immerse myself in the most pressing environmental problems in Sri Lanka, but I also gained extensive knowledge and practical experience in environmental protection and waste disposal.



Regarding my office work, I primarily focused on video recording and editing duties. Understanding the importance of publicity in the public welfare sector, I aimed to help more people become aware of and participate in these initiatives. Therefore, I endeavored to record every significant moment, enhancing the videos with subtitles and background music to attract more viewers. During my tenure, I participated in every activity, producing over ten videos.

I firmly believe that with the increasing involvement of more volunteers and organizations like ours, environmental and social issues will be effectively alleviated.

Ruonan Wang (Volunteer of HELP-O)

A student from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia



As a photographer, I have had the privilege of witnessing and recording the positive changes we make to our environment, as well as capturing the relationships we build through volunteering. Shared smiles, united hands, and cultural exchange are all integral parts of visual storytelling.

This volunteer work is very meaningful to me and I also hope that our work will continue to have a positive response and call for more people to join with us. Let's make more contributions to environmental protection!

Jiaqi Du (Volunteer of HELP-O)

A student from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia



Jiaqi Du

I'm Jiaqi Du, from China, and I'm a student at the University of New South Wales. I am glad to join the Help-O family as a volunteer. Now my six-week journey at Help-O is coming to an end, I wanted to briefly share my feelings.

Sri Lanka's lush landscapes, vibrant communities, and unique biodiversity have always been the backdrop for memorable environmental volunteering experiences. Our time here is not just a series of tasks; it is an immersion in the heart of conservation efforts in this beautiful country.



**A special ceremony
was held at the
HELP-O Office
premises to
welcome the 2024
New Year.**



2024
HAPPY NEW YEAR





We are pleased to announce that Ms. Thakshala Witharanage, a dedicated member of our HELP-0 team, has been awarded a scholarship and has moved on to new horizons. We want to extend our heartfelt wishes to Thakshala for all the success and joy in her future endeavors.

May her journey ahead be filled with growth, learning, and countless accomplishments. Thakshala, your contributions were truly valued, and we wish you nothing but the best in this exciting chapter of your life.



NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2024 HELP-O SRI LANKA

CHIEF ADVISIOR

Chathura Welivitiya

ADVISIORS

Asoka Siriwardana
Dr.Rohana Rathnayake
Padmasiri Moonamale
P.A. Gunathilaka
Nadeeka Amarasinghe
Lasitha Udaya
Buddhika Somaratne

EDITORS

Lahiru Udumalagala
Thakshala Witharanage
Chandhi Devaki
Anoja Jeewanthi
Chamoth Teran
Hansi Sadu Tharaka
Amasha Kavindi

DESIGNN BY

Chamoth Teran




Happy
New Year!


2024


HELP-O

No.364/18A,Samagi Mw,
Dangedara , Galle, Sri Lanka

 FB Page - Help-o SriLanka

 Whatsapp - 94 77 373 7834

 Mail - info@helpo-srilanka.org

 YouTube - HELP-O TV

Visit Us....



www.helpo-srilanka.org