

AUGUST NEWSLETTER

2024



HELP-O
SRI LANKA



ABOUT US

HELP-O is a non-governmental organization (NGO) established in 1992 to serve the local community by making it a better, happier place to live in harmony with nature.

The vision of the organization is "Equitable Economic Development, Social Justice, and a Safer Environment for All," while the mission is "To identify the 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, recognizing the importance of community participation and leadership, dedicating efforts to protecting the environment through an integrated process, safeguarding human rights and justice, and ensuring sustainable development.


Our programs and projects mainly focus on community empowerment, rehabilitation, relief assistance, 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, optimal utilization of marine resources, and optimal utilization of forest products.

Our organization is dedicated to making a sustainable positive impact on the environment and the lives of people in Sri Lanka through a multisectoral approach in different sectors.





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EMPOWERING LOCAL VOICES IN HAMBANTOTA: A MILESTONE EVENT UNDER THE RIGHT TO VOICE PROGRAM



On August 23, 2024, Hambantota District marked a pivotal moment in its journey towards greater civic engagement and community empowerment. Under the *Right to Voice Project*, a significant event unfolded at the Tangalle Malima Festival Hall, where the Community Organization Forum establishment program and training session took place. The event, which ran from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, was a resounding success, underscoring the district's commitment to enhancing public participation.

The program was designed with a clear objective: to empower local voices by creating and strengthening Community Organization Forums at both the Local Government and District levels. These forums are envisioned as platforms where community members can collaborate, share insights, and influence decisions that impact their lives. The day's activities were meticulously planned, starting with the development of action plans tailored for Local Government and District Community Organization Forums.

A highlight of the event was the thorough feasibility analysis conducted for the District Forum, which was followed by a detailed SWOT analysis. These analyses provided a comprehensive understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the forums, ensuring that the action plans are both realistic and effective.

The session also witnessed the appointment of key convenors for various forums, ensuring that leadership is distributed across the district's urban and municipal councils. The appointed convenors are:

- Hambantota Municipal Council: Mr. P.G. Kumara
- Tangalle Municipal Council: Ms. Kamani Kumari
- Tangalle Urban Council: Mr. Pubudu Manohara
- Katuwana Urban Council: Ms. Supun Sandamali
- Beli Atta Urban Council: Mr. J. S. Dahanayake

In a moment of celebration, the District Forum elected its leadership team, reflecting the district's commitment to inclusive and participatory governance. Lion. J.R.S. Dahanayake was unanimously elected as the President of the District Forum.

He will be supported by Ms. Deepika Nilangi, who will serve as Vice President. The role of Deputy Secretary was entrusted to Ms. Supun Sandamali, while the crucial positions of Treasurer will be jointly held by Ms. Fatima Siama and Ms. Kamani Kumari.

The success of the event was further enhanced by the presence of several distinguished guests whose contributions were invaluable. Among them were Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, CEO of HELP-O, who has been a driving force behind numerous community initiatives; Dr. Asoka Siriwardena, the Project Advisor and a former Ministry Secretary, whose experience and wisdom were evident throughout the session; Mr. Lahiru Madhuranga Udumalagala, Project Manager and a respected lawyer, who provided legal insights; Mrs. Vinodani Tharanga, Hambantota District Project Coordinator, who played a pivotal role in organizing the event; and Mr. Chamoth Teran, Information Technical Officer, whose technical expertise ensured the smooth running of the event.

As Hambantota District moves forward, the establishment of these forums marks a significant step towards a more engaged and empowered community. The commitment shown by all participants and leaders sets a strong foundation for future initiatives under the Right to Voice Project. With the continued collaboration of local authorities, community members, and supportive organizations, Hambantota is well on its way to becoming a model of participatory governance in Sri Lanka.

Together, we are not just creating forums; we are building the future of Hambantota—one voice at a time.



Enhancing Public Participation in Local Governance: A Successful Initiative in Matara District



On August 27, 2024, the Matara District Community Organizations Forum Program and Training Session, part of the "Right to Voice" initiative, was successfully conducted at the Shanaya Banquet Hall, Matara. The event, held from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM, focused on improving public participation in local government institutions across the Southern Province.

The program brought together key stakeholders and community leaders to develop strategic action plans for both the Provincial Council Forums and the District Community Organizations Forum. A significant part of the session was dedicated to conducting a feasibility analysis for the establishment of the District Community Organizations Forum, ensuring its alignment with the needs and aspirations of the local communities.

One of the highlights of the session was the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. This exercise provided valuable insights into the potential and challenges faced by the community forums, guiding the participants in crafting effective strategies for future engagement and growth.

Key appointments were made during the session, ensuring strong leadership and effective management of the forums. The Matara District Forum saw the designation of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, marking a significant step forward in organizing and empowering local communities. Esteemed participants in the program included Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, CEO of HELP-O; Dr. Ashoka Siriwardhana, Project Consultant and former Ministry Secretary; Attorney Lahiru Maduranga Udumalagala, Project Manager; and Anoja Jayasinghe, Matara District Project Coordinator. Their combined expertise and dedication to the cause played a pivotal role in the success of the event.

The Matara District Community Organizations Forum Program and Training Session marks a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to enhance public participation in local governance. As the forums continue to develop and grow, they are expected to play a crucial role in shaping the future of local government in the Southern Province, ensuring that the voices of the community are heard and valued.





Congratulations to Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, CEO of HELP-O, on His PhD Achievement!



Dr. Chathura Welivitiya

We are delighted to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, the CEO of HELP-O, on successfully completing his PhD! This monumental achievement is a testament to his years of unwavering dedication to community development and his relentless commitment to making a positive impact in society.

Dr. Welivitiya has always been an inspiring figure, leading with vision and passion in his role at HELP-O. His work has touched the lives of many, fostering sustainable development, environmental conservation, and social empowerment across communities. His PhD is not just a personal milestone but a reflection of his dedication to academic excellence and professional growth, further solidifying his position as a leader in both academia and community development.

Throughout his career, Dr. Welivitiya has shown perseverance and a passion for driving change. This PhD is a well-deserved recognition of his hard work and intellectual contributions, and it underscores his role as a trailblazer in his field.

His commitment to finding innovative solutions to pressing challenges in community welfare has not only brought about sustainable transformations but has also inspired many to follow in his footsteps.

We wish Dr. Welivitiya all the best in his future endeavours. As he continues his journey, we are confident that his knowledge and expertise will shape the future of community development in profound ways. We eagerly anticipate witnessing the influence of his contributions in the years to come and are excited to see the new heights he will reach.

Congratulations once again, Dr. Chathura Welivitiya! We celebrate this incredible accomplishment and look forward to the continued success of HELP-O under your outstanding leadership.



Congratulations to Dr. Sirisena Desapriya Vice Chairman of HELP-O His PhD Achievement!

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Sirisena Desapriya, Former Secretary to the Ministry of National Integration and Official Languages, District Secretary/ Government Agent, Secretaries to the number of Provincial ministries and Divisional Secretary. Also, national coordinator for UNDP Artgold Sri Lanka project. Governance and Planning consultant for the project of National Languages Equality Advancement Project funded by Canadian government. Currently, he is holding position of Member of Public Service Commission of Southern Provincial Council and Vice Chairman of HELP-O, on the prestigious accomplishment of earning his PhD.

This remarkable milestone is a reflection of his unwavering dedication to public administration and his relentless commitment to making a meaningful impact in the community. Dr. Desapriya's achievement symbolizes years of hard work, perseverance, and profound commitment to both his academic and professional growth. As a dedicated leader and an inspiring figure, his contributions have positively influenced countless lives, and we look forward to seeing the far-reaching impact of his future endeavors. We wish Dr. Desapriya continued success as he embarks on this new chapter, and We eagerly anticipate the exceptional contributions he will make in the years to come. May this accomplishment serve as a beacon of inspiration for all.

Warmest congratulations!



Empowering Change: A Month of Environmental Stewardship

In August, we had the pleasure of working with eight dedicated volunteers who significantly contributed to our ongoing efforts. The volunteers were Elif Ildemir from Turkey, Emma Jane Gibson from United Kingdom, Belohlavkova Anika from Netherlands and Skulysh Khrystyna from Ukraine. Their diverse backgrounds and skills brought a wealth of knowledge and energy to our projects. The volunteers provided essential support to our office operations, ensuring smooth day-to-day activities and assisting in administrative tasks. Their efforts were vital in maintaining the efficiency and effectiveness of our work.

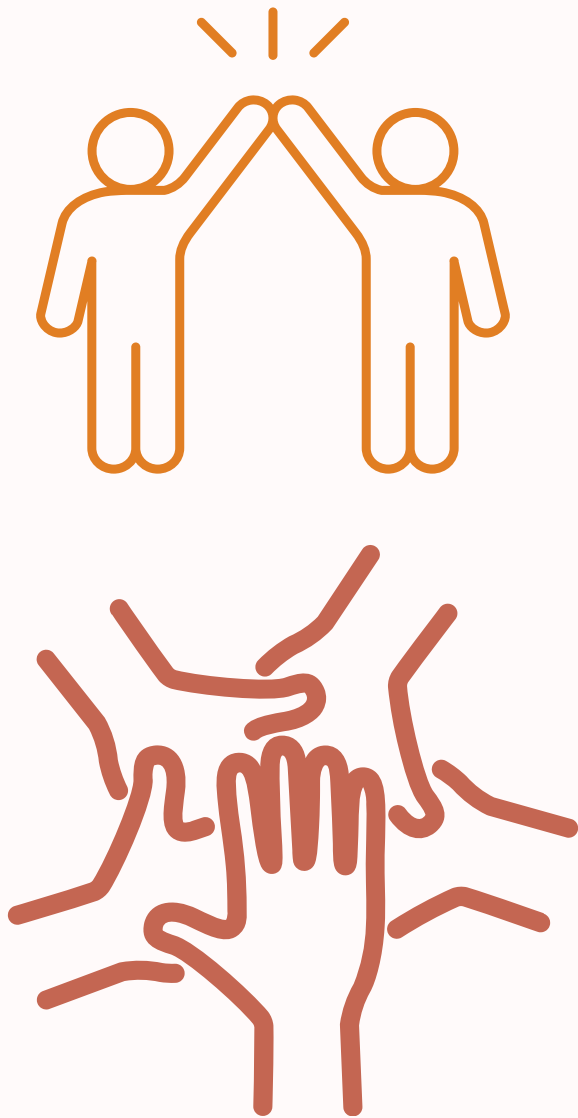
In addition to supporting office work, the volunteers played a crucial role in creating comprehensive proposals on waste management. These proposals will be instrumental in our future projects and initiatives, helping us to develop and implement more effective waste management strategies.

This volunteer visited three key hotspots to assess the progress of waste management initiatives under the CACG project. During their visits, they created videos documenting the current status, drafted proposals for improving waste management practices, and compiled detailed reports outlining their observations and recommendations. These contributions played a crucial role in advancing the project's objectives and ensuring the sustainability of the implemented solutions.



The volunteers also took part in a beach cleanup program, demonstrating their commitment to environmental protection. They worked tirelessly to remove debris and litter from the beaches, contributing to the cleanliness and beauty of the local coastal areas. This initiative not only improved the local environment but also raised awareness about the importance of keeping our beaches clean.

Additionally, the volunteers participated in the Right to Voice Project Pocket meetings with local authorities. During these meetings, they contributed their perspectives and ideas to enhance community engagement and environmental policies. Their involvement was key in bridging the gap between the community and local authorities, promoting collaborative efforts towards environmental sustainability. We are immensely grateful for the hard work and dedication of these volunteers. Their contributions have been crucial in advancing our mission to make Galle City plastic waste-free. We look forward to their continued involvement in our projects and initiatives.



Discussion on Enhancing and Safeguarding Sustainability of the e-Sabha Application

A discussion was held with Mr. Krishantha Mahendra, Secretary of the Chief Ministry of the Southern Province, on the subject of enhancing and safeguarding the sustainability of the e-Sabha mobile application. The meeting included key participants such as Ms. Erandi Umanga Mandis, Southern Provincial Local Government Commissioner, Mr. Eranga Dulshan, Chief Operations Officer of Akwasoft, Mr. Lahiru Madhuranga, Project Manager of the Right to Voice Project, Ms. Anoja Jayasinghe, Project Coordinator, and Mr. Chathura Rajitha, Engineer from HELP-O Eco Green.

Additionally, the project consultant, Dr. Ashoka Siriwardhana, former Secretary of the State Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Sahan Bodaragama, Executive Director of Aquasoft, joined the discussion through an online platform.

The focus of the meeting was to identify key areas for improvement and to ensure the long-term viability of the mobile application. Various strategies and technical solutions were proposed, aimed at strengthening the application's functionality and sustainability in the Southern Province. The participants emphasized the importance of collaboration among government officials, private sector representatives, and civil society to achieve the project's objectives.

This discussion marks a significant step forward in enhancing digital governance and service delivery in the Southern Province, ensuring that the mobile application continues to serve the public efficiently and sustainably.



Monitoring and Evaluation Discussion on e-Sabha App Held at Baddegama Pradeshiya Sabha

On the 12th of August, a significant discussion focused on the Monitoring and Evaluation of the eSabha app took place at the Baddegama Pradeshiya Sabha. The session was attended by the Secretary of the Baddegama Pradeshiya Sabha along with other key officials, highlighting the importance of this initiative.

The discussion was led by Mr. Lahiru Udumalagala, the Project Manager of the "Right to Voice" project. His insights into the app's potential to enhance governance and transparency at the local level were well-received by the participants. The eSabha app is seen as a crucial tool in promoting citizen engagement and improving the efficiency of local government operations.

This event marks a key step in the ongoing efforts to empower communities and ensure their voices are heard in the decision-making processes.



Training Program on e-Sabha App Dashboard Management Held at Weligama Urban Council

On August 14th, a significant training program focusing on the management of the eSabha app dashboard was organized at the Weligama Urban Council. The session was attended by the Secretary of the Baddegama Urban Council along with other key officials, underscoring the importance of the program for enhancing local governance through digital platforms.

The training was conducted by Mr. Lahiru Maduranga, the Project Manager of the Right to Voice project. His expertise guided the participants through the intricacies of the eSabha app, ensuring that they are well-equipped to manage the dashboard effectively. This initiative marks a critical step towards the digital empowerment of local government bodies, promoting transparency, efficiency, and better service delivery to the public.



Final Review Workshop for "Moving Towards a Plastic Waste-Free Future in Sri Lanka" Successfully Concludes



The final stages of preparation for the Teacher Resource Book and the Student Activity Book, titled "Moving Towards a Plastic Waste-Free Future in Sri Lanka with Next Generation," reached a significant milestone with the completion of translations into Sinhala and Tamil. These vital educational materials, aimed at shaping the next generation's approach to plastic waste management, were reviewed for content accuracy and coherence during a workshop held at the Ministry of Environment on August 15 and 16, 2024.

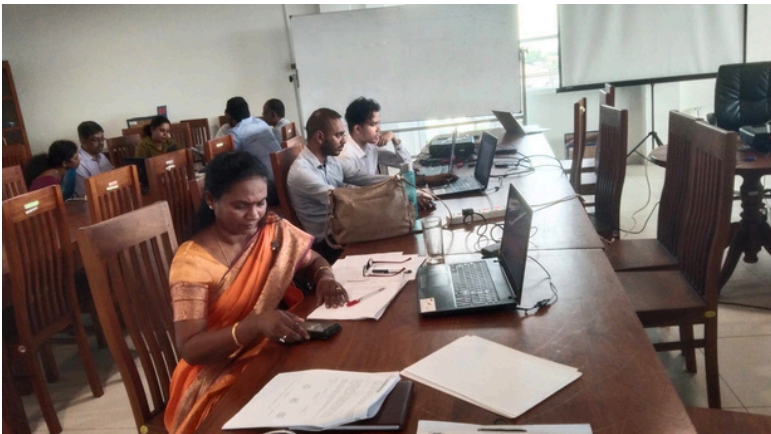


The event brought together key stakeholders from various government institutions, including officials from the National Institute of Education, the Department of Book Publication, the Department of Education, and the Ministry of Environment. In attendance were also prominent figures from the implementing organization, HELP-O, such as Chief Executive Officer Dr. Chatura Weliwitiya, Project Consultant Dr. Ashoka Siriwardana, and Accountant Ms. Chandani Megamamana.

This workshop marked a crucial phase in ensuring the quality and relevance of the educational content, focusing on environmental sustainability and plastic waste management. The collaborative effort was supported by UNEP/BRS/IGES, demonstrating a shared commitment to fostering a waste-free future through education and community engagement.



The translated versions of the Teacher Resource Book and Student Activity Book are expected to be instrumental in raising awareness among students and educators across Sri Lanka. By equipping future generations with the knowledge and tools to address plastic pollution, the initiative aligns with the nation's broader environmental goals.



This initiative underscores the importance of multilingual access to educational resources, ensuring that the message of sustainability reaches every corner of the country. The final review workshop represents a step forward in empowering students and educators to lead the charge in moving towards a plastic waste-free Sri Lanka.



The collaborative spirit of this effort and the support from various environmental and educational bodies exemplify a holistic approach to addressing one of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time.



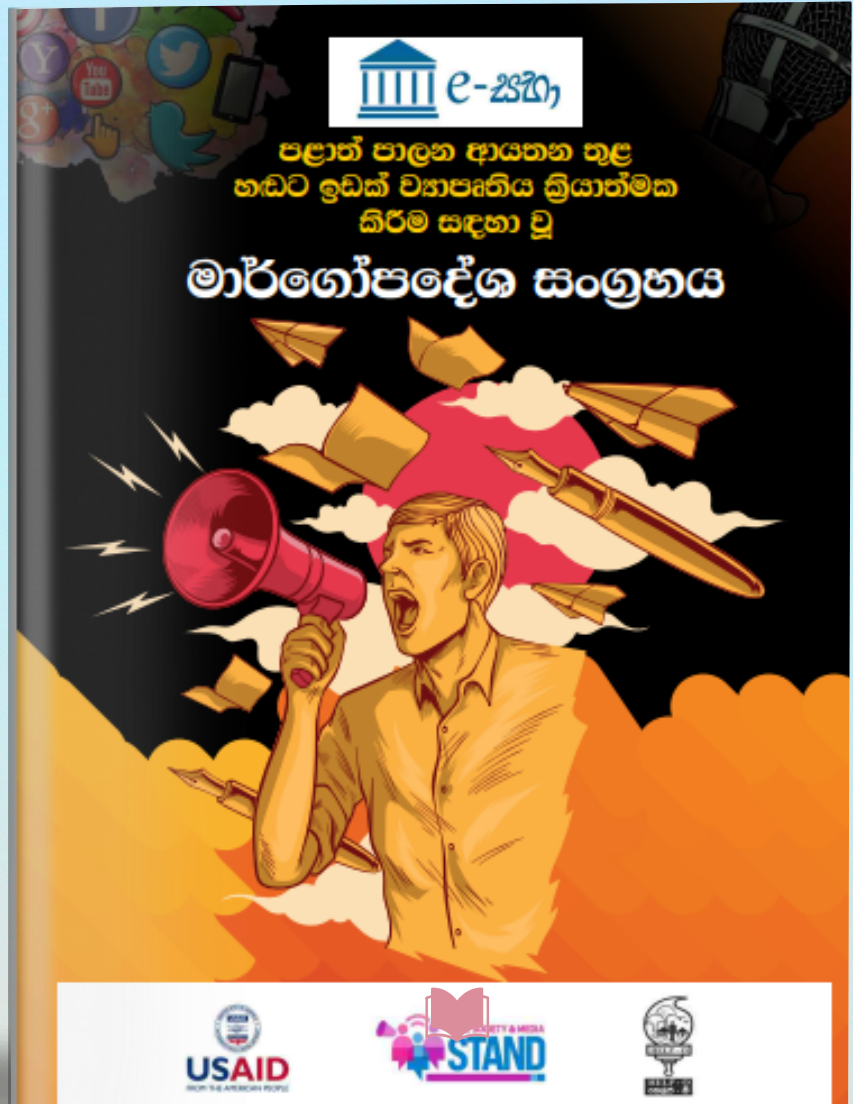
Success Stories of e-Sabha Governance Platform



Mr. R.J Samaraweera
Community Organization Leader
Middeniya

“I sent three complaints to the Katuwana LA, via e-Sabha Application. I received a message from LA within a few hours for these three complaints. Also, they gave positive action for all these complaints and solved all the issues within few days. Previously I sent these complaints to another responsible entity. But I could not get a positive result from them. So, I think e-Sabha is a very successful method of sending complaints.”

RIGHT TO VOICE PROJECT GUIDE BOOK



Download - [Click](#)

HELPO Eco Green Ltd: Leading the Way in Environmental Conservation and Biogas Technology

HELPO Eco Green Ltd., a pioneering consultancy in environmental conservation, is revolutionizing waste management practices across various sectors, including hospitals, hotels, industries, factories, schools, and government organizations. With expertise in biogas technology and wastewater treatment, the company is dedicated to lowering carbon emissions, turning waste into valuable resources, and promoting sustainability through innovative solutions.

Founded with a mission to support vulnerable communities and organizations in Sri Lanka, HELPO Eco Green Ltd. has been at the forefront of environmental conservation since its inception. The company envisions a world where social justice and eco-friendly economic development are prioritized, and it aims to be a trailblazer in the field of eco-conservation.

Since implementing its first biogas unit at Karapitiya Hospital in 2004, HELPO Eco Green Ltd. has expanded its operations to multiple sectors. From domestic and community-level biogas projects to larger initiatives for hotels, hospitals, government offices, and international organizations, the company has constructed over 200 biogas units to date.

Some notable installations include MAS holdings in Koggala & Panadura, Sri Lankan Airlines in Katunayake, Sambodiya Children's Village, Galle and SOS Children's Villages Galle & Piliyandala.

In addition to biogas, HELPO Eco Green Ltd. has developed new technologies to improve the efficiency of waste-to-energy conversion. The company's work has extended beyond Sri Lanka, offering consultation and technical guidance to countries like Cambodia, where biogas units have been built to generate electricity.

What is Biogas?

Biogas is a renewable energy source produced through the natural decomposition of organic matter in an oxygen-free environment. Comprising approximately 65% methane (CH₄) and 35% carbon dioxide (CO₂), biogas can be produced from various inputs, such as household waste, plant matter, industrial food waste, sewage sludge, and animal farm waste. It serves as an alternative to fossil fuels like LPG, helping to reduce costs while minimizing harmful methane emissions



The Benefits of Biogas Technology

HELPO Eco Green Ltd.'s biogas projects are designed not only to manage waste but also to create a more sustainable environment. Some of the key benefits include:

1. Efficient organic waste management
2. Reduced reliance on LPG
3. Alternative renewable energy source
4. Promotion of organic cultivation within communities
5. Reduction in diseases linked to waste mismanagement
6. Minimized soil, water, and air pollution
7. Lower methane emissions

HELPO Eco Green Ltd. offers not only construction but also consultancy services, providing methane analysis reports and green certifications for businesses and communities striving to reduce their environmental footprint.



As the world continues to battle climate change, HELPO Eco Green Ltd. remains a leader in green technology, contributing to a cleaner and more sustainable future. With a highly qualified technical staff and a vision for an eco-friendly world, the company is set to expand its operations even further, constructing more biogas units around the country and abroad.

For organizations looking to reduce waste, conserve energy, and enhance sustainability, HELPO Eco Green Ltd. offers proven solutions and innovative approaches to environmental challenges.

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TURNING WASTE INTO WEALTH: SUCCESS STORIES FROM GALLE'S BOKASHI COMPOST INITIATIVE



Mr. Vijitha Kandambi
Resident of Bombe Castle

"Collaboration Action for a Clean City of Galle" implemented by HELP-O Institute under the supervision of Galle Municipal Council, funded by United States Agency for International Development, Clean City Blue Ocean Program has taken another step in its mission to reduce waste and promote sustainable living by distributing Bokashi compost bins to three selected communities in Galle: Salamiyawatta, Mohideen Watta, and Bombe Castle. The initiative aims to empower residents to manage their kitchen waste more effectively, turning organic waste into valuable compost and liquid fertilizer.

One of the beneficiaries of this project is Mr. Vijitha Kandambi, a resident of Bombe Castle, who has embraced the innovative Bokashi composting system. Speaking about his experience, Mr. Kandambi shared the positive impact the bin has had on his household's waste management practices.

"We use this bin to dispose of our kitchen waste. Since receiving it, we have never had to give any organic waste to the municipal council," he said. Mr. Kandambi explained that after the waste is composted, he mixes it with soil for gardening. "The compost is very effective, and we've already harvested produce from our plants," he added.

Additionally, the liquid fertilizer produced from the bin is used to nourish his plants. "We mix the liquid fertilizer with water and pour it onto the plants. It has been very beneficial," he noted.

Mr. Vijitha Kandambi believes this initiative could have a larger impact if extended to more households in Galle. "This is a good solution to reduce the organic waste burden on the Galle Municipal Council. I think the bokashi bin should be distributed to all residents in the council area," he suggested.

HELP-O bokashi compost bin initiative is part of a broader effort to promote environmental sustainability by reducing waste sent to landfills and encouraging organic cultivation within communities. By converting kitchen waste into compost and liquid fertilizer, residents can actively contribute to a cleaner environment while benefiting from home-grown produce.

This project aligns with the company's vision of promoting eco-friendly economic development and reducing carbon emissions, further solidifying Help-O's commitment to sustainability and innovation.





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