

2024

SEPTEMBER

NEWSLETTER



www.helpo-srilanka.org

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.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Strengthening Local Governance: Galle District Community Organizations Network Inaugurated** 01
 - **First Training Session of the Galle District Operations Team for the e-Sabha Mobile App and Agreement Signing Ceremony** 02
 - **Akmeemana Pradeshiya Sabha Staff Meeting to Reactivate e-Sabha app** 03
 - **Sri Lanka at the 16th City Net Disaster Cluster Seminar: A Focus on Community-Centered Resilience** 04
 - **Success Stories of e-Sabha Governance Platform** 05
 - **Turning Waste into Wealth: Success Stories from Galle's Bokashi Compost Initiative** 06
 - **International Newsletter Articles** 07
 - **Free Breakfast Program at Galle Karapitiya German Sri Lanka Friendship Women's Hospital: A Community-Driven Initiative** 08
- 

Strengthening Local Governance: Galle District Community Organizations Network Inaugurated



On September 4, 2024, the Galle Hasara Hotel hosted a pivotal event under the "Right to Voice Project" initiative, focusing on increasing public engagement in local government institutions across the Southern Province. The event, which ran from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, marked a significant milestone with the establishment of the Galle District Community Organizations Council and a dedicated training session for its effective functioning.

The program's central objective was to empower citizens by enhancing the operational efficiency of local government councils and ensuring the active participation of community organizations. During the event, a detailed SWOT analysis was conducted to evaluate the council's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, leading to the development of a roadmap for its successful implementation. The newly formed district council also saw the appointment of key leadership roles, including the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Several distinguished participants contributed to the success of the event, including:

- Dr. Chathura Walawita, Chief Executive Officer of HELP-O
- Mr. Mohamed Siyad, Program Manager of the BCS Project
- Dr. Asoka Siriwardena, former Ministry Secretary and Project Consultant
- Mr. Lahiru Madhuranga Udumalagala, Project Manager
- Ms. Anoja Jayasinghe, Project Coordinator
- Mr. Chamoth Teran, IT Officer

The collaborative efforts of these individuals and organizations are expected to greatly enhance the responsiveness and inclusivity of local governance in the region. This initiative represents a crucial step toward strengthening community involvement, ensuring that local voices are heard and that governance becomes more transparent and accountable.

By establishing these councils, the "Right to Voice Project" has taken a meaningful step toward empowering citizens, reinforcing the bridge between local government and the community it serves.





FIRST TRAINING SESSION OF THE GALLE DISTRICT OPERATIONS TEAM FOR THE E-SABHA MOBILE APP AND AGREEMENT SIGNING CEREMONY



On September 11, 2024, a milestone event took place at Hasara Hotel, Galle, marking a significant step toward digital transformation in local governance. The first training session of the Galle District Operations Team for the e-Sabha mobile app, alongside the signing of the e-Sabha Agreements, was held with an esteemed gathering of provincial and local government representatives.

The event was graced by Mr. Sumith Alahakoon, Chief Secretary of the Southern Province, and Mrs. Erandi Umanga Mendis, Commissioner of Local Government for the Southern Province, as the chief guests of honor. Their presence underscored the importance of this initiative, which aims to streamline public engagement and enhance transparency in local governance.

Heads and officers from various local government institutions actively participated in the session, representing the Galle Municipal Council, Hikkaduwa Urban Council, Rathgama Pradeshiya Sabha, Yakkalamulla Pradeshiya Sabha, Akmeemana Pradeshiya Sabha, Bop-Poddala Pradeshiya Sabha, Habaraduwa Pradeshiya Sabha, Baddegama Pradeshiya Sabha, Weliwitiya-Divithura Pradeshiya Sabha, and Nagoda Pradeshiya Sabha.

These institutions play a crucial role in implementing the e-Sabha mobile app across the district, making this training session a key step in ensuring the system's efficient operation. The event also saw the attendance of prominent figures from HELP-O, including Dr. Chathura Weliwitiya, CEO of HELP-O, Dr. Sirisena Deshapriya, former Ministry Secretary and Vice Chairman of HELP-O, and Dr. Ashoka Siriwardena, former Ministry Secretary and Project Advisor.

Their involvement highlights the collaboration between government bodies and civil society organizations in driving technological innovation and service delivery improvements.

The e-Sabha mobile app is designed to empower citizens by providing them with a platform to engage directly with their local councils. Through this app, the public can raise concerns, track the progress of local projects, and receive important updates, enhancing both communication and accountability within local governance structures.

This training session equipped the Galle District Operations Team with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage the app, ensuring its smooth operation across the region. The signing of the e-Sabha Agreements further solidified the commitment of the participating local councils to embrace this new platform as a tool for good governance.

The event was a significant step toward improving citizen engagement and making local governance more accessible and efficient. The successful launch of the e-Sabha mobile app in the Galle District sets a promising precedent for other regions to follow suit in the coming months.





Akmeemana Pradeshiya Sabha Staff Meeting to Reactivate e-Sabha app

A meeting aimed at updating and reactivating the e-Sabha mobile application was successfully conducted on September 30, 2024, at the Akmeemana Pradeshiya Sabha. The program, held under the leadership of the Secretary of the Akmeemana Pradeshiya Sabha, gathered the staff to discuss the latest developments and procedures related to the digital platform.

During the meeting, the staff unanimously agreed to reactivate and strictly enforce the e-Sabha process, an initiative that seeks to enhance transparency, accountability, and public engagement in the region's administrative functions. The decision was made to record all complaints through the e-Sabha system, marking a significant step toward fully digitizing the complaint-handling process.

The e-Sabha mobile application, designed to streamline administrative tasks and improve public service delivery, allows citizens to lodge complaints and requests directly with the Pradeshiya Sabha, ensuring faster resolution and more efficient communication. By reintroducing and enforcing the use of this platform, the Akmeemana Pradeshiya Sabha is prioritizing the modernization of its administrative operations.

This meeting represents the first of many steps toward the complete integration of the e-Sabha system into the local government's workflow. The Secretary of the Pradeshiya Sabha reiterated the commitment of the entire staff to ensuring the effective implementation of the system, with a strong focus on better serving the needs of the public.

The Akmeemana Pradeshiya Sabha remains dedicated to leveraging digital tools to foster a more efficient and responsive governance system. With the reactivation of the e-Sabha application, citizens can now look forward to quicker resolutions of their concerns and improved engagement with their local government.



Sri Lanka at the 16th City Net Disaster Cluster Seminar: A Focus on Community-Centered Resilience

16th City Net Disaster Cluster Seminar was held from 18th September 2024 to 21st September 2024 in Taipei. It brought together global experts, city leaders, and policymakers to address critical issues surrounding disaster preparedness, resilience, and sustainable urban development.

Representing Sri Lanka, the Chief Executive Officer of HELP-O Sri Lanka, Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, participated to this valuable occasion and delivered an insightful speech under the session "Climate Change Adopting Actions" titled "Community-Centered Approaches to Preparedness: Empowering Local Voices for Sustainable Cities" emphasizing the importance of engaging communities in shaping disaster preparedness strategies. In the session, he has underscored how community empowerment is the key to building resilience in cities. He discussed various methods and successful case studies, particularly from Sri Lanka, that demonstrate the impact of community-driven initiatives. His emphasis on local participation resonated strongly with the overarching theme of creating sustainable, resilient cities.

The seminar was further enriched with several field visits aimed at showcasing the resilience efforts in Taipei. Delegates, including Dr. Welivitiya, had the opportunity to explore key facilities such as the Yongchumpi Wetland Park, Taipei Emergency Operations Center, National Disaster Prevention Day Outreach Event and the Taipei Dome.



These field studies were a testament to Taipei innovative strategies for disaster preparedness, integrating technological solutions with sustainable urban planning. The exchange of ideas during these visits provided valuable insights into how Sri Lanka could adopt similar practices to strengthen disaster resilience in its cities. The seminar concluded with a renewed commitment to fostering collaboration between cities in the Asia-Pacific region. Dr. Chathura Welivitiya's contribution highlighted the Sri Lankan role in advancing community-centered approaches to disaster preparedness, ensuring that local voices are at the heart of building resilient, sustainable cities.

Through the events like these, Sri Lanka continues to strengthen its global partnerships and contribute to the development of innovative solutions for urban resilience in the face of climate change and natural disasters.



CITYNET

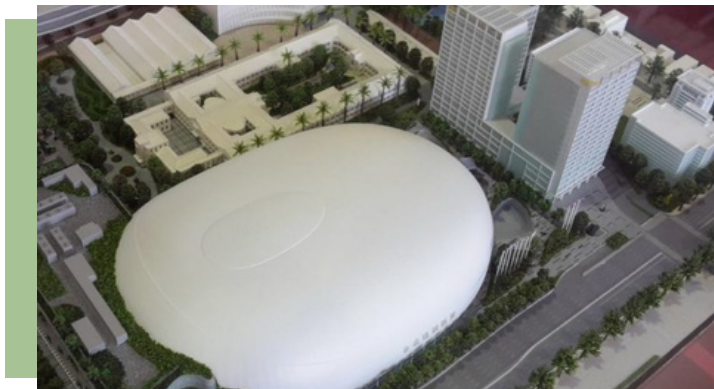
THE REGIONAL NETWORK OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES
FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS







TAIPEI DOME: A NEW LANDMARK AND SAFE HAVEN FOR NATURAL DISASTERS



The Taipei Dome, located in the heart of Taipei city which is Xinyi, is not only set to become one of Taiwan's premier venues for sports and entertainment but also a key player in the city's natural disaster management strategy. With Taiwan being highly vulnerable to floods, typhoons, earthquakes, and other natural disasters, the Taipei Dome's design includes features that make it a potential refuge for thousands of people in the event of a disaster.

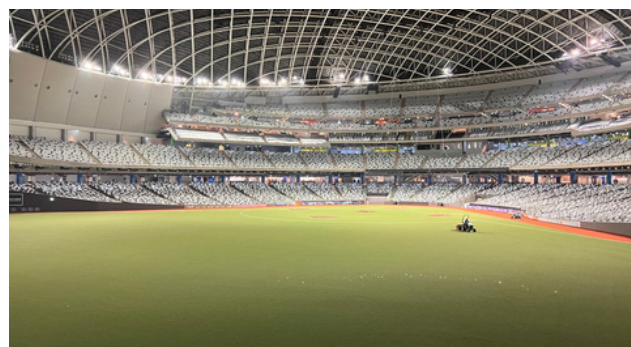
Initially envisioned as a multipurpose stadium primarily for baseball games and large-scale events, the Taipei Dome can seat up to 40,000 spectators. Beyond its function as a sports and entertainment hub, the facility has been integrated into Taipei's emergency management plans, providing a safe, structurally sound shelter that can accommodate a large number of people during disasters.

Equipped with reinforced construction materials designed to withstand earthquakes, which are common in Taiwan, the Dome also features cutting-edge evacuation and disaster-response systems. In the event of a typhoon or earthquake, the Dome's design allows it to act as a large-scale emergency shelter, capable of housing around 15,000 to 20,000 people in emergency situations. This provision aligns with the city's overall disaster preparedness program, which focuses on utilizing public infrastructure as shelters to protect citizens during severe weather or geological events.

The Dome's strategic location in Xinyi area, close to essential city services and infrastructure, makes it an ideal protection. It is designed with large open spaces, food storage facilities and emergency medical supplies, ensuring that evacuees can be supported for extended periods. The spacious interior is adaptable, enabling emergency authorities to set up temporary bedding, distribute food, and offer medical care to those displaced by disasters.

The incorporation of disaster management features reflects Taipei's commitment to preparedness in the face of climate change and growing concerns over natural hazards. The Taipei City government has been working closely with architects, engineers, and emergency planners to ensure that the Dome is not only a venue for entertainment but also a beacon of safety in times of crisis.

As the Dome nears completion, its role as a disaster shelter offers an additional layer of security for Taipei's residents, providing peace of mind that, should disaster strike, they have a safe and secure space to seek refuge. The Taipei Dome, once a symbol of urban development, is now set to become a critical element in Taiwan's natural disaster management system.



Success Stories of e-Sabha Governance Platform



Mr. Roshan Kulathunga
Community Organization Leader
Katuwana

"I submitted two complaints to the Katuwana Local Authority through the e-Sabha application and received a response within a few hours. They took prompt action on all three complaints and resolved the issues within a few days. Before this, I had reported these problems to another responsible organization but didn't receive any satisfactory results. Based on my experience, I believe the e-Sabha platform is a highly effective way to submit complaints."

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



Mr. M. Riyaz
Resident of Bombe Castle

Under the "Collaboration Action for a Clean City of Galle" initiative, implemented by HELP-O and supported by the Galle Municipal Council, residents are embracing a more sustainable approach to waste management. Funded by USAID's Clean Cities Blue Ocean Program, this project introduced Bokashi compost bins to three communities Salamiyawatta, Mohideen Watta, and Bombe Castle, empowering them to turn kitchen waste into valuable compost.

In Bombe Castle, Mr. Riyaz has become a strong advocate for the initiative. With the help of Bokashi composting, his family now manages their kitchen waste independently, reducing the burden on municipal waste collection. The compost produced is used to grow fruits, vegetables, and flowers in their garden, with the nutrient-rich liquid fertilizer proving essential for their plants.

The initiative also extends beyond waste management, promoting sustainable gardening. Families like Mr. Riyaz's received seeds and learned how to use recyclable materials like PET bottles for gardening. His flourishing garden is a symbol of the community's shift towards eco-friendly living, reducing waste and enhancing food security.

As more families follow this example, Bombe Castle is becoming a model for sustainable living. Through collaboration, education, and community action, Galle is moving towards a cleaner, greener future, where waste is minimized, and environmental stewardship is embraced.





International Newsletter Articles



SOUTH ASIA GRANTS PROGRAM

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Sri Lanka

ENHANCING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT - HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENT LINKS PROGRESSIVE ORGANIZATION (HELP-O)

HELP-O is an organization aimed at developing and balancing human and environmental progress in rural as well as urban areas, with a particular focus on the low-income communities. During the first phase of the SAGF, HELP-O developed the 'E-Sabha' application under the 'Right to Voice' program, which provides a platform for citizens to engage with their local government representatives efficiently, including reporting issues, offering feedback and keeping informed of local government initiatives. The initiative first started during the COVID-19 pandemic and serves as a method for citizens to communicate with local government officials without the requirement of physical visitation to government offices, which can be costly and prohibitive for many constituents, particularly in rural areas.



Since its inception through the SAGF, HELP-O has continued to improve the application, widen its reach, and forge strong networks with various stakeholders, especially local government, to promote its utilization. The second phase of the 'Right to Voice' program is currently supported by The Asia Foundation and Pact International through funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In subsequent visits made to the organization by the SAGF team as part of ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities, HELP-O acknowledged the role played by the SAGF funding and capacity building initiative in enhancing the capacity of the organization to secure further competitive funding opportunities.

The mobile application is now available in all three local languages and has been updated with advanced features. Further, in the month of July 2024, HELP-O was able to make significant inroads into the institutionalization of the application within the local government structures of the Southern Province. On July 12, 2024, a pivotal meeting was convened by Southern Province local government officials to reinforce commitment to the application within the Province and train government officials and other stakeholders to effectively utilize the application. The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary of the Southern Province; secretaries of several key ministries; divisional secretaries; municipal commissioners and heads of security forces.

HELP-O also instituted several training programs at a district level across the Southern Province to further facilitate usage of the application. At present, the E-Sabha application operates in 30 out of 49 local government institutions in the Southern Province and has also been extended to one district of the North-Western Province. HELP-O aims to institute this application in local government institutions across the country to revolutionize the way citizens communicate and engage with local government.





CLEAN **CITIES**, BLUE **OCEAN**

Galle, Sri Lanka

**Kawashima Aerated Mechanical Composting
Bokashi Anaerobic Home Composting**

25



Sonia Ytuarte Nasser, PE

Solid Waste Advisor

USAID's Clean Cities, Blue Ocean Program

Sonia.YtuarteNasser@tetrattech.com

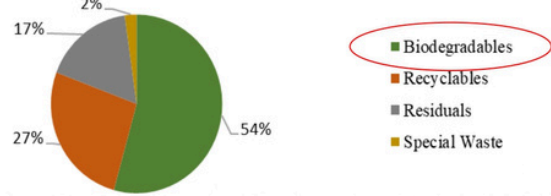


City of Galle, Sri Lanka – Initial Context

- Waste Generation: 68 tons/day
- **Composition: 54% organics**
- Population: 104,000 (2021)

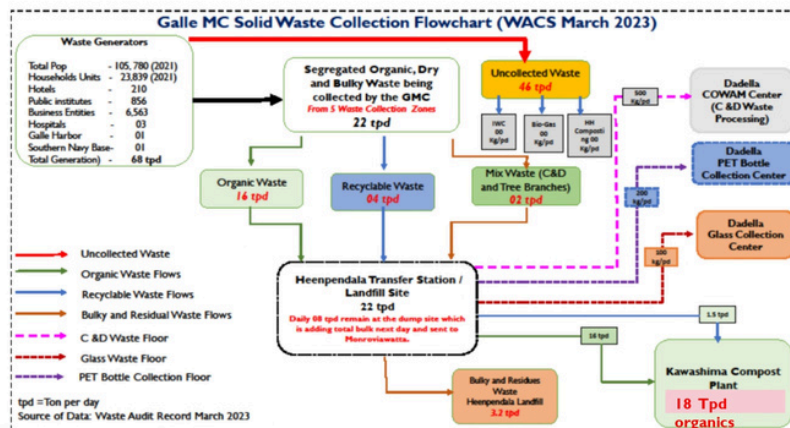
No	Sector wise waste Generation	Kg/pd
01	Residential	52,376
02	Commercial	11,145
03	Industrial (Small and medium scale)	2,600
04	Service sector	2,256
	Total Generation	68,377

COMPOSITION OF TOTAL WASTE COMPONENTS

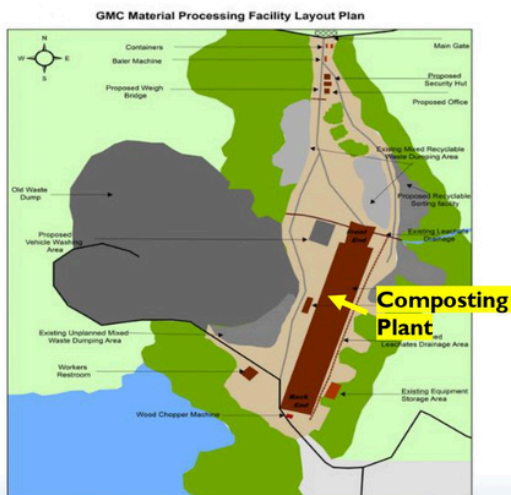


Waste Flow Map

82% of actual collected waste was organics



Kawashima Composting Facility – Galle, Heependala Disposal Site

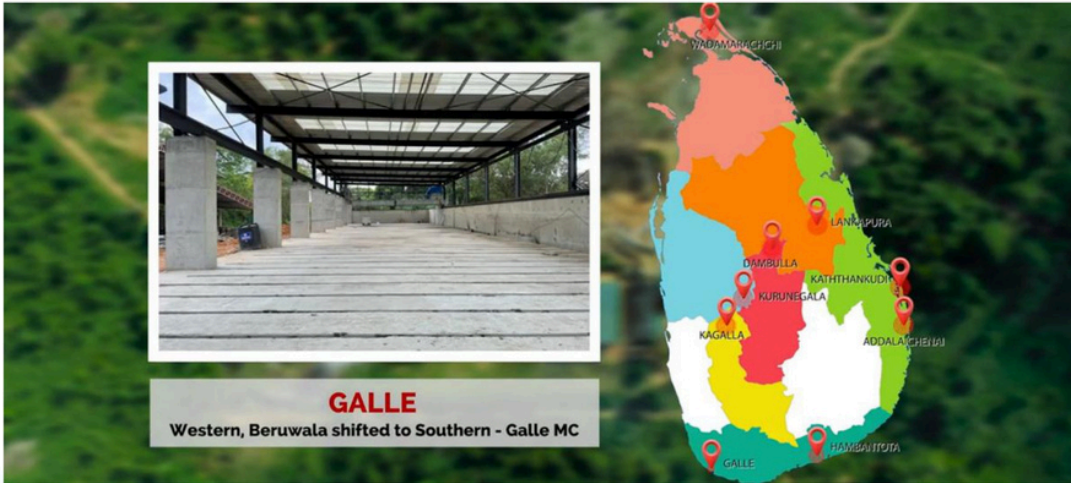


1.4 Hectare site = 3.5 Acres

Surrounded by residential neighborhood



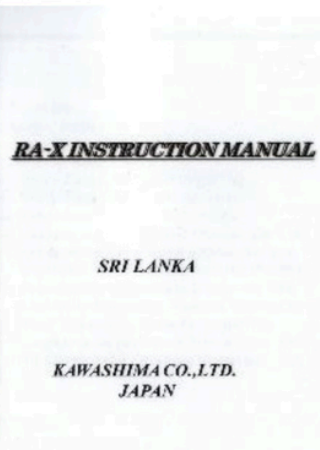
Kawashima Composting Facilities gifted by JICA to Sri Lanka



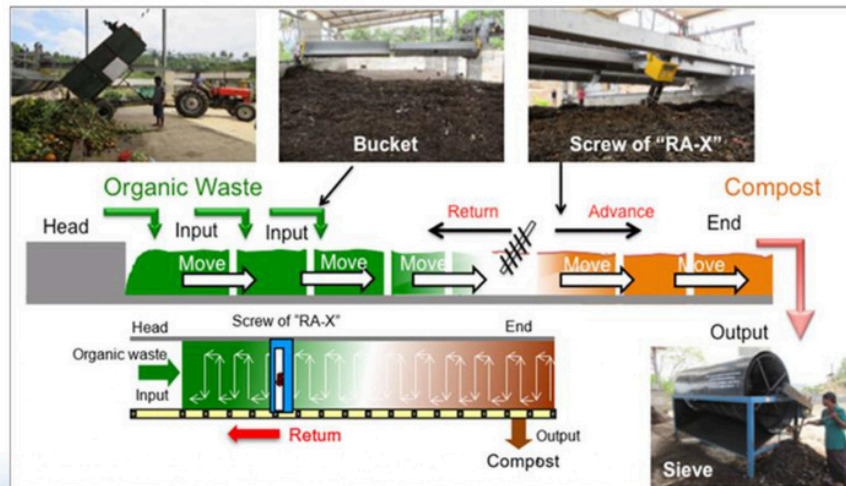
Galle Kawashima Plant



Manual for RA-X Composting Equipment



Kawashima Plant RA-X Screw



Secondary Fermenter – Covered Maturation Area NOT BUILT in the Galle Facility

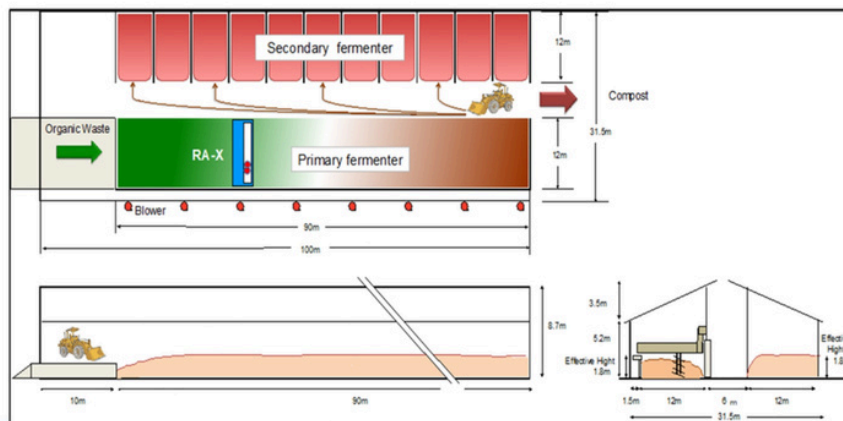


Photo: Evreka.com

Final Product



Challenges and Recommendations



Short Term Recommendations

- Rainy season: Process organics and use the material as soil cover
- Non-rainy season: Mature compost in open area
- Scale to weigh inputs and outputs

Long Term Needs

- Leachate collection and treatment system: Natural wetlands
- Covered maturation area: Secondary fermenter

CCBO Grantee HELP-O – Bokashi Home Composting

HELP-O: Human and Environment Links Progressive Organization

- Worked with Galle Municipal Council to distribute and train home owners in 4 settlements:
 - Salamiya Watta: 40 Bokashi Bins, 70 Plastic Bins (recyclables)
 - Bombay Castle: 110 Bokashi Bins, 35 Plastic Bins
 - Mohideen Watta: 250 Bokashi Bins, 73 Plastic Bins
 - Samagi Watta: 200 Bokashi Bins
- These were hot spots for flooding waste in canals
- Low-income settlements
- Introduction to waste segregation
- Good resident and community engagement



CCBO Grantee HELP-O – Bokashi Home Composting

Results from 3 months data

- **Organics diverted: 10 tons**
- **Recyclables: 7 tons**, collected by traders
- Led to a flourishing of home gardens producing fresh, organic produce, thereby improving food security and reducing dependence on chemical fertilizers
- Estimated savings to Galle Municipality: ~\$2,600 per year



Free Breakfast Program at Galle Karapitiya German Sri Lanka Friendship Women's Hospital: A Community-Driven Initiative

In a heartwarming initiative that began on October 1st, 2024, Galle Karapitiya German Sri Lanka Friendship Women's Hospital (formerly known as Mahmudara Hospital) has launched a revolutionary program offering free nutritious breakfasts to all inpatients. This groundbreaking effort, which is the first of its kind in any Sri Lankan government hospital, is sustained through the generous contributions of the local business community, hospital staff, community organizations, and even specialist doctors. The initiative is supervised by Doctors, ensuring that the food served is not only healthy but also prepared in an exceptionally clean environment. The hospital's modern kitchen, equipped with the latest technology, sets this program apart from even private healthcare facilities. The free services are open to everyone, regardless of financial background, creating an inclusive model of healthcare that is as inspiring as it is innovative.

How Can You Get Involved?

This program is run by a dedicated food committee that includes business leaders, community organizations, Lions Club members, and hospital staff. Community participation is not only encouraged but vital for the continuation of this initiative.



Here are several ways you can contribute:

Celebrate Special Occasions: Mark birthdays or significant family events by sponsoring a breakfast for the inpatients. This is a thoughtful way to give back while celebrating your personal milestones.

Support Nutritional Needs: Contribute to the daily liquid milk provided to mothers in the nursery or join in providing evening soup to all hospital wards.

Monetary or Material Donations: Any contribution, large or small, helps sustain the program. Your support can help ensure that the future generation receives the nourishment they deserve, especially during crucial moments of recovery.



For more details on how to get involved, you can contact:

Dr. Chathura Welivitiya at 0773737824

Mr. Saman Athukorala at 0777909192

Mr. Suranga at 0718656804 (Women's Hospital)

A Community-Driven Effort

This program is a true testament to the power of collective goodwill. It's a perfect example of how communities can come together to support their local institutions and improve the lives of others. Through this initiative, Galle's Women's Hospital is not just treating patients but nourishing them in a holistic manner, ensuring a healthier future for all.

හොට් එලිය දැකීම



දරුවන් උදෙසා...

බහුපාර්ශ්වීය සහයෝගීතාවයෙන්
ගැබිණි මව්වරුන් සඳහා

පෝෂණ සුරක්ෂා

වැඩසටහන

(උදුසන ආහාරයට අතිරේක එකතුවක්)



ඔබගේ උපන්දින ඇතුළු සුවිශේෂී
අවස්ථාවලට වටිනාකමක්
එක්කිරීමට මෙය අවස්ථාවක්
කරගත හැක.

වැඩිදුර විස්තර සඳහා විමසීම්

077 373 7824
077 790 9192
071 865 6804

ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීම

ජර්මන් - ශ්‍රී ලංකා මිත්‍රත්ව
කාන්තා රෝහලේ ආහාර කමිටුව



THE STAMP CARD ISSUED BY THE SRI LANKA POSTAL DEPARTMENT IN OF DR. CHATHURA WELIVITIYA, CEO OF HELP-O

Dr. Chathura Welivitiya (Lion)
(PhD.HC.En.M.WD.Uni) / JP.All Isaland)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Human and Environment Link Progressive Organization

amps

POST No 364/18A, Samagi Mw, Dangedara, Galle, Sri Lanka . Office Mobile -9491 9230818 . Whatsapp-9477 373 7824 . Philatel
 Mobile -94714260161 . E-mail-chathura@helpo-srilanka.org . info@helpo-srilanka.org . Web: www.helpo-srilanka.org





Your Council is in Your Finger Tips

e-Sabha

Easily voice your public concerns
Send complaints to your local council instantly.

Features:

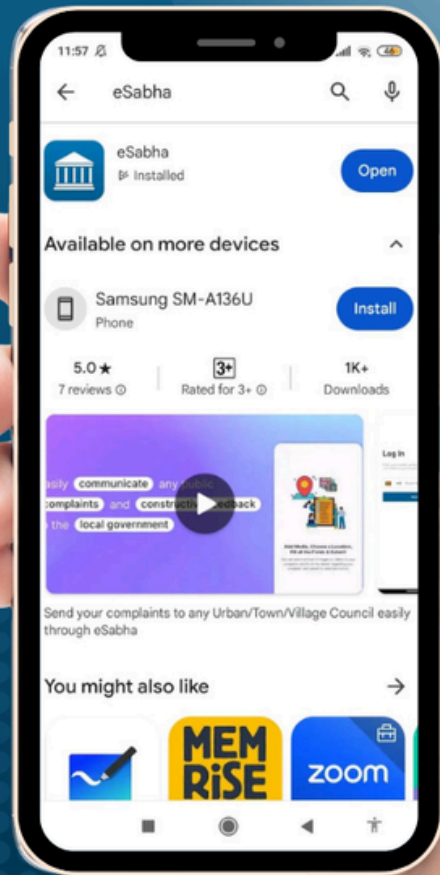
- ✓ Easy-to-use interface
- ✓ Get started with just a click
- ✓ Take action with multimedia
- ✓ Swift delivery guaranteed
- ✓ The council is ready to provide solutions to your complaints

DOWNLOAD NOW 

 www.helpo-srilanka.org



Google Play



NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2024 HELP-O SRI LANKA

CHIEF ADVISIOR

Dr.Chathura Welivitiya

ADVISIORS

Dr.Asoka Siriwardana
Dr.Rohana Rathnayake
Dr.Sirisena Deshapriya
Padmasiri Moonamale
P.A. Gunathilaka
Lasitha Udaya

EDITORS

Lahiru Udumalagala
Chandhi Devaki
Anoja Jeewanthi
Chamoth Teran
Supun Suranjith
Chathura Rajitha
Yasitha Iresha

DESIGN BY


Chamoth Teran





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