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2024

NEWSLETTER

OCTOMBER

HELP-O
SRI LANKA



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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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e-Sabha App Action Group Establishment- Matara and Hambantota Districts



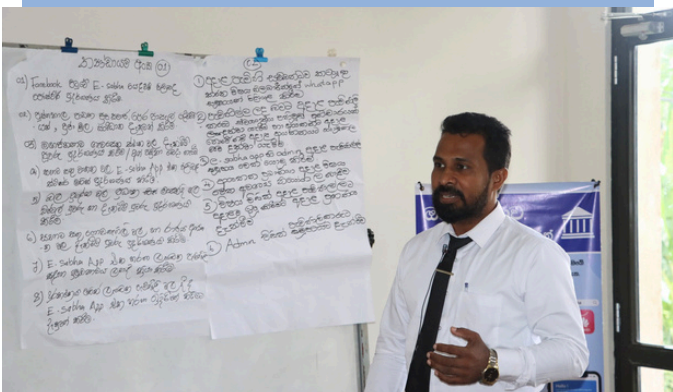
On October 3, 2024, a pivotal training session on the implementation of the e-Sabha mobile app was held at the Wakwella Management and Technical Training Institute in Galle. Designed to streamline digital governance, this initiative brings local government authorities in the Matara and Hambantota districts together to enhance their digital capabilities for community engagement and service efficiency.

Participants included representatives from multiple councils and Pradeshiya Sabhas: Matara Municipal Council, Weligama Municipal Council, Weligama Pradeshiya Sabha, Matara Pradeshiya Sabha, Akuressa Pradeshiya Sabha, Hambantota Municipal Council, Tangalle Municipal Council, Tangalle Pradeshiya Sabha, Beliatta Pradeshiya Sabha, and Katuwana Pradeshiya Sabha. Key officials from the Matara Assistant Provincial Local Government Commissioner's Department were also in attendance.

Organized by HELP-O with guidance from the Southern Provincial Local Government Commissioner's Department, the session drew on the expertise of Dr. Ashoka Siriwardena, Dr. Chathura Weliwitiya, CEO of HELP-O, and Attorney Lahiru Udumalagala. Their insights underscored the importance of digital tools in fostering transparent, efficient governance at the local level.

The e-Sabha app promises to transform administrative tasks and community interactions, empowering councils to better serve their constituents through an accessible, streamlined platform.





Provincial Community Organizations Forum

Established under the "Right to Voice" Initiative



Attendees included HELP-O staff, local officials, and newly selected district representatives. The session included interactive training aimed at equipping officers with the skills and insights needed to strengthen community networks and advocate for local needs. This forum serves as a platform to amplify regional voices and foster greater engagement among community stakeholders.



The event concluded with a renewed commitment to the goals of the "Right to Voice" initiative, promising sustained collaboration to address pressing local issues and enhance community-led development across the province.

On October 4, 2024, the Provincial Community Organizations Forum establishment and training program took place at the scenic Rock Fort Hotel in Unawatuna, marking a key milestone in the ongoing "Right to Voice" initiative. This event brought together representatives from District Community Organizations Forums across the province for a day of collaboration, learning, and the formal selection of officers to represent each district at the Provincial level.

The event commenced with inspiring speeches from Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, CEO of HELP-O, and Dr. Asoka Siriwardhana, a former Ministry Secretary and advisor to the project. Both speakers emphasized the importance of community empowerment and the role of grassroots voices in shaping effective governance and social progress.





e-Sabha Mobile App Training Program Empowers Galle District Local Authorities



An innovative training session on the e-Sabha Mobile App was held at the Galle Hasara Hotel, aimed at enhancing the operational capabilities of ten local authorities in the Galle District. This event was a significant step toward digitizing local government functions, providing a platform for efficient, accessible communication between councils and their communities.



Attorney Sumith Alahakoon, Chief Secretary of the Southern Province, served as the Chief Guest, underscoring the importance of modernization in public service. Representatives from local bodies, including the Ambalangoda Municipal Council, Ambalangoda Pradeshiya Sabha, and others, actively participated in this training session.

Keynote addresses were delivered by Dr. Chathura Weliwitiya, CEO of HELP-O, and Dr. Ashoka Siriwardena, a former Ministry Secretary and project advisor. Both speakers emphasized the potential of the e-Sabha system to enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement. The technical training was conducted by Attorney Lahiru Maduranga, Project Manager of the initiative, alongside members of the HELP-O team who provided hands-on support.

The event marked a positive step towards digital transformation for the Galle District, setting a model for streamlined governance in other regions as well.



e-Sabha Progress Discussion with Hon. Governor of Southern Province.

On 2024.10.15, a critical discussion on implementing the eSabha app and outlining the future roadmap for local government digital transformation took place at the Southern Province Governor's Office. The meeting was presided over by Honorable Governor of the Southern Province, Mr. Bandula Harischandra, who emphasized the significance of the eSabha initiative in promoting citizen engagement and transparency in government functions.

The session brought together key leaders, including Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, CEO of the HELP-O organization, who shared insights into the project's alignment with HELP-O's vision of enhanced public service delivery through digital means. Joining him was Dr. Ashoka Siriwardena, the project advisor and a former Ministry Secretary, who contributed his experience to guide the project's strategic direction.



Lahiru Udumalagala, the project manager, along with Mr. Teran, the IT Officer for HELP-O, provided technical perspectives on the app's development and deployment. Their contributions underscored the app's role in facilitating a streamlined communication channel between citizens and local government bodies, thereby supporting efficient decision-making and accountability.

Also in attendance were the Governor's Private Secretary and the Provincial Assembly Secretary, underscoring the Provincial Government's commitment to this innovative digital transformation effort. This discussion represents a significant step toward modernizing public administration in the Southern Province.



Elpitiya CBO Forum Convenes Special Meeting to Address Community Issues

Elpitiya, Sri Lanka (October 19, 2024) - A special meeting of the Elpitiya Community Based Organizations (CBO) Forum was held on October 18, 2024, at the Elpitiya Divisional Secretariat. The meeting brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including government officials, community leaders, and media representatives, to discuss pressing issues facing the Elpitiya community.

Key Attendees:

Divisional Secretary

Community Development Officer

Officer-in-Charge of Elpitiya Main Police Station, Mr. Wijesinghe

Officer-in-Charge of the Vehicle Division of Pitigala Police Station, Mr. Wickramasinha

Principal of Amugoda Maha Vidyalaya, Mr. O.K.D. Samantha

Southern Provincial Coordinator of the Public Utilities Commission, Mr. Amarajeewa Gurusinghe

Public Health Inspector of Elpitiya, Mr. Palitha

Public Health Inspectors of Amugoda and Omatha, Mr. Aruna Lakmal

Environmental Officer of the Elpitiya Divisional Secretariat

Grama Seva Officer

Youth Services Officer

Integrated and Coexistence Development Officer

Development Officer, Mr. Samantha Salpage
Chairperson and other officials of the Elpitiya Mediation Board

55 community leaders from 40 Grama Seva Divisions

Journalists from Sirasa, Hiru, Divaina, Lankadeepa, and Lakbima newspapers, including Mr. Chandana Saman Kumar from Pitigala





Key Discussions and Decisions:

During the meeting, participants engaged in fruitful discussions on various community issues, including

Waste Management: The forum recognized the importance of sustainable waste management practices and decided to organize a waste fair in December to raise awareness and promote recycling initiatives.



The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to addressing community challenges and fostering collaboration between various stakeholders. The CBO Forum will continue to play a vital role in empowering the Elpitiya community and driving positive change.



SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BELIATTA COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS FORUM

Strengthening Community Collaboration under the "Right to Voice" Initiative

Beliatta, October 22, 2024 – A significant meeting of the Beliatta Community Organizations Forum was held at the Beliatta Pradeshiya Sabha on October 22, 2024, starting at 9:00 AM. Organized as part of the "Right to Voice" initiative, the gathering aimed to foster stronger community ties and promote active citizen participation in local governance and decision-making processes. The session was led by Lahiru Udamalagala, Program Manager of the "Right to Voice" initiative, who emphasized the importance of empowering local communities to have an active voice in their developmental concerns. The "Right to Voice" initiative is a community-driven platform that focuses on inclusive governance and collaboration among citizens, government entities, and local organizations.

Notable attendees included the Secretary of the Beliatta Pradeshiya Sabha, representatives from the Beliatta Police, various government officials, and respected community leaders. Together, they discussed pressing local issues, explored avenues for collaborative problem-solving, and laid out actionable plans to address key challenges in the Beliatta region.

The forum also highlighted recent achievements of the initiative and set priorities for the coming months, emphasizing a collective approach to creating sustainable solutions. The meeting concluded with a commitment from all stakeholders to continue supporting the initiative's vision for an inclusive, empowered community.

About "Right to Voice" Initiative

The "Right to Voice" initiative is committed to fostering community engagement across Sri Lanka, aiming to give citizens a platform for voicing their concerns and actively participating in local governance.



MONTHLY KATHUWANA COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS FORUM MEETING FOCUSES ON COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Kathuwana, Sri Lanka (October 25, 2024) - On October 24th, 2024, the Kathuwana Community Organizations Forum, a cornerstone of the "Right to Voice" initiative, convened its monthly meeting at the Kathuwana Pradeshiya Sabha. The forum, spearheaded by Mr. Lahiru Udamalagala, the Project Manager of the Right to Voice Project, brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including officials from the Kathuwana Pradeshiya Sabha, representatives from various government institutions, and influential community leaders.

Empowering the Community

The "Right to Voice" initiative, a visionary endeavor aimed at empowering marginalized communities, has been instrumental in fostering a platform for open dialogue and collective action. The monthly meetings of the Kathuwana Community Organizations Forum serve as a vital space for community members to share their concerns, ideas, and aspirations.

Key Discussions and Outcomes

The October 24th meeting was marked by a series of insightful discussions and decisions. Key topics included

Infrastructure Development: Participants deliberated on pressing infrastructure needs within the community, such as road repairs, water supply improvements, and the expansion of public facilities.

Environmental Conservation: The forum emphasized the importance of environmental sustainability and explored strategies to address issues like waste management, deforestation, and pollution.

Education and Youth Empowerment: Community leaders discussed the significance of quality education and youth development programs, aiming to create opportunities for young people to reach their full potential.

Healthcare Access: The meeting highlighted the challenges faced by the community in accessing affordable and quality healthcare services, and explored potential solutions to improve healthcare outcomes.

A Collaborative Approach to Community Development





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