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2024

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER

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.

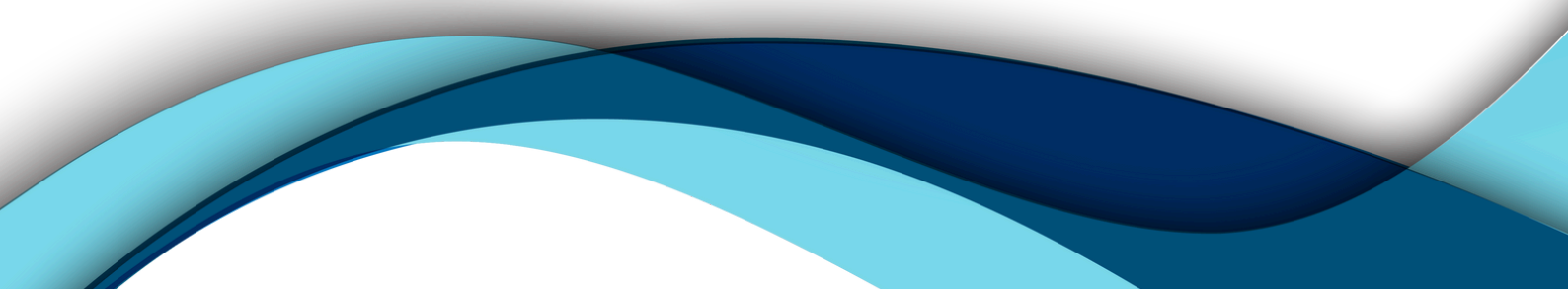


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Habaraduwa Pradeshiya Sabha Praises for Effective Use of eSabha Application

A meeting of the Habaraduwa Pradeshiya Sabha Community Organization Forum, a key component of the "Right to Voice" initiative, convened today to review the successful implementation of the e-Sabha mobile application.

The meeting, held on 3rd of december at the Habaraduwa Pradeshiya Sabha , saw the participation of key stakeholders, including the Secretary of the Habaraduwa Pradeshiya Sabha, Project Manager Mr. Lahiru Madhuranga, Project Coordinator Mrs. Anoja Jayasinghe, the Chairman of the Space for Voice Provincial Community Organization Forum Mr. Madhavan, and the Convener of the Habaraduwa Community Organization Forum Mrs. Briatrice, along with Pradeshiya Sabha officers and representatives from various community organizations.

The focus of the meeting was to assess the progress and impact of the eSabha application within the local community. Attendees expressed significant appreciation for the proactive steps taken by the Habaraduwa Pradeshiya Sabha, which included:

- **Prompt Resolution of Citizen Complaints:** The Sabha has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing all citizen grievances submitted through the eSabha platform.
- **Incorporation of Citizen Proposals:** Proposals and suggestions received via the eSabha application have been thoughtfully considered and integrated into the 2025 budget, ensuring that the voices of the community are directly reflected in local development plans.
- **Effective Public Awareness:** The Sabha has proactively utilized council funds to print and distribute informative brochures, effectively promoting the eSabha application among the community.



Community representatives conveyed their sincere gratitude to the dedicated staff of the Habaraduwa Pradeshiya Sabha, particularly acknowledging the leadership and guidance of the Secretary.

The successful implementation of the eSabha application in Habaraduwa serves as a positive example of how technology can empower citizens and enhance the responsiveness and transparency of local governance.



Establishment of Right to Voice, Bope-Poddala Pradeshiya Sabha CBO Forum



On December 6, 2024, a significant meeting took place at the Bope-Poddala Pradeshiya Sabha to establish a Community Discussion Group. This initiative falls under the "Right to Voice" project, aiming to empower local communities and enhance their participation in decision-making processes.

The meeting was well-attended, with key figures including the Secretary of the Bope-Poddala Pradeshiya Sabha, officials from the non-governmental organization Help-O, and the Chairman of the Southern Province Community Organization Forum.



To ensure effective leadership, the group elected Mrs. Priyalatha Kalansuriya as Chairman and Mrs. Nashmiya as Secretary. This newly formed leadership will now guide the group's future activities and advocate for the community's interests.



The "Right to Voice" project empowers citizens to actively engage in local governance and address community concerns. By providing a platform for open dialogue and constructive feedback, this initiative aims to strengthen the relationship between the community and local authorities.

The establishment of the Bope-Poddala Community Discussion Group marks an important step towards achieving these goals. It is anticipated that this group will play a crucial role in improving the quality of life for residents of the Bope-Poddala region.

Community Organizations Gather for Inaugural Forum in Akmeemana

The Akmeemana Pradeshiya Sabha hosted the inaugural meeting of its "Right to Voice" Community Organization Forum on December 11, 2024, at 2:40 PM. The Secretary of the Council presided over the meeting.

Distinguished guests included Dr. Chathuru Welivitiya, Chief Executive Officer of HELP-O, Dr. Ashoka Siriwardena, Project Advisor and former Ministry Secretary, and Lawyer Lahiru Udumalagala, Project Manager, Council officials and representatives from a diverse range of community organizations also participated.



Establishment of Right to Voice, Yakkalamulla Pradeshiya Sabha CBO Forum

On December 12th, the Yakkalamulla Community Organization Forum for Voices convened its inaugural meeting at the Yakkalamulla Pradeshiya Sabha. The primary agenda was to promote and review the progress of the e-Sabha application, a digital platform designed to enhance communication between the community and local government authorities.

The forum was chaired by Mr. Manjula Harindra, with Ms. Yamuna Nanayakkara serving as secretary, former school teacher Mr. Nihal as vice-chairman, Mr. Nimal Dharmawardena as deputy secretary, and Mr. Kalana Gayashan as treasurer.

Distinguished guests included Dr. Chathuru Welivitiya, Chief Executive Officer of HELP-O, Dr. Ashoka Siriwardena, Project Advisor and former Ministry Secretary, and Lawyer Lahiru Udumalagala, Project Manager, the Chairman of the Space for Voice Provincial Community Organization Forum Mr. Madhavan. Council officials and representatives from a diverse range of community organizations also participated.



Community Unites for Anda Halena Waterfall Clean-Up in Elpitiya

In a commendable display of community spirit and environmental stewardship, the Elpitiya "Right to Voice" Community Organization Forum recently spearheaded a clean-up initiative at the Hada Helen waterfall in Elpitiya. This event brought together a diverse group of participants, including Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, Chief Executive Officer of HELP-O, the Chief Inspector of Police from the Elpitiya Police Headquarters, officials from the Divisional Secretariat, and other government representatives and community organization leaders.

The clean-up drive aimed to address the growing concerns of pollution and environmental degradation around the Hada Helen waterfall, a cherished natural landmark in the region. By mobilizing local organizations and government bodies, the initiative sought to restore the area's natural beauty and promote sustainable environmental practices among the local populace.

The event witnessed active participation from various sectors of the community. The presence of the Chief Inspector of Police from the Elpitiya Police Headquarters and officials from the Divisional Secretariat highlighted the government's support for grassroots environmental efforts. Such collaborative endeavors are crucial in addressing environmental challenges and ensuring the sustainability of natural resources.

In conclusion, the clean-up drive at Hada Helen waterfall exemplifies the power of community unity in addressing environmental challenges. The combined efforts of local organizations, government officials, and community members serve as an inspiring model for other regions to emulate in the pursuit of environmental conservation.



Initial Meeting of the Niyagama Pradeshiya Sabha CBO Forum

The inaugural meeting of the Niyagama Community Organization Forum for Right to Voice took place on the 16th at the Niyagama Divisional Secretariat. This milestone event brought together various community organizations within the Niyagama Pradeshiya Sabha area to discuss and address local issues.

Key attendees included the Secretary of the Niyagama Pradeshiya Sabha and Mr. Lahiru Madhuranga Udumalagala, the Project Manager of the Right to Voice Project. The forum provided a platform for collaboration and dialogue, emphasizing the importance of community engagement in local governance.

The event marks the beginning of a collective effort to empower communities and ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes.



Inaugural Meeting of Tangalle Pradeshiya Sabha Community Based Organization Forum



The inaugural meeting of the Tangalle Community Organization Forum was held on the 17th of December at the Tangalle Pradeshiya Sabha. This gathering brought together community organization leaders from the Tangalle Pradeshiya Sabha area to discuss and strengthen their collective voice.



The meeting was graced by officials from the Pradeshiya Sabha, HELP-O CEO Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, Project Manager Lahiru Maduranga, and representatives from various community organizations. The forum aims to empower local communities by fostering dialogue, collaboration, and advocacy for their rights and development.



Inaugural Meeting of Tangalle Urban Council Community Based Organization Forum

The launch of the Community Organization Forum for the Tangalle Urban Council area was successfully held on the 17th of December at the Tangalle Urban Council. The event brought together community organization leaders and key stakeholders to foster collaboration and dialogue.

Notable attendees included Urban Council officials, the CEO of HELP-O, Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, Project Manager Mr. Lahiru Maduranga, and the Honorable Chairman of the Hambantota District Community Organization Forum, Mr. Lion Jagath Dahanayake. Leaders of various Tangalle urban community organizations were also present, marking this event as a milestone in strengthening community-driven initiatives.

The forum aims to enhance the representation and voice of community organizations, contributing to sustainable development in the region.



Establishment of the "Right to Voice" Community Organization Forum in Karandeniya

On December 19, 2024, a significant meeting was convened at the Karandeniya Pradeshiya Sabha to establish the "Right to Voice" Community Organization Forum. This initiative aims to empower local communities by providing a structured platform for voicing concerns, sharing ideas, and participating actively in regional development.



Key Attendees and Their Roles

The meeting brought together several notable figures:

- **Secretary of the Karandeniya Pradeshiya Sabha:** Responsible for overseeing administrative functions and ensuring the smooth operation of the local council.
- **Community Development Officer:** Tasked with assessing community needs, facilitating development projects, and fostering community engagement. Community Development Officers play a crucial role in urban planning and revitalization projects within a city or community.
- **Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, Chief Executive Officer of HELP-O:** Leads the Human and Environment Link Progressive Organization (HELP-O), which focuses on environmental conservation, human rights programs, and community development in Sri Lanka.
- **Dr. Ashoka Siriwardena, Project Advisor:** A former Ministry Secretary, bringing a wealth of experience in public administration and policy implementation.
- **Local Community Organization Leaders:** Key figures representing various community groups within the Karandeniya region, instrumental in grassroots mobilization and local initiatives.



Empowering Communities: "Right to Voice" Forum in Batapola

On December 19, 2024, the Ambalangoda Pradeshiya Sabha in Batapola hosted the "Right to Voice" Community Organization Forum, a significant event aimed at enhancing community engagement and participatory governance. The forum brought together key figures, including Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, CEO of HELP-O, and Dr. Ashoka Siriwardena, Project Advisor and former Ministry Secretary, alongside leaders from various community organizations and officials.

Objectives of the Forum

The primary goal of the "Right to Voice" forum was to empower local communities by providing a platform for open dialogue and collaboration with governmental bodies. Such initiatives are crucial in fostering transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making processes at the grassroots level.



Elpitiya Community Forum Advocates for 'Right to Voice'

On December 19, 2024, the Elpitiya Community Forum convened a pivotal meeting in Elpitiya, focusing on the 'Right to Voice' initiative. This gathering underscored the community's commitment to amplifying local voices in governance and development.

Key Participants:

- **Dr. Chathura Welivitiya:** Serving as the Chief Executive Officer of HELP-O, Dr. Welivitiya has been instrumental in spearheading community development and environmental conservation projects across Sri Lanka. His leadership has significantly contributed to empowering marginalized communities and promoting sustainable practices.
- **Dr. Ashoka Siriwardena:** A former Ministry Secretary, Dr. Siriwardena brings a wealth of experience in public administration. His insights into policy formulation and implementation have been invaluable in guiding community initiatives toward effective governance.



Galle District Secretaries Convene for Year-End Meeting and e-Sabha App Introduction

The Galle District Secretariat recently hosted its annual year-end meeting on 24th December at the historic Galle De Hall, presided over by District Secretary Mr. W. Dharmasiri. This gathering brought together Divisional Secretaries, Assistant Divisional Secretaries, and Chief Officers from various Divisional Secretariats within the district. A significant highlight of the event was the introduction of the e-Sabha mobile application, a digital platform designed to enhance public participation in local governance.

The event also featured key representatives from HELP-O (Human & Environment Link Progressive Organization), a non-governmental organization dedicated to enhancing social and environmental well-being in Sri Lanka. Notable attendees included CEO Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, Project Advisor and former Ministry Secretary Dr. Asoka Siriwardena, and Project Manager Lahiru Udumalagala. Their presence underscored HELP-O's commitment to promoting digital tools like the e-Sabha app to strengthen civic engagement and improve service delivery at the local government level.





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