



**HELP-O
SRI LANKA**



2025 APRIL NEWSLETTER

www.helpo-srilanka.org



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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HELP-O Honored with Prestigious International Earth Conservation Award 2024

We are proud to announce a momentous achievement for Sri Lanka on the global stage. HELP-O, a dedicated environmental and humanitarian organization based in Galle, has been awarded the 12th International “Mihithalaya Surakime Sammānaya 2024” (Earth Conservation Award). This prestigious honor, presented by The Time India in collaboration with JSW, recognizes exceptional global contributions to environmental conservation and sustainability.

The award ceremony took place in grand style in Mumbai, India, bringing together international leaders, environmentalists, and innovators united by a shared mission to protect the planet. Representing Sri Lanka with pride, Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, the visionary founder and CEO of HELP-O, accepted the award on behalf of the organization.

This international recognition highlights HELP-O’s unwavering commitment to environmental protection, sustainable development, and community empowerment. From grassroots initiatives to national campaigns, HELP-O continues to champion eco-friendly practices, conservation education, and responsible resource management.

Receiving the Mihithalaya Surakime Sammānaya 2024 is not only a testament to HELP-O’s impactful work but also a proud moment for the entire nation. It showcases Sri Lanka’s growing influence in the global environmental movement and affirms the importance of local action in addressing global challenges.

As HELP-O celebrates this remarkable milestone, it also renews its promise to inspire, educate, and lead in creating a greener, more sustainable future for generations to come.



'THE TIMES OF INDIA' Newspaper Artical

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI, TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2025

9

12th JSW THE TIMES OF INDIA EARTH CARE AWARDS

CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

From calls to awaken collective conscience to art that sears through indifference, the 12th Earth Care Awards celebrated changemakers who are turning crisis into opportunity—one action at a time



SALUTING CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

Mayura Shanbag

At the 12th edition of the Earth Care Awards, hosted jointly by JSW and The Times of India, the atmosphere was not one of despair—but defiant hope. Chairperson of the JSW Foundation, Sangita Jindal, opened the evening by quoting the legendary Dr. Jane Goodall: "Hope has never been more important. If we lose hope, we fall into apathy, and then we are doomed." This sentiment, she said, has shaped her own outlook on climate action—not rooted in fear, but fuelled by resolve and joy.

More than 1,500 entries poured in for this year's awards, signalling a groundswell of innovation from grassroots leaders, women champions, business heads, and a youth that refuses to be mere bystanders. "I find hope in the power of youth," Jindal said, spotlighting the Young Climate Champions programme, which was introduced this year and managed to spark meaningful conversations on climate action and sustainability among young minds across the country. With over 200 sessions held across



25 states, the programme directly reached more than 20,000 students—creating a wave of awareness and action that cut across regions and campuses. From IIT Bombay and TISS to St. Stephen's, NID, NSUT, Jamia Millia Islamia, and Christ University, the programme found its way into some of India's most respected institutions, reflecting both academic depth and geographic spread.

The awards this year spanned six thoughtfully crafted categories—each one capturing a different dimension of the climate story in India. The categories were Green Business Titan, Women Leaders in Climate Action, Community-Based Climate

Action, Enablers for Urban Centred Climate Action, Emerging Businesses in Climate Action and Young Climate Champions.

The Earth Care Awards are guided by a stellar jury chaired by

Each one of us lives on this planet with purpose, concern, and joy, and most importantly, hope. When I look at the room, I see it's full of intelligent and concerned people who are protesting what we have, restoring what has been destroyed, and finding solutions active to the climate crisis.

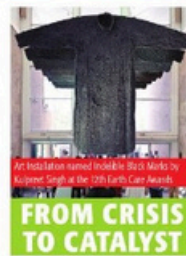
Sangita Jindal
Chairperson, JSW Foundation

the eminent Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, former Director General of CSIR, the jury includes Dr. Anunabha Ghosh, Founder and CEO of the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), Rajat Gupta, Senior Partner at McKinsey & Company and head of its Sustainability Practice; Shiloka Nath, CEO of the India Climate Collaborative and Head of Sustainability at Tata Trusts; and Priya Shah, Founder and General Partner at Thea Ventures.

Adding a touch of art and emotion to the evening was a powerful installation by artist Kulpreet Singh—Indelible Black Marks, which had a series of large, ashen kurtas that hung overhead to depict stubble burning by farmers. It brought to life the ecological anxieties of farmers in Punjab—reminding guests that climate change isn't just a future threat; it's a lived reality for millions today.

Twelve editions in, the Earth Care Awards continue to shine a light on the change-makers—those who may never make the headlines but are reshaping the climate story in powerful ways. This year's journey had Knowledge Partner—Think Through Consulting, Outreach Partners—India Climate Collaborative, CEEW, Earth Day Network, and many more—who've helped turn intent into impact.

In a country as complex and climate vulnerable as India, Earth Care Awards are not just about applause it's about accountability, ambition, and most of all—belief. The belief that when people care, when systems support, and when stories are told, the future can still be green.



FROM CRISIS TO CATALYST

There was also a deeper reflection on what lies ahead. A fireside chat titled "Next Decade: Urgency, Opportunity & Climate Imperative" offered candid perspectives on the scale of the climate challenge and the role of business, policy, and civil society in stepping up. Moderated by Prachi Shevgaonkar, climate entrepreneur and Founder & CEO of Cool The Globe, the session featured Dr. Roger Highfield, Science Director at the Science Museum Group, UK and Dr. Anunabha Ghosh, Founder & CEO of the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).

When I was in school, I used to read about freedom fighters, scientists, innovators—people who changed the world—and wonder why I wasn't born in such exciting times. But now, after years working in climate, I realise we are living in one of the most exciting decades of human existence.

PRACHI SHEVGAONKAR
Founder, Cool The Globe

People often think of climate change as a gradual process, but the system doesn't always work that way. The Amazon creates its own climate. If degraded beyond a point, it can collapse into dry savannah in just one or two decades. That's a tipping point—irreversible, and deeply consequential.

DR. ROGER HIGHFIELD
Science Director, Science Museum Group, UK

YOUNG CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

1. Abhi Prasad, B.V.P.D. Bharathidasan University
2. Thakuram Zengra, Bachelor of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Science
3. Rehan Kameer, PhD, IIT Bombay
4. Diptara Rai, PhD, The NorthCap University
5. Susha S. Shah, PhD, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment
6. Nandini Dink, PhD, Cum. Chaudhary Mahavidyalaya, Central University

What I'm most inspired by the EarthCare Awards is the range of categories of climate action that it celebrates and commemorates, as there are so many stakeholders in the entire fight against climate change, to bring us to our goal of net zero and the green energy transition. The categories of community-led action, youth action and women leaders are particularly unique and during this cycle, I have been so impressed by the quality of each applicant, and the rigorous selection and diligence process of the ECA team to bring carefully curated opportunities as a jury to evaluate.

PRIYA SHAH
Founder & General Partner, Thea Ventures

By 2030, I see the Earth Care Awards as a global benchmark for inclusive, climate-forward recognition—amplifying stories from the frontlines, influencing policy, and inspiring a new generation of environmental stewards across borders.

SHILOKA NATH
CEO, India Climate Collaborative

ECA 2023 will be more than awards platform—it will become an exemplar for future-oriented, justice-centered, and innovation-driven climate action. It will not only celebrate past achievements as a retrospective platform but become a powerful compass for future action, actively shaping emerging paradigms.

DR. R.A. MASHELKAR
Former Director General, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Water (CEEW)

We are one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, but we also have the chance to act—and that choice comes from exercising our agency. This isn't just about India—the innovation, it's about scalable, context-relevant solutions for India. You don't become a market leader by following one—you lead by disrupting.

DR. ARUNABHA GHOSH
Founder-CEEW, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)

WINNERS OF COMMUNITY-BASED CLIMATE ACTION



BAIF Development Research Foundation
BAIF Development Research Foundation was recognized for its climate initiative across Kutch, Bhildara, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli. Combining watershed development, smart irrigation, and sustainable farming, the project has created 6.46 billion litres of water storage and saved 9.50 billion litres. Empowering communities through local training and women-led enterprises, it offers a scalable model for climate adaptation in rural India.



Global Growth Foundation of India
The 12th Earth Care Awards honoured the Global Growth Foundation of India (GGFI) for its climate initiative in Dhandu. The Sustainable Fish Farming for Climate Resilience project rejuvenated 34 degraded ponds and empowered over 2,000 SHG members through training and income diversification. Now benefiting 15,000 people, the initiative combines climate resilience with rural livelihood revival, offering a scalable model for resource-stressed regions.



The Entrepreneurs Associates
The Entrepreneurs Associates (SEA) was honoured for its 'Times for Wealth' initiative across Nagaland and Manipur. Partnering with indigenous communities, SEA has planted over 3 million trees in 110 villages, rejuvenating 555 hectares. The project addresses soil erosion, enhances biodiversity, and supports rural livelihoods. With a goal to plant 1 billion trees by 2050, SEA is fostering long-term climate resilience in Northeast India.

WINNERS OF EMERGING BUSINESSES IN CLIMATE ACTION



Econova Packaging Private Limited
Econova Packaging was recognized for its 'paper-based and pallet-less packaging solutions.' Replacing traditional wooden and plastic pallets, their engineered paper composites offer high strength, reduced weight, and moisture resistance. Fully biodegradable and recyclable, these solutions cut up to 95% of carbon emissions and provide cost savings. With growing industry adoption and global scalability, Econova is leading the way in sustainable packaging innovation.



Recyklat
The 12th Earth Care Awards recognised Recyklat for its 'Digital Deposit Return System (dDRS)' under Emerging Businesses in Climate Action. Using QR code-based traceability and digital returns, dDRS incentivises consumers to return plastic, collecting over 22 lakh PET bottles and preventing 66 metric tons of CO2 emissions. The initiative created 110 jobs and increased income for waste workers by 325%. With proven impact, dDRS has influenced policy changes and has nationwide scaling potential.

WINNERS OF ENABLERS FOR URBAN-CENTERED CLIMATE ACTION



Indore Municipal Corporation
The 12th Earth Care Awards recognised Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) for its 'Pioneering Climate Action through Urban Waste Management and Sustainability.' IMC's initiative transformed Indore into a model for climate-resilient development with advanced waste segregation, recycling systems, and waste-to-energy solutions. Through public-private-community partnerships and a circular economy approach, IMC has set a benchmark in climate-smart urban governance, showcasing measurable impact and fostering sustainable urban growth in India.



Human and Environment Link Progressive Organisation (HELP-O)
Human and Environment Link Progressive Organisation (HELP-O) was recognised for its 'Collaborative Action for the Clean City' initiative in Coile. This community-led project integrates plastic waste reduction, biogas-based clean energy, sustainable agriculture, and microplastic filtration to promote a circular economy. Engaging local authorities, schools, and businesses, HELP-O fosters climate resilience, reduces emissions, and drives social change, with the potential to inspire similar actions across the Global South.

WINNER OF WOMEN LEADER IN CLIMATE ACTION



Natasha Zarine (Co-founder & Managing Director of EcoSalva)
The 12th Earth Care Awards recognised Natasha Zarine for her leadership in nature-based solutions to combat socio-environmental challenges. As Co-Founder of EcoSalva Environmental Solutions and The Center for Applied Research and Peoples' Engagement, she has pioneered sustainable waste management, wetland restoration, and green-blue infrastructure across India, Argentina, and Indonesia. Natasha's data-driven, inclusive approach fosters climate resilience, transforming communities into clean, green, and climate-resilient spaces.

WINNER OF GREEN BUSINESS TITAN



ITC Limited
ITC Limited was honoured as the Green Business Titan for its leadership in sustainability. A pioneer in the Triple Bottom Line approach, ITC has been carbon positive for 10 years, water positive for over two decades, and waste recycling positive for 17 years. Through initiatives like Climate Smart Agriculture, water stewardship, and circular economy practices, ITC drives environmental and social progress, setting a global example of responsible business and climate action.

HELP-O represented the National Forum on Plastics and Circular Economy

HELP-O was proud to showcase its groundbreaking initiatives at the National Forum on Plastic Waste Management and Circular Economy, highlighting the organization's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable innovation.

Representing the organization at the forum, Dr. Chathurana Welivitiya, CEO of HELP-O, was joined by Mr. Lahiru Madhuranga Udumalagala, Project Manager, to present HELP-O's holistic and community-driven approach to addressing plastic pollution. Their presentation emphasized the importance of collaboration, education, and circular economy principles in creating long-term solutions to plastic waste challenges.



Strengthening Environmental Alliances for a Sustainable Future

A crucial dialogue on enhancing cooperation between environmental organizations and the Ministry of Environment was held at the Ministry's headquarters in Battaramulla on 25th of March 2025. Chaired by Minister Dr. Dhammika Patabendi, the meeting addressed key environmental challenges, barriers to policy execution, and the importance of collaborative governance.

Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, CEO of Help-O, represented the Help-O organization in this discussion.

Stakeholders focused on improving resource management, strengthening regulations, and boosting public engagement. The meeting marks a pivotal move toward uniting government and civil society efforts to drive meaningful environmental change.



e-Sabha App Training Empowers Malimbada Pradeshiya Sabha Staff

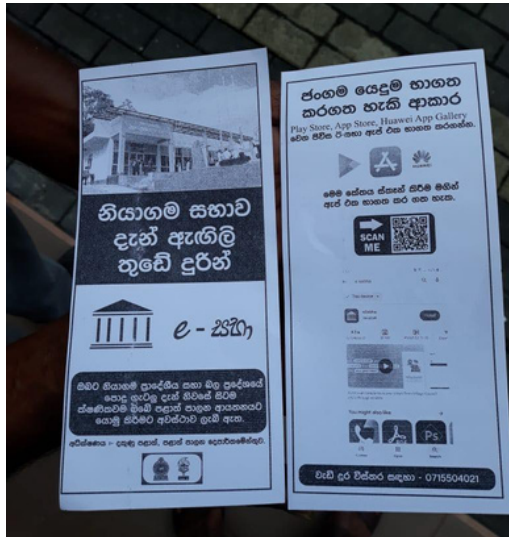
An awareness session on the eSabha mobile application was conducted for the staff of the Malimbada Pradeshiya Sabha at its meeting hall on 24th of March 2025. The session was held under the patronage of Pradeshiya Sabha Secretary, Mrs. Asanka Kumari.

Dr. Chathurya Welivitiya, CEO of HELP-O, and Mr. Lahiru Madhuranga Udumalagala, Project Manager, served as the key resource persons for the session, guiding participants on effective use of the app.



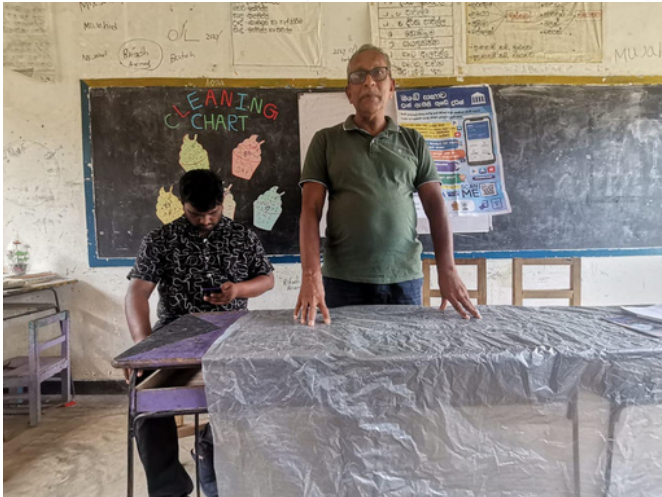
e-Sabha Mobile Application Promotion Program Organized by Niyagama Pradeshiya Sabha

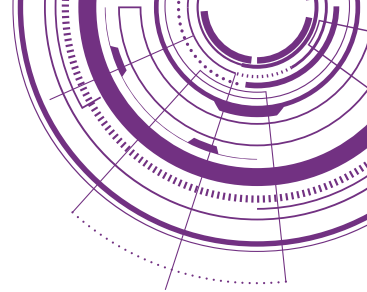
The Niyagama Pradeshiya Sabha organized a leaflet distribution campaign at the Thalgaswala Pola on 26th of March to raise awareness about the e-Sabha mobile application.



Right to voice Community Forum Launched in Panapitiya Muslim Village

The Panapitiya Muslim Village saw the official launch of its Rural Community-Based Organization Forum on 16th of March, under the guidance of the Karadeniya Voice Community-Based Organization Forum. The event was attended by local community leaders, along with the Honorable Chairman, Secretary, and committee members of the Karadeniya Forum, who showed their support for this grassroots initiative aimed at strengthening community development and cooperation.





2025.04.08 "DIVAINA" Newspaper

සෞඛ්‍යසර - අම්බ මෙහෙවර අඟයමු

'දිවයින' - සෞඛ්‍යසර' පාරිසරික අතිරේකය පුරා වසර 20 ක් ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ සහ ජාත්‍යන්තර මට්ටමින් වෙනුවෙන් කරන ලද සේවය මිල කළ නොහැකිය. 'සෞඛ්‍යසර' වඩා වැඩි දෙයක් කරමින් 'සෞඛ්‍යසර' සැබැවින්ම හේමාව අනුවම පරිසරය වෙනුවෙන් අනෙකු මෙහෙයක් ඉටුකළේය. පරිසරවේදීන් සඳහා මෙන්ම පරිසරය වෙනුවෙන් ද ඉඩ-කඩ සලසා දෙමින් නොකියව ඉදිරිපත්වී ජනතාව දැනුවත් කිරීම හා බලධරයන්ගේ අවධානය යොමුකරවීම සෞඛ්‍යසර මේ වසර 20 තුළ අඛණ්ඩව කර සිදු කර ඇත. එහිදී පරිසර මාධ්‍යකරුවන්ට ජීවිත තර්ජන - හර්ජනවලටද මුහුණදීමට සිදුවූ බව අපි දනිමු. විශේෂයෙන් මෙම අතිරේකයේ සංස්කාරක ජොෂ්ඩ්



පාරිසරික මධ්‍යවේදී ජාත්‍යන්තර කණ්ණායාරුවේ මහතාගේ මෙවැන්නක් කිරීමේ සහ මෙවැන්නක් වසර 20 ක් ඇදහෙන යැමේ නිර්මාතෘ කැපවීම අගය කළ යුතුය. කෙසේ වෙතත් 'සෞඛ්‍යසර' අතිරේකය දිගින් දිගටම ඉදිරියට යායුත්තකි. එය මෙරටේ පාරිසරික සන්නිවේදනයේ සැබෑ වෙනසක් ඇති කළේය. තවත් පුවත්වලට ආදර්ශයක් සැපයීය. අපටද නැතුවම බැරි වේදිකාවක් විය. 'සෞඛ්‍යසර' සුරැකිව තබාගැනීමට පරිසර සංවිධාන හා පරිසරයට ආදරය කරන ජනතාව පියවර ගත යුතුය.

චතුර වැලිවිටිය
පරිසරවේදී,
සහායක - Help-O
බාලේ.

2025.04.18 "ARUNA" Newspaper

“මිහිතලය සුරැකීමේ සම්මානය”

HELP-O සංවිධානයට

ඉන්දියාවේ “ද වයිමස් ඔෆ් ඉන්දියා” (The Times Of India) පුවත්පත විසින් 12 වැනි වරටත් සංවිධානය කරන ලද EARTH CARE සම්මාන උළෙලේදී “මිහිතලය සුරැකීමේ සම්මානය” භාලේ හෙල්ප් ඔ (HELP-O) සංවිධානයට හිමි විය. කසළ කළමනාකරණය, නාගරික දේශගුණික විපර්යාස අවම කිරීම යන කටයුතු සඳහා හෙල්ප් ඔ සංවිධානයට මෙම සම්මානය හිමි විය. එම සංවිධානයේ නිර්මාතෘ, ප්‍රධාන විධායක නිලධාරී ආචාර්ය චතුර වැලිවිටිය සම්මානය ලබාගත් අයුරු සේයාරුවෙන් දැක්වේ. මෙම සම්මානය ඉකුත් 2012 වසරේදීද හෙල්ප් ඔ සංවිධානයට හිමිවූ අතර, මෙවර එම සම්මානයට හිමිකම් කීවේ දෙවැනි වරටය.



හෙල්ප් ඔ නිර්මාතෘ චතුර වැලිවිටිය සම්මානය ලබා ගනිමින්



මිහිතල සුරැකීමේ සම්මාන උළෙලේදී ගාල්ලේ පාරිසරික සංවිධානයකටත් සම්මාන



The Time of india පුවත්පත සහ JWS පදනම එක්ව 2008 වසරේ සිට වාර්ෂිකව පවත්වනු ලබන 'මිහිතල සුරැකීමේ' සම්මාන 12 වැනි උළෙලේ දී 'Earth Care' ජයග්‍රාහී සම්මානය දිනාගැනීමට මෙරට ප්‍රකට පාරිසරික සංවිධානයක් වන ගාල්ලේ HELP-O සංවිධානය සමත්වී ඇත.

සම්මාන ප්‍රදානය ඉකුත් 12 වැනිදා මුම්බායේ දී සිදුකෙරුණු අතර HELP-O සංවිධානයේ නිර්මාතෘ හා ප්‍රධාන විධායක නිලධාරී ආචාර්ය චතුර වැලිවිටිය මහතා ඇතුළු පිරිසක් ඊට සහභාගි වූහ.

2012 වසරේදී ද මෙම සංවිධානය ප්‍රථමවරට ඉන්දීය මිහිතල සුරැකීමේ සම්මානය ශ්‍රී ලංකාවට රැගෙන ආ අතර මෙවර එය හිමිව ඇත්තේ කසළ කළමනාකරණය තුළින් ප්ලාස්ටික් භාවිතය පාලනය කිරීමට නිර්මාණාත්මක භාවිතයන් ලෙස ප්‍රජා මට්ටමට ගැළපෙන ඩිජිටල් ක්‍රමවේද ඇතුළත් ක්‍රියාකාරකම් හඳුන්වා දීම යන සාර්ථක ක්‍රමවේද පිළිබඳව සලකා බලාය.

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