

# **Sri Lanka Ports Authority: Community awareness programs to receive society support for Port Development and Marine environment protection**



This document presents the strategies and actions taken by Sri Lanka Ports Authority to address the needs and issues of the community and thereby receive their support for port development. The document first explains how SLPA has identified community objectives and matched it with port objectives. Next follows a detail description of the port project on increasing community awareness on port development and sustainability which has attracted community interest and community involvement and how it was implemented. Finally it describes how the port of Colombo as well as the community has been benefitted from this project.

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## Motivation to conduct the project:

The management of Sri Lanka Ports authority identified the requirement of communicating the port projects to the community. There was a gap to be filled between the theoretical knowledge of students and practical approaches. The community involvement and participation on port development had to be increased and the support towards making port of Colombo a green port with the support of the public. As a result the project on building awareness of the community was implemented and continues with greater success. This increased the curiosity of the community and increases the belonging towards the port. Moreover, this has lead to academics and scientists to conduct research activities related to the port which has benefited the port overall.



## Objectives

- More knowledgeable community about port development & sustainability & Communicating the port initiatives towards sustainability
- Increased practical awareness of University and vocational students
- Highlighting the role of the community in port development
- Receive community support for the development projects
- Increasing the research studies in the maritime sector

## Partnership with all terminals

The project will not be a success if the three main terminals in the port of Colombo join and work together because the partnership

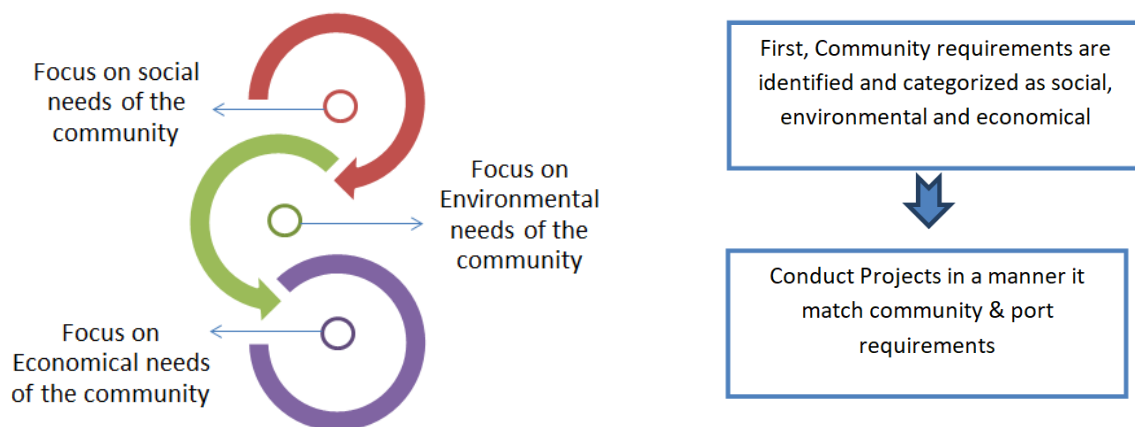


is key in such knowledge sharing sessions. The Three terminals Jaya container terminal (JCT) South Asia Gateway terminals (SAGT) and Colombo international container terminal (CICT) collaborate in such programs which successfully accommodated universities, visitors from professional bodies like CILT Chartered institute of Logistics and Transport, Women in Logistics and Transport (WILAT).

## Identify Community objectives and matching it with port objectives

**S** LPA has contributed to the life standards of the local population and this has been a strength of the authority. The community outreach approach, the balance among the business concentration and the responsibility towards community is vital in port and maritime field. Sri Lanka Ports Authority has achieved this balance to a greater extend by conducting projects which has benefitted the port and the community and more importantly it has matched objectives and provide solutions in a mutually benefitting way.

### Strategy used by SLPA for community outreach programs



Community Objectives	Port Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Receive knowledge on Port operations &amp; Management</li><li>• More educational opportunities</li><li>• Curiosity on Port Development</li><li>• Use the port for Research</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicate sustainability initiatives taken by port</li><li>• Knowledgeable community</li><li>• Educated and committed work force</li><li>• Innovations</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Less environmental pollution</li><li>• Clean marine environment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manage externalities</li><li>• Cost reduction</li><li>• Achieve green port status</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employment Opportunities for females</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achieve Gender balance</li><li>• Involve Females in the port and shipping filed</li></ul>

SLPA has initiated different projects in a way that community objectives and port objectives are met. Through this the community support towards port development is achieved.



## How port of Colombo has conducted projects integrating both objectives?

### Building Community awareness on port operations and Sustainability initiatives

**S**ri Lanka Ports Authority implemented the program to increase awareness of the public on port projects and sustainable initiatives taken by the port. As a result many public groups were invited to the port to share the knowledge and knowhow. The university students and vocational training students were given the priority as SLPA believe that the sustainability thinking (reduce, reuse, recycling, and recovery) should be giving in early stages of higher education. These students consist of different educational backgrounds such as Engineering, Transport and Logistics, marine cadets, and Business students.



The ports authority is aggressively functioning to integrate sustainable development into new generations by port visitor programs and promoting sustainability thinking through our role as educator of future generations and decision-makers.

These programs also explain the importance of the life cycle thinking. How Ports authority has implemented Life cycles thinking to minimize environment impacts were highlighted.



### **Explaining the Adverse Effects of Plastics in Oceans**

**T**he student groups are shown adverse effects of plastic usage. Currently between 45 and 95 % of marine litter is Plastic (Ioakeimidis et al., 2014). They were shown how the city waste of plastic added to water channels finally ended up in sea and the port. Through this they felt the severity of plastics usage and the importance of minimizing the wastage or reusing them as possible. They were also made aware of the cost to remove them from the oceans and the impacts it can have on the ecosystems.



### **Encouraging maritime research**

**M**oreover, SLPA has been promoting the port area for scientific research. It is important that the academics and scientist are been supported to conduct research in port related themes so that the port can find out its improvement areas and most importantly how to overcome them by innovations and through scientific solutions.



As a result SLPA encourage local universities as well as foreign scientist to visit and conduct research, the support is extended by providing access to required data and thereby setting a platform for scientific research.

These hands on experiences to visitor groups are aimed on providing a knowledgeable and memorable output for students to gain and increase their understanding of sustainability and commitment towards marine environment protection. Additionally the port is a great place for them to apply their sustainability and life cycle thinking practices which is learned in university



### **Responding to community requests and concerns on externalities and communicating the projects and progress**

**P**ort development plans are prepared with due consideration of the urban development of the city in collaboration with the urban development authority. SLPA has provided land to construct overhead expressway over the port to reduce city traffic levels which has been an urgent requirement. Resettlement programs are properly funded and compensated to implement development projects.

### **Feed backs and suggestions from the Program participants**

**S**LPA considers the suggestions and getting feedback from the academics, students and public as vital. Case study competitions are arranged along with the participation of chartered institutions and universities and awards are being distributed for winners. It has been way to get new ideas from the public in improving port operation efficiency as well as improving the sustainability. Some of these suggestions are,

- Looking into turning car park roof in to solar panels and there by generate green energy and as a measure to promote green travel, electric charging points are planned to be set in these car parks so employees will move in to electricity driven cars. This will become a good reason for employees to shift from oil to electricity because currently the main barrier has been the lack of charging points in the country for electric vehicles.
- The new buildings which are built are to be planned with technology solutions and adopting green building techniques to minimize high energy consumption. The logistics division has taken measures to equip SLPA warehouses with transparent roofing so that the cost and energy used on warehousing lights are minimized.
- To introduce new economic indicators to reflect environment externalities



### Promoting the Circular economy approach

**S**LPA has identified the need for automation and use the technology of digitization and Artificial Intelligence so the port can be more energy efficient and greener. The procurement process has always looked in to reverse logistics and life cycle so that at the end of life of a product it may not become a waste. The practice of industrial symbiosis is been practiced with the aim of identifying industries which could use the waste of the port as a recourse. Thereby the waste dispose by the port is expected to be minimized. The three terminals of Port of Colombo have developed synergies to share possible resources. For example the terminals have allowed each other's employees to use routine transportation so that number of bus rounds to be done in the port have minimized.



These initiatives are been communicated for the visitors and the community and they have looked on these as positive steps towards environment commitment.





## How the community as well as the port has benefitted?

**S**LPA has responded well to the community requirements in different ways such as social, environmental and economic requirements. The awareness programs have brought the port much closer to the community than before.

These programs have increased the community's belongings to the port as well as received valuable knowledge and using it

as a research platform. In return the port can use the results of these researches for its betterment.



balance and opening of different job categories to females which were previously considered as male only jobs.

Through different projects port of Colombo has decreased its environmental impact on the surrounding and become a more green port than before. The benefits are enjoyed by the port as well as the community.

All participants got a greater insight to these initiatives so the eligible persons can join them and also pass the message to the public. The real experience and word of mouth to communicate port projects in this manner has brought about great results.

## Achievements of the Project

- ✓ Many recommendations have been received from the industry and Universities appreciating the program and being highlighted as one of the **Low cost high impact projects** in the maritime sector.
- ✓ Bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical aspects of university Students
- ✓ Created a Positive image on the community about port projects and increased public participation
- ✓ Inspired and increased the number of students involved in research in the maritime sector (According to local universities)
- ✓ More knowledgeable and practical candidates for recruitment



*News Paper articles about the visits*

## Relevant Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by the project



## Conclusion

Port of Colombo has achieved many successful mile stones in terms of handled Teu's and moving up in global ranking and SLPA as the administrator of the port is quite proud that it has not merely depended on these economic achievements but also focused on the community and played their role to the best to them. It could be said that the key in the success has been the factor of community engagement and quick responses that SLPA has taken to address community requirements. Overall this has given a positive impact on the community as well as the port of Colombo.