

## COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

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Our main objectives in upgrading Halgaha Kumbura are to provide improvements to housing, health and sanitation, and promote micro enterprise. Our means for accomplishing these objectives is by promoting the ‘greening’ of the area, ranging from small to large-scale interventions.

Our panel provides a general framework for how we believe the upgrading process may be carried out. Due to the distance and lack of first-hand knowledge of the culture, we set up a flexible framework that may be easily adapted once the upgrading process begins. We have tried to maintain a certain level of flexibility, so that if necessary, changes and adaptations may be easily accommodated once on site.

The most important aspect of our proposal is to **enable** the people in the community to achieve the objectives stated above. We want to empower people to help themselves, by supplying some basic tools and skills.

The first step is to establish a solid land tenure system. This includes not only creating an efficient and fair system (there is currently a Freehold Land Tenure system planned) but also educating people about this system. This education includes basic financial training. Along with this basic financial training, it is important that low interest or revolving loans be made available to the people for building materials and start-up capital for small-scale enterprises. Building materials must be accompanied by “how-to” guides to inform people of efficient, cost effective ways of improving their homes (Hamdi).

The next step is to extend the water system to supply as many people as is feasible with a private connection. If this is not financially feasible, than more communal taps are necessary at the very minimum. Proper drainage is also necessary (particularly if the water supply is increased, because without proper drainage, sanitation could be negatively affected).

Extending the existing sewage system is necessary to improve the health and sanitation of the community. We have proposed an extension to the existing system.

Proper roads are also necessary. We have developed a hierarchical system of roads ranging from the main access road to tertiary footpaths. This hierarchical system also sets up a framework for organization and prioritization.

The installation of the basic services mentioned above is the first priority. However, in order to create a healthy sustainable community, it is important that programs are developed in order to increase the local economy and to increase food security. Both of these goals can be addressed through what the Sri Lankan government is calling the “Family Business Garden”, whereby residents grow food for consumption, as well as other plants (food or medicinal) for selling.

The settlement is very dense and has little space for larger scale or community gardens. Therefore, we emphasize the important of **maximizing the space** that exists. We have tried to show diagrammatically how this space may be used. We do not know how the residents have appropriated the land surrounding their individual units. Therefore, we have proposed a general idea for how this land maybe be used whether or not the land has been sub-divided physically (with fences).

We realize the importance of teaching residents what and how they may grow a variety plants for nutritional and medicinal purposes. This is done by implementing various resourceful ideas such as using old bottles, tires, bags, boxes (or anything that may otherwise be considered as waste) as

a growing container. There are also specific techniques such as the “cultivation tower” and using *Gliricidia* trees to create living fences (City Farmer). These ‘living fences’ can have wires attached to them to create a suitable place for vines to grow. By using the marginalized land on each lot the residents are able to maximize their use of space.

We also propose encouraging knowledgeable residents to use their homes as a demonstration area, in order to teach and share ideas about efficient gardening practices. We have chosen four (4) potential sites for these demonstration areas, but in reality, the sites will exist where the residents who are interested in participating reside. We recommend that the city provide incentives for this demonstration activity by supplying a variety of seeds and/or seedlings to the residents who will hold a demonstration site.

On a larger scale, we proposed a series of greenbelts. We propose starting a program whereby residents will each get a coconut tree that they are required to plant on at the front property. This will create tree-lined streets and provide residents with the many nutritional benefits of the fruit. We also propose a citywide initiative to create a greenbelt along the edge of the canal (the city limit). The main idea of this belt is to connect the existing green open spaces and the recreation areas along the canal with a strip of green belt of trees preferably "mediators" type of trees which serves as aesthetic as well as ecological purposes. The greenbelt can be developed in the future to include within it some recreational and small-scale activities based on its width and in relation to the different land uses along the canal. This will help to improve the view along the canal and increase the value of the residential areas along it as well as the people's appreciation and care for the canal.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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