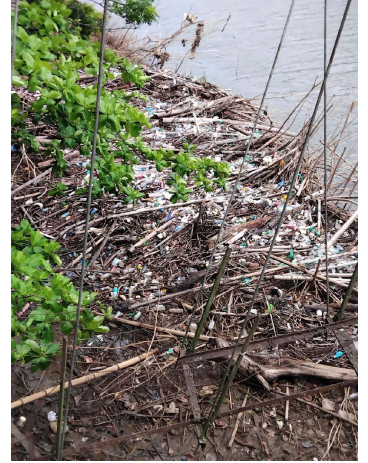


# Cleaning the Mahaveli River – A Community Initiative - 1



In January 2025, Buddhist Relief Mission invited Prof. David Loy, author of *Ecodharma: Buddhist Teachings for the Ecological Crisis*, to Kandy. After one of his sessions, some of the participants discussed how they could become activists for change. They decided to tackle the problem of pollution clogging the Mahaveli river near the Lewella bridge. On Saturday, March 1, more than 70 people worked together to accomplish this remarkable feat. Here are photos and a description of their marvelous work and the beautiful result.



## PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Kandy Municipal Council  
 Kandy District Council  
 Regional Public Health Inspector  
 Mahaveli Authority  
 Environmental Police  
 Clean Kandy Force  
 Green Team  
 Colombo International School  
 The Wildlife Society of Trinity college  
 Buddhist Relief Mission  
 Dhammaviveka Arama  
 Lewella Community



The volunteers and workers began assembling at the bridge at 9 AM. At first, six paid workers pushed the floating island of pollution debris onto the river bank. While these workers cleared away the bamboo into which the debris had become entangled, creating the ugly island, the volunteers, under the supervision of Clean Kandy Force, the volunteers sorted the waste and collected it in garbage bags, which totaled 196. The Kandy Municipal Council provided a truck, but it had to make two trips to transport all the bags to the Gohagoda Solid Waste Management Centre. As much of the waste as possible is being recycled.



The categories of the waste collected were:

- \* Plastic
- \* Glass
- \* Polythene
- \* Metals
- \* Rubber, styrofoam, and fabric

The volunteers recorded the brands of much of the plastic waste, so that the manufacturers can be notified. The group intends to launch a campaign to encourage these firms to reduce the production of much of this polluting plastic. Sadly, the debris included many rubber slippers, tyres, and damaged vehicle parts discarded by a nearby three-wheeler shop. The group will report their findings to local shops and try to discourage such wanton pollution. It is also important to educate the public in the proper disposal of plastic products and packaging.




Clean Kandy Force will establish a team to present awareness sessions at community centers and local schools. The team will also set up a monitoring system to control river pollution.



The government authorities have expressed their support and commitment to help in the realization of all of these projects.



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# Cleaning the Mahaveli River – A Community Initiative - 2



At 10:30, the group took a break and gathered at Dhammaviveka Arama, a nearby nunnery, for tea and cake. At 12:30, everyone enjoyed plastic-free vegetarian box lunches provided by Buddhist Relief Mission. During these breaks, the volunteers and workers enjoyed sharing their impressions and making future plans. The cleanup was completed at 2:30, but the members of Clean Kandy Force remained at the site until all the debris had been carried away.

Your donations will help Buddhist Relief Mission to carry out programs such as these, as well as to provide food, medicine, and other essentials to families, students, schools, monasteries, hospitals, and other institutions in Sri Lanka during this economic crisis. Thank you for your generous support!

**Sadhu! Sadhu!! Sadhu!!!**



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**To leave the world better than you found it,  
sometimes you have to pick up other people's  
trash. – Bill Nye**



Congratulations and Thanks to All Volunteers and Workers!



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