

The overarching theme of FARU Journal Vol. 11 (Issue 01) is Spatial Dynamics: Envisioning Tomorrow's Design through Advanced Practices. This theme is designed to address the critical actions required to accelerate sustainability efforts, especially as we approach the 2030 deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The selected papers in this volume offer diverse insights into the fields of design, architecture, and urban planning, all contributing to sustainable development in the built environment.

This volume features seven highly commended papers that were submitted in response to the call for papers for the FARU Journal Volume 11. Each paper underwent an extensive double-blind peer review process to ensure the highest quality. The papers reflect the significance of sustainability in local contexts, yet their insights are globally relevant, making them valuable contributions to the broader academic discourse.

The papers in this volume explore the overarching theme of sustainability from diverse perspectives, encompassing design, social impact, user creativity, cost management, procurement strategies, and occupational safety—all within the built environment context. The methodologies employed by the authors span both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The first paper examines the sustainable development of tea tourism landscapes and their impact on community empowerment. The second paper addresses the socio-economic effects of environmental changes caused by coastal infrastructure projects. The third paper explores how picture books foster imagination in children, emphasising their role in early development. The fourth paper delves into informal, user-led architectural practices, revealing the significant role of users in shaping urban adaptability. Cost overrun factors in construction projects are analysed in the fifth paper, followed by an investigation into centralised procurement practices in the sixth paper. Finally, the seventh paper identifies key occupational health and safety issues in hotel kitchens, proposing strategies to enhance safety for kitchen staff.

The first paper by Sewwandi explores the sustainable alternative livelihood approach in tea tourism landscape development, using the Pedro Tea Estate in Nuwara-Eliya, Sri Lanka, as a case study. The research examines how sustainable landscape development strategies in the tea industry can empower local communities while promoting responsible tourism. Sewwandi's work is particularly significant as it offers a blueprint for other tea-growing regions to adopt sustainable tourism practices, focusing on both economic benefits and environmental stewardship. This research aims to inspire global tea tourism regions to integrate community empowerment and sustainability into their landscape development plans. Shifqa and Gamage, in the second paper, investigate the socio-environmental impacts caused by landscape changes resulting from the construction of the commercial and fisheries harbour in Oluvil, Sri Lanka. Through a mixed-methods approach that includes semi-structured interviews, observations, and a questionnaire survey, the researchers explore the significant negative effects on residents. Their study reveals that severe coastal erosion, driven by harbour construction, has adversely impacted income, livelihood, and resources, with further consequences on cultural identity and social structures. This has led to a loss of place attachment and a diminished sense of belonging among the affected communities, highlighting the long-term socio-cultural impacts of environmental changes. In the third paper, authored by Perera and Samarawickrama, the focus shifts to the concept of imagination in children, particularly between the ages of two and six, who are in their "high season of imagination." The study explores how picture books can be used as a medium to nurture creativity and imagination in young children. Through an extensive literature review, the research identifies five critical elements that contribute to the effectiveness of picture books in fostering imagination: the role of the picture book itself, the writing component, characterisation, setting and situation, and layout. The findings suggest that picture books offer a rich opportunity to stimulate imagination during a child's formative years, providing valuable insights for authors, educators, and designers involved in early childhood education. The fourth paper by Maheshika investigates informal, user-led architectural production in Sri Lanka, focusing on the design methods employed by individuals in creating their own living spaces. Using Jonathan Hill's framework of user creativity types, the authors examine four residences in Kitulwatte, Colombo, to identify how users adapt and shape their environments. This research highlights the creative agency of residents in the urban fabric, revealing how user-led design contributes to adaptability and vibrancy within cities. By shedding light on the conscious and subconscious processes behind user creativity, the paper challenges traditional notions of architectural authorship and underscores the importance of recognising users as key contributors to urban development. The fifth paper by Sachchithananthan et al., delves into the cost-related factors contributing to cost overruns in Sri Lankan construction projects. Through a detailed panel data analysis and the use of Monte Carlo simulations, the authors investigate how these factors have evolved over time. The research focuses on data collected from twenty random building projects in the Western Province of Sri Lanka and highlights key contributors to cost overruns, such as variations in the Bill of Materials (BOM) and extra work. The authors recommend that clients, contractors, and consultants prioritise accurate estimations and reduce changes during the project lifecycle to minimise these overruns. The study also suggests that future research should explore additional factors influencing cost overruns beyond those related to cost alone. The sixth paper, authored by Sivasubramaniam et al. investigates the application of centralised procurement in the Sri Lankan construction supply chain. Through semi-structured interviews with industry experts, the study examines the potential benefits and challenges of adopting a centralised procurement strategy. Positive impacts identified include cost reduction, improved procurement monitoring, and more informed decision-making. However, the study also highlights several challenges,

such as restricted competition, decreased innovation, and reduced client satisfaction. The authors recommend creating transparent and uniform procurement procedures, enhancing legal frameworks, and fostering collaboration between stakeholders and government bodies to overcome these barriers. This research provides valuable insights for policymakers and industry professionals seeking to optimise procurement processes in construction. The final paper, authored by Marasingha et al. focuses on kitchen safety issues in Sri Lanka's 3-star hotels. Through interviews with managerial-level personnel, the study identifies common kitchen accidents—including slips, falls, burns, and musculoskeletal injuries—and examines the barriers to improving occupational health and safety in hotel kitchens. The research categorises the causes of these accidents into four main areas: the work environment, people, materials and equipment, and management procedures. To address these issues, the study proposes a series of strategic interventions, such as enhanced training, the adoption of new technologies, and stricter managerial controls. These findings offer practical solutions for reducing OHS risks and improving kitchen safety in the hospitality industry.

The diverse range of topics covered in this volume underscores the multidisciplinary nature of the research presented in FARU Journal Vol. 11 (Issue 01). From sustainable landscape development and user-led architectural practices to cost management and kitchen safety, the papers collectively advance our understanding of sustainability in the built environment.

We extend my congratulations to all the authors for their invaluable contributions and express my deepest gratitude to the reviewers for their thorough assessments, which were instrumental in maintaining the journal's high standards. We also wish to thank our colleagues in the FARU team for their dedication and effort in producing this volume. A special note of appreciation goes to Dr. Menaha Thayaparan, Editor-in-Chief of FARU Journal, for offering us the opportunity to serve as guest editors. Lastly, we acknowledge Sri Lanka Journals Online for publishing the FARU Journal and supporting its outreach to a wider audience.

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