



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

LET'S WORK  
TOGETHER  
FOR A CLEANER  
SRI LANKA

## ENGAGING BUSINESS SECTORS TO REDUCE PLASTIC WASTE

Municipalities in Sri Lanka struggle to collect and properly dispose of solid waste in their jurisdictions, particularly the growing volume of plastic waste. Renewed economic growth, after the end of Sri Lanka's civil war in 2009, has strained the country's solid waste management system. Insufficient disposal sites and mismanaged processes have resulted in plastic waste increasingly being discarded in or near waterways, ultimately finding its way into the ocean. Local businesses often do not recognize opportunities to contribute to plastic waste reduction.

USAID's Municipal Waste Recycling Program (MWRP) worked on the West Coast of Sri Lanka with public and private sector partners in the cities of Negombo and Katunayake (combined population of more than 200,000) to reduce ocean plastic pollution. Implemented by MWRP grantee Janathakshan Guarantee Limited (Janathakshan), the team collaborated with local supermarket chains to reduce plastic shopping bag use given much of Sri Lanka's plastic waste comes from low-value, single-use items, such as plastic bags from shopping markets. Janathakshan also worked with solid waste management officials to empower women in the industry and improve collection efficiency by linking public waste collection and private recyclers with local businesses, fishing boat owners, and households.

### HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

- On average, a **30% usage drop in single-use plastic bags** was reported by supermarkets participating in the Green Star program.
- **34 new jobs** were created in the two largest recycling businesses in Negombo and Katunayake with Janathakshan's support.
- **4,670 households** learned plastic waste reduction practices during outreach events led by 160 trained youth volunteers.

### LOCAL BUSINESSES ENGAGED TO REDUCE PLASTIC WASTE

Janathakshan concentrated on businesses that represented the main sources of plastic waste: supermarkets, hotels, restaurants, and fishing harbors. MWRP helped supermarkets participate in the Negombo Municipal Council's Green Star program, which has a rating system to reduce plastic bag usage. The more active a store was in promoting the reduction and reuse of plastic shopping bags, the more stars it would earn. In total, 14 supermarkets, including from the national chain Keells Super, participated and most earned four to five stars at the end of the project. Janathakshan raised awareness among 3,000 customers and store staff on how to reduce plastic bag use and piloted a "no plastic shopping bag" hour that helped significantly reduce plastic bag waste. Janathakshan's community facilitators also trained youth volunteers to implement a waste segregation education campaign with thousands of households and establishments.

### WOMEN IN THE RECYCLING SECTOR ECONOMICALLY EMPOWERED

In collaboration with a local business school, Janathakshan helped increase women's participation in the recycling sector by providing 9,175 hours of training to 1,324 women in business management, among other topics. Many of the women trained subsequently obtained employment at the two largest recycling businesses in Negombo and Katunayake, both of which had expanded productive capacity, sales volume, and employment as a result of technical assistance from Janathakshan.

**PROJECT:** Reducing the use of Plastics on the West Coast of Sri Lanka | **DURATION:** October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019

**IMPLEMENTER:** Janathakshan Guarantee Limited | **LOCATION:** Negombo and Katunayake Cities, Sri Lanka | **BUDGET:** \$142,244