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STRENGTHENING PLASTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT IN FAST-GROWING URBAN AREAS

Recent scientific research shows that Sri Lanka contributes as much as 640,000 metric tons of plastic waste to our oceans annually, making it the world's fifth largest polluter¹ by total mass of mismanaged plastic debris. The challenge is particularly acute in urban and peri-urban areas like Dehiwala, a poor but fast-growing area with a quarter of a million people located next to the capital city of Colombo.

The Community-Led Plastic Waste Management Program in Dehiwala focuses on reducing plastic waste, especially single use waste, and strengthening the municipal solid waste management (SWM) system through innovative river waste traps, public awareness campaigns, and technical assistance to the recycling sector. The project also facilitates public-private partnerships to foster collaboration between the SWM service providers and the primary waste generators.

STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL RECYCLING SYSTEM

The project formally linked the Badowita community recycling center in Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia with local private recycling firms and facilitated the installation of new equipment provided by the municipal government. As a result of the new equipment and improved operations of 28 recycling enterprises, the local recycling market has been significantly strengthened, with the recycling center nearly tripling its volume of processed recyclable materials. At the same time, project community outreach and education has led to improvements in household-level waste segregation.

ENGAGING WITH SCHOOLS, HOUSEHOLDS AND CITY AGENCIES

In partnership with the Municipal Council of Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia in metro Colombo, the project team has identified fifteen locations for the placement of small and inexpensive waste traps on key river tributaries and canals. The traps will be monitored by the surrounding communities and collection will be coordinated with the national government agency responsible for managing canals and waterways. The project also educates thousands of students and teachers on plastic waste and recycling. Recycling collection boxes are being organized in the schools, with recyclable materials sold to private sector recycling firms and the income raised used for school environmental activities. Other community-level activities to improve understanding of recycling and waste separation have reached more than 4,300 local residents.

¹ Jambeck, J.R. et al. (2015). Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean. *Science* 347(6223), 768-771. doi: 10.1126/science.1260352

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

- The amount of **plastic recycled at the Badowita community recycling center has nearly tripled**, from 622 kilos recycled in the month of July 2018 to 1,729 kilos in January 2019.
- The project helped launch **five private waste collection microenterprises** and provided technical assistance to **23 private recyclers** so they can generate more income through the sale of recyclable materials.
- Outreach and education in 20 schools has benefited **2,990 students and teachers** who now focus on collecting recyclable items to promote a green environment.

PROJECT: Community-led Plastic Waste Management Program in Dehiwala | **DURATION:** October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019
IMPLEMENTER: Sevanatha Urban Resource Center | **LOCATION:** Municipality south of Colombo, Sri Lanka | **BUDGET:** \$236,232