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EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO REDUCE PLASTIC WASTE IN MARINE ENVIRONMENTS

Jaffna, the capital of Sri Lanka's Northern Province, has an estimated population of 100,000 people. The 17 local authorities (LA) that comprise Jaffna lacked an effective solid waste management (SWM) system. The amount of waste generated by the population far exceeded the amount of waste collected by the LAs. Furthermore, Jaffna's dump sites, located close to the coast, caused waste to spill into the ocean. Governmental institutions and other stakeholders had struggled to raise public awareness of SWM issues among residents.

The Sri Lanka Centre for Development Facilitation (SLCDF) project received a grant from USAID's Municipal Waste Recycling Program to implement a long-term solution: to build the capacity of four LAs – Jaffna Municipal Council, Chavakachcheri Urban Council, Point Pedro Urban Council, and the Valvettithurai Urban Council – and other stakeholders, including women and youth, to raise the awareness of residents on sustainable SWM practices.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

SLCDF provided technical assistance to LAs to build their capacity to efficiently reduce, reuse, and recycle plastic. SLCDF facilitated and implemented an integrated and participatory community-based SWM plan in collaboration with each of the four LAs supported under the project. SLCDF assisted these LAs with establishing functional multi-stakeholder advisory groups for SWM and recycling, and organized sustainable recycling options for plastic waste.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Awareness campaigns offered community residents and businesses information on the important roles they play in using alternatives to plastic, improving waste collection efficiency, and maximizing recent municipal government investments in transferring compacted plastics to licensed recycling plants in Colombo. As a result of public awareness campaigns - such as art competitions and a Plastic-Zero Forum Facebook page - households, businesses, and schools reduced plastic use, bought reusable items, and increased solid waste separation at source. By the end of the project, national and local governments had the tools to continue public awareness campaigns to address plastic pollution in marine environments.

PROJECT: Local Authorities and Networks Toward Environmental Restoration | **DURATION:** April 9, 2018 – September 30, 2020 | **IMPLEMENTER:** Sri Lanka Centre for Development Facilitation (SLCDF) | **LOCATION:** Jaffna, Sri Lanka | **BUDGET:** \$171,962

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

- **Trained more than 14,000 community members in SWM practices**, including government officials, trade association members, shop owners and staff, and hospital staff.
- **Created the Plastic Zero Forum, a youth-led initiative with more than 1,600 followers** working towards a zero-plastic Jaffna.
- **Raised awareness of more than 800 teachers on SWM best practices** and helped set up **212 environment clubs** in schools.