



## **Learning Waste Management Issues in Negombo City through Ward Meetings**

19-23 February, 2019, Negombo City, Sri Lanka

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## Introduction

IGES Centre Collaborating with UNEP on Environmental Technologies (CCET) and UNEP-IETC undertook preliminary discussions with the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment (MOMDE) in March 2018. In October 2018, MOMDE and CCET agreed to work together in development of waste management strategy and action plan for Negombo city. Moreover, CCET team visited Negombo during March 2018 and October 2018 receptively to meet the key stakeholders including the Mayor, Commissioner and Public Health Inspectors, and also to observe the waste management facilities and understand the current overall waste management in the city.

Negombo is one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in Sri Lanka and it is experiencing a rapid increase in waste generation. The daily waste generation is 110-120 tonnes of which 70-90 tonnes of waste is collected. Out of the collected waste, 10 tonnes of waste is used for compost-making at its compost plant. The remaining 60-80 tonnes of collected waste is currently disposed of at Ovitiyawatta, an area of private land rented by the city, as there is no public land for final disposal. Negombo City is carrying out some activities for management of their waste such as composting, recycling and public awareness etc. but only on a very small scale. Most of the generated waste in the city is dumped into non-engineered landfill with very limited resource recovery. Moreover, the lifetime of the landfill is expected to end within less than two years and no alternative options have been found for final disposal. Therefore, Negombo City needs a proper waste management strategy and long-term action plans to improve the current waste management situation as well as prepare itself to tackle future problems in the waste sector. Furthermore, this can help Sri Lanka to achieve its global commitments at the local level such as the reduction of marine plastic waste, the SDGs and Paris Agreement.

In this regard, Negombo Municipal Council (NMC) and CCET jointly organized an inception workshop on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 with an aim to discuss the project activities and gain everyone's commitment and support in development of a city strategy.

Based on need for a ward-based meeting highlighted by the inception workshop, CCET conducted the ward-based meeting with community people on 19-23 February 2019 to identify the current waste management system, challenges and priorities in waste management sector in different wards of Negombo city. The finding from the ward meetings are summarized in the report with the aim that the outputs from the report will be considered in follow up activities for the development of city strategy on waste management for Negombo city.

CCET was successful in conducting the ward meeting in 1-12 wards named as 1)Bazar-1 2) Bazar-2 3)Munnakkaraya 4) Sriwardhana Place 5)Kadolkale 6)Kurana-1 7)Kurana-2 8) Agurukaramulla 9) Periyamulla -1 10)Periyamulla-2 11) Kudapaduwa 12) Colombo Road as shown in the figure below. However, CCET was unable to conduct ward meeting in ward 13 and 14 as these wards are yet to form the environmental committee unlike other wards which have their environmental committee to discuss the environmental issues and tries to resolve the issues with the proper coordination with NMC officials.

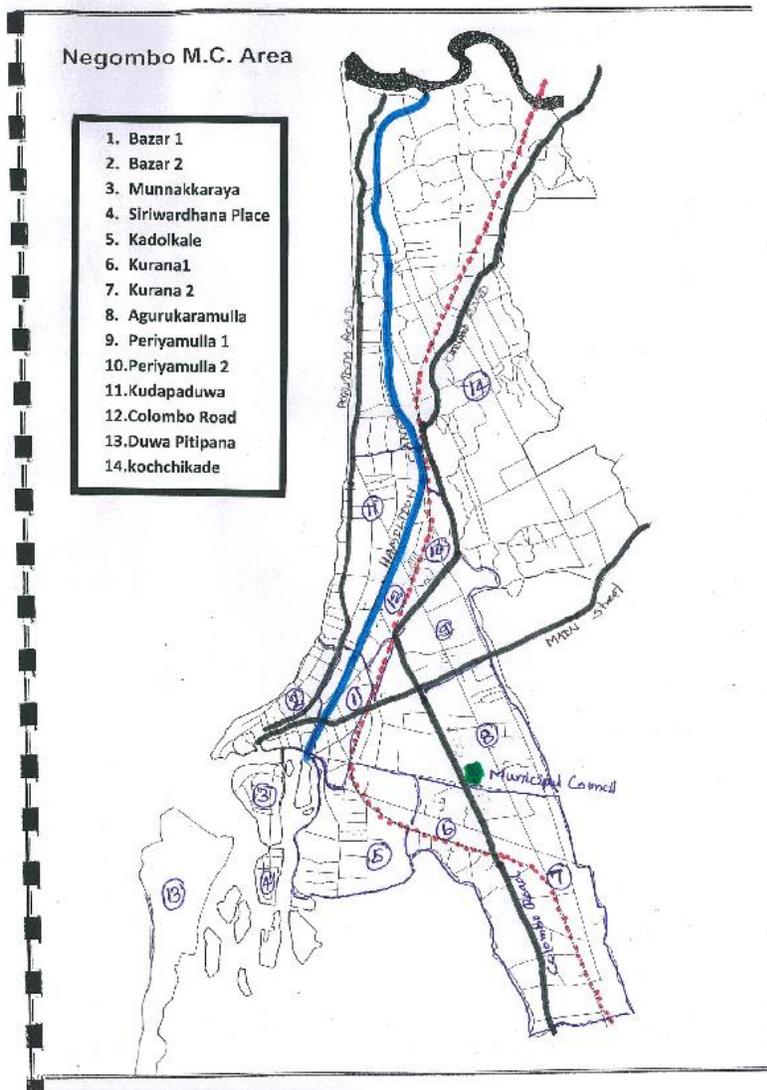


Figure 1 Wards in Negombo Municipal Council Area

The important points discussed during the ward meetings are compiled and categorized into four sections such as environment, economic, social and others. The suggestions and discussions from key stakeholders including commissioner, PHI and environmental committee is listed at the end of each discussion points for ward meetings.

## 1. Colombo Road ward (12)



### *Environmental*

- Drains are filled with garbage causing blockage to the drain water as well as it generates bad smell and it is also a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other insects
- Ocean water is polluted with waste dumps from fishermen
- Illegal waste dumps on road and surroundings from outsiders which pollutes environment
- Someone highlighted that one company do not treat the polluted water and discharged into the drain (PHI replied that they will check and take proper action on that)

### *Economic*

- People requested PHI to provide three separate bins in different community places where people can put their waste and collectors can collect from those bins
- People highlighted the need of incinerator for burning the waste

- People requested PHI to provide compost bins for each household for composting the organic waste
- People requested to complete the half built drainage
- Tractor's horn is not working so people requested PHI to fix the horns of the tractors

### ***Social***

- Outsiders come and dump garbage on roads and surrounding in the morning
- People throw waste from butcher shops (bones and unwanted meats) to the empty land which pollute the area
- People throw garbage in the drain
- Cows which belongs to slaughter house are left around to feed on garbage
- People throw beer cans on streets and roads
- Awareness on compost bins is necessary, people feel it stinks and it is not good to bring it in or around houses
- People cut grasses beside the roads and leave it there which eventually wash into the drains causing them to block.
- Fishermen dump waste into the sea
- Business houses pay collectors money to collect waste, collectors get used to bad trend of getting money for collection of waste
- Collector says that they cannot take more because of capacity limit however if they are paid them come back and collect the waste separately
- Street cleaner ask for money to clean the main road
- Garbage on the few roads is not collected because people do not pay money to collectors

### ***Others***

- People are not aware about tractor timetable
- People want to know what happens to the separated waste

- People request PHI to prepare no littering boards so that people can buy and place it where it is required/needed
- People want the involvement of police to catch the illegal dumps
- One lady shared her practice on composting at her house, she has two compost bins and she feed all her organic waste into it and produces compost for her garden however she collects all the leaves and burns in her garden as there is no space for leaves into her compost – she requested others to manage their organic waste by themselves using the compost bins in similar ways
- Someone suggested to dig a hole and burry all the organic waste
- No proper strategy/solution for hazardous waste such as batteries and electronics
- Police is not cooperative even though people notify them about the illegal garbage dumps around the roads or surroundings
- At linien road, garbage is thrown into empty land. People requested the council to take action to those people who dispose garbage into the empty lands and also contact the land owners to provide a feasible solution
- Collectors collects waste which has value in the market and leave other waste, people already filed a complaint but no response from the NMC

### ***Suggestions and discussion from PHI***

- PHI questioned people to make him assure that community bin which they are requesting will be well maintained by community people and it will not turn into dumping ground
- Put the hazardous waste in a separate bag and give it to collectors
- Once the green committee is formed in the ward, PHI will come and conduct the awareness
- Requested people that if they suspect someone is doing any illegal activities to pollute environment around, let them know so that they can visit there and check and take proper action against them.

- There are 12 guidelines on dump yard by the court which the city has to follow, one out of 12 guideline is that waste should be segregated at source and plastic waste should not go to final disposal site
- NMC allows collectors to sell the recyclables however the collectors should not be encourage to only collect recyclables
- Let PHI inspect the areas where you feel there is possibility of dengue, it is for the people's benefit
- People should also do awareness program on waste management on their own
- NMC is planning to distribute the degradable bag for waste collection which is a bit costly (Rs. 100) if people have motivation to buy it
- Lots of polythene bag with separated waste however it is really hard to identify which bag consist of what kind of separated waste
- People should bring recyclables to recycling center
- NMC is facing problem of lack of labor in waste management sector
- Smoke is now not so effective for repelling dengue mosquitoes
- Illegal pumping of sewage water into drain has been practices by many households and business
- PHI's suggestion was to drill hole so that the stagnant drain waste will go down

## 2. Periyamulla 1 ward (9)



### *Environmental*

- People throw waste inside the drainage causing blockage to the drain water causing overflow on the roads especially in rainy season, the stagnant drain water generates bad smell as well as it is a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other insects

### *Economic*

- People highlighted that collectors should use horn/siren system to inform people while collecting the garbage and requested PHI to provide collection vehicles with such facilities so that waste collection is smooth
- People requested compost bins for each household to manage their organic waste by themselves through composting

### *Social*

- Garbage is thrown in a main road by both community people as well as outsiders
- Some awareness is done by the local people but it is not effective and people request PHI to do it for more effectiveness

- People wash vehicles or roads (especially three wheelers) and lots of waste produced from used soaps and chemicals are left on the road
- People throw lots of polythene near school
- People put garbage after the waste collector is gone
- Use to have 6 small waste dumping places in this area however community people assisted PHI to clean and remove all the garbage from those dumping places and got rid of those dumping places
- Workers/collectors should speak Tamil language (at least one worker) as there is communication gap between collectors and people due to language barrier which lead to arguments
- In general, many family members live in small houses in this area so there is less space for compost so people need portable bins
- Too many plastic bags used for organic waste packaging
- Leaflet on waste management should be in both languages (Sinhala and Tamil)
- Not ethical for garbage collectors to check whether the waste is properly segregated or not, so people should be made more aware to segregate their waste

### ***Others***

- People question why some area do not separate waste and this area has to separate waste
- People argue that the rules and regulation for waste separation/collection should be same everywhere and for everyone
- On main road, collectors collect mixed waste however inside the community why they only collect separated waste
- People would like to know how to manage the construction waste
- Due to increase in polythene waste, people have concern on how to manage polythene
- Collection staff do not explain why they are not collecting particular garbage and they just leave it without collecting and when questioned they are very angry and aggressive
- No compost making practices in this area therefore there is a need for promoting composting

- Bring people to mosque and get the help of “Mawla” to aware people on waste management issues
- PHI should teach people to make compost for few weeks so that people can follow the instruction and do it by themselves

### 3. Agurukaramulla ward (8)



#### *Environmental*

- Some worms are seen in the drains which might be due to illegal waste dumps in the drains
- Lots of soil in the drain which creates blockage in the drain and the water overflows on the roads polluting the environment

#### *Economic*

- People requested PHI to provide common bins with cover (PHI asked who will be responsible to maintain that, if someone takes responsibility then NMC will provide those bins)
- Even though the collectors comes in morning, people are unaware of collection time as the collection tractors do not have any horns or siren so people requested for collection vehicles with proper horn or siren which they can use during the collection
- People requested PHI to provide them a leaflet on how to prepare household compost

#### *Social*

- Dogs and cattle tear the garbage bags beside the roads and scatter the waste
- Outsiders throw waste on roads from their vehicles and run away

- Established god's statue in areas where people use to throw waste, now people are reluctant to throw waste there and those area are clean now
- People tend to get more plastic bags while shopping
- People use flowers and coconuts for workshops and they leave these things there and go
- Butchers throw waste on roads

### ***Others***

- Collection is good unlike old days
- Roads are clean
- In avenue area, people requested PHI for 3 days of waste collection in a week
- Collectors do not collect branches of the tree
- PHI suggested to inform the supervisor in the respective areas to find the solution for branches collection
- People like their place to be clean like temple road
- People highlighted the need for training on composting
- People do not want drains as people put garbage into it
- Collectors should get safety equipment while collecting waste

### ***Suggestions and discussion from PHI***

- Minimize waste at home
- Refuse the polythene while buying goods
- Make aware children about reduce the use of plastics
- Awareness on health issues
- NMC will provide vegetables plants in reasonable price, people can use their compost to grow them
- 2375 compost barrel is being maintained in NMC by people
- Ward committee members will be given ID cards by mid of April and they will be responsible to get all your suggestion and solve the problems with coordination of NMC officials

- PHI suggested people to prepare place to store garbage on certain height so that cattle and dogs cannot scatter it

*Suggestions and discussion from one of the committee member*

- Do not care about which political party you belong to and work together to solve all the environmental problems
- Will propose Mayor to give compost bins to each household free of charges
- People should discourage fogging for driving mosquitoes as it kills other useful insects, butterflies and also kills flowers and useful plants (some mango trees stop flowering)
- Fine system for those who dump was illegally
- Tie the garbage bags nicely
- Do not bring anything which is free of charge even though you do not need it
- Burry the organic waste around the coconut trees, If you do not have coconut tree then make a big pit and burry the organic waste

## 4. Bazaar 1 and Bazaar 2 ward (1&2)

### *Environmental*

- Some areas the garbage is found in drain and roads which is not collected and pollutes the surrounding environment
- Empty yogurt cups are found on the roads

### *Economic*

- People requested PHI to set CCTV camera in illegal dumping areas

### *Social*

- People put their waste outside after the collection vehicle is gone
- Lots of unwanted waste is produced during feast in the church

### *Others*

- Waste is collected everyday
- Waste collection is done in very organized way
- People would like to know if it is ok to feed food waste to fishes in the Lagoon?

## 5. Kudapaduwa ward (11)



### *Environmental*

- Illegal waste dumps beside roads and the surroundings polluted the environment around
- Sometime garbage drops from the collection tractors and pollutes the road

### *Economic*

- Waste collection tractor's horn is not working, people requested PHI to fix the horns of the waste collection tractors
- Two bio-gas plant of about 500 kg each were started in 2010 however one is stopped working, people highlighted that it should be revived

### *Social*

- Outsiders come and throw garbage on the roads from their cars
- People put their garbage outside after the waste collector has gone
- BOSCO areas – people throw garbage outside from their buildings
- Some people throw garbage in graveyard

- Before there use to be lots of waste on road but after awareness program, the road are in good condition
- People throw bottles in the sea
- Sisters from church are willing to make eco-bags if materials are provided to them
- Leaving garbage on the roads without separation.
- Restaurants throw their garbage at mid-night and stray animals scatter those waste before the garbage collector comes next morning to pick the waste
- Pakistan refugee community does not adhere to the waste collection system
- Make awareness on quality assurance of plastic containers among ‘achcharu’ sellers (acidic fruits mixed with spices)

### ***Others***

- Street dogs scatter the garbage on the roads
- Collectors collect organic waste properly and neglect the plastic and other waste
- Tourist areas produces lots if waste at night especially the coconut shell
- Use of polythene and plastic is increasing
- Sometimes collected garbage fall off from the tractor and collectors are not aware of this
- Bringing in the business communities to not to sell plastic and polythene bags
- Allocate a specific location on the beach strip where people can throw their garbage (separated), otherwise people are very irresponsible and throw garbage / plastics on the beaches.

### ***Comments and suggestions from PHI***

- Awareness of bringing a system where households who do not keep their house and surrounding clean will be charged
- Mayor would like to select five houses for reward based on cleanliness
- Clean house will get green star and dirty house will get red star
- Spot (places where the people throw their garbage) check will be conducted at night by PHI

- People should start to use the reusable bags
- Aware people of the negative environmental impact of fogging (smoke for mosquitos).
- Informed about making households clean with enough light as well as to maintain proper air circulation to avoid leprosy and similar diseases
- Informed about Mayor's decision to sue the business establishments which routed their drains and sewage lines to the public drain lines, which causes clogging
- Highlighted the importance of joining with the Municipal council to provide information or complaints to increase the efficiency of the service provided
- After formulation of Green committee, NMC will be provided an official ID to all the member of committee and committee members will coordinate meetings and awareness campaigns in coordination with NMC
- Awareness camping on dengue patterns and how to reduce epidemic by cleaning the environment will be conducted

## 6. Munnakkaraya and Siriwardena wards (3 &4)



### *Environmental*

- Drainage are stagnate causing breeding ground for mosquitoes
- Garbage is not covered while collection so most of the time the garbage leak from the tractors on roads or through the collection tracks polluting surrounding environment
- Near the lagoon area, some people have made sheds, they go there only for drinking and throw all their waste mostly the beer cans which pollutes the environment there

### *Economic*

- People would like to get three separate bins from the municipal council for separation of the waste into organic, inorganic and recyclables
- People highlighted the need of proper cover for collected waste on the tractor and also the roof for the driver using the tractor
- Sometimes the collection tractors have problems due to old batteries
- People want light and strong collection bins from the municipality
- People suggested to have a newer garbage truck and requested PHI to ask tractor drivers to make a louder signal (horn or siren) when garbage collecting team arrives in their respective streets.

### ***Social***

- Lot of outsiders come and throw garbage beside roads, people requested PHI to provide hoarding board notifying not to throw garbage in public areas
- Lots of street dogs are around the roads and community areas due to garbage on the roads or surrounding areas
- Lot of people usually let their dogs go outside at night to feed on the garbage
- People throw nets and garments into lagoon polluting the lagoon

### ***Others***

- Usually people bring their waste outside once they hear the tractor horns, however lots of times the horns of the tractors collecting waste is not working, so people do not know the collection time and miss to give away their waste
- People want to know the exact time of the collection of garbage
- People would like to take the help of police to find and punish the people who are throwing garbage illegally to the environment
- Lot of times the tractor does not collect waste properly, people have to run behind the tractors to give them their waste
- People request for awareness on compost making in order to manage the degradable waste on their own

### ***Suggestions and discussion from Commissioner and PHI***

- Separate the garbage and sell the recyclables
- Minimize the waste at homes
- Every house should plan to have a compost pit
- Plans to manage waste differ from area to area according to the living style of the people
- NMC is planning to provide different color bags for different waste
- People should inform the problem to us so that NMC will inform the police and take actions accordingly to solve the waste problem
- Kitchen leftover at home should be composted

## 7. Periyammulla II ward (10)



### *Environmental*

- PHI instruct to trim the trees however when the trees or branches are kept outside after trimming for collection, the collectors do not collect it causing it to decay there
- Use of polythene has increased from 35% to 50%

### *Economic*

- People requested PHI to provide containers for branches and leaves
- People also highlighted the need for compost bins and flower pots in each houses so that the compost produced can be used to grow flowers and vegetables using flower pots
- People underlined the need for incinerator, previous donor project on incinerator got stalled due to lack of land space for the installation of the facility
- People suggested to apply additional charge on cold drinks (pet bottle) and return some amount of money when people return the pet bottle to the shops (charge Rs. 300 and return 50 after getting the pet bottle) , same can be applied for plastic bags (charge Rs. 10 and return Rs. 5 after getting back the plastic bag)
- One good example for such practice is done by beverage company called Elephant house, they pay back some money when glass bottle is returned to them
- People requested PHI to increase the capacity of garbage collection by increasing the size of the tractor

- People requested PHI to install a siren in the collection vehicles and also use some kind of calling system during waste collection in the community

### ***Social***

- Some segregate waste but some do not
- PHI has instructed collector not to get inside the houses to collect the garbage (due to robbery issues in the past)
- Street dogs scatter the waste when it is kept outside
- To have awareness program in community centers and discuss the problem
- After tractor is gone some people come and put the waste
- Collectors break the buckets while collecting waste

### ***Others***

- Collaborate with collector and find better way of collection
- Garbage is collected only when it is kept outside but sometimes both husband and wives are working so there is no one to bring the garbage outside when the collection tractors come
- Waste is collected daily (plastic is collected only on wednesday)
- One of the community member of the wards has a proposal for pilot project on compost bins and flower pots on 500 hundred household and he would like to share the proposal with us for consideration
- Waste collection at night (however PHI said it is not practical)
- Some people highlighted that there is no space at home for compost pit
- People would like to know whether there is any bacteria which feed on sewage waste and garbage waste
- Tractors do not use horns
- People want to have some kind of alarm which collectors can easily use and people can be notified easily

### *Suggestions and discussion from PHI*

- Better that everyone cut the trees or branches on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month so that municipality can collect those waste on the same day
- Minimize the use of polythene
- Daily wage for collectors is low (Rs. 1080) so even though NMC try to recruit more workers but people are not interested
- Unwanted/too much cooking should not be done to reduce waste
- NMC is searching land of about 5 acre for final disposal of waste, trying to find land in Siduwa
- People should use bucket with cover
- Green committee members in the community will be provided with ID cards from NMC so that they can work in awareness raising on proper waste management and also work in finding people who dump illegal waste in surroundings
- Lack of laborers to collect garbage causes disturbance in the schedule for collection of garbage

## 8. Kadolkale ward (5)

### *Environmental*

- Polythene scattered all around
- Polythene being stuck in the drains causing the water in the drain to stagnate
- Waste generated by vendors are on roads and streets
- Priority must be given to the Mangrove trees protection, these trees are getting disturbed by the amount of garbage being washed to the lagoon through the canals.

### *Economic*

- People are interested in buying compost bins in reasonable price
- People request NMC for increment in collection days for organic waste (three days) and also for plastic waste (two days)
- People requested PHI to assist them on cleaning the drainage system

### *Social*

- People throw the waste on road and surroundings in early morning
- House to house awareness program is important, people highlighted the need of awareness program on separation too
- Active green committee to conduct more awareness and training sessions on all kinds of health problems and waste management related issues

### *Others*

- People supported the idea to banned the polythene use
- Fine system for illegal waste dumps on streets and drains
- People highlighted that collaboration with other government institutes to clean the locality once is important so that community can keep it clean by themselves
- People wanted to know how to manage sewage by ourselves?

### ***Suggestions and discussion from Commissioner and PHI***

- Make your own compost
- Garbage minimization at home is mother's duty (especially the kitchen waste)
- NMC buys waste like coconut shells, plastic, polythene, pet bottles, cans and cardboard- so people should sell their waste to NMC recycling centre
- People should file written complain to PHI if there is any issue waste in the community or surroundings
- NMC is planning to provide compost bins in discount rate and also people can pay in installment
- NMC will make aware about the timing and schedule of waste collection
- Lot of time when NMC comes with some project, people do not cooperate and the project fails
- People shouldn't keep garbage on the streets, especially food waste
- Information regarding issues and illegal/wrongdoers should be provided to the council/PHI by the Green committee

### ***Suggestion and concern from the Sister of the church***

- People are responsible for cleaning their surroundings
- People should protect trees
- Street dogs eat the garbage on the road, tear the plastic with food and after eating the garbage the plastic is only left which gets scattered everywhere
- Need bins on the road

## 9. Kurana-1 and Kurana-2 wards (6&7)



### *Environmental*

- Though people collect the garbage from the drains, the drain water is still polluted
- Lot of flies due to polluted drain and waste scattered around roads and surroundings
- Participants unanimously agreed the mosquitos are breeding due to the stagnation of water in drainage system
- Lagoon area having lots of plastics and bottles thrown around and it which has caused a lot of water blockages.

### *Economic*

- Participants believe that drains are not completely built as water does not flow in most areas.
- People want free concrete bins from the municipality for composting organic waste
- Suggestion of having CCTV in the areas of illegal dumping to apprehend the outsiders who throw garbage
- People highlighted the need of proper garbage bins to avoid stray animals from messing the regular garbage bags and bins before the tractor arrives

### *Social*

- People throw garbage into the drainage

- People from neighboring wards come and throw waste on roads and surroundings
- When collection vehicles are late for collection, people throw the waste into surroundings areas
- Garbage collectors do not collect waste if people keep their waste inside their house
- Lots of toilets and wastewater pipes from households are connected to the drainage illegally
- People also highlighted that illegal construction have also blocked some parts of the Negombo drainage system and suggested that council should take initiative to reconstruct the drains and sewers to bear the water capacity, especially during monsoon season.

### *Others*

- Participants were happy about council work on waste management especially the waste collection which is done every other day in these wards.
- People wants the municipality to clean all the drainage system in the locality
- Responsible officials from the municipality do not come and observe the problem in the municipality
- Community people are taking help of police to catch the people who throw waste illegally on the roads or surroundings – successful in stopping people to throw waste illegally
- Cooperation of police in waste management activities is very important so we should involve police in our waste management activities
- Awareness on waste separation, recycling and reduction of garbage
- Suggestion of taxing the excessive waste producing households and making a payment for those who provide recyclable waste

### *Suggestions and discussion from Commissioner and PHI*

- Lifetime of the landfill is almost going to finish so people should reduce their waste generation
- Use household compost and produced compost which people can use for their flowers or vegetables
- Separate plastic and sell it

- Manage to get their own bins for composting rather than waiting for the municipality to give them
- People cut trees to build their own houses, if they cut trees then they should plant as well
- People cut trees because the trees produce leaves (waste) which are scattered all around and people are lazy to clean all the time but this is not the proper solution
- When there was no drain in Negobo city, there were no mosquitoes so either we should close the drain or manage it in proper ways
- During any festival, people should collect the waste and manage it properly after the event
- If the community wants to organize any cleaning program, the NMC will provide all the facility if informed in advance
- Waste collector does not go inside and collect the waste because they are afraid of being blamed if anything is stolen from/around the house
- Need of attitude change of the community to support to keep environment clean and produce less garbage.

## 10. Some photos of field visit

