

Press Release: Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) supported the Corporation of Chennai organize camps to register waste pickers for issuing occupational ID cards

Chennai, August 15, 2015:

The Corporation of Chennai with support from Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) and its partner organizations organized camps near Perungudi and Kodungaiyur dumping yards for registering waste pickers in the city and to issue them occupational ID cards. The camp at Perungudi was conducted for 3 days from 15th to 17th of July 2015 followed by another camp at Kodungaiyur from 20th to 22nd of July 2015. Preliminary health screening of waste pickers was also done as part of these camps. Approximately 980 waste pickers from across Chennai registered for ID cards and benefited from the health camps at both the sites. On 17th August 2015, which was also the last day of the camp at Perungudi, the Honorable Mayor of the Corporation of Chennai visited the camp and distributed ID cards to 20 waste pickers as a precursor to the issuance of ID cards to waste pickers from across the city.

These occupational ID cards decriminalise waste picking, recognise the contribution of waste pickers to the city and the environment, and ensure them secured and sustained livelihood opportunities in the waste sector. The Corporation of Chennai has also committed to holding similar ID card camps in all other zones of the Corporation in the coming days which would mean many more waste pickers in the city will benefit.

Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) along with its partner organizations - Pennurimai Iyyakkam, Thozhamai, Arunodhaya, Real Charitable Trust and Chennai Metro Workers Union - working as the Initiative on Waste, Informal Workers and Chennai's Future, played a pivotal role in liaising with the Corporation of Chennai in organizing these ID card camps successfully. These camps have been organised pursuant to a strategy paper on ID cards for waste pickers that the Initiative presented to the Commissioner, Corporation of Chennai, in November 2014.

The Corporation of Chennai used Android tablets and ODK (Open Data Kit) forms to collect information and photographs from the waste pickers. The CAG team with its expertise in these areas had designed the ODK forms for the survey and also trained 10 surveyors of the Corporation of Chennai in using the tablets to administer the surveys to the waste pickers. CAG along with its partners had carried out extensive outreach and mobilization activities in and around the settlements of waste pickers both prior to and during the camp so as to ensure a high turn out. The concerted efforts of the Corporation of Chennai, CAG, and all its partner organizations and the volunteers ensured that the three days each of the camps at Perungudi and Kodungaiyur were a success.