



EWR good practices and case studies

A year without waste bins

1. Details of Action:

Coordinators: IBGE-BIM Brussels Environment

Action Developers: Yacine Canamas

Name of nominated action: Un an sans poubelles (A year without waste bins)

Town: Brussels

Region: The Brussels Capital Region

Country: Belgium

Website: /

Nominee [category](#): Citizen

Dates of action: 22-30/11/ 2014

2. Action's theme:

- Reduce – Strict avoidance and reduction at source
- Reuse – Preparing for reuse and reuse
- Recycle – Waste sorting and Recycling
- Let's Clean Up Europe!

3. Action related to the Prevention Thematic Days 2014: Stop Food Waste?

- Yes
- No

4. Description of the nominated action:

This project was carried out during 2014, with a special highlight during the Week: presentation of the results of the project by an individual citizen and his family: "a year without waste bins".

The idea for the project originated in 2013, inspired by a similar experience in the United States of America. In 2013, the family already started to weigh the contents of their waste bins in order to have a clear idea of what it represented and to be able to compare with the results obtained in 2014. The project's interest lies in the fact that it concerns a large family in a city, where both parents work. The idea was to apply intensively all the solutions that are available to reduce waste. By measuring the produced waste before and after, it was easy to obtain and communicate quantified results.

The "workfields"

Besides the project communication, they worked on three "workfields" to complete the project:

- purchasing
- conservation/storage
- recycling



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1. Purchasing

The family has radically changed the way they buy, decreasing the purchases at the supermarket (100 euro / week to about 40), increasing share purchased at the market, the organic market, local shops and through group purchases. The portion of their budget spent on food has increased slightly, partly compensated by a better organization of the purchases, more time spent cooking, and reduced meat consumption. The main difficulty was time constraints since they had to divide their purchases over different times and places, not always nearby.

Because of buying in bulk, they needed to invest in large glass jars to store foods, which proved very convenient, and also more aesthetic than conventional packaging. They used plastic boxes for certain purchases (meats, olives, cheeses ...)

2. Conservation/storage:

The major concern was the preservation of the waste for a year, and potential hygiene problems. Good conservation required systematic composting (made possible by the fact that they have a garden, but there is also a collective compost in the nearby town park) and also separation of packaging. The general waste bin was thus reduced to an absolute minimum, receiving less waste from the kitchen, the bathroom,... Finally, except for the packaging (plastic, aluminum, paper), they have reduced the general waste bin to one large bag for a whole year. The packaging appears to be the real problem when it comes to reducing waste.

They had to equip themselves with additional bins and containers for several unavoidable waste streams (glass, paper...), but ultimately, they were never "invaded" by waste, even at the end of the year. There was no problem regarding the storage space (terrace, basement,...).

3. Recycling

Having decided to keep all their garbage, including recyclable materials, they initially opted for returnable packaging, as much as possible: milk, yogurt, juice, beer ...

They reused some of the paper as drafting paper, they gave some jars to friends who made jam and other conserved food. They separated the plastic packaging for 2 purposes: one part for recycling at end of the experiment, and the other part for a new practical or artistic use.

They collected the cork and plastic caps to donate to social associations, who benefit from the sale of those two waste streams. They kept the coffee packaging for a bag making experience.

5. Type of evaluation conducted and outcome of the evaluation:

- Number of visitors/participants
- Feedback from visitors/participants (willingness to change their behaviour)
- Quantity of waste avoided/collected
- Amount of CO2 avoided
- Other indicators (please specify):

Qualitative:

According to the action developer, he changed his view on his household waste. He realized that the "dirty" or "disgusting" waste was only a small part of the general waste bin, consisting mainly of compostable materials



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and packaging, and all was composed of "resources" for new practices, some still to be invented.

The action developer managed to reduce the production of waste significantly. However, he noticed 3 constraints:

- The massive and indiscriminate use of packaging in our society
- The lack of time (to buy, cook, invent new uses, ...)
- The requests from children for waste generating products (chips, French fries, small juice, cakes, choco spread,...); requests that were hard to resist all the time.

Quantitative:

-residual waste: 94 kg in 2013, 16 kg in 2014.

- 8 kg general waste
- 8 kg non recyclable plastic waste

-plastics, metal (cans), drink cartons: 35,5 kg in 2013, 10,2 kg in 2014

-compostable fraction: about 200 kg

-paper : 108 kg in 2013, 40 kg in 2014

-textile: 4 kg

-other products: coffee maker, toaster, chair (probably possible to repair at a Repair Café)

During the Week, the action developer presented his experiences at a stand during an event organised by the municipality. He also created 9 comic strips (each of 1 page), in annex.

6. Reasons why the action has been selected for the EWWR 2014 Awards :

a) Visibility and communicational aspects

-Presentation of the qualitative and quantitative results at a stand during a large event.

-Interviews in press (newspapers, newsletters, tv,...)

-Movies

-9 comic strips

-2 artistic statues : "Trashosaurus Rex" in plastic and "Paperman" in paper

b) Good practice, originality and exemplarity

The fact that an individual is motivated to weigh his produced waste during a whole year and to take action on all levels during the following year, is very original and shows that it is possible to act on an individual level. By sharing the experiences, others can benefit from this project as well. The approach the action developer used is humoristic, so there is no feeling of condemnation: it's a positive approach which was well appreciated by journalists and other citizens.

c) Quality of content and focus on waste prevention

The action developer wanted to show, by using humor, the citizen's ability to radically change its practices (purchase, but also how to individually reflect on personal waste production). His approach also shows the limits of this ability (e.g. the packaging problem is ultimately a production choice problem, and it's the packaging which is problem number 1 to reduce waste).



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d) European reproducibility

Every citizen is welcome and even encouraged to follow this example!

e) Follow-up in long-term and lasting impact

The action developer and his family are convinced of the positive impact their efforts have on the environment and will continue their actions. By disseminating his experiences via a comic strip, he will inspire others to take measures at their own individual level.



Yacine Canamas explaining the project to interested people

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POUR VIVRE 1 AN SANS POUCELLES, IL FAUT:



POUR L'INSTANT, LES SOLUTIONS SE TROUVENT:



ET POUR L'INSTANT, LES PROBLÈMES SE POSENT CAR:

