



# EWR good practices and case studies

What's essential doesn't weigh ... and is invisible to the eyes

## 1. Details of Action:

Coordinators: Steering Committee for Italy

Action Developers: Scuola Secondaria di primo grado G. B. Monteggia

Name of nominated action: What's essential doesn't weigh ... and is invisible to the eyes

Town: Laveno Mombello

Region: Lombardia

Country: Italy

Website: <http://www.icmonteggialaveno.gov.it/>

Nominee category: Educational Establishment

Dates of action: Monday, 23 November 2015, Tuesday, 24 November 2015, Wednesday, 25 November 2015, Thursday, 26 November 2015, Friday, 27 November 2015, Saturday, 28 November 2015, Sunday, 29 November 2015

## 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 2015: Dematerialisation: Doing more with less?

- Yes
- No

## 4. Description of the nominated action:

The school decided to start a broad work engaging pupils on the issue of dematerialization. "When we speak of dematerialization, it usually refers to reduction of paper due to the informatics revolution. But dematerializing means reducing the use of materials or even do not use any material... We all, however, are accustomed to surrounding ourselves with things and, especially during the pre-Christmas period, the race to buy presents and gifts produces a spiral of often unnecessary purchases", the teacher responsible for the action writes. For Christmas 2015, the school thought different kind of gifts during the EWR: "If you offer someone a present to communicate that he/she is important to you, why not give attention, kind thoughts and good intentions and actions? These intangible gifts may extend over time and strengthen the bond of affection or sympathy with others, between friends, family and neighbours in order to achieve the sharing of things and experiences. The real gifts are made with the heart and not with the money!" Activities implemented during the EWR were:

-School teachers proposed kids a series of actions designed to increase empathy with others, going over the traditional Christmas presents by promoting gestures and concrete actions that could lead to the sharing objects and experiences. Gift Messages were written and packaged exclusively with recycled



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material (See photo);

- An evaluation of the amount of material avoidance due to dematerialised gifts has been made; together with an estimation of how much energies they saved during the year implementing good practices in car-pooling, light use (in kWh, CO<sub>2</sub>, non-renewable resources, economic savings);
- 2nd and 3rd grade classes promoted the initiative also outside the school, inviting everyone to do the same via an awareness raising 'campaign' on the school website, Facebook and WhatsApp group messages.
- An email was sent other schools to involve them in the initiative of dematerialised gifts.
- Discussions in class about how certain basic needs are met by attitudes and not by objects;
- A revolution for the school began: starting to get used to lighten schoolbags bringing only the essential, sharing books with classmates. During the week, schoolbags were 'checked' and scores assigned to create a game with points and winners;
- Moreover, during the EWWR school activities that do not necessarily involve the use of the books were enhanced by increasing the use of interactive whiteboard (IWB) and cooperative learning;
- With reference to the list Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, classes wrote a list on how to dematerialize (see list);
- Parents got involved so that during the EWWR the car-pooling started again for the second year, not only because of the reduction of the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> but also because it is enjoyable to travel with schoolmates in the same car! (see photo)
- Pupils made a "shared break" bringing something to eat together and to accumulate less waste;
- Classes which have addressed environmental issues since September, during the EWWR were appointed "Bin-Inspectors" and assessed the proper separate collection of waste in 10 classes of the school giving feedback and results;
- The project "Give a Second Life to Words" took place for the second year: bringing books to the school library instead of leaving them forgotten on the shelves at home;
- in classes, "Guardians of the Light" were in charge of checking the good use of the energy and illumination
- On the 29 November, the school joined the Global Climate March in order to remember that we have to change our lifestyles to prevent pollution, waste and excessive consumption. Before, classes watched documentaries on climate change. Pupils and teachers commuted by train as an ecological transportation, then walked to the Lake Park all together. During the march, as a symbol of recognition, pupils used the big letters in polystyrene IO RIUSO (I reuse) realized for a previous swap party two years ago. Invitations for children's families will be placed in cans already reused last year for a theater project; posters were made during the hours of Technical drawing, revisiting the logo of the march and adding pupil's thoughts on the event (SeePhoto). The families of students were notified via the school website and civic society via official posters of the March around the City, adapted by school children (during the hours of Art). At the end of the march, the school screened a PowerPoint presentation showing the best practices implemented during the year: 3Rs, Waste Collection, energy efficiency and sustainable mobility, already in place at the school for several years. Earlier in September, the school also participated in the "Clean Up the World" day organized by Legambiente (biggest clean-up action in Italy; Legambiente sits in the National Steering Committee of the Italian EWWR).

### 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 CO<sub>2</sub> avoided
- Other indicators



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- Number of participants: around 700 (250 pupils + around 400 parents/families + 50 people at the Climate March + around 12 teachers; Around 100 city citizens)
- Estimation of material gifts avoided = resources avoided (what pupils would have bought instead of dematerialised gifts):
  - 61 garments (t-shirts, sweaters, etc.) ;
  - 11 cosmetics (perfumes, body lotions, etc.);
  - 63 gadgets (phone covers, sunglasses, etc.);
  - 12 books;
  - 41 jewels (bracelets, necklaces, etc.)
- positive Feedback from parents: they were happy with the new gifts (someone stressed dematerialized presents should become the norm especially last year classes' parents were very conscious and proud of what they were doing.
- Energy savings during the year. 2014-2015: 9315 kWh
- Reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions : 5403 kg CO<sub>2</sub> /year
- Saving of non-renewable resources: 2236 kg/ year
- Economic savings: 2422 euros/ year
- Sustainable mobility: 57 people walk to school; 51 go by bus: for 108 people at school, mobility is already sustainable!
- Car-pooling (22% of questionnaires, with estimation of CO<sub>2</sub> emission): CO<sub>2</sub> reduction of 105 kg/week (- 23%)

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction by better sorting and waste reduction: from 80kg/week before the action to 59,9 kg (2013-14) to 50,5 kg (2014-15)

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

### a) Visibility and communicational aspects

Visibility for the participation in the climate march was guaranteed by posters and website post realised partly by pupils themselves. Also the idea of reused cans to bring the invitation to families was an original part of the action. The invitation to Dematerialise was sent to other schools also and to friends via digital tools we use every day. The message communicated all along the action was strong and clear, but also broad. It surely passed to pupils with all those comprehensive activities and with their engagement in doing, creating, drawing, reflecting. It also passed for teachers...(see photo)

### b) Quality of content and focus on waste reduction, products reuse or materials recycling

focus centered here because the actions were on dematerialization so waste avoidance; however, all aspects of the 3Rs were touched, considering also how to better collect waste for recycling. With the Climate March during the EWWR 2015, moreover, pupils were able to start understanding the bigger picture.

### c) Originality and exemplarity:

It is original because it operates in many areas and involve all pupils and their families; it really starts a comprehensive mindset change. Also, the focus on an alternative Christmas from the traditional, established one in an area long known from unbridled consumerism. In Europe, too often Christmas is the time where a large amount of goods is consumed: food, decorations, markets, gifts, packaging ... perhaps useless. On top of this, all with great



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expenditure of various materials and costs of production and transport. The concept is simple: take back the spiritual value of Christmas. The originality, in this case, lies in the simplicity.

## d) European reproducibility:

It would be clearly very easy to reproduce these simple actions in every European School, but also to reproduce it in other fields of the civil society like workplaces, associations, communities etc. because it is a collaborative work with the use of recycled materials; when is not 'mental'=you can create everything!

## e) Lasting impact:

Working with children as the main target, getting them used to a more sustainable lifestyle, presenting the playful aspect of the action, enhancing the critical skills of reflection and choice often inhibited by the mechanism of consumerism. This was the key to a lasting impact in the mind of the new generation regarding waste prevention. These actions have been in place for at least 2 years and many actions have naturally evolved in a more conscious way of living! This is the best clue that proves the lasting impact... "has lasted"!

## f) Motivation:

When engaged in a playful way, making pupils the protagonists, they are naturally involved. The new generations are also more open, without prejudice and ready to play the game. They were motivated also by the attitudes of teachers. Families were motivated because they saw their children involved and willing to participate.



Dematerialised gift wrapped in recycled paper or in recycled objects (creative reuse)



Car-pooling experience