



EWWR good practices and case studies

1. Details of Action:

EWWR Organiser: Belfast City Council
Country/Region: Belfast – Northern Ireland
Name of nominated project developer: Sonia Boal
Name of nominated action: Show your Support
Place: City Hall – Cecil Ward Building
Town: Belfast
Region: UK
Country: Northern Ireland
Website:
Nominee **category**: Administration
Dates of action:

2. Please select the **theme(s)** highlighted in the action:

- Too Much Waste
- Better Consumption
- Better Production
- A Life for Products
- Less Waste thrown Away

3. Type of Action

- Action open to general public
- Action open to a target group
- Action based on the production of communication tools
- Other, please specify:



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4. Please give a detailed and precise description of the action

Most western women have item(s) of underwear – bras in particular, that they will never wear again. Either they are uncomfortable, the wrong size, worn out or just unsuitable. Typically, these linger at the back of drawers, till we eventually dispose of them, discreetly.

The action was to collect old, unwanted bras and using our existing contracts to send these to a market in Kenya where there is a shortage of this type of item. The lack of a textile industry in Kenya or the necessary infrastructure to support it, means that people are dependant upon 2nd hand clothing, however western prejudices mean that this type of item rarely gets recycled via clothing banks. Many women do not have access to underwear, and those who do frequently have to wear the wrong size due to lack of choice. In a region where sexual abuse and aids are rife, it is women who do not have access to underwear who are targeted as they are perceived as more vulnerable.

It was agreed that the proceeds from the sale of any items donated would go to a local cancer research facility in Queen's University Belfast.

Initially this project was conceived as an internal project for Belfast City Council with one bin located in the Cecil Ward Building for one week, however as staff heard about it, demand came back for more collection points. The BBC picked up the story and broadcasted an interview which put the project into the public domain, there was a huge amount of interest in the project and it was agreed that the bins should remain in place until the Christmas holidays.

In the end five collection points were created in the city centre with specific bins for the bras. Additionally Strathearn Grammar school, contacted us asking to be involved in the project. Having heard the BBC interview the Lower 6th year group wanted to organise a collection for the entire school, with their collected items feeding into the overall project.

5. Please describe the target audience and how the action motivated its public/target audience, as well as the number of participants

The target audience was women, though a few brave men also participated on behalf of their partners. The concept of donating an unwanted item that would genuinely help someone else both abroad and again at home (though the donation to the Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology) was incredibly powerful in terms of motivating people to take part. As mentioned above, we had to adjust the project to keep up with demand.

We were unable to measure how many people took part in the project, but we do know that we collected almost 3000 bras, with most women donating about two bras we estimate that about 1500 people took part in the project.

6. Please explain why you have decided to nominate this action for a EWWR Award, following the main criteria listed here below:

- 1) visibility and communicational aspects
- 2) good practice, originality and exemplarity
- 3) quality of content and focus on waste prevention,
- 4) European reproducibility
- 5) follow-up in long-term and lasting impact



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Certainly within Belfast & Northern Ireland this was a totally original project and it really seemed to appeal to people, both in the general public and the media. It required very little in terms of resources to run – just a suitable container and somewhere to store the items until they were collected by the contractor. This would make it very easy for any other local authority to replicate the project in their area even with limited resources.

With regards communication of the action we relied heavily on waste-free, online marketing, e.g. social media and websites. We also communicated face to face and the tour guides at City Hall actively promoted the scheme during EWWR to people on the City Hall tour. So too did the Security Guards at City Hall and other locations, so as to promote the scheme further. All the collection points were brightly decorated to make the bins stand out, and they all had bright signage on them for all to see.

The message of reuse was clear and simple from the outset. There is an immediate link between action and effect, which participants easily recognised. People were very enthusiastic about the concept and about how their actions could help both the environment and other people.

Due to the social aspect of this project, people were interested and would go to some effort to find out more therefore communicating the message was completely straightforward. The BBC were given a copy of the internal email that was distributed which led to a radio interview on Good Morning Ulster, their prime time breakfast current affairs programme.

Bras can continue to be donated through the year at the 4 Recycling Centres in Belfast. Plans are already in place for a wider collection this year with collection points in all Leisure Centres and Community Centres operated by Belfast City Council. We have also been approached by one City Centre bank who have indicated that they may be willing to organise a collection point in their branches.

7. Please provide us with photos, videos, weblinks or any other material that would help to better understand the nominated EWWR action.

