



EWWR good practices and case studies

1. Details of Action:

EWWR Organiser: Belfast City Council
Country/Region: Northern Ireland
Name of nominated project developer: Queen's University Elms Village
Name of nominated action: Green Week
Place: Queen's Elms Village, Malone Road
Town: Belfast
Region: Northern Ireland
Country: Northern Ireland
Website: www.stayatqueens.com
Nominee **category**: Business/Industry
Dates of action: 19/11/2011- 27/11/2011

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

Queen's University Belfast (QUB) Elms Village is a residential area that houses around 1800 students, mostly in their first year at university. QUB is very active across all its departments in reducing its carbon footprint. The Elms Village is a prime example of a successful student recycling scheme, in partnership with Belfast City Council. The Elms Village participated in EWWR 2010 and since then has been engaged in actively promoting waste reduction to all residents all year round. In EWWR 2011 we built upon the previous year's success and developed a wider programme of waste reduction.

- We used the beginning of EWWR to launch our call out for Green Champions. Students that sign up will take the lead in starting up environmental initiatives throughout the year at the Elms Village and will be able to shape any future eco-projects.
- We have a lounge area where students can relax and spend time reading. There is a bookcase where we encourage students and staff to leave off any books or games they are finished with so others can use them for free. During EWWR 2011 we encouraged students to donate items to the Swap and encouraged them to use it. We communicated with them throughout the Week to publicise the free use of the Swap. We encouraged students to submit their green ideas for the Elms Village too, using large posters they could write on in the lounge.
- We developed a cook book for students, which aims to show how to measure correct portions of food, correct storage of food in the fridge and freezer, smart shopping practices and using up leftovers. We launched the cookbook during EWWR, and all 205 kitchens will receive a copy of it. We want to encourage students to learn sensible cooking and eating habits that they will take with them when they leave the Halls of Residence. As well as this, as students become better at cooking the right portions etc, the waste at the Elms Village will be vastly reduced, which helps the University reduce its carbon footprint and save money.
- We put up a 'green display' in the Reception area of the Elms Village, a high footfall area. The display showed how to 'shop smart' (little or no packaging, reusing bags etc).
- We operate a year-round vegetable garden, which was built using reclaimed wood. We grow a variety of vegetables that are then available to the students for free. We promoted the garden during EWWR and put out a call for student volunteers to work in it, and reap the benefits of their work.
- We held a 'Christmas decoration from waste' competition that we held during the run up to Christmas. All types of waste were used to make the various decorations and the winner was featured on the green notice board and the Queen's Accommodation Facebook page.
- Laundry swap – Sometimes items of clothing get left behind or forgotten about at the Elms laundry. We display the clothes so that they can be reclaimed, either by the people who forgot them, or other students. If there are clothes left at the end of term when the students are leaving we give them to charity. During EWWR2011 we promoted the Laundry Swap to all the students by email, Facebook, website and posters.

All the events that we organised for EWWR were also promoted under the banner of Green Week. At QUB we use November as our Green Month with 1 week of intense environmental campaigning. We used the EWWR as our Green Week to give it a waste reduction focus and to promote the internationality of the environmental awareness message.



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

- **Target audience**

The audience for our Green Week was our student residents. We have approximately 1800 residents who all receive a weekly newsletter with updates on events and campaigns. All students have access to the cook book, located in every kitchen on site and all the students frequent the Treehouse (bar, shop, lounge, recycling, laundry and Reception area). Posters and other information including the green display were all located around the Treehouse.

- **How did the action/s motivate the target audience?**

For many of the actions that we organised during Green Week there were incentives. We offered prizes for the Christmas decoration competition (reusable bamboo bag, reuseable coffee mug, memory stick, Coffee voucher, Cinema Voucher) and we encouraged students to save money by using the book and game swap and the laundry swap. By showing them that by reusing items they could save money we hoped that it would motivate them to take part, not just during EWWR but all year round.

The Cook Book that we produced for the students encourages them to think about how to shop smart by making a list, taking reusable bags and avoiding packaging. All this can help the students to save money, do their bit for the environment and it encourages them to cook socially, for their friends and neighbours. The motivation for helping out with the vegetable garden is free food... Something that motivates everyone! By taking part in such environmental initiatives the students can demonstrate 'extra-curricular' interest in such topics, which can boost their CVs, transfer to a Degree Plus award and improve their employment prospects in the future.

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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• **Visibility and communicational aspect**

We publicised all our events widely before, during and after the week (with regards feedback) so the campaign was very visible to all students. We communicated to the students fortnightly via email to let them know what was happening and how they could get involved. Our Elms Village Facebook page was very active throughout the build up and during the Week. We try to communicate with our students by email and internet so as to produce as little waste as possible. In this way we can demonstrate our commitment to waste reduction. We do produce posters also but we only print as many as we need so there was little or no waste. Posters are reused as notebooks in the offices.

We were also mentioned on the Council website as a participating Project Developer so this was great publicity too.

• **Good practice, originality and exemplarity**

QUB Elms Village prides itself in developing an interesting and interactive programme of events every year for its Green Week. A prime example of good practise would be that we organised our Green Week so that it coincided with EWWR. This meant that the messages could be combined and therefore delivered in a stronger way. All the events and initiatives that we ran were well attended and very successful. We believe that our Community Youth Workers and Residential Assistants, all previous QUB students (many of whom are past tenants of the Elms Village) who run the events for students come up with wonderful, unique and original ideas. Other similar university halls of residence in Northern Ireland do not seem to have as many events for students. In this way we show exemplary leadership and commitment to the environment.

• **Quality of content and focus on waste prevention**

The projects we ran were well thought out and well delivered. We engaged with all our residents and promoted EWWR strongly, as well as our other Green Week messages. All the events had a waste reduction or waste reuse focus and all publicity was as waste-free as possible.

We have a Green team made up of various staff from all departments within Accommodation and Hospitality who meet 4 times a year to bring forward ideas to continue to reduce waste, such as new recycling bins within all public areas, increasing recycling bins and reducing the number of landfill waste bins in all offices.

• **European Reproducibility**

All the projects, competitions and initiatives we ran would be easy to replicate in university campuses across Europe and beyond. They are low-cost and easily run as well as being appealing to students. It may even be a good idea to have an international link-up to run EU wide campaigns and projects, (e.g. international cookbook with recipes from around Europe).

• **Follow-up in the long term and lasting impact**

If we can demonstrate to students at this stage in their lives the importance of waste reduction, we can instil a responsible attitude that they will carry with them forever. The cookbook for example will teach them life skills that they can develop as they get older. How to cook, how to shop smart, how to reduce consumption etc are all tips that can save them money and waste. It is a perfect time for these students to develop good habits. We invested in this cookbook because we know that it will be useful for not only this year's students but for the students that live here every year. We plan on emailing some excerpts from the cookbook in the email that goes out to all students at QUB, not just those that live in the Elms Village. We hope that this will encourage them to notice the message of food waste reduction and instil good practices for life. It will have a long term positive impact on their lives, both financially and environmentally.

Many of the other initiatives run all year round, but receive added publicity during EWWR. Laundry swap, book and games swap and the vegetable garden all operate as year round projects and they rely upon the green champions to make them work. In this way the students take the lead in these projects and develop their skill sets, giving them more experience when they come to apply for jobs. For these reasons we believe that the lasting impact of these projects is very great indeed.



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



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