



EWWR good practices and case studies

1. Details of Action:

EWWR Organiser: Avfall Sverige
Country/Region: Sweden
Name of nominated project developer: Bjurhovdaskolan/IDA unit representing all 23 schools taking part in the Food Waste Reduction Competition
Name of nominated action: 49% Less Food Wasted in Bjurhovda School Restaurant
Place: Bjurhovda Elementary School
Town: Västerås
Region: Västmanland County
Country: Sweden
Website: <http://idasidan.se/>
Nominee **category**: Educational establishment
Dates of action: 21-25 November

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

For some time now, the restaurant at Bjurhovda Elementary School in the city of Västerås, Sweden, has worked together with The Unit of IDA to reduce the amount of food wasted. Initially, to have something to compare with, they began to secretly measure how much food that was wasted. The measurement showed that about 11 kg of food ended up in the garbage bin every day. That is 1,958 kg per year. To change this they used a simple reward system to motivate students and staff to throw away less food and change their behaviour.

The reward system consists of a transparent tube that the students made in woodworking class together. For each day that less than 11 kg was thrown away an equal amount of balls were put in the tube the next day. On the tip of the tube a sign was placed which said "Kitchen Surprises." The tube was placed near the compost so that everyone could see the previous day's results. The results were also presented on a whiteboard in the restaurant and reported via the school's internal radio every Friday to summarize the week. Because they started at a high level, a few balls were put in the tube almost everyday. After a few days it became clear that the amount of wasted food declined. Some days the difference was greater and balls grew more rapidly in the tube. Everyone agreed that they would soon reach the surprise and the excitement grew each day that passed.

After about 4 weeks the tube was nearly full and curiosity about what would happen when the tube was completely full increased all the time among the children (and the staff). Finally they reached the goal. From the internal sound system the children were told to stay in their classrooms because something special was about to happen. Then it all became very quiet. Tension was rising. What would happen?

Suddenly Donkeyboy's song Ambitions started to play and the kitchen staff together with the headmaster entered the first classroom. They had a wagon loaded with 500 cinnamon rolls that the kitchen staff had baked. They handed the rolls to the children and complimented them for their fantastic effort. Then they went on to the rest of the classrooms and repeated the same procedure all over again. There was great excitement in the classrooms and everyone was happy to have reached the goal. The next day the tube was gone. Surprisingly the amount of wasted food still was low. Something had happen during those 4 weeks. They had changed their behavior. The following days the staff was repeatedly asked the same question over and over again: When is the tube coming back?

When the project began the measured amount of food thrown away every day was 11 kg on average. During the period of the tube this was reduced to 5.6 kg. This is a reduction of 49 percent or 961 kg less waste every year. Today the waste amount still is much smaller than the original result. Even when the tube is not in place, the difference is large, which indicates a change in the behaviour of children and staff at the school and a sustainable, long-term solution.



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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

About 400 people eat in the restaurant of Bjurhovda Elementary School (ages 6–11) every day. Now, it is relevant in this matter that in Sweden the children put the food on their own plates and can thereby decide how much they will eat (and of course how much they will throw away as well). Teachers cannot force pupils to finish what's on their plate. They can however try to change the outcome of a situation.

By using the tube the teachers never had to tell anybody to finish his or her meal. They only gave the children a goal that they could work towards together. This gave the children the possibility to work out their own way to reach the final goal. Nobody told them what to do and the school think that this is a key aspect of trying to achieve a change in behavior. If you find your own way it is more likely that you will follow it. This also became clear after the first round with the tube when the participants were asked how they had manage to do it. They had found several different solutions which all helped the group to succeed.

There are a few weblinks about the project but they are all in Swedish so Bjurhovda Elementary School decided to make a short presentation and translate it into English about the work. The DVD contains a 2 minutes film that shows the participants, the restaurant and their 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

Bjurhovda Elementary school showed fantastic results of their project, which is long term and can be easily applied to many other schools. By having fun and get instant feedback and reward the children have changed their behavior and reduced the food waste in a few years. There are many schools in Sweden engaged in similar projects that also show good results. Bjurhovda school is chosen to represent them all, they fulfil all the main criteria.

Bjurhovda got good publicity in newspapers, radio and television within its region. Although good external communication is important, the essential thing in this case was the internal communication within the school with pupils, teachers and also parents.

This is a way of working that is easy to reproduce not only in Sweden, but in all of Europe. And probably not only at elementary schools but also older students and also other “traditional” restaurants, but maybe with other reward systems.

This is the second year Bjurhovda has been working with the tube, and the results is getting better and better. The interesting thing is that through the pupils, Bjurhovda also get the attention of the parents. They hear the children talk about it at home and the children also threw away less food at home compared with before, which caught to the parents as well



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