

MINIMAL-WASTE EVENT GUIDELINES

Idrija Youth Centre Associations

Reduce! Project
October 2019–October 2021



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND
INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE



MLADINSKI
CENTER
IDRIJA

LAS
s Ciljem



Primorski val



KOMUNALA
IDRIJA
več kot 80 let

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Introduction

In recent years, environmental topics have been gaining attention, and rightfully so. Our planet is experiencing changes that are mostly seen in different weather conditions. On the one hand, the circumstances in which the Covid-19 pandemic has pushed us have shown that nature is able to quickly regenerate with the reduction of traffic and the consequential reduction in greenhouse gases. On the other hand, the pandemic encouraged an increase in the use of plastic – which is one of the larger fronts in protecting the environment today. We have become familiar with recycling; in Slovenia, we are in fact proud to compare ourselves with the best countries in the EU. Yet, there is still room for improvement. Recycling has long been considered the mere basics or the first step to a correct treatment of waste. Data shows that the amount of waste has been increasing yearly. This is why the most important principle to follow is reduction. Despite crises and lockdowns, consumerism is alive and well. Instead of trade calming down, web sales have exponentially grown through the complete lockdown. This means larger productions, a larger use of natural sources, and more waste.

The Youth Centre is aware that the protection of environment is a complex issue. With a flood of news and the so-called greenwashing, with more and more recommendations, with constant social change and related pressure, the young generation is also confronted with climate anxiety. As a youth centre, we wish to set an example showing that small steps and gradually introduced changes can lead to big changes.

In Idrija YC, we prepared simple guidelines for you to begin your road towards minimising waste.

How did we begin?

Idrija Youth Centre organises events as part of monthly programme: they include larger public events and smaller workshops and lectures. For an easier overview of our activities, we started the project by composing a table in which we recorded the necessary material and accessories to organise an event; where we can get them; and how we can minimise the use of packaging. The table also allows us to reflect on what to do with the remaining things/packaging after the event. The final table gathers data on waste collected – based on the results, we can evaluate the event from the perspective of good and bad practices and upgrade our organisation in the future.

CASE STUDY: organising a minimal-waste event

Event: A picnic with a spice of murder (World Environment Day)

Date: 5. 6. 2020

Place: Idrija Youth Centre, Ulica IX. Korpusa 17, Idrija

Organiser: Idrija YC – project Reduce!

Basic guidelines for the organisers:

1. Minimising the amount of waste.
2. Choosing packaging-free products and/or products with less packaging.
3. Choosing products with reusable packaging.
4. Searching for possibilities of reusing things from previous events.
5. Choosing things that can be reused on future events or donated (surplus of food, clothing, etc.)
6. Waste separation (possibilities for composting, recycling)
7. Minimising the use of energy, water.
8. Minimising carbon footprint in the entire process of organisation.

BEFORE THE EVENT

What do we need?	What do we have?	How to reduce packaging?	Where do we get it?	What to do with excess packaging and the surplus of material?
Posters	Cardboard, paint, felt-tip pens, white sheets, wooden stakes		YC, forest	Save for future events, exhibit on YC corridors, throw sticks back into nature
Picnic snack		Order from local farms/see what home-product we can find. Choose products with less packaging, e.g. offer fruit instead of crisps.	Local farms	Wash packaging and store for future use.
Plates, cups	Everything	Everything can be reused; detergents are bought in as large packaging as possible or made at the centre.	Hostel kitchen	/
Clothes – costumes	What we need for our roles	Borrow/exchange	YC warehouse – what was left from clothes exchanges	Save for future exchanges, future events

What do we need to collect waste before/during the event?	What to use? (bins, bucket, bags, crates, etc.)	Do we have it? Yes/no	Where do we get it?
Separate waste bins	We used kitchen bins.	Yes	Kitchen and warehouse

We recommend promoting the event (before and during the event) as an event following the zero-waste concept. This includes instructions on how to separate waste at the event (notices, posters, signs at the bins).

AFTER THE EVENT

Separated waste	Amount (No. of bags)	Collection? Mark with X	Reuse? Mark with X
Organic	NONE		The participants took the leftover food home
Plastic	NONE		
Paper	YES (A FIFTH OF A BAG)	NO – bin placed back in the kitchen	The bag remained in use
Glass	NONE	NO	NO
Other	NONE	NO	NO

Difficulties/notes/advice when organising a minimum-waste event:

We mainly encountered difficulties when trying to organise the event based on the measures and recommendations to contain the spread of Covid-19. As far as organising an event with a small number of participants, we had no difficulties in minimising waste. We paid special attention to the regular supplier of local produce and products, which enables us to use and reuse packaging (for milk, butter, etc.).



Figure 1: Picnic with a spice of murder (designing the space which was already equipped following the repurpose principle) – waste separation, signs, local produce

BEFORE THE EVENT/TIME OF PLANNING

The main requirement is that the organiser or the organising team is acquainted with the environmental issue. To ensure this, you can plan a team building or a short meeting to cover this topic.

STEP 1 (for organisations): CHOOSING THE CONTENT: You can begin acting in the direction of minimizing waste when planning the yearly programme and choosing the ideas for individual activities. In our case, this meant organising and exchange focused on reducing waste; organise a web- or a live event on the topic of reducing waste and living connected to nature; organise creative workshops for things that outlived their original purpose, etc.

STEP 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CONTENT of the event and a reflection on how it can be as sustainable as possible: mobility, location, promotion, waste, material purchase, catering, etc.

STEP 3: A LIST OF THINGS we need for the event.

STEP 4: See what you already have, what you can borrow, and what you can replace.

EXAMPLE 1: For the One without, please! action, we borrowed a thermos from a local catering provider; we only used it twice that year.

EXAMPLE 2: For the Healthy breakfast action of sustainable mobility, we agreed with the organisers of a previous local festival to use a batch of eco-friendly pots that would otherwise go past their expiration date.

STEP 5: Try to find a **PURPOSE for FUTURE EVENTS** (workshops, exchanges, etc.) for things that must be bought.

STEP 6: ENQUIRE what you can source from local environment – find **LOCAL PROVIDERS**. This minimises the need for import, reduces emissions, and supports local economy. Sometimes there is a dilemma between choosing products with less packaging and local products. Choose what you find best.

STEP 7: Considering the size of the space, estimate how many **RECYCLING** bins you need and what type of waste you will produce

- a. Prepare the waste collection area
- b. In case of a large event, invite the local waste management company to help manage waste.

STEP 8: Estimate what part of your event offer might be left over (food, clothing, etc.) and discuss with local (humanitarian) organisations to **TAKE THE SURPLUS AFTER THE EVENT**.

STEP 9: PROMOTION

- a. Signs on waste separation. Learn about the separation system of the local waste management company.
- b. Encourage sustainably mobility: issue instructions on how to reach the location on foot/by bike/with public transport. Enable carsharing.
- c. Place notices on how the planning focused on the event being environmentally friendly: reusable cups and cutlery, local produce (example: fruit, cheese, milk from local farms), vegan dishes, the use of natural detergents after the event.
- d. Invite the participants to bring their own materials.

EXAMPLE 1: For a workshop, we asked the participants to bring their own hula hoop if they had one. At the same time, we also acquired the info on where we can borrow them – we did not need to buy them as we do not use them several times per year. With the collaboration of all the participants, the workshop was a success.

EXAMPLE 2: If the location does not have access to drinking water, we ask the participants to bring their own bottles of water. This is how we avoid buying plastic bottles of water.

**As much as possible, promote your event digitally via social networks. In case of printing the signs, use old paper or design signs that can be reused in other events (e.g. universal posters for the organisation that enable names, dates, and locations to be additionally pasted on). This stops reprinting.



Figure 2: Workshop on making rugs out of old T-shirts, where we used hula hoops.



Figure 3: Action of sustainable mobility: Healthy breakfast, eco-friendly pots, local yoghurts and marmalade.

DURING THE EVENT

1. Check if waste is being separated. In case of a larger event, you can delegate a team in charge of waste separation.
2. Enable access to drinking water to the participants.
3. Oversee potential leftovers of food/drinks. If you will not (re)use them, invite the participants to take them home.



Figure 4: Collaboration with a local association in preparing snacks.

AFTER THE EVENT

Check the amount of waste. Save the packaging that can be reused. If possible, compost organic waste.

When evaluating the event, take some time to discuss event sustainability: what proved to be a successful practice and what needs changing or upgrading next time. For this purpose, you can have a special folder or write the proposals in the office meeting minutes.



Figure 5: Action One without, please!

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Photos: Idrija Youth Centre