

MINIMAL-WASTE YOUTH CENTRE GUIDELINES

Idrija Youth Centre Associations

Project Reduce!

October 2019–October 2021



Introduction

In October 2019, the Idrija Youth Centre Associations entered the 2-year project Reduce!, in which it collaborated with Komunalna d. o. o. (a local waste management company) and radio Primorski val (Radio Cerčno d. o. o.). The goal of the project was to analyse data and organise interactive workshops, lectures, courses, and larger events to raise awareness among young people about the zero-waste concept and to encourage the local community to upgrade mere separation of waste (however successful it might be) into a minimal production of waste. The Youth Centre believes that **the actions of every individual lead to larger positive changes in the society**. We wish to show the younger generation and others good examples proving that small changes in our everyday lives can make a big step towards cleaner environment and a healthier lifestyle, while also develop critical thinking regarding this topic – which also leads to a generally raised awareness in the future.

The investment is co-funded by the Republic of Slovenia and the European Union (European Regional Development Fund).

People are directly connected to nature but unfortunately sacrifice it all too often in our desire to acquire more and more capital and live a luxurious life. The society of today forces us to consume more and more. Yet our planet has a limited capability of producing raw materials needed for everyday life. Idrija has shown that local communities can achieve great things.

In 2018, the Idrija Youth Centre Associations were joined by the Idrija Hostel that works in the same building. Tourism is one of the most important industries which has been rapidly developing and growing, especially in the recent years. Travel is more accessible than a few decades ago, which also invites many young tourists. However, tourism is directly connected to environment. That is why it must take care of the footprints it leaves behind with its activities.

One of our project goals was to establish a youth centre that would operate with minimal waste and not affect the environment in a negative way.

For a more comprehensive structure of the guidelines, we divided the youth centre's activities in several areas:

- Office(s) and other spaces
- Workshops, meetings of the young generation, and other larger events
- Youth exchanges/youth projects
- External collaboration

Where did we begin?

1. Participation at the 2019 European Week for Waste Reduction with the action One without, please! and the 2020 European Week for Waste Reduction with the Corona Cleaning Challenge and web workshops of making natural cosmetics and home cleaners
2. Buying water bottles as promotional material
3. Designing a form to monitor the organisation of green events
4. Report on waste management in the local community – Idrija Municipality, Cerklno Municipality
 - Publishing a questionnaire for social network users
 - Collaborating with Komunala d.o.o., a local waste-management company
5. Organising clothes exchanges (winter and summer exchanges)
6. Designing notices on the sustainable activities of the youth centre that are pasted in the centre
7. Planning and carrying out employee training in waste reduction
8. Workshops and training in **environment protection**: reuse, recycling, green jobs, a lecture on electric cars, workshops for primary schools, etc.
9. Installing a composter.
10. Buying and installing a rainwater collector.
11. Raising awareness on rainwater in collaboration with scouts (workshops)
12. DIG-IT Mondays – raising awareness on digital waste

We have only listed some of the activities organised in the framework of the project Reduce!, with which we tried to encourage the young to be actively included in local community and actively solve the issues of contemporary society that directly pollute the environment. This 2-year project strived to educate individuals, participating organisations, and the wider local community about waste and encourage them to make changes.

Youth centres differ in their work, yet each has a more or less permanent programme with occasional larger events and smaller events such as workshops or lectures. Depending on the circumstances, they can also host solidarity projects, youth exchanges, and international European Solidarity Corps volunteers.

The first principle of the project Reduce! which is included in all guidelines focuses on reducing waste, e.g. strives to renovate, reuse, borrow, and refuse unneeded things.

OFFICE and other SPACES

Measures to improve work in the youth centre:

- Use reusable jugs, glasses or bottles for water.
- Promotional gifts: consider what is reusable. Example: water bottles, T-shirts, recovered wax candles, etc.
- Buy coffee in bulk or in larger packaging
- Do not use plastic waste bags for plastic waste and paper but throw waste directly in the bin
- Install an organic waste bin in the kitchen
- Install a battery collector. In the Idrija Youth Centre, one is located in the office spaces and one in the lower-floor communal space.
- Install posters to raise awareness on:
 - *Digital waste*
 - *Use of electricity*
 - *Saving water*
 - *Recycling*

Save used paper and posters; the reverse can be used to write drafts, in workshops, on lectures, etc.

In the communal space, provide a place for reusable packaging that comes in handy with daily meals and for workshops, youth exchanges, etc.

Equip the mailbox with a yellow sticker against promotional material.

Use water bottles.

Install automatic lights in corridors and staircases.



WORKSHOPS, MEETINGS, AND OTHER LARGER EVENTS

Use only reusable bags when shopping.

Contact local supplier to provide anything you need for your activity (food, reparations, services, other products).

When shopping, pay attention to the origin of the products and try to buy as many local products as possible. Also, pay attention that the materials are eco-friendly.

IDEAS TRANSFERABLE TO OTHER ENVIRONMENTS:

- Sustainable-mobility actions (Healthy breakfast for passers-by – local providers; Breakfast for cyclers/hikers; Take-away coffee – bring your own cup)
- Inclusion in the European Week for Waste Reduction (every October/November)
- Clean-up actions with the local community
- Restoration of old furniture
- Exchanges of clothes and accessories
- Garage sale
- Library of things in the local community
- Reuse workshops (making dog toys, shopping bags, or rugs from old T-shirts; eco candles from used oil; fruit-and-vegetable bags from old curtains; eco bricks; painting old flower pots)

- Lectures/seminars: green jobs, social entrepreneurship



YOUTH EXCHANGES/YOUTH PROJECTS

Use only reusable bags when shopping.

Contact local supplier to provide anything you need for your activity (food, reparations, services, other products). Our experience show that it is better practice for the participants to cook for themselves. In those cases, there was visibly less food thrown away and less meat consumed – which contributes to reducing carbon footprint of the exchange. We are trying to introduce vegan menus in the programme – either on certain days or during the whole exchange.

Introduce a group of volunteers on duty to clean and make sure there is enough of detergent and/or dishwasher tablets (if there is not, they make home-made cleaning agents. It only takes a few minutes to make natural cleaners).

- Personal water bottles
- Explain recycling
- Engage the participants to find solutions that would improve the work of the youth centre. We offer the time and space to share good practices – an open space where each can share their ideas and opinions (e.g. an hour after lunch during coffee etc.)
- Organise an exchange dedicated to environmental topics



EXTERNAL COLLABORATIONS

Borrowing – being connected to local associations and organisations enables an easier organisation of sustainable events as you can mutually lend and borrow things you need only seldomly.

Space sharing enables action following the sustainable principle of “common good” and “individual modesty”. Organisations do not need to own large spaces but can share them.

Collecting items for common use or use in the youth centre, e.g. donated second-hand refrigerators, a microwave oven, old sheets, indoor plants, dishes, etc.



IDEAS for ORGANISING events:

ACTION ONE WITHOUT, PLEASE!

Collaboration with: Idrija Occupational Activity Centre and Primorski val (local radio station)

In collaboration with the Idrija Occupational Activity Centre, the youth centre organised a morning event at the main town square. We set up a stand and offered free coffee to passers-by. Before the event, we promoted the action to local public through social networks and local radio station appealing to them to bring their own take-away cup. For those who came by without their own cup, we provided ceramic mugs that the youth centre received second-hand. Our goal was to provide morning coffee without producing redundant waste. Along with coffee, we also served biscuits baked by the Idrija Occupational Activity Centre.

Event organisation made sure that coffee came packed in eco-friendly packaging, while milk was bought in a bottle from local providers. We bought the ingredients for the biscuits on foot, contributing to a lower carbon footprint. We also researched which local shops offer the ingredients with as little packaging as possible. The entire process of planning and the activities were published on our social networks.

The action One without, please! stands out as it includes the entire community and invites each and every passer-by to participate. We reached a large number of people in the town centre. Raising awareness always works best if it is done through a medium close to people – which is what morning coffee and biscuits definitely are. The activities before and during the action was published through the youth centre's social media (Facebook, Instagram), which further introduced the issue of the action to the people

Topic included:

- Waste prevention and reduction
- Reuse
- Local community collaboration



The event was repeated in various forms as part of sustainable mobility actions:

1. One without, please! at the Kobila Dam

The action was carried out at the end of a popular walking/jogging path in the town.



2. Have breakfast with us!

The action Have breakfast with us! happened in collaboration with the town living room Pr' Golitu. All passers-by who opted for sustainable mobility that morning (travelling to school/work on foot or by bicycle), were offered a healthy breakfast with local products and take-away coffee.



DECEMBER CLOTHES EXCHANGE

What is it: Clothes exchange accompanied by mingling, drinking coffee, and eating snacks; with music by local DJ Looni.

The end of the year is a time to look back on the past year and decide to leave some things behind, make place for fresh ideas, and plan for the year ahead. Perhaps also decide to become better people. Better to yourselves, to other people and living beings, and the world around you. One of the good practices to help contribute to reducing pollution is an exchange of items we no longer use.

With this purpose, the Idrija Youth Centre organised a December exchange where people could exchange clothes, shoes, and fashion accessories, mingle while

drinking coffee or tea, eat biscuits, and enjoy in the relaxed atmosphere brought by DJ Looni's music!

How it went?

- Everyone could bring up to 10 pieces of clothes or fashion accessories to the exchange
- Included in the exchange were women's, men's and children's clothes, shoes, and fashion accessories
- All items had to be clean and undamaged – in the same state that you wished to receive them. Only shoes without visible signs of wear were accepted – this targeted wrong buys or once-worn shoes.
- The exchange followed the TAKE AS MANY AS YOU BRING rule. However, people were encouraged to take more items as the purpose of the exchange was to provide new home for things.
- Clothing had to be appropriate for the winter season – no explicitly summer clothes.
- No promotional T-shirts and underwear.
- Clothes that were left at the end were donated to humanitarian organisations.

Sources and other useful literature:

Ekologi brez meja (2016). **Splošne smernice za organizacijo Zero waste prireditve**. Accessed at <http://ebm.si/zw/turizem/prireditve/smernice-zw-prireditve/>

Umanotera. (2019a). **Infografike: Podnebne spremembe in Projekcije za Slovenijo**. Accessed 26 July 2021 s <https://www.umanotera.org/publikacije/brosure-letaki/>

Umanotera. (2019b). **Dobre prakse mladinskih podnebnih projektov**. Accessed 26 July 2021 at <https://www.umanotera.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Dobre-prakse-mladinskih-podnebnih-projektov-katalog.pdf>

Umanotera. (n.d. a). **Primeri mladinskih projektov in aktivnosti za preprečevanje nevarnih podnebnih sprememb**. Accessed 26 July 2021 at <https://www.umanotera.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Dobre-prakse-mladinskih-podnebnih-projektov-infolisti.pdf>

Umanotera. (n.d. b). **Podnebne spremembe gradiva in povezave**. Accessed 26 July 2021 at <https://www.umanotera.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Podnebne-spremembe-gradiva-in-povezave.pdf>

Umanotera. (n.d. c). **Izračunaj svoj ogljični odtis.** Accessed 13 July 2021 at <https://www.umanotera.org/izracunaj-svoj-ogljicni-odtis/>

World's largest lesson. (n.d.). Accessed 26 July 2021 at <https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/>

PHOTOS: Idrija Youth Centre