

The UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Zero Waste

Foodwaste Reduction at Home



Zero waste good practice

City of Bruges

Bruges, Belgium

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About

Synopsis

With the 'Food Winners' project, The aim of this campaign was to achieve a 30% reduction in food waste among 5,000 residents, thereby also reducing CO2 emissions.

Implementation
period

2019 - 2022

Country

Belgium

Location

Bruges

Stakeholders and Partners: City of Bruges- climate departement, Environmental department Flanders (subsidy), Foodwin (through tender), and we trained 50 ambassadors on foodwaste@home.

Connection Zero Waste

On average, in Flanders we waste 37 kilograms of food per person per year. This corresponds to a CO2 emission of 118.4 kilograms (Figures proved by EU Fusion). In this way, the participants in Food Winners Bruges together could save up to 177,600 kilograms of CO2 emissions annually and save aprox 55 ton of foodwaste.

Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals

Reducing foodwaste is one of the 6 themes in our sustainable food strategy (Bruggesmaakt), and in our Bruges climateplan. combatting foodwaste we also help to achieve the climategoals and reduce CO2. We hereby also promote sustainable agriculture , plantbased cooking and local and seisonal products.

Background, Challenges and Objectives

Every day, a lot of food that is still perfectly edible ends up in the garbage bin. Research by the Department of the Environment shows that an average Flemish family throws away no less than 369 euros worth of food per year. In total, this makes a staggering figure of 240,925 tons of food loss in Flanders. Avoiding food loss is therefore an important theme in Bruggesmaak, the sustainable food strategy of the City of Bruges. We need to become aware of how much food we waste, because we often think that it is not too bad 'at home'. And we could all use some tips to limit food loss.

less food at home and save CO₂.

"Reducing food waste isn't just about saving money—it's about saving our planet. Let's rethink our relationship with food and take simple steps to minimize waste. Together, we can make a significant impact, one meal at a time."

Actions and Implementation

In our actions and implementation chapter, we outline some steps taken to achieve sustainable waste management:

For this purpose, the City of Bruges trained 50 Bruges ambassadors in 2019-2020! They use this knowledge to motivate others to participate. The result was also impressive: they achieved an average of 65% less waste, a significant amount of money was saved and one step closer to a greener future. They helped us to reach 512 households in 2021 and hoped to reach 5000 people in 2022! We can proudly say that 1,886 families participated, good for 4,809 participants! The Food Winners managed to save 55 percent. This means a saving of 44,400 kilos of food, 186,036 euros and 142,080 kg of CO₂ per year.

Participants measured their liquid and solid food waste during a week and repeated this after all the tips regarding, fridge, shopping, cooking, portion size, using all ingredients.

Outcomes and Impact

The Food Winners managed to save 55 percent of their foodloss. This means a saving of 44,400 kilos of food, 186,036 euros and 142,080 kg of CO2 per year. See also the manual.

44,400kg food

saved per year.

138,036 €

saved per year.

142,080kg CO2

saved per year

Replicability and Scaleability

This program is certainly replicable, we wrote a manual for cities with tips on what worked best.

See [here](#).

Inclusion and Innovation

We worked with training of ambassadors who helped us to reach different communities. The ambassadors were selected on the basis of their municipality of residence, age, gender, nationality, occupation and household size.

For 5 months, the ambassadors attended workshops and took up challenges. The content of the workshops was converted into useful tips & tricks sent out via email to reach as many people as possible. Afterwards, these people can also remain involved in the volunteer group of compost masters.

When scaling up, we approached residents who are already actively involved in food initiatives: e.g. fridge sharing initiatives, soup cafes, allotment gardens, cooking clubs, training institutions, social welfare organisations, budget counselling services, community centres and neighbourhood committees, schools. The 'energy cutters' were also actively involved, they used the refrigerator layout flyer to spread the message.

Accountability and Sustainability

Most effective actions, using famous people to spread the call to action through social media, has proven to be very efficient. Throughout the different phases, it was found that recruiting participants by using one big prize has more impact than giving away several small prizes. From 50 to 500 and finally to 5,000. Creating togetherness is important for upscaling and it adds fun to the process! For Food Winners Brugge, ambassadors were used. Due to COVID-19, there were hardly any physical meetings, but a group was created on the Slack platform to keep in touch with the ambassadors. Later, a Facebook group was added. This way, participants can exchange information about what they are working on and what the results are. Slogans like 'You can be a Food Winner too' and 'Join the battle with 5,000 Bruges citizens', invoked people's fear of missing out.

Less effective actions were distributing posters yielded few additional participations.

During the corona crisis, there were fewer fairs and local events at which we could address citizens directly. Moreover, this proved to be time-consuming and not very efficient. To recruit even more people, we spoke to companies, schools and associations. We also created personalised communication material. The impact of this was minor, but COVID-19 probably was a factor here as well. The time invested in this could have been better used by involving well-known people, for instance. In hindsight, this proved more efficient.

Financial Data

The project was granted a climate subsidy (75% of total, including staff) of by the Department of the Environment (Flanders). (109143 USD) 1 person, policy officer climate (food) was allocated on the project. We used the external website of Foodwin for the registration of the data.

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