

## Travelling Books



### 1. Summary

Country/Geographical Area	France / Montreuil sur Mer (Nord Pas de Calais region)
Level implementation	Local
Scale	Roll out
Waste fraction / Specific Waste Type	Paper / books
Target Audience	General public and secondary schools
Objective	Free exchange of books in the city / raising awareness on waste prevention
Initiator/coordinator	GDEAM (Local NGO)
Other key actors involved	Museum of Montreuil sur Mer, FNE (a French environmental NGO), the European Week for Waste Reduction Program, the secondary school of the city, restaurants of Montreuil, and the Municipality of Montreuil sur Mer
Duration	One week each year in November since 2008 + one day in May
Number in Pre-waste Mapping	56
Name of partner(s) having contributed to factsheet & date	ORDIF
Contact URL	<a href="mailto:mariette.vanbrugghe@gmail.com">mariette.vanbrugghe@gmail.com</a> (from GDEAM) <a href="http://gdeam.com/articles.php?lng=fr&amp;pg=1162">http://gdeam.com/articles.php?lng=fr&amp;pg=1162</a>

## 2. Context

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This good practice takes place in a city located in the north of France, called Montreuil-sur-Mer. This city belongs to the Region Nord-Pas-de-Calais and the population is about 2.300 inhabitants.

Initially, the action was set up by an NGO called GDEAM during the Week for Waste Reduction in November 2008. The main objective was to collect books people or students wanted to throw away. The book collection took place before and during the Week for waste reduction. Books collected were then distributed during the two last days of the Week.

### 3. Strategy

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#### ***Objectives***

The objective of the operation was to increase public awareness on the fact that cultural products can generate waste too. It is quite unusual to speak of waste from this point of view. People use to store their books before throwing them whereas those books could have a second life and being read by others. “Travelling books” operation contributes to reduce waste production and to manage old books in a more sustainable way.

#### ***Preconditions***

The action took place for the first time during the French Week for Waste Reduction in 2008 (this operation exists in France since 2006; the event was not European at that time). GDEAM, the NGO in charge of the project, asked several local actors to be partners of the action: the municipality, the museum of Montreuil, the secondary school of Montreuil, the train station, and several restaurants.

#### ***Procedure***

For the first edition of this action in 2008, books were collected during two weeks (before and during the Week for Waste Reduction) in two places: at the museum of the city and at the secondary school. Then, collected books were distributed for free in different places of the city: chapel of orphanage, station, restaurants, and some crowded places of Montreuil. Signets were put inside the books in order to present the project and present waste reduction messages.

In 2009, the action was led by the same actors, and joined the European Week for Waste Reduction program (EWWR). Books were collected in the same places as in 2008 (secondary school and museum) during three weeks (two weeks before the EWWR and during the EWWR). Collected books were delivered during the two last days of the EWWR in different places of the city. Books collected at the secondary school were delivered only at school in order to create an internal transfer. The others were distributed at the museum, the train station and on public benches.

In 2010, the same operation was led during the EWWR. Books were collected at the secondary school and at the museum during three weeks (two before the EWWR and during the EWWR). They were available at school during a few days and then to the population in different public places the two last days of the EWWR.

As the operation worked well during the EWWR, the NGO decided to implement it one day in May too. Thus, on May 2010 and May 2011, books resulting from the collect of November were distributed for free in the usually places of the city (station, benches, etc.).

#### ***Instruments***

This operation completely results from the private initiative of a local NGO. No specific instrument was used for this action besides communication towards potential participants.

## ***Timeframe***

This action is punctual: it lasts 3 weeks in November (collection and delivery) and one day in May when books which were not taken in November are made available again. Students of the secondary school are involved in the project (two classes) since the beginning of the school year in September. They have to discover the project, the issue of waste reduction, and prepare the collection of books by advertising the action through the use of posters.

## **4. Resources**

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### ***Financial Resources***

This project does not require much financial resources. All communication supports are provided by the European Week for Waste Reduction Program (posters). The NGO only had to buy the bookmarks and the flyers. 100 € were spent for 600 bookmarks and 140 € for 600 flyers. They received a technical support from the France Nature Environnement (a French NGO, partner of GDEAM) and eventually some subsidies, but the precise amount was not available. This project requires more technical resources than financial resources, and is efficient mostly because it takes place in a small city which simplifies communication effort.

### ***Human Resources***

Human resources are limited. The technical partnership between the museum, the secondary school and the NGO is the most important part of the project.

Books' collection is set up during three weeks by the museum's partners and the janitor of the school. Hours passed for the collection are not quantified. At the end of the EWWR, books are delivered during 2 days for free in the city (a bit longer in the school). 7 or 8 people are working during the Week in order to transport the books from collection points to delivery points. The 2 last days of the operation (the delivery days), they have to be present in order to explain people the aim of the operation and to give some waste prevention messages. Among those persons, 4 persons are volunteers and work 3 days for free (in reality they work 6 half days in the week). 4 other people are paid, being employed by the NGO.

During the operation that takes place in May, only 4 persons work on the project and they are mostly volunteers.

### ***Equipment***

This operation does not require much equipment: places to store books (in this case, the museum and the secondary school), flyers to present the project and identify places where books will be exchanged, and bookmarks introduced in each book to present the project again and give some waste prevention messages.

## ***Communication Tools***

One month before the EWWR, a press conference is organized by the NGO, the city and the secondary school. This conference is a call for books donation. During the operation, communication supports are provided by the EWWR program. Besides, the NGO introduces bookmarks in each book (600 bookmarks in total) in order to present the project and give waste prevention messages. Finally, the NGO uses flyers that enable people to identify the project, the project's partners, and the places where books can be exchanged during the operation. This operation is also an opportunity to distribute documents presenting global waste prevention issues such as national flyers or prospectus (the GDEAM distributes documents from ADEME - the French environment agency - or FNE - a French environmental NGO).

## ***Allocation of resources over time***

As said before, this action does not require many financial resources but mostly technical support. This operation lasts since 2008 and partnerships are well identified. People at large (inhabitants of Montreuil but also tourists visiting the city) seem to appreciate the project. That is why "travelling books" operation will go on in 2011 and probably further, without many changes with the allocation of resources.

## 5. Evaluation

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### **Results**

#### **- Participation**

4.000 books were collected in November 2010. The secondary school counts 1.200 students and all of them have to bring at least one book during the operation. Teachers are invited to participate to the project too. The other books are brought by the inhabitants of Montreuil and by the inhabitants of the nearby towns.

#### **- Avoided waste quantities (or toxicity)**

It is difficult to assess the quantity of waste avoided by this operation since books are not weighted during the collection step. We can assess the avoided waste quantities from the average weight of a book and the total amounts collected. If we make the assumption that in average, a book weights 750 g and that all 4.000 books were supposed to be thrown away, then the action allowed avoiding the generation of about 3 tonnes of waste. However, it is unsure whether these books would have been thrown away or not.

#### **- Other results**

### **Impacts**

#### **- Avoided Costs**

Too few elements are available to have a clear view on avoided costs. For participants, it is not sure that the books they take home would have been bought. Moreover, the avoided quantities seem too little to have a concrete impact on waste management costs.

#### **- Avoided CO<sub>2</sub> equivalentents**

A study of the Government of Catalonia calculated that 34 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> is emitted through the production of a book. The book in question is a bit bigger than an average one, therefore 30 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per book can be considered, meaning that if we make the assumption that each book exchanged during this action would have been bought, it allowed avoiding 120 t of CO<sub>2</sub>. However, this is a very imprecise assessment since the ratio is probably heavily dependent on the local specificities of the study.

#### **- Social Benefits**

At the secondary school, this operation was very successful since it enabled to get teachers together. Indeed, the president of the NGO that initiated the project is a biology teacher. According to her, biology teachers usually only interacted with other biology teachers, while few exchanges existed with others. This operation created a strong dynamic between them, and now teachers of science and literature interact more.

In the street, the operation enables people to meet other people and to exchange experiences. Montreuil-sur-Mer is a touristic city, and many people just come to visit it. Thanks to the operation, tourists and inhabitants have opportunities to speak of literature and more.

### **Continuation over time**

This action is punctual since it takes place 2 times per year (in November during the EWWR and in May). However, it lasts since 2008 and will continue over time.

### ***Difficulties encountered***

The main difficulty is to work on communication in order to collect as many books as possible. The operation must be well known in order to collect enough books and have a real impact.

### ***Monitoring System***

Quantities collected are not weighted and books not counted. This operation was not really monitored until now. An assessment of the total number of books exchanged is made.

## ***6. Lessons learnt & recommendations***

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### ***Opportunities & challenges***

This operation enables to reduce waste production resulting from cultural products. As people are quite receptive to the exchange of their old books in the street, this operation is also a good opportunity to increase their awareness concerning other waste reduction issues and to give some prevention messages. Besides students play a really important part in the project since they all have to bring at least one book during the operation. “Travelling books” enables also to increase the awareness of a young public by giving them explanations and tools to understand the interest of waste reduction.

### ***Key factors of success***

The success of the action mainly depends on a good partnership in order to have places to store the books during the collection and at the end of the project. Another important key of success is the human resources in order to transport the books from the collection points to the delivery points but also to explain people and students the aim of the operation. Finally, an important communication campaign in order to collect enough books and give the operation a real impact is mandatory.

### ***Recommended improvements/adaptations***

The operation is not monitored for the moment. It would be interesting to count the number of books collected and to weight them to assess the waste quantities avoided by the project each year.

### ***Recommended indicators & monitoring***

Same as before, the project is not monitored for the moment whereas we just need to count and/or weigh the books (which requires more time and also more human resources). A simple way to achieve a first monitoring would be to keep track of the number of books distributed, the number of books that were taken by students and the population, and then to assess the total weight using an average (that could be obtained by weighing part of the books).

## 7. Comparison with similar actions

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In Belgium, a similar action is carried out by a local NGO, called “Green”. In the frame of a year-round school campaign, “Jongeren keren het klimaat” (in Dutch)/”Effet de jeunes contre effet de serre” (in French) they organize 5 thematic days, one of which is the Kringloopactie (in Dutch) or Récup’attitude (in French), held during the EWWR. Schools are free to decide whether or not they participate and even if they only choose 1 action, or all 5 of them (local food, reuse, energy consumption (“wear an extra sweater”), (tap) water, mobility).

The purpose is to collect second hand books (but also clothes and/or toys) in the school. It’s up to the school to decide how they proceed. Some schools organize an exchange: 1 book per child (according to the age of the children), the books which were not chosen can be donated to a second hand shop. Some schools also measure the number of books and/or their weight, and as an exercise (for older children), they calculate the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> which was avoided by not throwing away the book and buying a new one.

More information:

In Dutch:

<http://www.jongerenkerenklimaat.be/nl/>

<http://www.jongerenkerenklimaat.be/nl/kringloopactie.htm>

In French:

<http://www.effetdejeunes.be/fr/>

<http://www.effetdejeunes.be/fr/recupattitude.htm>

The NGO GREEN:

<http://www.greenbelgium.org/>