



Co-creative
RETHINKing
for **sustainable**
cities



**Reduction of general waste in the
municipality of Hveragerði**

The Icelandic Case Study

Authors: Association of Municipalities in South Iceland /SASS



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What are the Case Studies?

These Case studies present under a methodological light the experiences of the local projects implemented by the Crethink project partners and their Change Agents. The idea is to use partners' experiences as testimonies, case-studies, practical examples of the application of co-creation methodologies in their different settings and with different targets. It's not just about telling the story of their project but also about providing a useful tool for other stakeholders who might want to adapt and use the same methodologies and/or work with similar targets.

Each case study includes an explanation of the processes triggered by the local project and of the methodologies and tools used, together with practical examples and/or templates as annex when available. Finally, they include recommendations and tips for practitioners who approach similar methodologies, contexts and/or target groups.

Introduction

The following summary outlines the process of the Icelandic project on implementing zero waste ideology among the residence of Hveragerði municipality in South Iceland, what was done and what will be the afterlife of the project.



The Icelandic partners decided to combine into the Cre-think project, work that had already been decided to start regarding zero waste ideology – and use the co-creation method to implement it in the municipality

The Process

Goal

The goal of the project was to reduce the general waste produced in Hveragerði.

Target group

The main target group was the general public in the municipality who throw waste from their own homes as well as with in the institutions and companies located there.



Activities

Due to Covid 19 many of the activities that would have been ideal were not an option, mainly meetings and activities involving live interactions with the public, that due to the situations was forced to move in an on-line or digital settings.

The change agents decided to focus on raising awareness among the residents by posting articles, quoting facts, and spreading knowledge on the quantity of general waste in the municipality and asking why there is such a high percentage of unsorted waste in the local waste-bins when there is an easy access to sorting bins available. What is the cause and how can we change it?

The agents decided that due to the situation, the best way to connect to the residents would be through social media. They were able to use Hveragerði local residents Facebook page to initiate the conversation, as well as the official municipality FB page and web page – as the municipality was very engaged in the project as a stakeholder. After some publicity, the agents decided to make their own FB page where enthusiasts could discuss the matter further. The project also got some national interest after an interview in the national radio where these pressing issues were discussed. The agents also manage to engage with the locals and get their views and ideas through a questionnaire that was sent out among the residents about their



views on waste sorting. There they could also give feedback and bring forward ideas on how to tackle the issue, followed by an online sorting survey where participants could prioritize actions that they felt were the most pressing ones.

As a final event (local dissemination event) the agents managed to hold a live residence assembly for the locals of Hveragerði where they could meet and exchange ideas with elected officials as well as receive knowledge on waste reduction and co-creation.

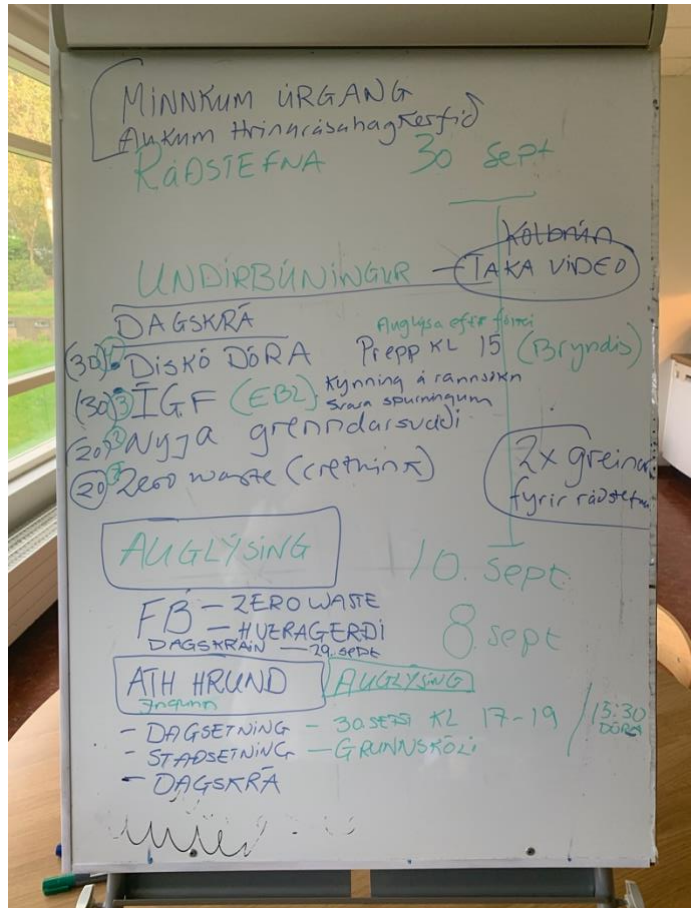
Stakeholder involved

The most important stakeholder were the local authorities in Hveragerði as well as the residents, but this project also affects local companies and visitors to the municipality.

Methodologies and Tools

In the beginning, the project managers and the change agents made a project plan that divided work between the agents over the project lifetime so that everyone was clear on their role and responsibility. This plan was re-visited in every meeting with follow-ups re-evaluation of tasks and summaries. This made sure that all participants were on top of their tasks and due dates, hence making all the meetings more effective.

As stated before, due to the Covid-19 situation, the agents had to be creative in finding ways to reach out to the residents of Hveragerði, as the initial plan of meetings, physical idea-boxes and live events were not an option. The public common use of social media was high providing the agents with a efficient way to connect with the locals and initiate the conversation on how to tackle "the issue of minimizing general household waste".



The questionnaire was built with survey monkey. It included several yes/no questions and one open question where participants could write anything they thought would improve the waste system in the municipality.

The sorting database used was optimal workshop (<https://www.optimalworkshop.com/>). All the answers from the open questions in Survey Monkey were sorted and categories and then uploaded into the optimal workshop system. Here people could drag and drop each item into predetermined categories (very important, important, not important, don't understand). From these results the group was able to retrieve a popular placement matrix based on the preferences of the participants. That means that from all the ideas on how the participants thought the waste system in Hveragerði could improve, the agents now had an overview on what ideas to priorities based on participants needs and wants.

As great as these programs were, it was clear to the agents as well as the project managers that what had the biggest impact for the locals was the resident's assembly



(the local dissemination event) that was held at the end – when a small window of opportunity arose, to gather people and exchange ideas, knowledge, and solutions for this endless “wicked problem” that waste reduction is. This assembly showed all participants once again that a face-to-face meeting will never be fully replaced by the digital world.

Results and Tips for practitioners

During the process of the project, the managers were able to ensure the afterlife of the zero-waste initiative by implementing it to the work of Environmental committee of the municipality of Hveragerði. This action will make sure that the results and products of the project will be used after the Cre-think projects finishes and is there for one of the biggest success and result of the project.

Another result and product of the Icelandic case was a step-by-step guide to implement zero-waste ideology into municipalities in general. The findings from the Cre-think project showed that for this work to succeed, it is necessary to have:

- ❑ a working project manager
- ❑ a group of local change agents from different sections of the municipality
- ❑ a “carrot” for the change agents – to fuel their interest and work (as they are volunteers)

Such a project has already been set up in another municipality in South Iceland where this guide is the basis for the work.

Here is a quick overview of the final dissemination:
<https://www.crethink.eu/post/residents-assembly-in-hveragerdi>

Summary of the Project

The project "CRETHINK - Co-creative RETHINKing for sustainable cities" aims to promote sustainable practices in European cities through co-creation methodologies.

The project is a two-year Erasmus+ KA2 project which aims to foster citizens' active participation and influence in the local community and society. It achieves so by supporting adult learners within the public sector and the civil society in gaining competences, concrete methods and tools for co-creation and cross-sector cooperation towards sustainable development and complex problem solving.

With the UN SDG 11 as subject matter, the project is developing an online toolbox and recommendations on the use of co-creation methodologies, available on an open-access online platform. The toolbox contains training modules and curriculums, as well as sectors-specific guidelines and methodological documents, specifying how to implement the UN SDGs through co-creation and citizen participation. Its format allows individuals and groups to "self-learn" and implement the methods in their work or everyday activities.

Furthermore, in each partner country, local teams are implementing Pilot Projects that employ the aforementioned methodologies to create sustainable change in the urban environment. These projects are included as Case Studies in the project toolbox.

The project consortium comprises 5 partners from Denmark, Iceland, Slovenia and Italy. The project is coordinated by Vejle Kommune, which is the sixth largest municipality in the country and the capital region of South Denmark.



www.crethink.eu



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