



CASE STUDY

Sofia Municipality adopt ‘Small Change Big Difference’ campaign to support new food waste collections and promote the production of compost and electricity

Sofia Municipality worked alongside TRiFOCAL to reduce the quantity of food waste going to landfill by educating school children and the citizens of Sofia about healthy sustainable eating, and encouraging better food habits.

The challenge

Food is the second most wasted resource in Sofia, behind paper and cardboard. This represents an average of 68,265 tons of waste annually.

Sofia Municipality have noted a reduction in food waste going to landfill from those making use of food waste collections, therefore, part of the challenge is to encourage food waste recycling within these sites and promote the food waste collections pilot to the remaining sites and householders.

The solution

The ‘Small Change Big Difference’ campaign was adopted by Sofia Municipality as the delivery mechanism for educating citizens and schools around the topics of food waste recycling, food waste prevention and healthy sustainable eating. This supported the Municipal Waste Management Programme as they trialled separate food waste collections for households.

The benefits

In 2018, a notifiable **increase of 8.5% in food waste processing** had been recorded by Sofia’s Municipal Installation, which enabled them to **produce 13.2% more compost and 3.7% more electricity** for the city of Sofia.

The different initiatives delivered during the campaign were well received by Sofia’s citizens. Overall, some anecdotal behaviour change and improvement in the perception of food waste and recycling was noted.

Background

With a current population of 1.7 million inhabitants, Sofia is the capital of Bulgaria and the largest political, cultural and educational centre in the country. Sofia Municipality is an administrative unit that runs activities conducted by the municipality, including preservation of the environment, healthcare, social, and educational and cultural activities for its citizens.

Food waste recycling facilities were made available in 2014 to schools, kindergartens, medical and catering establishments, markets, hotels, and other sites that generate kitchen-based food waste.

It is estimated that there are 2000 sites within the region producing food waste. Around 700 sites are currently utilising food waste facilities and action is being taken to enable other sites to participate by increasing separate collections. The scope of separate collections is being extended to include households in a pilot scheme which runs for 12 months in 2019.

Objectives

As part of their Waste Management Strategy, Sofia Municipality aim to reduce food waste generated by households and they chose TRiFOCAL’s citizen facing campaign “Small Change Big Difference” as the communication mechanism.

**SMALL CHANGE
BIG DIFFERENCE**

Working with TRiFOCAL meant that Sofia Municipality also had access to integrated programmes developed for schools to support the dissemination of key messaging on food waste prevention, recycling and healthy sustainable eating, encouraging behaviour change in kindergarten pupils.

Campaign

Campaign highlights:

- A dinner organised for 50 journalists and editors exclusively made of rescued food
- A six-week long radio campaign delivering tips and advice on preventing food waste and recycling more inedible food
- 700 kilos of compost collected from kindergartens, hospitals, schools and retailers were redistributed to citizens
- A social media campaign, featuring Super Mori, the mascot launched on Facebook, sharing key campaign messages
- Sofia Municipality received an award for Best Content Eco Campaign of BTV Media Group (one of the biggest media groups in Bulgaria), following the success of this initiative

The planning and delivery of the campaign was supported by the TRIFOVAL delivery team. Access to an online TRIFOVAL Resource Bank containing toolkits and campaign materials such as posters, videos and leaflets also aided campaign activities.

Key messages of the campaign:

- **Prevent food waste through better planning shopping, storage and meal preparation**
- **Promote healthy and sustainable eating**
- **Recycle unavoidable food waste correctly**

To launch the campaign, in Autumn 2018, the Mayor of Sofia invited 50 journalists and editors-in-chief to attend a dinner created from 'rescued' ingredients. Two of Bulgaria's most popular chefs were present and shared valuable tips to help prolong the life of food and prepare easy meals using leftovers. The event was widely shared across social media, featured in newspapers and was broadcasted on local TV news programmes.

Householder campaign

During Autumn 2018, the campaign collaborated with 'Inspector N-Joy', one of the most popular radio presenters in Bulgaria, whose weekly audience approximates 937,687 listeners. Collaboratively, they a six-week radio campaign ran dedicated to the importance of preventing food waste at home by making small changes such as meal planning, organised shopping, storage and meal preparation behaviours.

The campaign aimed to educate householders about the production of compost from food waste as preparation for the collection trial due in 2019. During this broadcasting campaign, a free 10kg bag of compost was made available to everyone for a limited time. The compost was produced in Sofia Municipality's waste treatment system using food waste collected from primary schools, hospitals, secondary schools and retailers. Within 8 hours, 700kg of compost had been collected by members of the public.

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ЗА РИСУНКА

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BILLA **CRED** **SMALL CHANGE BIG DIFFERENCE** **TRIFOVAL**

Schools campaign

In Summer 2018, a drawing competition was launched via social media asking children to invent a food super hero. The winner was Super Mori the carrot, who would feature as the “vegetable” of the campaign to promote key messages. A short digital campaign ensued, where visuals of Super Mori were shared on the Environmental Department of Sofia Municipality Facebook page. This series of social media posts generated more than 24,000 likes and comments.

In early 2019, Super Mori was brought to life as the mascot of the campaign, and 30 primary schools in Sofia were visited to raise awareness amongst 1000 pupils about the three key campaign messages.



Feedback provided by staff on the campaign day was positive. Employees who visited the stands in the staff canteens said that the information they were given was helpful and interesting. Campaign organisers noted that the location was ideal for the stand, due to high staff footfall. During and after the event, staff posted comments on the intranet news stories page, demonstrating positive employee engagement.

Results

Key messages on food waste reduction and recycling were shared to the public following the campaign. This included younger generations, as they are believed to influence and drive change within their families.

The campaign is on-going, but Sofia Municipality are reporting that these initiatives have influenced thousands of citizens with a view to change their behaviours and perception of food waste.

In 2018, a notifiable increase of 8.5% in bio-waste processing was recorded by Sofia’s Municipal Installation of Bio-Waste Treatment, which enabled them to produce 13.2% more compost and 3.7% more electricity.

What’s next?

In March 2019, Sofia Municipality started a one-year-long pilot initiative to encourage separate collection of household waste.

During Autumn 2019, Sofia plans to launch a booklet which will be distributed in primary schools to engage a young audience. It aims to be fun and interactive with useful information, top tips and facts, short games and colouring activities.

Sofia Municipality will host a TRiFOCAL funded Dissemination Seminar during 2019, sharing outcomes and learnings from the campaign.