

HOW TO EDUCATE/ENGAGE CITIZENS ON RECYCLING?

World café table report

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We started our table with trying to identify the immediate issues organizations, civil societies and local authorities face when educating and/or engaging citizens on recycling.

ISSUES:

- Citizens have no interest in recycling as they don't recognize the immediate impact it can have on their lives
- Citizens find it time consuming
- Citizens, specially older generations, are much more set in their ways and changing their habits is hard
- Locating right containers for each waste type when trying to recycle is a challenge
- Not knowing how to recycle a 'combined material' object, where one part is from one material and the other from another. Not having the proper knowledge for identifying and separating them (specially children in primary schools)
- People find it expensive

When approaching the afore mentioned issues we agreed that different target groups need different approaches. We identified our target groups as such:

TARGET GROUPS

- children (easiest to approach)
- students (easiest to approach)
- active population (interested when gaining)
- industry sector (very interested when gaining)
- family units (very interested when gaining)
- older people (harder to approach)
- unemployed (interested when gaining)
- immigrants (harder to approach because of language barriers, cultural differences, etc.)

Based on the defined target groups, general and specific approaches were conceived.

APPROACHES

- general:
 - building transparent closed looped recycling models
 - educating citizens in which part of the recycling loop they are involved in and how (through non-professional communication, tutorship)
 - recognizing recycling as convenient and something all citizens can gain from
 - seeing waste as a possible material rather than an end byproduct of consumption
- specific:
 - supporting the development of a good business model for

recycling/environmental consciousness and a good cultural education (the link between both as motivation, specially for the active population)

- recycling should be made easy for all
- recycling as a gain (lower taxes, credit points etc. for recycling)
- recycling should be considered as an opportunity, not added pressure
- waste as source material, new technology and industry could provide jobs for the unemployed
- finding crowd leaders for promoting recycling with which citizen could indentify with
- emphasizing the impact of recycling on our immediate environment and the consequences it has on our health and for the future generations
- as a means for social recognition for the vulnerable groups in our society (immigrants, unemployed)

OUTCOMES:

It was agreed that the general aim should firstly be creating a suitable recycling model. This model should be:

- easy to use
- local
- participatory (an opportunity for the user, ex. lowering the cost of other services, using a reward system, gaining funds)

It should promote the idea of recycling being sexy! smart! cool! In which each participant could be an important actor of change, evolving their role as observers of the difference it has on the environment to active participants in making a difference for the environment.