

6.0 Business + Community = Less Waste



Commercial wastes collected for community use by the Northamptonshire Children's Resource Centre

6.1 Why this theme?

Some of the materials disposed of by companies are potentially useful to specific community groups. By donating these materials to the groups, businesses can benefit from reduced waste disposal charges and positive social and environmental publicity. Despite this, most businesses have a closed attitude to waste, preferring to simply pay to dispose of the issue than work with communities to develop shared solutions.

This theme details how Corby Waste Not has helped businesses to work with community groups to find constructive uses for commercial wastes, and examines methods of helping companies to establish initial relationships with community groups.

6.2 What we did

6.2.1 Business to community recycling and re-use schemes

6.2.1.1 Northamptonshire Children's Resource Centre

Projectworkers Kathy Allen and Freya Dean helped to develop and promote the Northamptonshire Children's Resource Centre during their Projectwork placements.

6.2.1.1.1 About Northamptonshire Children's Resource Centre



groups, parents and adults with special needs throughout Northamptonshire.

The Northamptonshire Children's Resource Centre (NCRC) is a voluntary organisation and registered charity committed to helping businesses support community groups by turning waste things into play things. The Centre collects safe commercial waste materials suitable for creative play and makes them available, on payment of an annual membership fee, to schools, playgroups, voluntary

In 2001, NCRC supported 46,365 children

6.2.1.1.2 Items accepted by NCRC

NCRC collects safe and useful unwanted materials from companies in Northamptonshire. Items regularly donated include card, paper, boxes, fabric off-cuts, buttons, plastic containers, crates, bubble wrap or spare packaging materials. The centre also accepts unwanted set-specification computers, making them available to the public on payment of a donation. At any one time, the NCRC has over 150 different items in stock. Member groups are able to visit the Warehouse on a weekly basis and fill a trolley with specified amounts of materials. Section 9.2.5 examines how some of the donated wastes are being used in educational and artistic projects.

6.2.1.1.3 The NCRC Craft Shop

The NCRC Craft Shop provides additional creative materials, such as paint, paper, pencils and safe scissors, at discounted rates. The NCRC Warehouse and Craft Shop together create a one-stop-shop for all the resources needed by children's groups. In 2001, the NCRC shop had a turnover of £4,500.



Figure 22 The Northamptonshire Children's Resource Centre Warehouse

6.2.1.1.4 Online Swap Shop service

The Swap Shop is a web page, developed by Projectworker Kathy Allen, where children's resource centres across the UK can advertise their stock. As well as helping to find homes for the materials, the site helps resource centres distribute surplus materials and obtain wanted materials. The web page can be found at www.ncrc.org.uk. The web site received over 1000 visitors in 2001.

6.2.1.1.5 Funding

"The Projectworkers set up a Funding Strategy which has proved a real asset in tackling the difficult issue of raising money. In addition Kathy was instrumental in improving the promotion of the Centre resulting in additional suppliers of materials and the enrolment of new member groups"

Peter Taylor,
Business Manager,
Northamptonshire Children's Resource Centre

As part of their Projectworks, Kathy and Freya researched and developed a 3-year funding strategy for the NCRC.

6.2.1.2 Charitable recycling schemes for single waste streams

Some commercial waste streams, such as used printer cartridges, old mobile phones and unwanted office furniture, have a potential cash value to charitable groups. Theme 7.0 examines charitable single waste stream recycling projects in detail.

6.2.2 Community involvement in business waste projects

Business waste projects provide a chance for community groups to develop relationships with commercial organisations, something that can benefit community groups by increasing awareness and support, and commercial organisations through positive community and environmental publicity.

6.2.2.1 Involvement of young and recently retired people in Community Eco-Checks

“Through Eco-Check, I learnt a lot about how companies work”

**Becky Renshaw
6th Former, Corby
Technology College**

The Community Eco-Check Scheme encourages volunteering by sixth formers and recently retired people (see theme 3.0 and section 9.2.6.1). Volunteers are trained in the methods of Eco-Check auditing and reporting, and then given the opportunity to carry out site audits at various types of organisations. The Eco-Check process helps young people and voluntary groups build relationships with local companies.

6.2.2.2 Community and business involvement in whole-town partnerships

Whole-town partnerships, such as Corby Waste Not, are an effective method of helping communities reduce the amount of waste that they make (see theme 2.0). The partnership brings together different parts of the community that wouldn't normally work together and helps them help each other. The principle of working together starts at the steering group, where representatives from across the community help shape the scheme. The Corby Waste Not Steering Group has representatives from business, community and educational organisations.

6.3 It's over to you...

6.3.1 Aims

To identify local commercial waste streams suitable for community use; to arrange the donation of selected waste streams to specific community groups; to develop lasting business-community relationships through waste minimisation initiatives.

6.3.2 Actions

If you work for a business, contact your local Children's Resource Centre, or directly contact schools, playgroups and voluntary groups, and offer them your safe useable wastes.



If you work for a community group that could benefit from selected commercial wastes, contact your local Children’s Resource Centre, or directly contact local businesses and find out if they are willing to help.

6.4 Summary

Some commercial wastes can be used by community groups, especially playgroups and schools. By donating wastes to good causes, businesses benefit from reduced waste disposal charges and positive community and environmental publicity. Waste minimisation can provide an effective initial contact between businesses and community groups.


6.5 Troubleshooting

<p><i>I’ve got an old computer, but it has commercially sensitive data on it</i></p> <p>Most Children’s Resource Centres will provide written confirmation that the computers have been fully wiped</p>	<p><i>I’ve got some old furniture and other useful materials. Will my local CRC want them?</i></p> <p>Contact your local CRC and ask them. If they aren’t suitable for children but can be used by other charities, the Children’s Resource Centres will give you the relevant contact details (see theme 7.0)</p>
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6.6 Contacts

6.6.1 Children’s Resource Centres



Northamptonshire Children's Resource Centre  Charitable & Voluntary Organisations
www.ncrc.org.uk

Businesses

Community Groups

Waste Not Partnerships