



SP0129 Final Report

Please answer the following questions and return the completed form to the [SPF Staff](#) via e-mail.

Project Title: Plate Club

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Actual Project Start Date: February 1, 2014 **Actual Project End Date:** April 30, 2017

1. Please summarize the project and its key accomplishments in 1-2 sentences.

(400 characters maximum)

The Plate Club is a free, re-usable dishware lending service offered through the Undergraduate Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU). Over the club's lifetime, we have diverted over 60,000 dishware items from being purchased and disposed and have contributed to creating a campus culture of sustainability.

2. Did your team achieve your project's goal? In your answer, please describe the impact your project had on McGill's structures, processes, and/or systems. Also, please specify how this positively transformed people's behaviors/perspectives/habits on McGill campus(es).

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

The Plate Club has achieved its goal of reducing waste at McGill and contributing to a culture of material sustainability. To the first end, we lend out dishes to a number of on campus groups and organizations, allowing groups to borrow reusable dishware for events as an alternative to purchasing disposable dishware. We serve over 100 groups each year, and our aggregate micro-level impacts in reducing on-campus waste (see above) have reduced material waste outputs at the University.

To the second end, The Plate Club has helped to build a more materially sustainable on-campus culture by promoting the borrowing and reusing of dishware as an alternative to selecting disposable options at events. We have served groups with a wide range of mandates, showing that this message has resonated throughout the campus. Some of our core users include McGill Residence Councils, McGill Departmental and Faculty Associations, fraternities and sororities, campus clubs and organizations (ranging from clubs explicitly working on sustainability, like the McGill Pharmacology Green Committee, to student newspapers, to charity organizations like Think Pink), and community organizations like the Milton-Parc Citizens Committee. Many of our users quickly become repeat users, showing that providing groups with the means to plan sustainable events can help transform institutional behaviour in the long term. Furthermore, many groups have used our service for multiple years, proving that we have been integrated into many clubs' event-planning procedures.

3. Please describe the key successes and challenges of your project. (Minimum of two examples for each)

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

The Plate Club has been successful at expanding its user base, and the funding we received from the SPF has been critical for expanding our material resource base to meet clients' growing demand. We have successfully reduced the rate of material consumption and waste generation at McGill, and have continued to institutionalize low-waste options on campus. As we are designated a service by the SSMU, and have used this status as a platform to challenge consumer behaviour and mindsets. We often hear from our users that having a Plate Club "just makes sense". The idea is catching on: students in the Law and Engineering faculties have also established Plate Clubs to service the needs of students in their faculties.

We have faced the challenge of expanding our volunteer base to accommodate growing demand for our service. The core functions of the service are relatively solitary by nature, as one or two volunteers count dishware and assist users in collecting their orders each day during our office hours. To combat this challenge, we have put in place

systems to generate an increased sense of community around volunteering with Plate Club, including by creating a position on our executive collective to take the lead on volunteer engagement. In further expanding our volunteer base, we hope to increase our hours of service, in turn making our services more accessible to a greater number of individuals and groups. Likewise, as we rely on a relatively small number of volunteers per shift to maintain the core functions of the service, it has sometimes been challenging to accommodate last-minute changes in availability or when volunteers become ill and are not able to come for their shifts. We are thus hoping to increase the number of volunteers staffing each shift, in order to improve the consistency of our availability.

Similarly, we have experimented to determine a governance structure for the project which is equitable (to ensure social sustainability) while also assuring accountability and efficiency. We had often faced the challenge of unclear or overlapping mandates between executive positions which left key tasks incomplete. In our goal of assuring social sustainability, we seek to manage the project non-hierarchically to allow all stakeholders a say in decisions made by the executive team, but have restructured our organization of responsibilities within the collective to facilitate accountability. Instead of assigning roles, we have created a list of core responsibilities which the incoming executive reviews together and assigns the tasks collectively. One of these tasks is to coordinate the executive, meaning there will be oversight while maintaining a non-hierarchical structure.

4. What key points of advice or *lessons learned* would you give to other SPF teams either regarding your experience managing your project or the project itself?

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

For student-run projects, it is important to effectively manage inter-year transitions and ensure the effective transfer of information from one year's executive to the next. Especially when members of the old executive are graduating, we found it is most effective to not only document key tasks in exit reports to enshrine these tasks in our institutional memory, but also to meet and discuss the state of the project and the status of ongoing projects. To this end, we have institutionalized an inter-year training where the incoming executive meets with the outgoing executive to discuss the division of executive responsibilities for the upcoming year.

For SPF teams in general, don't hesitate to ask questions and use the resources available to you through MOOS! The MOOS team can provide invaluable logistical assistance and MOOS events are an excellent venue for increasing the name recognition of your project and for building alliances with other organizers.

5. What recommendations do you have for the future of this project to be continued and are there any opportunities for complementary projects? Who will take responsibility for the project's future and how can interested persons be in touch?

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

Thanks to the funding provided by the SPF, we now have a sufficient base of dishware to continue the service well into the future. We are continuing to recruit new volunteers to maintain and expand the project's human resource base, while responsibility for the project's future will continue to be the purview of the service executive. There are many opportunities for complementary projects, including the promotion and institutionalization of reusable dishware in the usage patterns of on-campus food vendors. We have begun working with Gerts to expand their selection of reusable alternatives to disposable dishware. The project would also benefit from commissioning a detailed life-cycle analysis on the environmental impacts of our dishware, which we hope to plan in collaboration with a student researcher (likely conducting ASR or CURE project research). The best way to contact us is via email, at theplateclub@gmail.com. We can also be reached through our Facebook page.

6. In your application, you listed the following sources of funding: None listed

Please confirm if you received this funding in the space below. In your response, please list the actual amount (in dollars) that you received. Note: If you received funding from a McGill Department or Unit, please attach a letter from its Financial/Budget Officer confirming the actual amount of support.

(1,800 characters maximum)

N/A

7. In your project’s Award Letter, the Working Group asked for your team to “provide an additional deliverable demonstrating the detailed plan for financial self-sufficiency after this year.” Please attach this plan in an appendix to this document, or use the space below.

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

The Plate Club now more stably receives an annual budget through the SSMU, \$2800 for this year. Acting as a SSMU-funded service has equipped us with a stable revenue stream, and we have avoided the sudden loss of funding which has been a problem within SSMU in the past. Maintaining this status is our primary means of achieving financial self-sufficiency, embedded within the SSMU as our parent organization. This funding is determined in consultation between the SSMU VP Clubs and Services, VP Finance, and members of our executive team at the beginning of each academic year. We have the autonomy and flexibility to spend this funding in a variety of areas, including inventory replacement and creating paid contract positions with the organization. This funding gives us the ability to continue subsidizing some of the replacement cost of lost items, and we have continued this practice for the time being to avoid making item replacements costs so expensive as to dissuade potential users of the service.

8. Did you purchase equipment or make an installation on campus? Yes No

If yes, please briefly describe how these items will be maintained and used in the future.

(1,800 characters maximum)

We purchased a number of reusable dishware items, including 120 knives and spoons, 180 forks, 65 sharp knives, 250 coffee mugs, 200 plates, 5 pitchers, and 5 serving spoons. These items will be maintained by our project's volunteers, overseen by the executive team. We collect an item replacement fee for any items which are broken or lost by the borrowers, allowing us to maintain our supply for future lending. We have access to a dishwasher and a sink in our office space in the SSMU Building of McGill University.

9. At the beginning of your project, you submitted a work plan or impact metric that included target measurables or indicators of your project’s success (e.g. # of tons of GHG emissions reduced). Please pick 3 indicators that best showcase the success of your project and complete the table below. To share updates on other indicators that you set, please attach an appendix to this report.

Selected Key Success Indicators	Target #	Actual #
Individual dishware items diverted from landfill (since 2014)	30000	30000
Inventory expansion: number of items purchased	950	945
Number of volunteers per semester	20	15

If there is a significant difference in the target numbers and the actual numbers achieved, please explain. If you have any additional information to share about these success indicators, please also include it below.

(1,800 characters maximum)

10. Please complete the table below for the Standard SPF Key Success Indicators, if the data is available.

Standard SPF Key Success Indicators	Actual #
# of volunteers directly or indirectly engaged in the project	30
# of people (student, staff, or other) trained in the context of the project	30
\$ raised for project activities subsequent to SPF funding	\$3300
# of partnerships or collaborations developed between the project team and other McGill administrative units, student groups, community groups, other universities, and/or other groups/organizations.	100+

Regarding the last Key Success Indicator, please list the groups and/or organizations that you counted.

(Unlimited characters; point form acceptable.)

This includes the wide range of groups (over 100 per year) who have used our services, including:
 -McGill Residence Councils (for example, Solin Hall)
 -McGill Departmental and Faculty Associations (For example, the McGill Biology Students' Association)
 -McGill clubs, organizations, and departments (for example, SLASA, Midnight Kitchen, McGill Friends of MSF, MOOS)
 -Community organizations (for example, the Milton-Parc Citizens Committee and the Sierra Club of Quebec)

If you have any additional information to share about the Standard SPF Key Success Indicators, please include it below. (1,800 characters maximum)

"\$ raised" figure reflects funding granted by the SSMU and money we received after applying for the SSMU Green Fund.

11. Please rate your project team's overall satisfaction with the support provided by the SPF Staff. Choose only one response.

- Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied Satisfied Very Satisfied

12. Please provide any feedback or recommendations regarding your team's experience with the SPF.

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

Working with the SPF team was an excellent experience. The SPF staff is tremendously helpful both in navigating the funding requirements of SPF projects and in assisting with logistics. The Plate Club owes a debt of gratitude to the SPF's support in managing purchases and determining funding options, as well as supporting our ability to promote the project by planning events and providing spaces in which our team could discuss our project with stakeholders. The Plate Club particularly benefitted from events like the SPF Showcase, which allowed us to expand our user base to faculty organizations within McGill that were less likely to have known about us.

13. If there is additional information you would like to share about your project, please use the field below.

(Unlimited characters)

14. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of professional growth? Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

- Yes No Prefer Not to Share

15. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of personal growth? Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

- Yes No Prefer Not to Share

16. Which of the following skills or attributes has your team improved through involvement in your SPF project? Choose all that apply.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Budgeting | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiating |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Networking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning |

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Identification | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Project Management | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Systems Thinking | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Teamwork | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify in the field below) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technology | |

Other:

17. Since starting your SPF project, has your team improved its knowledge of sustainability?
Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

Yes No Prefer Not to Share

18. (Optional) If applicable, please list the total number of team members voluntarily self-identifying as members of marginalized communities:

Please identify the represented communities below. (e.g. women, Indigenous people, people of colour, LGBTTQI, student parents, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities)
(1,800 characters maximum)

Women, people of colour, members of ethnic minorities, LGBT people

Thank you for completing your Final Report!

Please e-mail your report to the [SPF Staff](#) attaching any additional information that you would like to share about your project (e.g. other reports, research, documents, photos, etc.). Please note that this Final Report will be shared publicly on your SPF project's webpage.