



SP0137 Final Report

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

Project Title: Sustainability and Waste Education

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Actual Project Start Date: _____ **Actual Project End Date:** _____

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

(400 characters maximum)

This project enabled SHHS to effectively communicate & educate responsible waste management practices and principles to the individuals (students, faculty, staff) eating in McGill Cafeterias. This work was all completed by Student Waste Educators, who were trained and worked to educate students at 4 different Residence locations.

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)

...(cont. from above) This project was initially inspired by suggested actions from a Student Applied Research Project on long-term campus waste strategies, supervised by George McCourt. This project also included training sessions with McGill Floor Fellows, RLMS and SHHS staff.

Yes, we feel that we have been successful in creating a more responsible and more engaging waste system, and have done this by genuinely engaging with students about the many aspects of waste management. This success can be attributed to the work of the Waste Educators, because they were able to have important conversations with students - conversations far more valuable than the student reading an instruction sign. Through interacting directly with students, waste management became more approachable, interesting, and students were likely to grasp more of the dimensions and impacts of their waste. Pre-project surveys indicated that students had a negative connotation of sorting their own trays - and much of it could be attributed to a worry about whether they were doing it correctly, and that they might be reprimanded if not. This means that they are more likely to be motivated to continue sorting their waste well, and that they'll have a better appreciation of the system and of the work done to facilitate that system. Because McGill's Residences house thousands of new students each year, the learning opportunity here is huge - that all of those students leave after their first year, with a better understanding of responsible waste management and the value of composting. This means that as waste management improves across campus, we'll already have a considerable portion of students who are aware of how to properly deal with their waste. Students have also been very positive about the project, and helpful in providing feedback about the project and signage.

In a very concrete way, the success of the Waste Educator program is demonstrated by the massive increases in compost volume that SHHS now produces. The pre-consumer kitchen waste has been a compost stream for a few years, while this expansion into post-consumer waste proved to be much more labor intensive. Simply, this is waste diverted from landfills to be responsibly managed by a local company. Our relationship with Compost Montreal has grown since the beginning of this project, to a degree that they are much more open and able to increase their service around campus. This increase will be inevitable when the City decides to regulate institution waste more closely. This project also pushed SHHS employees - both kitchen and administrative, to realize that sustainability goes beyond kitchen inputs, and that all of us play a role in improving our system.

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)

Our key success is that this system functions well for students, staff and Waste Management personnel alike. It did take some modifications to arrive here. We are still working on our more general communications - how we are going to convey to other institutions or departments that this project has been worthwhile. Maintaining the signage in all locations is definitely an issue. When any materials change (ie. compostable cups, utensils), the signage should be changed to reflect this. Composting was relatively easy to teach students - as many had prior experience, and the educators were prepared to explain the many merits of composting organic waste. Compost Montreal reported low contamination levels from the first weeks. However, we received a lot of constructive feedback regarding the eco-station signage, and we did not anticipate the level of contamination within recycling bins that was experienced. After the first McGill Residence student committees were formed, they were consulted about the general reception of the eco-stations and it was clear that the signage needed to better represent the items within each cafeteria. We revised the signage to prioritize the items most frequently seen. For the recycling issue, we realized that in the past, staff was primarily in charge of the sorting into recycling bins. Because students were now sorting their own yogurt containers, cardboard boxes, water bottles, etc., there was a much higher risk of contamination within the recycling bins. This is problematic because the waste management company (BFI) will not take bags that appear to be heavily contaminated. Bags were rejected, and left in their respective waste rooms. This led to a lot of unintended waste, and the group of waste educators were quickly made aware to emphasize the need for clean recyclables. They succeeded in communicating this, and within 2-3 more weeks, a cleaner recycling level was achieved.

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)

Once a project is implemented, have a detailed monitoring plan in place so that should unexpected events or results occur, you know who to contact. We learned that we needed to better adapt to events like that, because a lot of students & staff were using the system that we created. This included updating signage frequently, sending out updates to the Waste Educators, contacting building managers, etc. Drawing a map of who your project involves and who it could impact would be a helpful exercise - to ensure that you have the contact information of everyone you may need to contact. Having a key person who is responsible for communications, problem-solving, feedback, etc., was extremely helpful, but also took considerable work for that individual. That is really something to be aware of, especially for full-time students. Lastly, it would be awesome to have resources on how to manage a project, how to manage groups of students, things along those lines. There were a few instances where an uncomfortable situation between a Waste Educator and a Staff member would arise, and I would be ultimately responsible for ensuring that it's taken care of. I learned about how to deal with these types of things along the way, but it certainly be helpful to have some resources on this, especially as a student.

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)

This project will continue to sit under SHHS's Student Sustainability Coordinator, who will be able to decide how to continue the initiative. I imagine that it will slowly spread across more units on campus, using similar tactics as we did. Many opportunities for similar projects have arisen, and all resources that SHHS has in relation to this project are open for anyone who's interested.

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)

Yes - Continuation of funds from the original GHG SHHS Audit.

7. 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)

8. 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 # |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Number of Students Engaged | 4000/year | 4700/year |
| Amount of Organic Waste Diverted/Month | 150 tons | 172 tons |
| Increase (%) in Compost Volume | 25% | 31% |

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)

The number of students engaged comes from the nearly 4000 Residence students, with the added number of staff, faculty, and other students with meal plans. The additional amount of waste diverted was estimated from the number of students eating at McGill cafeterias each day. The actual number has been higher because of the lunchtime increase of diners, we believe. The increase in compost volume - previously we were composting kitchen waste, and we expected it to rise 25% from that figure. It has been slightly larger than that.

9. 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 | 0 |
| # of people (student, staff, or other) trained in the context of the project | 150 |
| \$ raised for project activities subsequent to SPF funding | \$0 |
| # 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. | 3 |

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

(Unlimited characters; point form acceptable.)

Our relationship with our compost company has been great, and they have been a key to the success of the project. We find that we are frequently contacted for compost concerns around campus - including students groups, SSMU, Academic societies, conferences, etc. It's great that McGill's Food Services are also now thought of as a reliable ally in Waste Services.

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

10. 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

11. Please provide any feedback or recommendations regarding your team’s experience with the SPF.

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

I don't have too much to say on this. They were always helpful when needed - especially with financial issues, but this project was quite straight-forward and internally focused. I hope that the results of this project can help guide others, and that the SPF can facilitate that communication/network. The Project that ours was built from was involved in a very different way, and might have had a different experience.

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

(Unlimited characters)

13. 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

Yes - particularly because this project is nearly entirely student-run! SHHS has trusted myself & those around me (Simon Poitrimolt, Zoe Martiniak), with running an integral part of their cafeterias. Myself & others who were involved certainly know more about project management, about leading a team of students, and about taking full responsibility for project implications. I have learned how to train, communicate with and manage a group of student employees, and see that all parts of a project are accounted for.

14. 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

It has certainly been stressful at times, as well as rewarding. It has taught us a lot about ownership of an initiative, and working with students in a mutually respectful and responsible way. We have definitely been pushed to our limits at times, but do find that it's been worth it.

15. 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 type="checkbox"/> Networking | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Systems Thinking |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teamwork |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Management | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify in the field below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiating | <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Identification | |

Other:

16. 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

This project challenged everyone involved to think outside of the box within food sustainability, and realize that the outputs are also a really important area to improve. Waste applies to everyone, and it may not be the most exciting thing to change about a department's practices, but it is important. I have a much better understanding of the full implications of waste, it's full cycle, and it's human impacts. This project has also had us think a lot about long-term campus waste visioning, and how to take a small system and incorporate into a larger, more complex one.

17. (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, LGBTQI, student parents, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities)

(1,800 characters maximum)

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.