

Community Dishes

STOP THE USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTICS AT EVENTS





Welcome to the Community Dishes toolkit

Festivals and events are the heart and soul of Greek communities, so it's tragic to see so many still relying on single-use plastic cutlery, cups and plates.

Fortunately, there's a really simple solution: create a centrally managed store of reusable tableware and cutlery that local organisations can borrow for their events. We tested this solution with great success on the island of Paros, stopping 8,000 plastic items going to waste at just one event!

As of July 2021, an EU Directive banned the use of single-use plastic plates and cutlery.



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Case Study.

How Paros is reducing plastic waste at festivals and events. Use this to understand how the solution works and to convince others to support your project.

How To.

Use this to set up your project and achieve long term impact. This includes a set of printable instructions to share with event organisers.

What you'll need:

1. Community Dishes
2. Local supplier to order from
3. Clear plastic boxes for storing, with lids that lock
4. Secured storage space with easy year-round access
5. Inventory of Community Dishes, updated annually
6. The instructions for event organisers
7. List of participating association with contact details & event dates
8. Vehicle for transporting Community Dishes



Case Study

How Paros is reducing plastic waste at events

Like many coastal communities in Greece, Paros loves to party. But every year, these wonderful, vibrant and culturally significant events create a massive amount of plastic waste, with thousands of single-use plastic cups, plates, forks, knives and spoons being thrown away.

We've implemented a simple solution: a centrally managed stock of tableware that can be borrowed by event organisers. After they're done with the items, they're washed and returned, ready for the next group to use.



Problem

Millions of pieces of single-use plastic tableware are still used at cultural events across Greece. As of July 2021, an EU Directive banned the use of single-use plastic plates and cutlery, which means local communities and event organisers need alternative, effective solutions quickly or they could be breaking the law.



Solution

We bought a central store of 'Community Dishes' – 400 sets of metal crockery and 1000 sets of cutlery. We packaged these up into boxes, each one containing 50 'sets' of tableware and a set of instructions on how to use, store and return the dishes.

Our first trial of the Community Dishes was at 'Kapetaneika'—a three-day festival that celebrates local customs associated with traditional wooden sailing boats. The highlight of Kapetaneika is a 12-hour feast with lots of food, drink and dancing.

When the day arrived, we delivered the Community Dishes to the event and laid the tables to give the event a real festival feel. One of our team volunteered on the night, collecting dirty plates and taking them to the washing station, before taking clean plates back to the front table for more delicious food and drink to be served.

When the dancing started, we used crates that had been used for carrying food to the event to collect any final plates and cutlery. Most people took their cups to the dancefloor so they could keep using them!

The event was a huge success. Not only was everyone pleased to avoid wasting all that plastic, many people also reported enjoying both themselves and their food more because they were eating and drinking from proper plates and cups. As one member of our team put it: "I think Community Dishes reminds us of the authenticity and connection of how these fetes were celebrated before throw-away culture became the norm."



Outcome

By using our Community Dishes, the Kapetaneika organisers avoided using 8,000 pieces of single-use plastic. Multiply this outcome with other events, and the potential impact is really exciting. In fact, five local associations on Paros have committed to purchasing 4,000 sets of Community Dishes—enough to service all festivals on the island!

Due to COVID, we had to pause the roll out of this solution. But based on the initial findings and local enthusiasm, it won't be long before



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How To

Create your own Community Dishes



1. Determine the minimum amount of tableware you will need

You could talk with local event teams to understand what items and how many they'll need to cover their most popular events. Be generous in your estimations – we recommend catering for 25% more than you might think!

2. Review your options and choose a vendor

Once you know what you need, you can shop around to find the best quote for your dishes. We recommend using a local supplier so it's easy to replace any lost items. A local supplier might also be willing to support the project by offering a discount.



3. Keep upfront costs low

Can you find a way to cover the upfront costs of the dishes? You could host a fundraising event or even set up a crowd-funder for local people (particularly festival goers) to contribute to.

On Paros, we asked local associations to purchase or sponsor a set of Community Dishes for the events they're connected to. We also received private funding from four different people.



We recommend using a local supplier so it's easy to replace any lost items.

4. Find a suitable space to store the items

All pieces should be stored and managed by a centralised team, e.g. your municipality. The space should be easily accessible by the event organisers.

We recommend ensuring that all items have been counted and cleaned before returning to storage.

5. Set up a central online calendar

Create a calendar showing the dates and details of all participating festivals and events to avoid anything being double-booked. Remember to let people know when they must return their dishes by in time for their next outing.



6. Create and manage an inventory

Log each item in your stock of Community Dishes and keep track of who is borrowing what, when it's due to return and whether items need to be replaced.

We recommend you do this digitally. Make sure anyone borrowing the Community Dishes knows they must replace or pay for any missing items.

7. Include our instructions in each box

These will help ensure people get the most out of using your Community Dishes, and you'll avoid damage or material loss.

Different groups of people could be using each box, so make sure each one has its own set of instructions.

8. Keep a photo diary

Ask each organiser to document the use of your Community Dishes and use these to promote the initiative.

A few tips

ORGANIZATION

Use hard plastic containers for each 'set' of Community Dishes – they're lightweight and you can see inside them.

WEIGHT

Make sure each box isn't too heavy for the average person to carry. You may need to have more boxes with fewer items inside.

NUMBERING

Number your boxes, to help with inventory and storage.

BUILD EXCITEMENT

Get people excited about festivals and events making a come-back by sharing on social media.

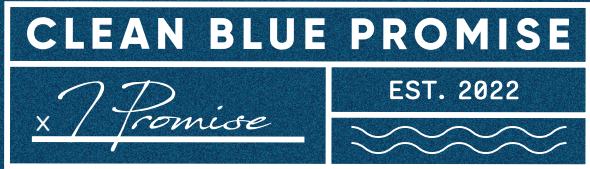
ENCOURAGE PERSONAL USE

Encourage festival-goers to purchase their own sets which they can reuse at every event!



Don't forget to enjoy the event!





Thank you

