

# Dealing with food waste through participatory workshops: a community engagement approach

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## Introduction

### The A2UFood project at a glance

The present poster is part of the A2UFood project that aspires to design and implement a holistic management scheme in which all aspects of reduction, reuse, and recycling of food waste are included.

As a spatial unit of implementation was chosen the Municipality of Heraklion – Crete- Greece and the current partnerships are: City of Heraklion, United Association of Solid Waste Management in Crete, ENVIROPLAN S.A., University of Crete, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Harokopio University and University of Stuttgart.

The A2UFood scheme is designed to:

- inform, raise awareness and educate the public to avoid food waste, with the use of especially designed
  - ✓ off line activities
  - ✓ on line tools and
  - ✓ digital tools
- redistribute the stream of avoidable food waste via second-opportunity restaurant or unavoidable food waste to a bio-plastics unit
- promote home-composting and decentralized community-composting.

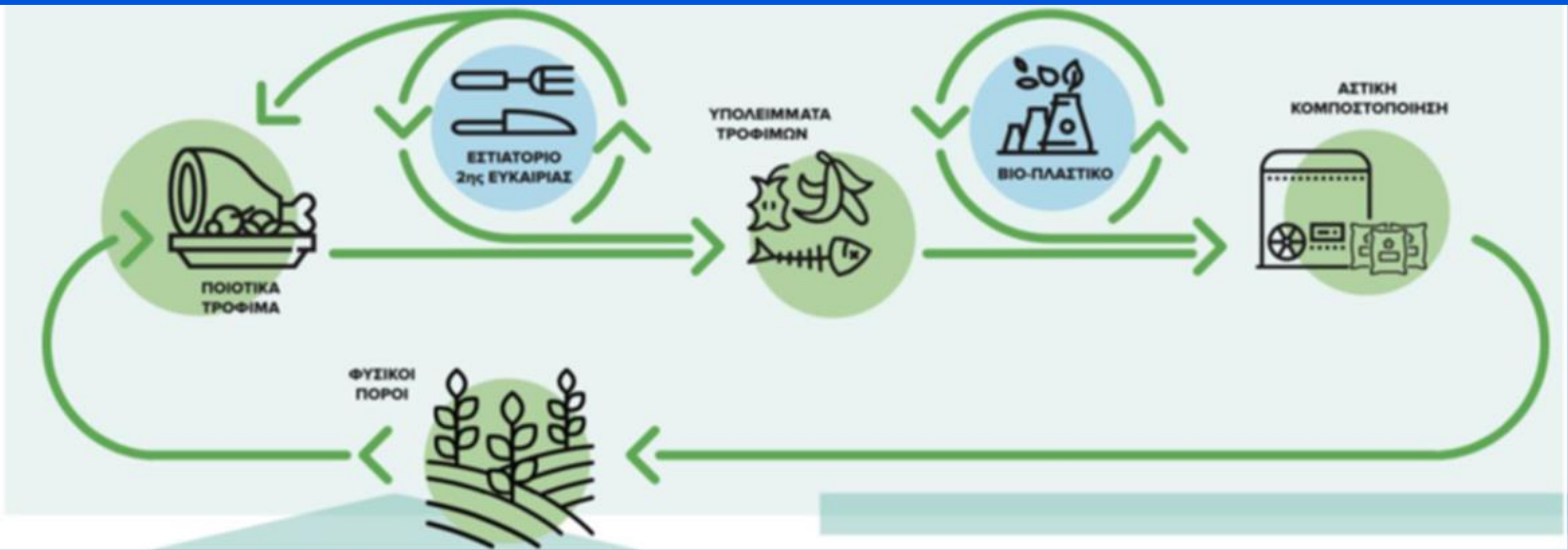


Figure 1: The A2UFood scheme

The “A2UFood training kit” in detail. Nine (9) sets of participatory activities (adjusted/related to subject)

### Introductory activities

- Act1 - Ice breaking activity
- Act2, Act3 - Group-formation activities (images, expressions/proverbs, old sayings).



### Consumption choices

- Act4 - Activity exploring personal consumption choices, their consequences on the environment, society and local economy. Reflection on personal choices regarding food waste.
- Act5 - Activity focusing on date labeling (“best before” and “use by”) and critical thinking on managing expiring food
- Act6 – A text analysis and creative writing exercise emphasizing on the role of advertising in food consumption.

### Disposal and management

- Act7 – Case study activity exploring disposal and management of food waste in our own household and a short 3-level evaluation on food waste management (Self-evaluation, Local Authority policies evaluation, Government policies evaluation)

### Food prevention

- Act8 – Exploratory activity about food preservation and available cooling technology and its journey through time (different eras) and space (different geographical areas).

### Around the world

- Act9 - Set of activities focuses on highlighting the complexity of food losses/waste issue and the different causes due to different social contexts. The section starts with a kinetic activity aiming to raise empathy followed by activities that investigate the causes in different societies and at different stages of food production/consumption..



Figure 3: Photos from participatory workshops

## Report of workshops

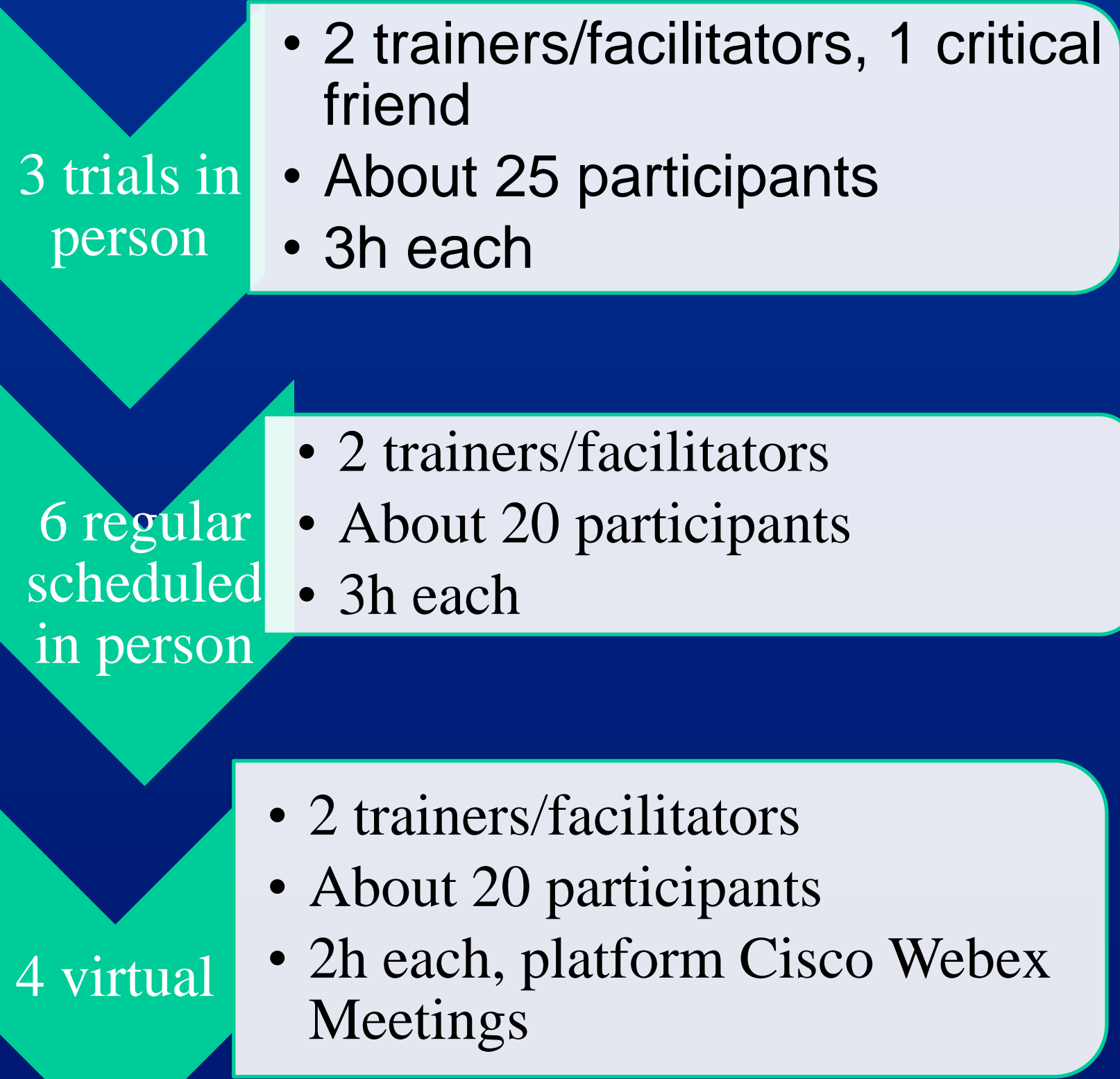


Figure 4:Report of actions

## Summary & Conclusions

Due to the interactive nature of multiple actors citizens’ behavioral change plays a key role in tackling food wastage problem. It appears that informative-type campaigns is not sufficient in and of itself to trigger behavioral changes including food waste prevention. An informative campaign hardly affects people’s deep thoughts and feelings, in order to change long-term established practices and routines.

In order to make informative campaign more efficient synergy in the actions and “community engagement” stressed as a potential path for communicating food waste management practices. Following the above path, we designed some participatory workshops/interventions as additional material to the A2UFood informative campaign.

Knowing that interventions aiming at behavior change do not produce transferable learning because they are usually presented as case studies we chose to develop a tailored made training kit. The pedagogical principle upon which our training kit has been designed is the pursuit of personal engagement with the issue. Reflection becomes a social action through participatory activities that provide the ground for exchange of ideas and sharing of thoughts among participants. Thus, the new knowledge is elaborated collectively by the community members and connected to the broader debate of environmental protection and postmaterialist values.

The trainer encourages participants to reflect on their daily practices, express their point of view, feel, gain empathy, work in groups and finally to commit themselves to socially desirable behaviors in the future and develop favorable attitudes concerning the avoidance of waste. Such participatory activities and workshops allow the different topics to be introduced in a more familiar framework and add the values of collaboration, team work and face-to-face communication.

Acknowledgements: the A2UFood Project (UIA02-115) is co-funded by the European Regional and Development Fund through the Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) Initiative.