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SELECTIVE WASTE COLLECTION AT THE GDAŃSK UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY – A CASE STUDY

1. Introduction

Sustainable waste management means action leading to avoiding waste, recovery of any possible materials and substances from waste, and making them safe for the environment. Placing the waste on garbage dump sites means the loss of potentially useful and usable materials, the loss of land and potential hazards to the environment.

Sustainable waste management is strongly related to selective waste collection. There are many types of selective waste collection systems. They differ depending on the country, population of the area, type of object etc., but all of them have the same objective – to improve recycling of waste. This paper describes the case of selective waste collection at the Gdańsk University of technology (GUT), which was initiated by students. The selective waste collection system at GUT corresponds to the system in the city of Gdansk. It means that colours of the containers for selectively collected waste are the same – yellow for plastics, blue for paper and green for glass. Cans are collected in can – shaped containers painted red or pink.

2. The case of the Gdańsk University of Technology

What is interesting about the selective waste collection system at GUT is that it was a group of students that proposed of the project and got money for it. Furthermore, they managed to get the authorities of GUT, companies dealing with waste and City Council of Gdansk involved.

GUT is a state university. State universities in Poland do not have much funding available for projects on selective waste collection. The total cost of the first stage of the project was estimated at 73,000 Polish złoty (about 18,000 euro). A group of students wrote an application to the Regional Fund of Environment Protection and Water Management (WFOŚ) in Gdańsk for 65,000 złoty. WFOŚ in Gdańsk agreed to give 60,000 złoty, and the GUT agreed to sponsor the project with 9,000 złoty. The work of administrative staff, phone bills, use of office equipment etc. was estimated at a cost of 3,000 złoty. The rest of the money was needed for internal and external containers for selective waste collection, to prepare posters, to create a Web – site, prepare questionnaires to check attitude towards the system and to write reports. Besides this, a company able to remove the waste from GUT was necessary. The partners in the project are:

- PRSP S.A., a company that removes selectively collected waste from GUT without charge. This company also provided also containers for cans.

- The Municipal Waste Utilising Company (Zakład Utylizacyjny w Gdańsku). This company gave 15 containers for cans.

- The City Council of Gdańsk. They put 6 sets of containers for glass, paper and plastics around student halls of residence.

The aims of the implementation of the selective waste collection system at GUT are:

- to educate students, future engineers, designers and managers how to deal with waste and to open their eyes to problems with waste,

- to educate professors and teachers, administrative staff in the field of waste collection,

- to do something real and useful, instead of paper – projects,

- to make GUY more environmentally friendly,

- to save money spent on waste removal and disposal at landfill sites.

The implementation of the project is still incomplete (April 2002). Containers have been bought and information is dispersed through GUT by way of educational posters. There are still some things to be done: promotion of the system in student halls of residence, buying of trolleys for waste transportation inside buildings, interviewing students and academic teachers using questionnaires, and writing a final report. Because GUT consists of many buildings, not each of them has been equipped with containers for selective waste collection. In many there is only one. There is a need to buy more containers. Also, educational action should proceed and new students should be informed about the system. Furthermore, it is necessary to obtain more funding in order to complete the implementation of the system and to make it efficient in the whole area of GUT.