



Energy Ambassador PRIORITERRE, France

Summary

The aim of the « energy ambassador » plan of action is to help the Haute-Savoie families in difficulties to manage their energy bills. This programme is financed by the Conseil General of Haute-Savoie – Local Authorities.

Following activities are addressed both to vulnerable households and to the professionals in contact with them.

- Training on saving energy and water for qualified social workers and those in training;
- A telephone service to answer any question concerning energy or water consumption, for professionals and volunteers in contact with people in difficulties.
- Development and distribution of a written guide (the 'ant's guide') to help social care professionals and volunteers in supporting people in difficulties to manage their energy and water consumption and bills.



End-user area

- New buildings
- Refurbishment of buildings
- Transport and mobility
- Financial instruments
- Industry
- Legal initiatives (regulations, directives, etc)
- Planning issues
- Sustainable communities
- User behaviour
- Education
- Other

Target Audience

- Citizens
- Households
- Property owners
- Schools and universities
- Decision makers
- Local and regional authorities
- Transport companies
- Utilities
- ESCOs
- Architects and engineers
- Financial institutions
- Other

Technical

- Energy efficiency
- Heating
- Cooling
- Appliances
- Lighting
- CHP
- District Heating
- Solar energy
- Biomass
- Wind
- Geothermal
- Hydro power
- Other

Context

People in situation of precariousness can be confronted with a number of problems regarding energy: they can have problems in paying their bills, problems regarding comfort issues in their homes, problems of inappropriate choice regarding their equipments or behaviours. Energy poverty can have very bad consequences on families that already live on a fragile standard of living.

The « energy ambassador » programme was created after an agreement between prioriterre and the department of Haute-Savoie on the development and improvement of social housing in the region.

Objectives

General aims are to help households in difficulties in reducing their electricity and water bills and consumption levels. The project tools are information and awareness rising on economics stakes linked to people behaviour.

The action (see process) aims at:

- Reaching as many people as possible with reduced human means,
- Giving autonomy and responsibility to the helped people,



- Fixing firmly in people's mind energy efficient practices (households in difficulties and social workers in priority).

Ambassadors have to:

- raise social housing tenant's awareness to energy and water savings;
- train and follow tenants in difficulties who have asked for financial help for unpaid energy and water bills;
- raise social workers and social housing associations awareness;
- locate households with high energy consumption.

Process

Different and complementary actions:

1. Communication and information towards households in difficulties and social workers:

- Tenants and owners requests are treated mainly by phone.
- Advice home visits take place on request of the social workers:
 - *home visit to check possible problems linked to the building, equipment and behaviour,*
 - *interview with the family to speak about their life habits*
 - *consumption bills and fees analysis to check if the subscription options chosen are relevant for the family.*
- Creation of communication and information documents for collective interventions and also to answer to individual information request.
- Publication of press articles to specialist professional local press.



2. Training

- Toward social workers:
Regular and individualised training sessions organised by the social department. It will allowed social workers to be more operational on energy and water saving issues.
- Toward future social workers:
Training modules are proposed to social workers training centres.

3. Developing links with housing actors (social housing associations, landlords unions, etc.).

4. Awareness raising meeting for general public





Financial resources and partners

Programme coordination: 8 days,	3472€
Meeting participation: 12 meetings,	5208€
Awareness raising meeting with tenants: 30 meetings,	13 020€
Training of social workers and future social workers: 30 days,	8680€
Home visits: 30 visits (½ day per visit),	6510€
Brochure printing:	2618€
In total:	51 226€

- Fundings from the Conseil Général de la Haute-Savoie 36 036 €

- Fundings from the ADEME 15 190 €
(through the fundings for energy advice centres in France)

Prioriterre, local energy agency, is in charge of developing the training sessions. Advisers from Prioriterre train the social workers and visit the tenants' homes for personalized advices. Prioriterre also ensures an energy advice hotline service. Prioriterre has also evaluated the trainings in order to improve the modules and to fit better with the needs of the people who are trained.

Results

Results on consumption evaluation made by the ambassadors during home visits:

- 58% of home visits helped to detect overconsumption problems of gas or electricity
- 34% of diagnosis have detected problems regarding low consumption. This is to be taken into consideration because it can reveal unsuited behaviours that could cause health or sanitary problems for families with difficulties.

Most of advices are given on the use of domestic appliances and power (36%), ventilation and airing (25%). Advices were also given regarding heating issues (17%), on subscription and off peaks periods (11%), water consumption (6%) and oil stove (5%).

During home visits, the ambassador points out possible problems linked to the building that can influence families' consumption or comfort. In most of the cases, energy related problems mainly concerned boilers (28%), and regulation issues (27%). Other identified problems were bad windows (18%) and motorised ventilation (12%) followed by water leaks (9%) and radiators (6%).

Lessons learned and repeatability

Guénaëlle CARTON, energy ambassador, explains the importance of this collaboration with social workers: In order to work with families on their energy and water consumption and on the management of their energy costs, it is necessary to have a comprehensive approach to the household budget.

Social workers are the first to be in contact with families and they can detect difficulties linked with energy. Without this collaboration, we would just have access to people who cannot pay; which is quite restrictive. Some families stop heating in order to be able to pay their bills. Others are cutting down on other expenditure, such as for food, to keep on paying their bills. And it is really important to help them".

Guénaëlle CARTON trained in 2007 more than 530 people that were tenants, social workers or future social workers. She also worked with the staff of local authorities.

Home visits are appreciated by families, phone advices and diagnosis can complete home visits and allow a greater number of treated problems.

Awareness raising meetings towards general public and trainings for social workers and future social workers have a great success.



To get concrete results and measure the effective savings on this programme, Guénaëlle CARTON proposed to the financial partners to check the energy and water consumption one year after home visits and advices. It can be done with the help of the energy providers (furbishing the consumption details). The main problem could be the confidentiality rules on private data, but it will help to evaluate the action's legitimacy.

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