



DETERGENT
PHOSPHATES

Photo: Ekotim

NGO STORY

A NEW LINE FOR SARAJEVO CITIZENS

During the war, the city of Sarajevo's wastewater treatment facility was destroyed. Ever since, untreated residential and industrial wastewater has poured into the local Miljacka River which flows into the Bosna River to the Sava River to the Danube.

To help curb pollution, local NGO "Ekotim" received a grant from the UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project to reduce the amount of nutrient pollution in wastewater – specifically, phosphates coming from household detergent use.

The project aimed to raise awareness among Sarajevo consumers about the links between their detergent use and water pollution. It would promote more use of phosphate-free detergents. And it would sample municipal wastewater to measure phosphate discharges, and to see if their strategy was working.

Communication activities proved highly successful reaching some 200,000 Sarajevo citizens. Over 20,000 leaflets were distributed through a range of activities and locations from shopping centres to street actions to bars. A radio jingle was played ten times a day for 11 months, along with 20 radio shows, reaching the ears of over 150,000 people. Other actions included the distribution of 9,000 postcards throughout the city, workshops in schools, advertising billboards placed in public toilets and stories printed in national newspapers and journals.

Samples of wastewater, tested for free by the partner Institute for Hydromechanics, proved that the campaign significantly reduced the quantity of phosphorus in wastewater. In the first part of the project, total phosphorus discharge to the river decreased from 310 to 245 kg per day.

“The phosphate detergent industry, mainly Procter & Gamble and a detergent factory from Croatia, opposed us with their own TV commercials,” said Rijad Tikvesa from Ekotim. “But the Bosnian company ‘Dita’ from Tuzla ended up developing a new line of phosphate-detergents with environmentally-friendly labelling. So we think we’ve had a very positive effect.”



Photo: Ekotim

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
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