From Concern to Certification: The Journey of Krško's Family Picnic in the Park

City municipality Krško, Slovenia
Center for Entrepreneurship and Tourism Krško
Local Destinations (including villages, cities, municipalities, islands)
Visitor Experience & Destination Management

Summary of Good Practice Story
In Krško, Slovenia, the town's popular Family Picnic in the Park community event routinely left the central Krško Town Park littered with single-use plastic waste, a problem worsened by pandemic-era disposable packaging requirements. The Krško Center for Entrepreneurship and Tourism partnered with Ecologists Without Borders, the local utility Kostak, cultural institutions and volunteers to redesign the event around Zero Waste principles: a trained "Green Patrol" of volunteers guided visitors to clearly marked eco-stations, food vendors switched to reusable or compostable serving ware, and 624 free-loan reusable cups were made available with simple messaging like "bring your own cup." The results were striking — waste fell from 11.47 kg in 2024 to just 3.6 kg for around 600 visitors in 2025 (6 grams per visitor), with 94.4% of waste correctly sorted and a 94-100% cup return rate, earning Slovenia's first Two-Star "On the Path to Zero Waste" event certification. The lesson: sustainable events aren't built from one measure alone but from many small, well-communicated changes working together, and the approach has since spread to other Krško festivals.

Setting the Scene: Destination & context
We are located in Krško, the urban centre of the Posavje region along the Sava River, where industrial heritage, rich natural surroundings, and an increasingly strategic focus on sustainable

development intersect. In recent years, we have been systematically implementing the principles of sustainable tourism through responsible spatial management, active community involvement, and the reduction of environmental impacts.
At the heart of this story is the Krško Town Park—the central public space and green heart of our town, serving as a place for relaxation, recreation, and social life. Because of its openness and intensive use, the park provides an ideal setting for introducing and testing sustainable solutions in practice.
At the Krško Center for Entrepreneurship and Tourism (CPT Krško), together with local associations, institutions, and providers, we are helping shape the destination by making sustainability a foundation of its future. Family Picnic in the Park is one of the most visible examples of this approach, bringing together community life, education, and sustainability in practice.

The Turning Point: Why change was needed
Before introducing a sustainable approach, we faced the same challenge as many event organisers: large amounts of waste, primarily from single-use plastics. After events, the venue was often littered with plastic cups, plates, and packaging, requiring extensive cleanup and generating additional costs, logistical challenges, and environmental impacts. The contradiction became impossible to ignore. How could an event designed to bring people together leave behind a landscape of waste in a public park that was meant to be a space for care, safety, and connection with nature?

The COVID-19 pandemic only intensified these challenges. Hygiene requirements increased the use of disposable packaging, while waste separation became even more difficult. Large amounts of waste ended up in mixed bins, preventing recycling and significantly increasing the environmental footprint of events.
We also recognised an important social challenge. Many visitors were accustomed to the convenience of single-use products and often did not consider the consequences of their choices. Clear communication, appropriate waste-separation infrastructure, and a sense of shared responsibility were still missing.

All these challenges led us to ask a simple but important question: Is it possible to organise a community event without generating waste—and if so, how?

The Vision: What you set out to do
Our goal was not simply to reduce waste, but to rethink how community events are organised. Faced with growing amounts of single-use waste and the negative impacts on the Krško Town Park, we decided that sustainability should become the starting point for every decision.
At the Krško Center for Entrepreneurship and Tourism, we recognised that events could become an important platform for demonstrating sustainability in practice. However, this vision could not have been realised without the support of local associations, institutions, volunteers,

suppliers, and other partners, who embraced the idea and helped transform it into a shared community effort.
Inspired by the Zero Waste principles promoted by Ecologists Without Borders, we redesigned Family Picnic in the Park to demonstrate waste reduction, responsible resource use, and community engagement. The event became a testing ground for sustainable practices and a model that could inspire other events in our destination. Our ambition was not only to reduce waste, but also to strengthen shared responsibility and create a model for more sustainable events.

The Journey: How change happened
The transformation did not happen overnight. Once we decided to redesign the event according to Zero Waste principles, our first step was to bring people together.
At the Center for Entrepreneurship and Tourism Krško, we worked closely with Ecologists Without Borders, the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities, the Valvasor Library, the City Museum of Krško, and the local utility company Kostak. Together, we combined sustainability, education, and community engagement into a shared effort that shaped the event. From the beginning, we knew that success would depend on collaboration. We discussed sustainability goals with food and beverage providers, event partners, and volunteers, encouraging them to become active contributors to the new approach rather than simply participants in the event.
One of our first challenges was changing established habits. Visitors were used to disposable packaging, and we knew that introducing new practices would require clear communication and practical solutions. Instead of relying on rules and restrictions, we focused on making sustainable choices easy and accessible. Visitors received simple messages such as “Bring your own cup” and “Sort your waste”, while sustainability information was integrated into invitations, social media communication, and on-site signage.
The Krško Town Park itself became an important part of the solution. Its central location allowed visitors to arrive on foot, by bicycle, or by public transport. We installed clearly marked eco-stations throughout the venue, while the Green Patrol – a team of trained volunteers – helped visitors separate waste correctly and explained the reasons behind the measures.
Food and beverage providers also played a crucial role. Together, we adapted the offer by reducing unnecessary packaging and prioritising reusable or compostable solutions. Visitors could borrow reusable plastic and glass cups free of charge, refill drinking water at dedicated stations, and enjoy food prepared with local and seasonal ingredients.
The event quickly became more than a waste-management project. Through workshops, games, and interactions with volunteers, sustainability became something visitors could experience rather than simply hear about. Families, children, local organisations, the utility company Kostak, Ecologists Without Borders, cultural institutions, and volunteers all became part of the story.
Some of the most memorable moments came from the visitors themselves. Throughout the day, members of the Green Patrol noticed people actively asking where to separate their waste and

willingly participating in the system. The reusable cup initiative also exceeded expectations. A total of 624 reusable cups were made available and almost all were returned. Interestingly, 33 cups were deliberately kept by visitors as souvenirs, resulting in a 94% return rate for reusable cups and a 100% return rate for glass cups. What had initially been introduced as a waste-reduction measure became a symbol of participation and engagement.
Step by step, Family Picnic in the Park evolved from a community event into a community-led example of sustainability in action. By measuring waste, listening to partners, and continuously improving the concept, we demonstrated that sustainability can be practical, enjoyable, and deeply rooted in local community life.

The Breakthrough: What you achieved
The results of Family Picnic in the Park exceeded our expectations. In 2024, the event generated 11.47 kilograms of waste. Just one year later, we reduced this to only 3.6 kilograms for approximately 600 visitors – equivalent to just 6 grams of waste per visitor. At the same time, 94.4% of all waste was correctly separated, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Zero Waste measures we introduced.
Our efforts were recognised through the Two-Star “On the Path to Zero Waste” certification awarded by Ecologists Without Borders. Family Picnic in the Park became the first and remains the only certified event of its kind in the region.
Yet the most important breakthrough was not measured in kilograms. We witnessed a clear change in behaviour and mindset. Visitors increasingly arrived with their own bottles, actively searched for eco-stations, asked where waste should be separated, and reminded one another of their shared responsibility. Sustainability became part of the event experience rather than an obligation.
The impact extended beyond environmental results. Families, volunteers, local organisations, institutions, and suppliers became active partners in creating a cleaner and more responsible event. The Krško Town Park remained clean and welcoming, while visitors discovered that environmentally friendly choices could be simple, practical, and enjoyable.
Family Picnic in the Park showed us that meaningful change can start with a single event. Today, sustainability is no longer just promoted—it is lived and shared by the community.

Reflections: What you learned and what others can learn
One of the most important lessons we learned is that sustainable events are not created through a single measure. Real change requires planning, communication, partnerships, and community involvement. The success of Family Picnic in the Park was the result of many small decisions working together toward a common goal.
From the beginning, we realised that clear communication is just as important as technical solutions. Eco-stations and reusable cups alone are not enough. Visitors, suppliers, volunteers, and partners need to understand why the measures matter and how they contribute to the overall goal. Early engagement helped build a shared sense of responsibility.

One of the most encouraging outcomes was seeing how quickly visitors embraced the new practices. They brought their own bottles, actively asked where to separate waste, and reminded one another of their shared responsibility. This showed us that people are willing to change their behaviour when sustainable choices are simple and accessible.
We also learned that certification is not the final goal, but a tool for learning and continuous improvement. Even when not everything goes as planned, measuring results helps identify opportunities for future progress.
Our advice to other destinations is simple: start with one event, take small but realistic steps, and involve the community from the beginning. Lasting change happens when people feel they are part of the solution.

The Ripple Effect: Lasting impact
The impact of Family Picnic in the Park extends far beyond a single day or a single event. What began as our effort to reduce waste at one community gathering gradually became a catalyst for wider change within the destination.
Through this project, we demonstrated that Zero Waste principles can be successfully applied without compromising visitor experience or community participation. The knowledge and approaches developed through Family Picnic in the Park have since influenced other events in Krško, including the Street Festival Taste Posavje and Beer & BBQ Festival Krško.
The initiative also strengthened cooperation between local organisations, volunteers, suppliers, Kostak, and Ecologists Without Borders, creating partnerships that continue beyond the event itself.
Most importantly, we have seen a change in perception. Sustainability is no longer viewed as a limitation, but as an opportunity to create better events, stronger partnerships, and a stronger connection between people and place.
Family Picnic in the Park showed us that meaningful change can start with a single event. What started as one Zero Waste picnic has become part of a broader journey toward a more sustainable and community-centred destination.

Awards or Certifications
Two-Star “On the Path to Zero Waste” certification, awarded by Ecologists Without Borders (certified twice).

Web Articles
https://www.posavskiobzornik.si/panorama/druzinski-piknik-v-parku-s-piko-nogavicko-in-aniko-horvat-107037

https://www.slovenia.info/sl/novinarsko-sredisce/novice/28652-druzinski-piknik-pridobil-naziv-prireditev-na-poti-zero-waste

https://www.posavskiobzornik.si/panorama/druzinski-piknik-pridobil-naziv-prireditev-na-poti-zero-waste-103946

https://www.visitkrsko.com/novice/minulo-soboto-se-je-v-mestnem-parku-odvijal-druzinski-piknik
https://ebm.si/zw/turizem/prireditve/slovenske-prireditve/
(https://ebm.si/zw/turizem/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/06/Zero-waste-zaveza-Dru%C5%BEinski-piknik-v-parku.pdf)

https://www.visitkrsko.com/novice/druzinski-piknik-pridobil-naziv-prireditev-na-poti-zero-waste

Other Relevant Links
https://www.facebook.com/100079338079016/posts/%EF%B8%8Fdru%C5%BEinski-piknik-pridobil-naziv-prireditev-na-poti-zero-waste%EF%B8%8Fminulo-soboto-se-/451501084171157/

Slovenia Green Destination Gold: https://www.visitkrsko.com/novice/destinacija-krsko-prejela-zlati-znak-slovenia-green-destination

Local Hotel got Good travel Seal certification: https://www.visitkrsko.com/novice/turisticni-ponudnik-gostilna-in-hotel-kunst-je-pridobil-trajnostni-znak-good-travel-seal

Visit Krško – Online media coverage of Family Picnic in the Park — news articles, including a feature in Posavski Obzornik

https://www.visitkrsko.com/novice/druzinski-piknik-pridobil-naziv-prireditev-na-poti-zero-waste - 2024, when we were awarded the Two-Star On the Path to Zero Waste certification - in Slovene

https://www.visitkrsko.com/en/news/family-picnic-receives-the-%E2%80%9Cevent-on-the-path-to-zero-waste%E2%80%9D-title – in English

https://www.visitkrsko.com/novice/minulo-soboto-se-je-v-mestnem-parku-odvijal-druzinski-piknik - 2025, when we retained the Two-Star On the Path to Zero Waste certification - in Slovene

https://www.visitkrsko.com/en/news/family-picnic-held-in-the-city-park-last-saturday - in English

https://www.posavskiobzornik.si/panorama/druzinski-piknik-z-aniko-horvat-in-piko-nogavicko-107129
https://www.posavskiobzornik.si/panorama/druzinski-piknik-v-parku-s-piko-nogavicko-in-aniko-horvat-107037

https://www.posavskiobzornik.si/panorama/druzinski-piknik-pridobil-naziv-prireditev-na-poti-zero-waste-103946

Quotes or Testimonials