



Student Switch Off campaigns in Bulgaria



Summary

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” (UoS) participated in the Student Switch Off (SSO) campaign organised within the SAVES2 project. The SSO campaign was an inter-dormitory energy-saving competition that focused on a predefined set of activities, encouraging students to save energy in their dormitories, while the SSO+ campaign focused on students living in the private rented sector and aimed at raising awareness of energy performance certificates (EPC), smart meters and energy efficiency, thus helping students reduce their energy costs and their exposure to energy poverty.

Why is it a case of energy citizenship?

The SSO campaigns represent the collective efforts of students to reduce their energy consumption through changes in their behaviour, encouraging them to become energy citizens. Moreover, the campaigns support students to minimise their carbon footprint at their university and private accommodation, raising awareness about energy efficiency and smart metering and establishing good sustainability habits which last beyond their time in education.



DIRECT ENERGY PRODUCTION / CONSUMPTION



COLLECTIVE



URBAN



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101022492.

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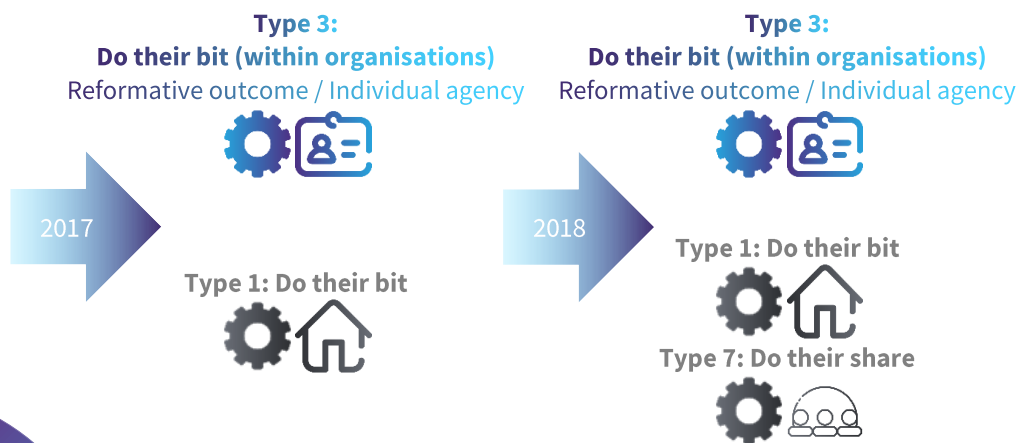
SAVES 2

Goals

1. Helping students become environmentally conscious by motivating them to engage in energy-saving action;
2. Reducing the carbon footprint of students by changes in their energy consumption habits;
3. Decreasing the exposure of university students to energy poverty by decreasing their energy bills.

The story and the typology

The Students Switch Off campaigns were active at the University of Sofia (UoS) for three consecutive academic years between 2017 and 2020, with about 14,000 students involved in the SSO campaign and 5,000 in the SSO+ campaign. Energy savings were determined by comparing pre-intervention and post-intervention electricity consumption in each dormitory/private accommodation. The dormitories that saved the most energy were announced winners and rewarded for their efforts.



Case history summary

For the summary methodology, click [HERE!](#)



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Phase 1: The first year and start of the case, 2017

The case started with recruiting students for participation in the initiative and the awareness-raising campaign (tips through the Facebook page of the initiative, the monthly newsletter, leaflets and posters, and dormitory visits during the academic year). Once students were made aware of the simple activities they could execute on a daily basis to change their energy behaviour, the dormitories started competing to save energy and reduce their energy expenses.

The case started within an organisation (university/student dormitories) but later also

affected energy consumption and behaviour within the private homes and households of students.

	Individual		Collective		
					
 Reformative	1. Do their bit (in the household)	3. Do their bit (within organisations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	4. Do it their way (within organisations)	6. Make their vote count	8. Go ahead	10. Make their claims

Main type: Do their bit (within organisations)

Reformative outcome / Organisationally embedded agency

Secondary type: Do their bit (in the household)

Reformative outcome / Private in the household agency

Phase 2: Continuation and expansion of the case, 2018 - 2020

One of the challenges of the SSO/SSO+ campaigns was that the UoS team changed after the first academic year. However, the new team stayed on board during the last two years, bringing stability and predictability. Students continued saving energy and monitoring energy consumption at dormitories and private households. Students also started to apply what they had learned about energy saving when they returned home during holidays and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The team analysed each year's experiences, building upon good practices and pinpointing new areas to improve. One important change was the use of social media. During the first year, there was no social media presence. In the second and third years, the active use of social media and email communication considerably increased engagement. About two-thirds of students who participated in Bulgaria's SSO/SSO+ campaign said

they would continue saving energy after graduation.

Social relations among students were an important aspect of the SSO/SSO+ initiative because students motivated each other, thus creating a community of active energy citizens.

	Individual		Collective		
					
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Main type: Do their bit (within organisations)

Reformative outcome / Organisationally embedded agency

Secondary types

Do their bit (in the household)

Reformative outcome / Private in the household agency

Do their share

Reformative outcome / Citizen-based and hybrid agency



The aspects of energy citizenship

The students participated in an initiative that was a part of an international project. Therefore, they largely followed the instructions and workplan designed by someone else before their involvement. During the implementation, they were supervised and instructed by their academic supervisors. However, at the same time they had considerable autonomy concerning what and how to achieve the objectives of the case.

The SSO/SSO+ campaigns promote simple energy efficiency tips that can be easily applied in everyday life. Their focus is on changing the personal habits of students and energy democracy is beyond this objective.



Democratic energy future

Energy democracy has not been among the goals



FOCUS ON DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

The SSO/SSO+ campaigns at Sofia University (UoS) aimed to reduce students' energy usage and exposure to energy poverty. **Involvement in the campaigns was open to all students** at the UoS. Moreover, the campaigns involved creating social media pages where tips for saving energy were regularly posted. These social media pages are still accessible to the wider public, including people who are not students at UoS, who are now able to take advantage of the information posted online.



Equity and justice

Involvement is fully open

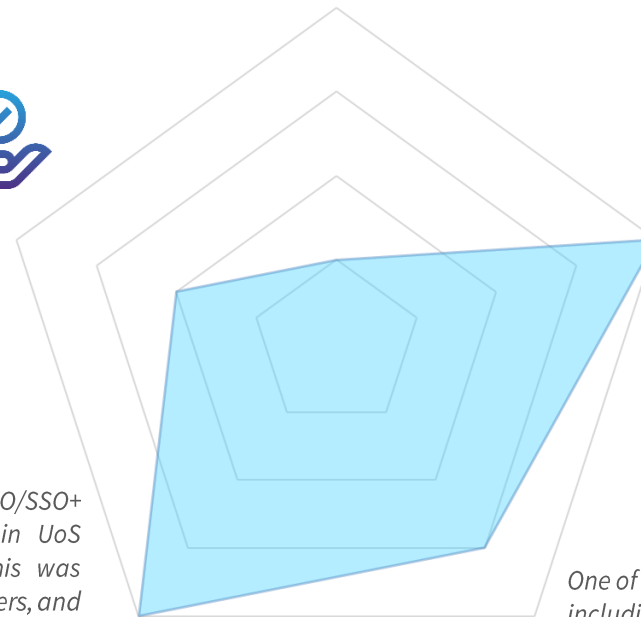
One of the objectives of the SSO/SSO+ campaigns within the SAVES2 project, including Sofia University in Bulgaria, was to reduce students' carbon footprints and thus positively affect the environment. Therefore, it can be claimed that **environmental sustainability was also addressed by the campaigns as a spillover effect** of the activities involved with the case, but energy saving was the focus of the initiative.



Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability is part of the process; energy remains the main focus

Citizen control
Citizens' voices remain hardly heard or taken into account



Reducing the carbon footprint was one of the objectives of the SSO/SSO+ initiative. By reducing their energy consumption, students in UoS managed to reduce their carbon footprints significantly. This was achieved by following the tips they received, the monthly newsletters, and information about energy-saving and dormitory visits during the academic year aimed at raising awareness face-to-face.

Carbon limit
Explicit recognition with mention/objective of reaching the max. carbon footprint



Further information



www.facebook.com/UOSSSO



bulgaria.studentswitchoff.org



saves2@uni-sofia.bg



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Source of images

<https://saves.nus.org.uk/articles/interest-is-high-at-university-of-sofia>



Case study authors

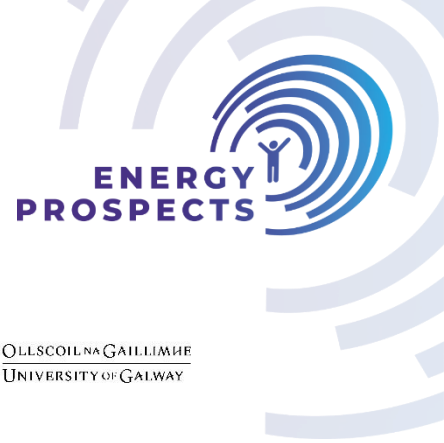
Mapping and detailed case research by:

Adriana Dimova, Desislava Asenova & Marko Hajdinjak, ARC Fund

Case study summary prepared by:

Kristóf Vadovics, Edina Vadovics & Anita Szóllóssy, GreenDependent Institute

Proofreading by Simon Milton



EnergyPROSPECTS partners

University of Galway (GAL)
University Road, H91 TK33, Galway, Ireland



Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB),
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 50-1050, Bruxelles, Belgium



GreenDependent Institute (GDI),
2100 Gödöllő, Éva u. 4., Hungary



Universiteit Maastricht (UM),
Minderbroedersberg 4-6, 6200 MD, Maastricht, Netherlands



Applied Research and Communications Fund (ARC Fund),
Alexander Zhendov Street 5, 1113, Sofia, Bulgaria



Notre Europe – Institut Jacques Delors (JDI),
18, rue de Londres 75009, Paris, France



University of Latvia (UL),
Raiņa bulvāris 19, LV-1586, Riga, Latvia



Technische Universität Berlin (TUB),
Straße des 17. Juni 135, 10623, Berlin, Germany



Universidade da Coruña (UDC),
Rúa da Maestranza 9, 15001 A Coruña, Spain



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