

Treefrog Toys Final Report

The Tree Frog Toys Project was a group effort to create toys for children who do not receive adequate sensory stimulation. Multiple studies show that children who are sensory deprived before age two have a harder time with social interactions and struggle cognitively when they enter school. Furthermore, children within our own school who have special needs could use the toys to self soothe as we got the patterns from autism websites. (UNSDGs 3 and 4) Our frogs are made out of recycled fabric donations and plastic from bake sales (used as stuffing and supplied by our fellow GSL team: Waste Warriors). We wanted to make sure every child in the Open Arms orphanage had a unique toy of their own while educating our own school about waste management and providing valuable sewing skills that can be used in the future. (UNSDG 12). We were therefore delighted when our project appeared in the journal for The American Chamber of Commerce (Seoul) and “The Banner” as a sustainable product with minimal financial output as everything was created from waste.



Despite school closure, roughly 50 toys were produced for children in the orphanage with 11 leftovers to give to our Learning Support Department and 5 prototypes for our neighboring school. We cut each frog by hand and made them each totally unique. Each of our frogs sports a unique name tag carrying a message for each child that is in Korean as the orphanage volunteers mentioned that no child had their own toy and this is crucial for building their identity. This became obvious when we prototyped our designs with year two (who showed us their own sensory toys). Service is compulsory for MYP so, in the sixth-grade design class from our neighboring school, our frogs were featured as the main objective of their sewing unit, where kids would learn design skills as well as



the environmental benefits of reusing some of the 500,000 tonnes of fabric waste that is generated yearly. They have since purchased brand new machines for our group to use as needed and we provided frog

prototypes for their display. Despite school closure, this unit will be taught yearly and the toys will be donated to Open Arms or Seoul National Hospital.

Prior to lockdown, we presented at the PYP exhibition for 90 fifth-graders about GSL and how service can sometimes be a long process and how change does not occur overnight - you have to work for it. During the lockdown, 5th-grade staff donated waste fabric and sewed frogs to ensure that we could meet our target and this was an important lesson about collaborating with other schools and organizations.

So far our favorite parts of the project have been interacting with our school friends because it offers a new way to bond. Learning a new skill and teaching it to others is very rewarding. We were able



to invite a large group of friends to sew on a Saturday evening while we listened to music and ate pizza once we were happy with the number of frogs that had been cut.



Another highlight of our time spent ‘Frogging’ is the fact that our frogs are simply irresistible! Mrs. Olivier’s cats snatched a frog and refused to let it go when she had brought them home to

sew due to Coronavirus. Sure enough, we decided that we had a frog to spare and let Little Star and Carrot keep their frog.

Some of the most important knowledge that we figured out through this project were basic sewing skills and collaboration as many of us were at completely different levels in our ability to sew and not all of us could speak Korean. As such, we realised that collaboration was critical as we needed to develop a production chain with each person relying on someone else to use their talent and we had to provide roles for every volunteer (some of whom had physical disabilities). We also needed to sanitise the toys in case orphans have weak immunity. We relied on the Waste Warriors for materials and other schools for sewing machines and labor. We then had to learn to teach others in a succinct, sensible way so that we could work without constant interruption and explanation, and children as young as 6 could participate.

Blocking out time for a long project such as this is very important because you need to be able to set a realistic timeline with goals and deadlines so that we can have batches of frogs ready to deliver along with meeting other deadlines such as reports and blog posts. Again, collaboration was important to delegate roles and handle disruptions like school closures.

We are proud that our frogs are bringing smiles to all species providing authentic educational experiences. Tree Frog Toys will be back next year in 4 different sections of our school and we look forward to working with our new sewing machines and partners in other school sections.