

SustainaGals' Upcycling Project

The Global Sustainable Goals Competition
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Source: Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

understand the negative effects of the fashion industry, they will change their behaviours and help out the environment. By sharing our experiences with the refugee children, we wanted to encourage them to repurpose their own clothes.

Which goals did our project address?



By trying to encourage others to consume clothing more sustainably, we hope to create a community which will be more aware of their impacts on the planet and how we can collectively make a big impact by making small changes such as repurposing old clothes.



Our project addresses the 12th goal because we are trying to encourage people to limit consumerism and the amount they use and waste. To buy more sustainably.



This then relates to the 13th goal as by using less resources you will have less of an impact on the environment, for example, wasting less water, and there will be less pollution emitted from the global fashion industry.



By working with organisations like UNIQLO and UNHCR, we are communicating with different groups such as NGOs and companies in order to address the Goals stated above. In this sense, we are engaging more and more members of the community and working together in order to make a difference.

Video Link (includes photos of our group in action): [Here](#)

Disclaimer: If it is to be shared publicly the faces of the UNHCR children will need to be blurred out.

What we achieved:

- We organised an upcycling event with the school where UNIQLO came to talk about fast fashion and sustainability in the industry. This was promoted on our schools youtube channel by younger students. [Here is a link to the video](#) (7:55). In the lead up to the event we encouraged students from both campuses to donate any old clothes which we combined with that donated from UNIQLO. The day involved students making their own upcycled outfits and having a fashion show which was judged by the sustainability department of UNIQLO Malaysia. Overall, there was lots of positive feedback from the day. [Here](#) is a link to UNIQLO Malaysia's facebook post about the day.
- We held a workshop with children from UNHCR tie-dyeing old t-shirts. The school donated the tie-dye for us to use, and we used the shirts left over from our previous event. This was an activity the kids really seemed to enjoy as everyone had smiles on their faces!
- As part of the school's STEM week, we included a workshop where students could make their own beeswax wraps using old fabric (left from the upcycling event). This was great as it taught students how one could use old fabric, and they could take home their beeswax wrap to use. The beeswax for the event was paid for by the school. After all the events, the leftover fabric (700.4kg!) was donated to our school's partner Kloth Cares.

Evaluation

Originally, our project proposal included selling upcycled items at our school's annual spring fair and donating funds to UNHCR. However, due to Covid-19, the school's fair was cancelled and we were unable to do this. We were also planning to give a presentation to a school committee meeting including parents, teachers and students from both primary and secondary school discussing what our school is doing to help the environment, however this was cancelled as well due to the Coronavirus outbreak. This would have been super valuable for both us and the community as it would have firstly allowed us to carry out in-depth research about the negative effects of fast fashion, and secondly, hopefully the people at the meeting would have learned something too.

Collectively we have spent roughly 80 hours on this project either planning or executing our events.

What did we learn?

One of the many skills that we developed is our leadership. We each had to take charge of different aspects of our events including showing the UNHCR children how to tie dye and teaching the students how to make beeswax wraps. This enabled us to practice our public speaking skills as we had to give clear instructions and address a number of audiences including the UNHCR children where there was a bit of a language barrier. We featured on our school KLASS TV series to promote our events and spoke in assemblies as well. In addition to communicating with the school we also had to connect and exchange emails with outside organisations such as UNHCR but also UNIQLO who helped with our workshop. All of these skills will be beneficial to us in our future workplaces.

We initially thought that our project wouldn't gain much support, especially considering the stigma surrounding environmental activism amongst a lot of people nowadays, but we were pleasantly surprised. We had around 80 students sign up for the upcycling event which was really encouraging, and everyone loved getting involved. It just goes to show that students care about the environment a lot more than we thought, and they really do love getting involved. We also improved our problem solving skills by adapting our eco day activities. We wanted to incorporate activities that would interest people and make them attend with the main theme relating to sustainability. Hence our beeswax wraps were an appropriate choice as it is a popular sustainable item and is fun and easy to make.

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