



Toy Story Project

OUR TEAM



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THE AIM

The Toy Story Project works to reduce the stigma surrounding the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This initiative targets awareness towards students and teachers across Jakarta whose passion and work would go on to impact the lives of children with ASD in Jakarta. In order to achieve this, we held online workshops as a platform that allows stories of children with ASD to be heard. Our workshops helped raise awareness to autistic learning approaches while actively engaging participants in making sensory-toys. The workshop experience illuminated the needs of children with ASD and allowed participants to take a step closer in understanding their struggles. The toys created, which help stimulate the senses of children with ASD and enhance their learning, were donated to our community partners - HOPE Special Needs Center and Yayasan Heesu "Cahaya Cinta."

THE TARGETED SDGs



Helped reduce the stigma surrounding ASD, and promoted acceptance and esteem among children with ASD



Sensory toy stimulants help engage and enrich the learning for children with ASD, which further aids their focus when learning



Resourcefully used recycled waste materials to create the sensory toys



Partnered with community organizations who are already taking care of children with ASD, to make collaborative efforts in enhancing the lives of the children

THE JOURNEY & SETBACKS

Finding materials and deciding on a prototype

The initial steps of our project required extensive research and interviews with several experienced teachers and mentors who understand the needs of children with ASD. Through this, we narrowed down our product to puppets as being the most effective sensory toy which would enrich these children's learning experience. After many challenges, we developed several prototypes with unique features, including:

- Made of waste-recycled materials
- Met safety standards
- Various colors on each puppet
- Different sensory materials or aspects
- Easily recreated at high standards
- Required simple sewing experience/training

Our prototype was mainly made of waste-recycle materials, specifically towels and clothes. We acquired these materials by setting up a clothing drive in Sekolah Pelita Harapan Sentul City with permission from the school, in which we collected materials from teachers, staff, and students. Our team also contacted several factories and fashion designers for waste materials that could be used for the puppets. Remaining materials such as the puppet's eyes, sewing kits, and glue required funding. Thus, several team members attended a project meeting with British School Jakarta's funding council to share Toy Story Project's aims and budget. We successfully received funding to purchase, package, and ship our puppet making kits to all our participants.

Preparing for the workshop

Due to the nature of our workshop being online, our team had to conduct various promotional tactics, in which we had to consider the different student policies in our individual schools. We first had to communicate with the schools' leadership team and ask for permission before we started promotions, which included various methods such as school-wide presentations, flyer distributions, mass emails, and Instagram promotions that we also had to dedicate a lot of time to prepare. Each of our team members were then further pushed to step out of our comfort zone to promote our workshops in front of hundreds of students and teachers.

Packaging and deliveries

The situation of the COVID-19 pandemic required us to work the extra mile to ensure the packaging and delivery of the puppets and their materials arrive securely. Our team had to contact various parties to bring all the puppet materials together and make sure each puppet-making package had all the materials needed for participants to work with. It was extremely important that nothing was missing in each package and we label the addresses correctly as we had to deliver them to participants' individual houses. For those who chose to pick up their package from school, we also had to organize this by asking permission from the school and communicating the details with the participants.

Workshop preparation and implementation

Preparation for the workshops required intensive organization, planning, and practice rundowns through Zoom. To ensure our two-hour-long workshops stayed interactive, we included a Kahoot game to introduce general facts about ASD, a talent show performance from children at Yayasan Heesu, and breakout rooms for the toy-making session, to allow more quality interactions with the participants. Due to the time limit of each workshop, we also prepared extra resources, which included a detailed puppet-making video and a step-by-step instructions manual to guide participants who were falling behind during the workshop, so they could continue working afterwards. As our target audience represented a breadth of participants, this presented a language barrier between guest speakers who only spoke the Indonesian language and participants who only understood English. This challenge motivated our team members to plan the translation of the entire talk show, question and answer session, and any communication from our end to ensure all our participants would understand.

The main challenge we encountered was participants with different sewing skill levels, which meant we had to cater to different audiences. This was a challenge for us considering the limited time and setbacks of teaching sewing online. Our first workshop went over the two-hour limit as we were not accustomed to the different paces of our participants' sewing. Through this, we developed patience as we took extra time to practice teaching to one another and finding the most efficient method to make teaching easier, such as the ideal camera angles for participants. Even as we learned and improved our workshops though, they were far from perfect. Two hours before the second workshop, we were informed that our guest speaker for the talk show could not come. We had to make quick judgments and improvise our plans, and one of our team members ended up speaking about her experiences with an autistic sibling. This demonstrated our continued passion and motivation to implement our workshops at the highest standard despite unexpected problems.

Collecting the puppets

The final stage of our project was to collect the puppets from our participants. These puppets were sent to one collection point whereby they were fixed up and sanitized by our team members. This was a challenging stage as it required lots of time and effort into redoing parts of the puppets that were fragile or incorrectly put together. This stage of the process required intense dedication not only to the hands-on fixing work, but also the online aspect of communicating with participants. Hundreds of emails were sent regarding drop-off and delivery, and it was challenging to keep on top of all the logistics. After all the puppets were successfully fixed up, they were repackaged and sent off to the respective organizations with each bag labeled with a personal note according to the child it was for. Once the puppets arrived at the organizations they were gifted to each child. Our team members also went above and beyond creating a puppet show video in the Indonesian language incorporating songs and interactive videos to model to the children how these puppets can be played with.

As high school students coming from different schools, each of our team members had different schedules, and at certain times, some were more busy than others. However, we persevered through this by dividing jobs and being compassionate with one another -- taking in the extra work when the others were overwhelmed with school, and by staying connected with each other. There were points throughout the journey where we felt burnt out facing the struggles and trying to reach out to participants who weren't as cooperative. But in these moments, we learned to be resilient and remember who and what we're doing this for -- to bring joy and smile to the faces of these children.



THE OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

- Implemented **3 successful online workshops**, reaching students and teachers from more than **8 different schools** in Jakarta
- Received positive feedback from workshop participants:
 - Rated **4.6/5** for effectiveness in **furthering knowledge** about ASD
 - Rated **4.2/5** for **clarity** of puppet-making instructions
 - Rated **4.6/5** for **interactiveness** of workshop speakers
 - Rated **4.7/5** for **enjoyment** of workshop
- **Enhanced learning** and promoted **creativity, imagination, and peer-to-peer interaction** to over **40 children with ASD**
- Raised awareness regarding ASD to over **60 participants**, in an effort to **reduce its stigma**
- Developed **trusted relationships** with two community organizations



INVOLVEMENT

- **50+** student participants
- **10+** teacher participants
- **40+** ASD children impacted
- **8 schools** in Jakarta reached
- **2 special needs organizations**
- Participants involved from **5+ cities**
- **1350+** hours as a team
- **270+** hours as individuals



SKILLS DEVELOPED

- Resilience
- Collaboration
- Commitment
- Leadership
- Communication
- Organization
- Public speaking
- Patience
- Creativity

TESTIMONIES

"I used to think that people with ASD are sick and disabled people, but through the workshop, I now see them as people like us who were born different, and just like us, they also have potential to learn how to be better. I think they really teach us how to be grateful for everything we have in our lives, and not take things for granted."

- Anonymous Workshop Participant

"Thank you so much to the Toy Story Project team. We will use these puppets every morning to tell our children stories and communicate with them. Thank you for giving us such a beneficial and unique tool for our children's learning."

- Pak Iwan, Head of Yayasan Heesu Orphanage

