

Improved - Knowledge on Puppy Mills Group 4-10

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Abstract

Improved - Knowledge on Puppy Mills is a project aimed towards raising awareness on puppy mills amongst young children, getting them to understand how the parents of the puppies they purchase from pet shops could be severely tortured back in puppy mills. The project includes many resources, namely a video to educate the young children on puppy mills, bookmarks, pencil cases, water bottles, plastic mugs and posters to remind the children who have watched the video that dogs are being tortured in puppy mills and they should adopt puppies instead of buying them so as to reduce the demand for puppies from puppy mills, and hopefully cause a decline in such businesses in Singapore.

1 Introduction

1.1 Rationale

Puppy mills are a form of animal abuse. Dogs in puppy mills are poorly treated and kept in bad conditions. Despite this, such businesses are currently thriving in Singapore. According to CNN Travel, 98% of all pet-store puppies come from puppy mills. An improvement in the knowledge of people about puppy mills will encourage people to adopt puppies instead of buying them and hence reduce the demand for puppies from puppy mills, and possibly even stop puppy mills from thriving in Singapore.

1.2 Objectives

Protecting animals is everyone's responsibility. We should treat animals the same way as we treat human beings. After all, animals are living things as well, and there are no acceptable reasons to confine and abuse dogs, simply to generate profit. Therefore, with our project, we aim to raise awareness of the cruelty taking place in puppy mills, and encourage young children (lower primary) to adopt puppies instead of buying them.

1.3 Target Audience

Our target audience are young children as they are the ones who tend to pester their parents to buy puppies, and are the main ones who want puppies (to play with), but are also more easily educated and more impressionable than adults. They can therefore tell their parents not to buy puppies to stop puppy mills from thriving.

1.4 Resources

Animated Video (made with PowToon)

Link for video (Version 1):

<https://www.powtoon.com/online-presentation/e0NbBAxicFa/?mode=movie#/>

Link for video (Version 2):

<https://www.powtoon.com/online-presentation/fG1LuPNn9m8/puppies-2/?mode=movie#/>

The video was made with PowToon, and the narration was recorded using a voice changer application with which the voice was then converted to a girl's voice.

Through the animation, children get to know where puppies could have come from before arriving in pet shops. It shows that dogs in puppy mills were kept in poor conditions and badly abused. It then ends by encouraging them to adopt instead of buying puppies.

Based on feedback from our first pilot test, a second version was created. The video was lengthened, including more details on the bad living conditions and how dogs are treated badly in puppy mills.

Bookmarks, plastic mugs, pencil case, water bottles and posters created all bear the same message: **There is animal abuse in puppy mills, and that puppies should be adopted and not bought to stop further abuse.**

Bookmark

The bookmark is designed in the eye-catching theme colour of our project, tangerine and a reminder for the children not to get their parents to buy puppies but adopt them.



Design of the bookmark

Pencil Case, Water Bottle and Plastic Mug

The pencil case, water bottle and plastic mug were created not only to remind children to adopt and not to ask their parents to buy puppies, but also to spread the word to those who see these items used by the children.

Based on feedback from the first pilot test, students wanted the water bottles and plastic mugs to be more colourful, so the same design of stickers were placed on more colourful water bottles and plastic mugs.



Design of the Pencil Case



Design of the Water Bottle (Version 1, Left; Improved Version, Right)



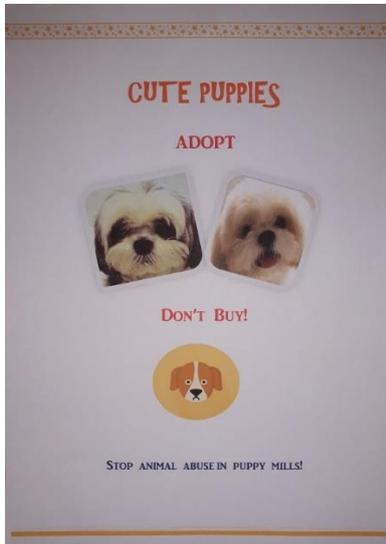
Design of the plastic mugs (Version 1)



Design of the plastic mugs (Improved Version)

Poster

The posters we created are to be placed in the schools we pilot test in to remind the children about the cruelty in puppy mills and that they should adopt puppies instead of buying them.

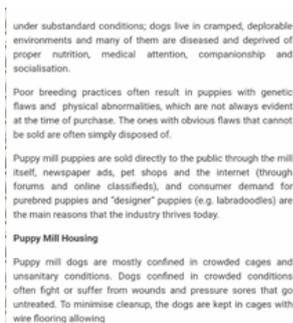


Design of the posters

2 Review

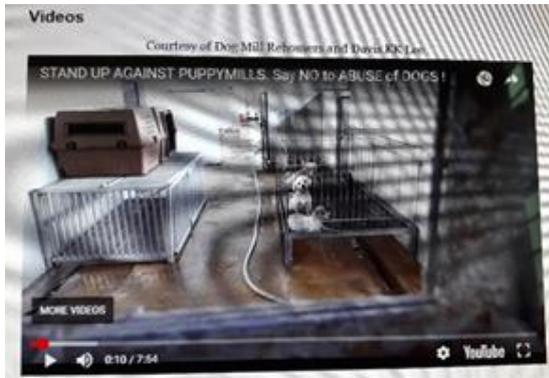
The SPCA has always been a strong promoter for the adoption of pets, instead of buying them, with many campaigns stating so. Other agencies like AVA and ACRES aim at protecting animals in general but not, in the case of dogs in puppy mills. We therefore feel these efforts are insufficient as plainly telling the public to adopt puppies without giving them a reason has little effect.

The online resources on the website provided by ACRES and SPCA about puppy mills are also too wordy and hence unattractive.



Screenshot of sgpuppies.com

The video on puppy mills on sgpuppies.com show only the barking dogs in the mills with no narration, thus it would not draw people to watch it.



Video on sgpuppies.com

3 Methodology

3.1 Needs Analysis

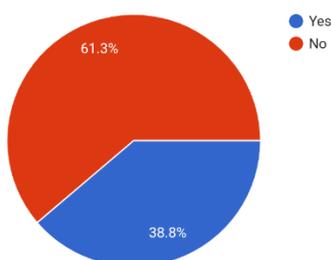
A needs analysis was conducted to ascertain the relevance of such a project. As the target audience previously was HCI students, it was carried out using a Google Form distributed to our cohorts, classmates and CCA members of our Project group members.

The survey included questions asking whether the respondents knew what puppy mills were and if they would be interested to have other resources, besides what is available online to learn more about puppy mills.

3.2 Survey Result

80 students in HCI responded to the survey, and it has shown that only a low 40% has some knowledge on puppy mills, which may not even be in-depth, while the rest have never even heard of puppy mills.

80 responses



With the poor survey results coming from HCI students (who are in the age range of 13 to 15), we reckoned that there should be more young children who have no idea what puppy mills are all about. We change our target audience to young children, as they are more receptive and impressionable to achieve the maximum impact of knowledge transfer/improvement.

3.3 Development of Resources

Information regarding puppy mills was researched through the internet, before being compiled and simplified to aid the young children in understanding and benefitting from our resources.

The animated video was created with PowToon, and a voiceover was recorded with Voice Changer by AndroidRock before being converted to a young girl's voice.

The other materials (not including poster) were bought from Diaso, with the designs being printed onto sticker paper and pasted onto them.

3.4 Pilot Tests

3.4.1 First Screening at Greenwood Primary

The pilot testing was carried out in the following sequence:

1. Introduction
2. Screening of animated video
3. Distribution of feedback forms
4. Quiz
5. Collection of feedback forms

Pilot tests are conducted to ascertain that our resources are effective and useful.

We conducted our first pilot testing in Greenwood Primary School, on a group of Primary 2 and Primary 3 students. Total of 270 students.

The bookmark was given to all Primary 2 students and one class of primary 3 students.

Some of our created resource materials like mugs, water bottles and pencil case were given as prizes for quiz.

3.4.2 Second Testing at Lakeside Student Care Centre

The second testing was carried out in Lakeside Student Care Centre, on a group of Primary 1, 2 and 3 students. Total of 26 students. (It was carried out with a smaller group of children in Student Care Centre as there was no positive responses from other primary school we wrote in to)

The same procedure for testing has been carried out.

Bookmarks, mugs, water bottles and pencil case were given as prizes for quiz.

London Choco Rolls instead of bookmarks were distributed to all participants.

4 Outcome & Discussion

4.1 Quiz

After the video was screened during the pilot tests, a quiz was carried out with the following questions, the options in bold being the correct answer.

- 1) What is a puppy mill?
 - a) Pet shop
 - b) Pet hotel
 - c) A place where dogs are trained to run around
 - d) A place where dogs are forced to give birth to puppies**

- 2) How are the dogs in puppy mills?
 - a) Sad**
 - b) Well-fed
 - c) Happy
 - d) Anxious

- 3) Why are there lots of puppy mills?
 - a) Many people adopt puppies
 - b) Many people sell puppies away
 - c) Many people like to visit puppy mills
 - d) Many people buy puppies**

- 4) Where are dogs kept in puppy mills?
 - a) Clean, but small cages
 - b) Dirty, large boxes
 - c) Dirty, small cages**
 - d) Wide, open fields

- 5) What should you do when you want a puppy?
- a) Buy one
 - b) Go for a walk
 - c) Go overseas
 - d) Adopt one**

During the first pilot test,

- With 7 students answering the questions, 2 answered incorrectly. Thus, the percentage of understanding is about 71.5%.

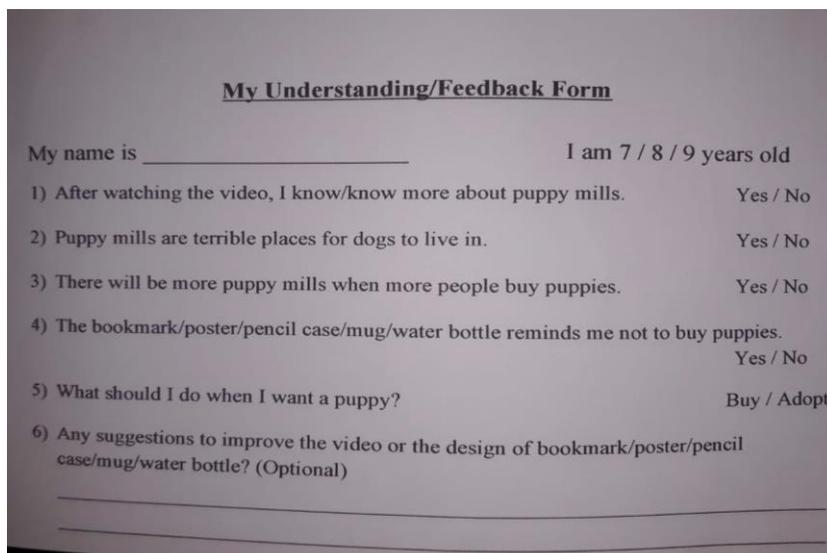
During the second pilot test,

- With 9 students answering the questions, 4 answered incorrectly. Thus, the percentage of understanding is about 55.5%.

4.2 Results of Feedback Form

4.2.1 Feedback from First Pilot Test

The feedback form that we distributed is as follows:



My Understanding/Feedback Form

My name is _____ I am 7 / 8 / 9 years old

1) After watching the video, I know/know more about puppy mills. Yes / No

2) Puppy mills are terrible places for dogs to live in. Yes / No

3) There will be more puppy mills when more people buy puppies. Yes / No

4) The bookmark/poster/pencil case/mug/water bottle reminds me not to buy puppies. Yes / No

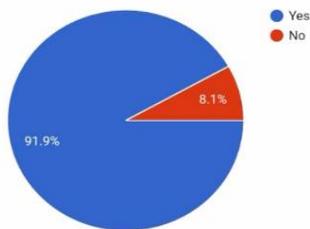
5) What should I do when I want a puppy? Buy / Adopt

6) Any suggestions to improve the video or the design of bookmark/poster/pencil case/mug/water bottle? (Optional)

These are the results compiled after it was keyed into a Google form:

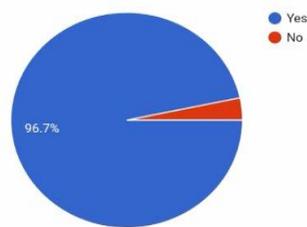
Puppy mills are terrible places for dogs to live in.

270 responses



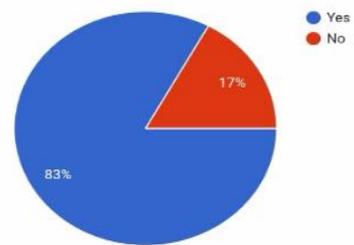
After watching the video, I know/know more about puppy mills

270 responses



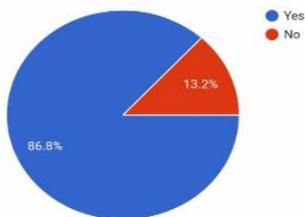
There will be more puppy mills when people buy puppies

270 responses



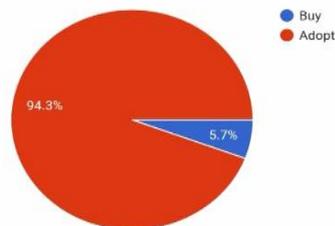
The bookmark/poster/pencil case/mug/water bottle reminds me not to buy puppies.

265 responses



What should I do when I want a puppy?

263 responses



The results were all positive.

There were also some relevant suggestions from the students:

- Make the mugs and water bottles more colourful
- Make the video longer
- Show how puppies are kept in bad conditions in puppy mills

4.2.2 Feedback from Second Pilot Test

The feedback form that we distributed is as follows:

My Understanding/Feedback Form

My name is _____ I am 7 / 8 / 9 years old

1) After watching the video, I know/know more about puppy mills. Yes / No

2) The video is long enough and it explains how dogs are kept in bad conditions in puppy mills. Yes / No

3) The mug & water bottle look nice with the design in different colour. Yes / No

4) The poster/ bookmark/pencil case/mug/water bottle reminds me not to buy puppies as dogs are abused in puppy mills. Yes / No

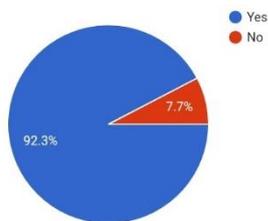
5) What should I do when I want a puppy? Buy / Adopt

6) Any suggestions to improve the video or the design of bookmark/poster/pencil case/mug/water bottle? (Optional)

These are the results compiled after it was keyed into a Google form:

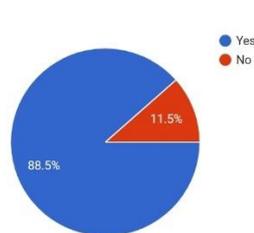
After watching the video, I know/know more about puppy mills

26 responses



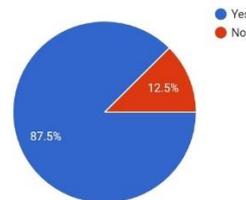
The video is long enough and it explains how dogs are kept in bad conditions in puppy mills

26 responses



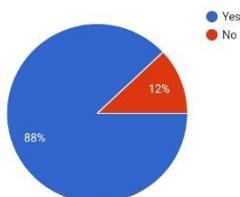
The mug and water bottle look nice with the design in different colour.

24 responses



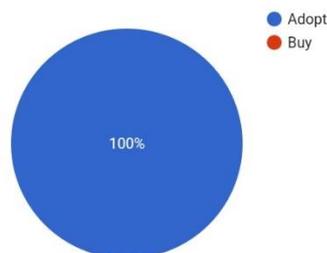
The poster/bookmark/pencil case/mug/water bottle remind me not to buy puppies as dogs are abused in puppy mills.

25 responses



What should I do if I want a puppy?

26 responses



The results were all mostly positive.

4.3 Analysis of Differences in Results

The second testing was conducted with a very much smaller group of children (26 of them) versus that of 270 children in the first test. Out of the 26 children, 15 are Primary 2 & 3 students and 11 are Primary 1 students (which make-up 42% of the test population). While for the first test, a total of 260 students were all from Primary 2 & 3.

Although the survey result from the second test may look poorer in comparison with the first test, with this group of younger children (mainly primary 1 students) involved in the second testing, 92.3% of these students from the second test did understand more about puppy mills from the video, and 88.5% of them agreed that the improved version of the video tells them more about how dogs are kept in bad conditions in puppy mills.

87.5% of the students agreed that the improved version of the mugs and bottles look nicer, and there is a 1.2% improvement in the responses, compared to the first test, that the created materials remind them not to buy puppies.

Most importantly, we achieved a 100% response that they should adopt and not buy puppies.

4.4 Limitations & Possible Future Works

As the project is currently running on funds from group members, it will not be sustainable without funding from organisations such as SPCA or fund-raisers.

Should the issue of financial sustainability be resolved, the group can visit more schools and student care centres to continue achieving the objective of raising awareness for puppy mills.

5 Conclusion

Improved – Knowledge on Puppy Mills has been a fairly challenging project to undertake as it required lots of hard work in the creation of the numerous materials and ensuring good quality is maintained at the same time.

Overall, the resource materials created are effective in improving the knowledge of children on puppy mills and hence can play a part in stopping such businesses from thriving in Singapore. The group members sincerely hope they have made an impact in reducing the demand for puppies from puppy mills.

6 Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals who helped make this project a success.

Ms Cheryl Foo (Principal, Greenwood Primary School) for allowing us to conduct our first pilot test in Greenwood Primary School;

Ms Faith Kwan (Supervisor, LSC Jurong East) for allowing us to conduct our second pilot test in Lakeside Student Care Centre;

Our mentor for his guidance and aid throughout the project;

All the participants of our pilot tests for providing us with invaluable feedback

7 References

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Ong, N. (2010, October 18). *Singapore: puppy-mills-pet-store*. Retrieved from: <http://travel.cnn.com/singapore/puppy-mills-pet-store-337803/>

The Hidden Ills of Puppy Mills. (2017, February 8). Retrieved from: <https://rafflespress.com/2017/02/08/the-hidden-bill-of-puppy-mills/>

Images

Screenshot of *sgpuppies.com* (n.d.) Retrieved from: <https://sgpuppies.com>

Video on *sgpuppies.com* (n.d.) Retrieved from: <https://sgpuppies.com/learnmore/videos/>