

IKEA Design Workshop

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The IKEA design workshop was conceived and realized as a collaborative project between Zehra Baran (Deputy Store Manager IKEA Nagakute) and the Graduate School of Design and Architecture represented by Mikako Mizuno (Dean), Junko Mori (Professor, Industrial Innovation Design Department) and Neda Firfova (Lecturer, Industrial Innovation Design Department) in September 2018. Preceding the workshop, Zehra Baran held a guest lecture at the Graduate School of Design and Architecture which served as an introduction to IKEA's principles of product conception and production. The workshop was a unique chance for the students to get hands-on experience with conceiving products and proposing ideas based on the democratic design approach used in IKEA.

Keywords: Sustainability • Democratic Design • Life at home

1. Introduction

As presented in the introduction lecture, IKEA's belief that everybody has the right to functional design and better products is materialized according to a democratic design approach which needs to satisfy five crucial design elements: form, function, low price, quality and sustainability. Our workshop participants were tasked to consider this approach while designing a product, proposing an idea or providing a solution which will enable people to lead a more sustainable life at home.

In this context, sustainability was defined as a characteristic of products/ideas/solutions that would enable as many people as possible to:

- lead a healthier life
- reduce energy use
- reduce water use
- reduce waste and
- recycle.

The workshop lasted for three hours; two for work and



Fig. 1 Play Composter, Group 1
(Participants: Okuno, Ohashi, Adachi)

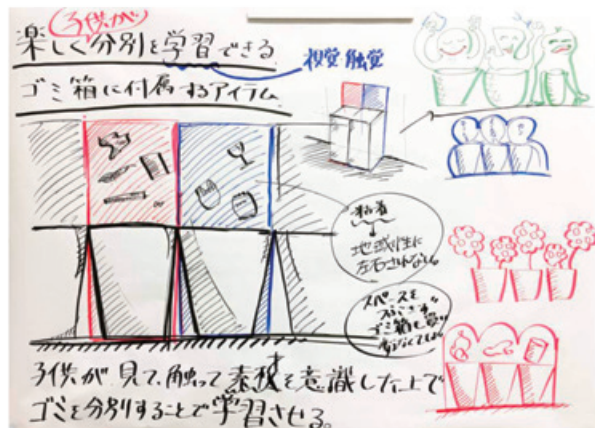


Fig. 2 Garbage Separation Stands, Group 2
(Participants: Hirosaki, Nakamura, Kato, Akita)

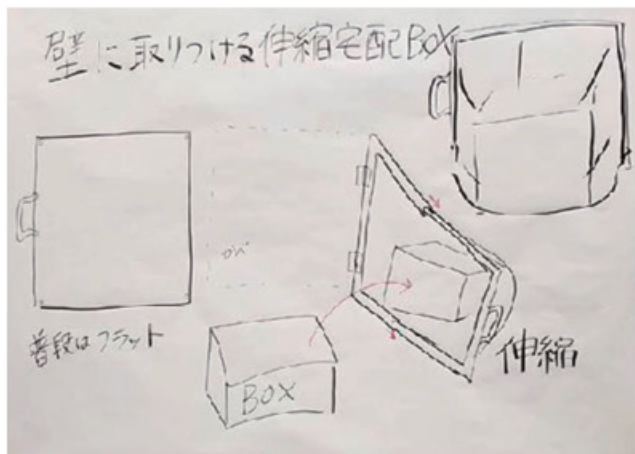


Fig. 3 Extendable Mailbox, Group 3
(Participants: Mori, Miyamoto, Miyamoto)

one for presentations and comments. Therefore, the participants were encouraged to develop their ideas in a sketch format.

2. The products/ideas/solutions from the workshop

2.1 Group 1 - Play Composter

This group's garbage composter for domestic use utilizes the energy of children at play and can potentially be installed in playground equipment or other public spaces but can also function on its own as one unit. Revolving and rolling help the content to mix and a fertilizer for a home garden to be produced. The composter unit is imagined as a metal cylinder to be filled with garbage and shut tightly. Light materials such as paper and wood were avoided due to smell and leakage possibilities.

2.2 Group 2 - Garbage Separation Stands

This group entered the process while discussing issues such as attachment and memory in relation to trash and they came up with an idea for sticker stands that define the separate types of it. They are to be used right next to the trash cans at home. Their first purpose would be to teach children about recycling, and the second to actually

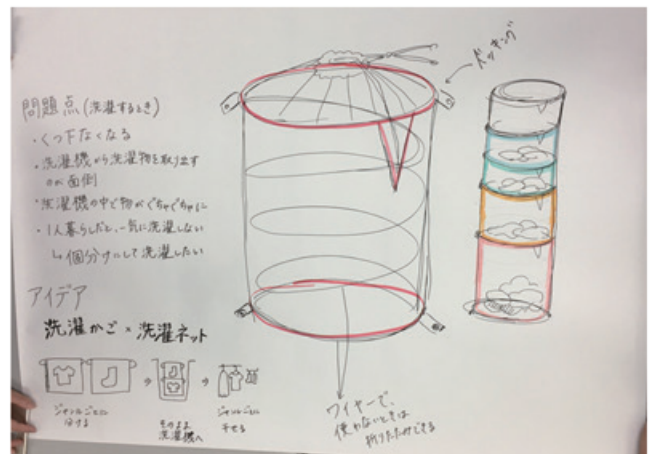


Fig. 4 Washing Machine Insert, Group 4
(Participants: Iwata, Chikusa)

remind people of the separation rules, as they differ from city to city or prefecture to prefecture.

2.3 Group 3 - Extendable Mailbox

Although big apartment buildings have large mailbox storage spaces in the entrances, individual houses or smaller apartment buildings have no solution deliveries of larger parcels. The group attempted a proposal for such a mailbox attached to an individual house. Imagined as a stretchy attachment to the house wall, it would change shape according to the parcel that is put inside. Once closed and empty it would be flat.

2.4 Group 4 - Washing Machine Insert

Challenging washing problems such as transfer of clothes from the washing machine to a laundry basket and the various types and sizes of clothing items that are being washed in the same machine, this group proposed a product that combines two existing products: a laundry basket and a laundry net. The product proposes that before washing you insert your clothes in the separate sockets according to item types and insert the whole laundry basket inside your washing machine. Sockets that are not used can be flattened for compact storing, as the product is designed around a spiral wire.



Fig. 5 Foldable Trash Can, Group 5
(Participants: Nakagawa, Iwata, Kato, Furui)

2.5 Group 5 - Foldable Trash Can

Since households vary in sizes and household members, there are many different trash can sizes. Also garbage separation in Japan varies from one prefecture to the other. To tackle these two issues and to generally decrease the space trash cans take up in the households, this group proposed a somewhat universal trash can design with partitions that can be moved around or removed depending on the needs and the size of the household.

3. Guest's comments

The evaluation criteria for the proposed product/idea/solution were:

- Is it innovative and does it make a change in our lives?
- Does it apply to many people's needs?
- Is it functional, understandable and ergonomic?
- Is it low price? (Does the proposal answer to securing a low price during production and delivery?)
- Is it sustainable? (Which material is used, how is it produced, packaged and delivered)
- Does it have a simple and good form?
- Does it have a good quality level? (Value for money)

Following these preconceived questions, our guest Zehra Baran made generous comments to all the groups that presented their ideas.

3.1 Comments to Group 1 - Play Composter

The product applies to a large group of people in its start - children, and it proposes a fun way of teaching children about the recycling and the environment. The form is simple, but longterm use and cleaning need to be reconsidered as the product has movable parts. Points that need to be reconsidered:

- Safety for children, considering that metal was proposed as a material
- Cleaning, as leftovers can produce rust with time
- Usability, metal is a heavy material, especially when the product is full and to be used.

3.2 Comments to Group 2 - Garbage Separation Stands

The group thinking process was good and there was a good intention behind the idea to teach recycling to children and the general public in a fun way. However, the product itself could be more innovative to create a reason for the consumers to buy it.

3.3 Comments to Group 3 - Extendable Mailbox

This was a well researched problem as people nowadays use online shopping much more than before. Life is dynamic and it's difficult to wait at home to receive a parcel. It is also sustainable because the delivery company doesn't need to drive back again and again to deliver the package. However, the final product can be improved in terms of form and function. Product material needs to be reconsidered, centre of gravity for when its full, how it looks and whether people would buy it and install it on their house on their own.

3.4 Comments to Group 4 - Washing Machine Insert

Good idea and simple solution to everyday challenges

at home, encouraging everyone to be more organized, clean and tidy. As the product uses a material that is already widely used in washing clothes, or a “net”, it is easy to understand the new product. In addition, it is important to consider the opening and how to insert clothes, as a good product would provide easy access and easy use. It would also be interesting to think about standardizing the product for the Japanese and overseas market, as there may be differences in sizes and shapes of washing machines.

3.5 Comments to Group 5 - Foldable Trash Can

The group thinking process was good and the group challenged themselves to find a product idea for organizing the trash while minimizing the space. The vertical adjustment works much better than the horizontal one, its easy to understand and use, but also easy to implement and transport. It has a very simple form, however the material and production techniques should be taken into consideration more.

4. In Conclusion

Living our lives in a fast paced society, one rarely stops to really reevaluate the established ways we live our lives and why we make certain choices on daily bases, but the reconsideration of those choices gives possibility to big social change and building of awareness that the design field cant go without. The IKEA design workshop provided exactly that kind of possibility for the students in addition to the valuable first hand experience with democratic design approaches and the concept of sustainability. As a result, it has sharpened the students observation and critical skills towards their own environment, their own basic everyday, the everyday of those around them and their daily habits; skills crucial on the way to becoming a

designer as well as a better, more involved member of society.