THINKS

Wish for WASH

Wish for WASH x The Weber School

Design Jam
Fall 2020 Series

A Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Workshop Series Reflection
November 2020

Compiled, written and edited by
Anya Smith-Roman, Abigail Emerson, and Jasmine Burton

Some of the Wish for WASH Design Thinking Team with Staff Members from the Weber School
INTRODUCTION

Wish for WASH (W4W) is a social impact organization that seeks to innovate in the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector through culturally specific research, design, and education. Since 2018, W4W has been expanding its WASH-related educational programming by piloting Design Jams for intergenerational and intersectional audiences.

Amidst the uncertainty of the past year due to COVID-19, the W4W design thinking and educational outreach team has began conducting a new pilot project around facilitating Virtual Design Jams on Zoom.

The Weber High School in Atlanta, Georgia approached W4W with an interest in being a part of this pilot program in order to increase design thinking and WASH knowledge in its high school student body.

The three, two-hour Design Jams that W4W held for Weber focused on:

- **WATER** - Running Out of Water & Running Out of Time
  How might we save water?

- **SANITATION** - Redesigning Public Toilets
  How might we ensure that public toilets are not dirty?

- **HYGIENE** - Period Problems
  How might we destigmatize menstrual health and hygiene in young girls?

These Virtual Design Jams consisted of W4W members who acted as *facilitators, coaches, and notetakers* for all three workshops.

- the **W4W facilitation sub-team** created the overview and general logistical flow of the event (Anya, Abigail and Jasmine)

- the **W4W coaching sub-team** assisted with planning elements and small group discussions during the event (Anya, Abigail, and Jasmine)

- the **W4W notetaking sub-team** captured general notes on the process as well as the ideas/concepts generated by the participants (Sarah, Jillian, Grace, Debbie, Simrill, Sarah, Lexie)

- the **participants** were an average of 8-12 high schoolers from the Weber School (additionally an average of 4-6 Weber School Staff members were present as well)
RUNNING OUT OF WATER

The Water Design Jam was hosted on November 11 2020 with 11 high school participants who were challenged to consider the problem that Atlanta, their home city, is running out of water. The workshop began with a virtual icebreaker activity and a quick overview about the design thinking process. Participants learned about the United Nation’s 6th Sustainable Development Goal targets, related to improving the global water crisis, and about how much water the average American household uses. Teams then took on the perspective of an Atlanta-based parent of two kids and brainstormed specific problem statements and prototyped solutions to reduce water consumption in their bathrooms.

Some of the final ideas that were prototyped and pitched included:
- a gamified app to inspire people to save water
- a timer for showers to automatically turn off the water after a designated time,
- and a superhero book that teaches kids about the importance of saving water.
REDESIGNING PUBLIC TOILETS

The Sanitation Design Jam was hosted on November 17, 2020 with 12 high school participants (no repeated students from the water session). They were challenged to redesign public toilets. Following an icebreaker, a quick overview of design thinking and a mini lecture on sanitation services and public bathrooms from a WASH expert, participants empathized with an Uber driver who has kids and needs to use public toilets.

They were split into virtual breakout rooms where they created problem statements for their user and brainstormed creative ideas.

Final prototyped and pitched ideas included:

- a bathroom feature on the Uber app that tells drivers where nearby public toilets are,
- a smart, hygienic diaper that can be bought and disposed of, and
- creature comfort pods, community access bathroom pods throughout the city that are open to the public.
PERIOD PROBLEMS

The **Menstrual Health Design Jam** was hosted on November 30 2020 with 10 high school participants that were of different genders (with some new and repeat participants). They were challenged to tackle period stigma. The beginning this session was as follows: SPARK introductory activity, another review of design thinking and a presentation that covered menstrual health innovation as well as the history of period pain/stigma from a subject matter expert. **Participants were then encouraged to empathize with and take on the perspective of an Atlanta-based 5th grader for this design challenge.**

Once in their virtual break out rooms, they worked together to create problem statements and empathy maps for their user before launching in various product and systemic level ideations.

Some of the prototyped and pitched ideas included:

- **Dad Pads**, an app to support single dads with menstruators
- **Period Doula TikTok** Accounts
- **Wearables** such as a sweatshirt used to mitigate period pain.
Overall, the W4W Design Thinking and Community Outreach team views this first three-part Design Jam series pilot with Weber as a success.

Weber students and teachers alike were actively learning and participating in the process, and the W4W team grew, iterated and learned significantly through the series as well.

Staying true to the design thinking process, the W4W team sought continued feedback from both the students and the Weber staff in order to continue iterating and improving the flow of the virtual workshops and the content (especially since most students who joined were attending as an after school or extra credit activity).

**SOME STUDENT FEEDBACK**

- 82% of participants reported feeling Somewhat Familiar with the WASH sector after attending one of the three Design Jams

- 81% of participants reported feeling Very Familiar (n=4) or Somewhat Familiar (n=5) with Design Thinking after attending one of the three Design Jams

- an average of 7-8 of the high school participants reported that they “loved” attending one of the three Design Jams

**SOME TEACHER FEEDBACK**

“I did not know what to expect as I am not familiar with any aspect of design. Thank you for introducing me into something new. Even though it was intended for the students I really enjoyed the project.”

“I attended all three DT jams. I love that the design jams moved from least stigmatizing to most stigmatizing and in the future I wonder if Weber could make this a series of mini classes where students attend all sessions and really delve into building empathy within each topic. I loved the empathy maps and story building exercises of the intended user. It was a really easy framework for the students to understand without shying away from really understanding the user experience.”

“I love things like this, and I am so happy I finally got involved, but would like to do even more! I also have a product idea, not for water conservation, but something I am trying to start for a business.”

“I felt like the group text input on the brainstorming worked out well overall but was either a little confusing or a little hard to use for some - it would be great if you could figure out an easier method/tool for this!”
The most common piece of anecdotal and constructive feedback was that participants wished we could have more time, especially for the more nuanced and or stigmatized topics such as our conversations about Menstrual Health.

The W4W Design Thinking and Community Outreach planning team’s biggest takeaway was that in the future, when doing multiple sessions with one organization in a short timeframe, the workshops should be planned, coordinated and structured to build off of one another in a more streamlined and intuitive series format.

This would allow participants that attend all of the Design Jams in the series to hear about new design thinking examples and to learn new tools that are coordinated throughout all the sessions. This pre-series coordination and planning would also make it easier for the facilitating and coaching teams. Additionally, the W4W facilitators and coaches were able to develop and iterate their unique facilitation and coaching methods to fit within the allotted time frames. The W4W team is excited to continue iterating and growing these Design Jams!
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www.wishforwash.com
jasminekburton@wishforwash.com