

Project Bridge

Bridging the Gap between Business and Environment



Protecting Forests Builds a Bridge

In 2007, the SIFE team at Yonsei University in South Korea launched a project to build a bridge between environmental sustainability and responsible business practices. The team began by providing consulting services for the Seoul Forest Park Conservancy, an organization established to preserve forests in the capital city. The SIFE students improved the organization's public relations and marketing efforts through eco-friendly education sessions for kids and additional projects that increased community participation. Building upon this initial success, the SIFE students recognized the opportunity to partner with other organizations and businesses to achieve an even greater environmental impact.

Bridge Supports Recycled Products

The following year, the SIFE students partnered with Eco-Party Meary, a company struggling to sell its variety of products made from recycled items. The business turned old street banners into bags, clothing into dolls, and leather from sofas and purses into wallets, but a lack of qualified employees and sales channels presented major obstacles. The SIFE team first addressed the lack of manpower necessary for redesigning the old items into useful products and cultural artwork. They organized 20 Yonsei University students who volunteered to fill the void until a sufficient number of employees was hired and trained.

Crossing the Bridge to Success

With the business fully staffed, the SIFE students next turned their attention to increasing sales. The corporation that owned Eco-Party Meary also controlled several retail stores, so the team leveraged this relationship to place the items in these shops. Next, they developed an advertising campaign to generate interest among potential consumers, organizing exhibitions at a popular art gallery and the university campus that attracted more than 1,500 visitors and totaled over \$1,100 in sales. The company even received an invitation to showcase its products at the New York Museum of Modern Art. The SIFE students are now planning an online marketing campaign to promote Meary's new store with its exclusive line of recycled products.

Painting the Bridge Green

The next objective for Project Bridge is to expand greenery in Seoul. The SIFE team has approached several apartment buildings and hospitals with a plan to plant vegetation on their rooftops to benefit a burgeoning city where available space is extremely limited. An environmental foundation has provided a thousand planting boxes to start this effort, and the SIFE team proposes that apartment residents could care for and sell the plants while hospital patients might appreciate having a garden where they can relax. This project has bridged the gap between the old mindset that what is good for business and what is good for the environment are mutually exclusive and the new ideology that environmentally sustainable business strategies can benefit both the planet and the bottom line.

