

Prior to the covid pandemic, the generous support of the Nineveh Trust enabled the Frozen Ark communications project officer, with the help of volunteers to facilitate and deliver workshops aimed at children and adults in a variety of settings and helped to raise awareness of the Frozen Ark, biobanking and an understanding of the threats to endangered animal species. Stand displays and workshop materials were purchased with the support of the Nineveh Trust. We will be able to use the stand and materials for future events.

The Frozen Ark attended three events held at Central Library, Aspley Library and Wollaton Hall (Science in the Park) as part of the Nottingham Festival of Science and Curiosity (FOSAC) in February/March 2020. The events were attended by the general public and were mainly families with young children. The activities undertaken were a map game requiring children to identify the animal under threat, its habitat and provided the opportunity to discuss the threats of extinction faced by the animal. An activity extracting DNA from strawberries gave the opportunity to explore how the biobanking of DNA can help to save a species. We also developed a DNA modelling activity for younger children, introducing the concept of DNA to a younger audience.

Individual evaluation reports were compiled for all the events with total attendance estimated for the Wonder Festival and Science in the Park being 8,000 to 9,000 people. Total engagement is difficult to quantify but the Frozen Ark team engaged directly with 200+ people at the three Science and Curiosity events and an estimated 10% of the 5,000 people attending the Wonder Festival.

Some selected comments from the volunteers leading the engagement activity and one of the participants included:

- *“We saw many people and were able perform many DNA extraction demonstrations that worked well.”*
- ***“My favourite activity was the strawberry DNA because I enjoyed watching the process happen”***
- *“We got lots of good feedback which is encouraging. I feel as though we communicated the idea of biobanking well for the general public.”*



Public engagement activity

In addition to the four Nottingham based events, the Frozen Ark materials produced to improve engagement as part of this project were used at the following events in Cardiff and South Wales:

- WEEN ~ Wales Ecology and Evolution Network
- Cardiff Science Festival February 2020
- Pint of science – “Elephant in the room” stand up talk.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we were not able to progress with our planned programme of hands-on educational activities with schools and the planned sample collecting as outlined in our application. Instead, we switched our educational activities on-line and on to our social media platforms where possible.

Frozen Ark staff and volunteers devised on-line activities such as word mazes, art competitions and emoji activities to specifically engage and educate children and families. All activities had an endangered species theme and were designed to raise awareness about biobanking, DNA and animal extinctions. These were on our social media pages and our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter following increased exponentially.

In February 2021 we contributed to the Nottingham Festival of Science and Curiosity which was switched from being a hands-on festival to being fully online, with items being screened on local TV, in a festival magazine and on the website. For this festival, our Professional Training Year students produced a video called ‘What Nature has done for us’ in which they discussed how their love of nature had influenced their STEM career choice. The idea being to encourage young people to take up STEM careers. This was showcased on the festival website. This video was viewed 481 times. The Frozen Ark project officer appeared in an episode of ‘Wollaton Watch’ one of a series of film shorts aimed at primary age children about local endangered UK species, which was shown on local TV, this had 6475 views. We also contributed activities such as Frozen Ark word searches and mazes to the festival magazine which was distributed to 13000 people including schools and community groups. Whilst we weren’t able to carry out our planned educational activities, we were pleased to be able to reach our audience in this way.

We do aim to resume our educational and sample collecting activities once conditions are more favourable and we will be able to use the materials developed and paid for by the Nineveh Trust. Once again thank you for your generous and invaluable support.