Raise your hand if you have ever had a menstrual period.
Why our research is interesting

Globally, menstruation is surrounded by silence and shame

The stigma surrounding menstruation creates barriers for menstruators

Encouraging women to have open conversations about their periods is necessary to combat these challenges
RESEARCH THAT PRECEDED THIS STUDY

FROST SUMMER 2021

Project Mentor

Dr. Joni Roberts
B.A. in Political Science
M.A.T. in Elementary Education
Dr.P.H. in Public Health

Julia Pennington
Graduated Liberal Studies Major

Sarah Hamp-Adams
3rd Year Public Health Major

Sidra Bugsch
Graduated Kinesiology Major
RESEARCH THAT PRECEDED THIS STUDY

Literature Review

1. Created list of working search terms
2. Used search terms to find relevant research articles on databases
3. Uploaded relevant articles to Covidence
4. Title and abstract screening
5. Full-Text review
6. Used remaining articles to develop final recommendations
7. Brainstormed and created campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer to Peer menstruation education and big sister groups</td>
<td>R. Divateedi; C. Sharma; et al 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. A. McMahon; P. J. Winch; et al 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. Rahman; H. Islam; et al 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V. Chandra-Mouli; S. V. Patel 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y. Kabir; R. Chandrakrishna; B. Talebiani 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. McCabe 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. G. Vaughn 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook as a mode of communication</td>
<td>A. Bebla; M. Diwan; et al 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. Rahman; H. Islam; et al 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive video to teach menstrual health</td>
<td>P. Joshi; S. Gir 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Light; N. Matinghure-Muzondo; C. Ferguson; T. H. Muzondo; N. H. Lunga 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. Moon; I. Kim; H. Kim; et al 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Ranimaya 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness programs on menstruation to break the silence and taboos</td>
<td>T. Chirambo, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. N. Yadav; S. Joshi; R. Poudel; P. Pandeya 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Talk surrounding menstruation</td>
<td>J. Crichton; J. Okai; et al 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. C. McHugh 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a story-like approach to portray a taboo subject in a more accessible and understandable way</td>
<td>A. Bebla; M. Diwan; et al 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. Avasthi; P. Suryavanshi 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. McCabe 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass media messages</td>
<td>A. Aftab; R. K. Biswas 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. Avasthi; P. Suryavanshi 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. Rahman; H. Islam; S. S. Rodrick; K. Nusrat 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Rani; P. Kumari; N. Rani 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address factors that are not in the concrete definition of MHM i.e., education, reduction of slame, stigmas, and taboos</td>
<td>J. Hennegan; C. Dolan; M. Wu; L. Scott; P. Montgomery; 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Gandhi; M. A. Subramanyam 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE SYSTEM AND HOW IT ADDRESSES GAPS

STORYTELLING

MY FIRST PERIOD.

Meet Nitisha!

Nitisha began menstruating at the age of 13 while living in India.

"I woke up after my afternoon nap and went to the washroom. I looked at my underwear and saw blood. I cried for the first time in my life. Why is this happening to me?" Nitisha said. "I was scared and didn't know what to do. I consulted my mother, but she was also confused. I don't want to tell anyone because people in my village would laugh at me."

It was a lot for the 13-year-old me. I felt like the rules were too much and was a smart girl who knew there was no need to be scared. I called someone in the village. They told me to stop crying and come and talk to them."

SOCIAL MEDIA
Goal: To encourage and empower menstruators to comfortably talk about their period
METHODS

THE QUALRICS SURVEY AND IRB APPROVAL

Link to Qualtrics Survey
What country were you in when you got your first period?

- North America: 63.4%
- Asia: 25.6%
- Africa: 7.3%

How old were you when you got your first period?

- 12 - 14: 72%
- 8 - 11: 13.4%
- 15 - 17: 14.6%

Average Age: 12.8 years
How comfortable do you feel when talking about menstruation?

- Extremely Comfortable: 39.7%
- Somewhat Comfortable: 41.2%
- Somewhat/Extremely Uncomfortable: 14.7%
- neither: 4.4%

How effective is storytelling at fighting stigmas?

- "Extremely or Very Effective": 80%

How do you think most people describe their first period?

- Negative: 52.2%
- Neither: 43.3%
- Positive: 4.5%
**Inadequate or Lack of Education Before Menarche**

22% of menstruators lacked sufficient education

"I didn't know it was a period since I wasn't told anything. I asked classmates about it and was told by their parents to not encourage indecent conversations."

- Aarushi, India

**Location of First Period**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the menstruators who started their period at school, 34% did not have access to menstrual products

"Sadly, there were no sanitary products in the bathroom so I just stuffed toilet paper into my underwear."

- Abigail, USA
Menstrual Support From Mother or Female Relative

73%

"I first spoke to my mom and she gave me everything I needed." -Rachel, South Africa

Did Not Seek Support

17%

“I didn't really seek support from anyone because I decided it would be easier if I just dealt with it myself.” -Anonymous Menstruator, USA
Need For Menstrual Health Education

- Provide education on menstrual hygiene so that menstruators are prepared for their first period
- Provide continuous education to facilitate ongoing conversations that empower menstruators to make informed decisions about how they manage their period
Increase Access to Menstrual Products

• Enable girls to stay in school by ensuring access to menstrual hygiene products, especially in the Global South

• Partnering with organizations that provide safe and sustainable menstrual products
FUTURE DIRECTION
MORE STORIES!

>100 RESPONSES ON QUALITRICS

600 RESPONSES FROM POLL FISH
FUTURE DIRECTION

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Qualitative data → Coding → Codes → Iterative comparison → Themes

NVIVO
FUTURE DIRECTION

FOLLOW UP SURVEY

How comfortable do you feel when talking about menstruation?

- Extremely uncomfortable
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Extremely comfortable

How do you think most people describe their first period?

- A positive experience
- Neither negative nor positive experience
- A negative experience

How effective is storytelling at fighting stigmas?

- Not effective at all
- Slightly effective
- Moderately effective
- Very effective
- Extremely effective
FUTURE DIRECTION

CURRENT PARTNERS

Canada  India  Kenya  Nigeria
FUTURE DIRECTION

NEW PARTNERS

- DIRECT MESSAGE ORGANIZATIONS ON INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK
- CAMPUS ORGANIZATIONS
FUTURE DIRECTION

Five Year Plan Outline

YEAR 1
What is your “First Period Story”?

YEAR 2
Describe your Menstrual Routine.

YEAR 3
What misperceptions have you heard about periods?

YEAR 4
What do you love about your period?

YEAR 5
What advice would you give yourself before your first period?
AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

William and Linda Frost

Our Partners
• Claudia, itsAugust
• Aashrina, PEESafe
• Racheal, Live Healthy Initiatives
• Iris, YAPD4africa

Dr. Joni Roberts

The Team
• Sydney Carolan
• Kate Petit
• Nicola Manalili