



PERIOD PRIDE

BREAKING TABOOS AND EMPOWERING
WOMEN AND GIRLS



Introduction

The Institute for Social and Youth Development (ISYD) proudly presents the comprehensive report of our Period Pride campaign, an initiative aimed at raising awareness and improving menstrual health and hygiene among young girls and women in different corners of Pakistan.

ISYD launched this campaign in collaboration with Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA), Chanan Development Association (CDA), and Prime Minister's Youth Program under Young Omang Project and has been a cornerstone of our efforts to break taboos, empower communities, and create a #PeriodFriendlyWorld.

By promoting menstrual health awareness, the campaign aimed to educate, engage, and empower individuals especially young girls and women, enabling them to embrace menstrual health with confidence and dignity.



Objective

The primary objective of the Period Pride campaign was to educate and empower young girls and women about menstrual health and hygiene, dispel prevalent myths and misconceptions, and advocate for better access to menstrual hygiene products. Through a combination of educational sessions, community engagement, and stakeholder consultations, the campaign aimed to foster an environment where menstruation is understood, accepted, and managed with dignity and confidence. Our goal was to create a supportive community that encourages open discussions about menstruation and promotes the health and well-being of women and girls.

Overview

The Period Pride campaign was designed to address the critical issues surrounding menstrual health and hygiene management (MHM) in Pakistan. Through a series of targeted activities, including educational sessions, multi-stakeholder consultations, and community engagements, we aimed to dispel myths, provide essential health education, and improve access to sanitary products.



Outcomes

- Students exhibited a marked increase in their understanding of menstrual hygiene, including proper practices and the health implications of inadequate hygiene.
- Participants were able to identify and challenge common myths and misconceptions surrounding menstruation, fostering more informed and positive attitudes.
- Menstruating individuals reported feeling more comfortable and confident in managing their menstrual health, effectively reducing embarrassment and stigma.
- There was a noticeable improvement in hygiene practices among participants, such as regularly changing sanitary products and utilizing proper disposal methods.
- Enhanced peer support networks emerged, with students feeling more at ease discussing menstruation and providing advice and support to each other.
- Schools and institutions began considering policy changes to better support menstrual hygiene, such as providing free sanitary products and enhancing sanitation facilities.
- The stigma reduction and increased support led to improved mental health outcomes, with students feeling less isolated and more supported.
- Many participants became advocates for menstrual hygiene within their communities, pledged to actively spread awareness and advocating for improved resources and support.

Challenges

- In some areas deep-rooted cultural taboos and stigma surrounding menstruation made it difficult to openly discuss and address menstrual health issues, hindering the effectiveness of our educational efforts.
- Many communities lacked fundamental knowledge about menstrual health, which posed a significant challenge in educating individuals and promoting healthy practices.
- Ensuring access to essential menstrual hygiene products and facilities was a major hurdle, particularly in remote or economically disadvantaged areas.
- Reaching remote areas and ensuring consistent delivery of educational materials and resources proved to be logistically challenging and resource-intensive, impacting the campaign's reach and effectiveness.

Activities by ISYD

Activity 1

Community Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	40
Date	20 th February, 2024
Place	Skills Centre of Sister Zeph, Gujranwala
Facilitator	Ms. Fatima Yaseen

Highlights:

On 20th February 2024, ITA and ISYD launched the first session of their campaign on MHM in a Foundation “**Zephaniah** Women's Education and Empowerment Foundation (ZWEE)” in Gujranwala, with students who come to the institute for learning courses. The session commenced with an introduction by the presenter and students. In the session, Ms. Fatima Jaffer and Ms. Fatima Yaseen highlighted the significance of openly discussing menstrual hygiene and eradicating the stigma associated with menstruation. After the Introduction, the presenter started the session with the students asking what they know about Menses, periods, and MHM. Participants come up with different answers like, they come once every month, it is unclean blood, a harrowing time, etc.

The presenter began by elucidating the biological process of menstruation, the common words used for menstruation, what students do when they have their first menses, how openly they talk about this topic, etc. then continued with explaining the menstrual cycle, and in she told the students that this cycle begins on the first day of menstruation, known as day 1 and the menstrual cycle is a recurring process in the female reproductive system, lasting approximately 28 days, involving hormonal fluctuations and physiological changes to prepare the body for a potential pregnancy. Another presenter discussed emotional and physiological changes during menstruation, and this led to an activity in which students were asked to write what changes a girl can face emotionally and physically during menstruation. They came up with different answers like they want to eat sweet things, they want to go for a walk, want to keep quieter, feel pain in the back, they don't like to go in any event, are angrier, etc. Various menstrual hygiene practices were discussed, including the importance of using clean menstrual products, changing them regularly, and maintaining proper genital hygiene to prevent infections. Common myths and misconceptions surrounding menstruation were addressed. Students were encouraged to critically analyze cultural beliefs and societal taboos related to menstruation. For this, the presenter did another activity with students in which they were scattered into 4 groups, and each group was given to write 10 myths and taboos related to menstruation. The importance of ensuring equitable access to menstrual hygiene products for all individuals, regardless of socio-economic status, was emphasized. Strategies for addressing barriers to access were discussed.

The presenter highlighted the importance of prioritizing menstrual health as a component of overall well-being and also gave tips for managing menstrual discomfort and promoting self-care practices.

A dedicated question-and-answer session allowed students to seek clarification on any doubts or queries they had regarding menstruation and menstrual hygiene. The presenter provided informative responses, ensuring that all questions were addressed comprehensively. The MHM session concluded with a recap of key takeaways. Students were encouraged to apply the knowledge gained from the session in their daily lives and to advocate for menstrual health awareness in their communities.



Activity 2

Community Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	18
Date	26 th February, 2024
Place	Jamatpura, near Railway Station, Kasur
Facilitator	Ms. Saima

Highlights:

The second installment of the campaign took place at Idara-E-Taleem O Aagahi, Lahore, on 26th February 2024. Ms. Fatima guided the session, commencing with an introduction to menstruation followed by an exploration of the associated taboos and stigmas. The presenter delved into the topic of periods, addressing terminology, the initial experiences of menstruation, and societal comfort levels in discussing it. Subsequently, the menstrual cycle was elucidated. Activities related to MHM were also performed. The session concluded with an interactive segment featuring participant questions and the sharing of personal experiences, fostering a supportive atmosphere for open dialogue.



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Activity 3

Community Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	33
Date	28 th February, 2024
Place	Parish House, Renala Khurd, Okara
Facilitator	Ms. Fatima Jaffar

Highlights:

ISYD in Collaboration with Idara e Taleem o Aagahi ITA conducted enlightening community awareness sessions under the MHM campaign #PeriodPride at Parish House Church Renala Khurd. These sessions focused on educating attendees about menstruation, promoting hygiene practices, and dispelling myths.

Ms. Fatima elaborated on all MHM concepts to participants and distributed hygiene products to girls to ensure their dignity and hygiene during menstruation.



Activity 4

Community Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	15
Date	1 st March, 2024
Place	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA), Lahore
Facilitator	Ms. Fatima Jaffar

Highlights:

This session of the campaign was held at Idara-E-Taleem O Aagahi, Lahore on 1st March 2024. The session started with the introduction of menstruation, further the taboos, and stigmas related to Menstruation. Ms. Fatima facilitated this session. The presenter talked about periods—what they are, how people usually refer to them, what happens when someone has their first period, and how comfortable people are discussing this topic. Then, they went on to explain the menstrual cycle. The session ended with questions from participants and shared experiences.



Activity 5

Community Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	26
Date	1 st March, 2024
Place	St. Mary's High School, Mariam Nishat Colony, Lahore Cantt
Facilitator	Ms. Jennifer Wycliffe

Highlights:

Ms. Jennifer led the session and managed the productive discussion overall. The session commenced with an exploration of puberty, focusing on the physical and emotional changes individuals undergo during this period. Ms. Jennifer then delved into the significance of understanding one's body and the importance of self-care practices. Following this, the topic shifted to the myths and misconceptions surrounding puberty, aiming to debunk common misunderstandings. The session concluded with an engaging Q&A session, allowing participants to seek clarification and share their insights, fostering a supportive and informative environment.



Activity 6

Community Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	30
Date	2 nd March, 2024
Place	Al-Faisal Public School, Kasur
Facilitator	Ms. Jennifer Wycliffe & Ms. Fatima Jaffar

Highlights:

This brilliant session was given by Ms. Fatima Jaffar on Menstrual Hygiene and Management. She highlighted the significance of discussing menstrual hygiene openly and eradicating the stigma associated with menstruation. She also talked about the taboos attached to menstruation and how social, economic, and psychological factors affect MHM. This led to an activity in which students were asked to write about what changes a girl can face emotionally and physically during menstruation.



Global



Activity 7

Community Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	15
Date	11 th March, 2024
Place	Village Noor Pir, District Ghotki, Sindh
Facilitator	Mr. Annas

Highlights:

This brilliant session was given by Ms. Fatima Jaffar on Menstrual Hygiene and Management. She highlighted the significance of discussing menstrual hygiene openly and eradicating the stigma associated with menstruation. She also talked about the taboos attached to menstruation and how social, economic, and psychological factors affect MHM. This led to an activity in which students were asked to write about what changes a girl can face emotionally and physically during menstruation.



Activity 8

Community Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	15
Date	11 th March, 2024
Place	Village Muhammad Pur, Taluka, Uauro, District Ghotki, Sindh
Facilitator	Mr. Annas &

Highlights:

As a part of the "Period Pride" campaign, a session in Gotki focused on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM). Beginning with an introduction, presenters emphasized the significance of MHM and addressed the physical and emotional changes that occur during menstruation. The discussion extended to cover taboos, myths, and stigmas surrounding menstruation, aiming to dispel misconceptions and promote awareness.



Activity 9

Community Awareness Session

Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	16
Date	29 th March, 2024
Place	Dar-UI-Falah, Lahore
Facilitator	Ms. Fatima Jaffar

Highlights:

As part of the "Period Pride" campaign, a session in Dar-ul-Falah was conducted with the widow females along with their daughters on Menstrual Health. Beginning with an introduction, the facilitator shared the importance of hygiene concerning physical challenges. The discussion covered material-related information, taboos, myths, and stigmas surrounding menstruation, aiming to dispel misconceptions and promote awareness.



Activity 10

Celebration of Menstruation Day & Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	37
Date	28 th May, 2024
Place	Girls Madrassa, Lahore
Facilitator	Ms. Naimat-Ur-Raheem

Highlights:

To mark World Menstrual Hygiene Day, ISYD, in collaboration with ITA, organized a vibrant and impactful event under our Period Pride advocacy campaign. Led by a youth trainer, Ms. Naimat-Ur-Raheem, the activity combined fun and informative sessions designed to break taboos and empower girls to take control of their menstrual health. Participants were engaged in discussions and activities focused on hygiene, self-care, and body positivity within a safe and supportive environment. The session offered a chance to demystify menstrual health and highlight the strength of girls, fostering an atmosphere of openness and confidence.



Activity 11

Community Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	30
Date	8 th June, 2024
Place	Aitchison School in Muzaffarabad, AJ&K
Facilitator	Ms. Rimsha Chaudhary

Highlights:

The Institute for Social and Youth Development (ISYD), in partnership with Idara e Taleem o Aagahi (ITA), organized an advocacy session as part of the #PeriodPride campaign, focusing on menstrual health education, at Aitchison School in Muzaffarabad, AJ&K. The session aimed to raise awareness about menstrual health and break stigmas associated with menstruation among students. Activities and informative discussions were conducted to empower young individuals with knowledge and promote period positivity.



Activity 12

Celebration of Menstruation Day & Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	33
Date	24 th June, 2024
Place	The Church of Christ in Warispura, Faisalabad
Facilitator	Ms. Aqsa Kanwal

Highlights:

ISYD, in partnership with Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA), conducted another impactful awareness session as part of the #PeriodPride campaign at the Church of Christ in Warispura, Faisalabad. Led by our dedicated trainer, Ms. Aqsa Kanwal, this session was designed to educate young girls and women about the importance of menstrual health and hygiene. The event began with an engaging introduction to menstrual health, covering the biological aspects and emphasizing the importance of proper hygiene practices to prevent infections and improve overall well-being. Ms. Aqsa Kanwal provided detailed information and practical advice, making the content accessible and relatable to all participants.

During the session, sanitary pads were distributed, ensuring attendees had access to essential menstrual hygiene products. This practical support was vital in addressing some of the challenges these women and girls face. Along with that, the session focused on debunking common myths and misconceptions surrounding menstruation, addressing cultural taboos and encouraging open dialogue. Ms. Kanwal shared best practices for maintaining good health and hygiene, including tips on using and disposing of sanitary products properly and general self-care during menstruation. The event concluded with an interactive Q&A segment, allowing participants to voice their concerns and receive personalized advice. Overall, the session empowered attendees to take control of their menstrual health through engaging discussions and interactive activities, reflecting ISYD and ITA's commitment to promoting a #PeriodFriendlyWorld.



Activity 13

Celebration of Menstruation Day & Awareness Session	
Topic	Menstrual Hygiene Management
Participants	45
Date	26 th June, 2024
Place	St. Anthony Catholic Church, Ram Dewali, Faisalabad.
Facilitator	Ms. Aqsa Kanwal

Highlights:

Institute for Social and Youth Development (ISYD), in collaboration with Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA), recently hosted an enlightening awareness session as part of the #PeriodPride campaign at St. Anthony Catholic Church in Ram Dewali, Faisalabad. Under the guidance of our committed trainer, Ms. Aqsa Kanwal, the session aimed to engage young girls and women in crucial discussions about menstrual health and hygiene. The interactive nature of the session allowed participants to gain a thorough understanding of menstrual health, emphasizing the importance of hygiene practices to maintain overall well-being.

Participants were provided with sanitary pads to ensure they had the necessary resources for proper menstrual care. In addition to this support, the session focused on dispelling prevalent myths and misconceptions about menstruation, fostering an environment where cultural taboos could be openly discussed and challenged. Ms. Kanwal shared valuable information on best practices for daily health and hygiene, covering practical tips on the use and disposal of sanitary products and self-care routines during menstruation. The event empowered attendees to confidently manage their menstrual health and promoted a broader understanding of menstrual hygiene within the community.



Other Activities

Awareness Raising activities around MHM

1. **Video Recording:**

Under the campaign "Period Pride" 5 videos were recorded on Menstrual Hygiene Management, and youth were interviewed in this activity. They talked about different aspects of MHM, challenges, and taboos related to menstruation.

2. **Blog:**

<https://p-pens.com/shaping-tomorrow-a-deep-dive-into-menstrual-hygiene-challenges-in-pakistan/>

3. **Posters:**

- <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/59wqJ29UDgj1VqUV/?mibextid=oFDknk>
- <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/fdFfzdhTtwVdRbAv/?mibextid=oFDknk>
- <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/gw7FQ4JxLB4y5czx/?mibextid=oFDknk>

4. **Posters Competition:**

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/yZdFE23i9tTxD2L3/?mibextid=qi2Omg>



Other Activities

Awareness Raising activities around MHM

5. Pictures with Different Messages:

As part of our #PeriodPride campaign, ISYD engaged our team and volunteers in an impactful online activity to spread awareness about Menstrual Health Management (MHM). We encouraged them to share personal quotes and pictures related to MHM on social media. These contributions helped disseminate important messages about menstrual health, dispelling myths, and promoting hygiene practices. This online initiative aimed to create a supportive and informative digital space, fostering a broader understanding and acceptance of menstrual health in our communities.

The image displays four social media posts from the #PeriodPride campaign, each featuring a quote and a photo of a participant. The posts are arranged in a collage. Each post includes the ISYD logo, the Prime Minister's Youth Programme logo, and the text "PERIOD PRIDE BREAKING TABOOS AND EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS".

Post 1 (Top Left): Features Nouman Khalid from Artivism Academy. The quote reads: "Menstrual hygiene isn't just about periods; it's about access to education, health, and opportunity as well. Let's advocate for policies and programs that prioritize MHM, ensuring no one is left behind due to their menstrual cycle".

Post 2 (Top Right): Features Fatima Jaffar from Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi. The quote reads: "Menstrual hygiene is a fundamental human right, yet millions of girls and women lack access to necessities. It's time to stand up, speak out, and demand equality for all menstruators and increase the access to affordable menstrual products. Together, we can break down barriers and build a world where every period is respected because every period is a chance to advocate for gender equality and health equity".

Post 3 (Bottom Left): Features Fatima Yaseen from ISYD Pakistan. The quote reads: "I strongly emphasize on spreading education and knowledge regarding MHM and educating girls about menstrual hygiene and its not just a health issue; it's also an investment in their future. Let's empower them with knowledge and resources to manage their periods confidently and pursue their dreams uninhibited. Managing periods shouldn't hold anyone back. Let's break barriers and empower girls worldwide".

Post 4 (Bottom Right): Features Joshua Dilawar from ISYD Pakistan. The quote reads: "Periods are a natural part of life, but for many, they are accompanied by stigma and barriers. It's time to change that narrative and work together to break the stereotypes and stigmas. Let's start conversations, challenge taboos, increase access to menstrual products and create supportive environments where menstruation is celebrated, not shamed".

PERIOD PRIDE

BREAKING TABOOS AND EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS



"Empowerment starts with access. We have to break the silence and ensure that every girl has the resources and knowledge to manage her period with dignity.

Together, we can and we have to END the period of poverty and stigma"

HAFIZ MUHAMMAD TALHA

YPEER Pakistan

ISYDPakistan ISYDPakistan ISYDPakistan

PERIOD PRIDE

BREAKING TABOOS AND EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS



"Periods should never hold anyone back. Let's challenge the norms, dismantle the stigma, and create inclusive spaces where menstruation is embraced and supported. Together, we can make menstrual equity a reality.

Menstrual health is a key component of overall well-being. Let's prioritize it and work together"

EESHA ASHFAQ

Fatima Memorial Hospital

ISYDPakistan ISYDPakistan ISYDPakistan

PERIOD PRIDE

BREAKING TABOOS AND EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS

"Menstruation is not a sign of Stigma and Taboo. It is a sign of strength and power.

It is blessing and natural gift of life. Periods Positivity is a period pride for every women.

We have to educate, and Empower everyone in the society about MHM to end the periods Taboo"



MEHWISH ZIA

Vanderbyl College

ISYDPakistan ISYDPakistan ISYDPakistan

PERIOD PRIDE

BREAKING TABOOS AND EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS



"Breaking the silence on menstruation isn't just about talking; it's also about taking action. Let's prioritize menstrual hygiene education, destigmatize periods, and advocate for policies that ensure menstrual equity for all"

MAHNOOR TARIQ

Pak-Turk International School

ISYDPakistan ISYDPakistan ISYDPakistan

Other Activities

Awareness Raising activities around MHM

7. Collective Voices Video on MHM:

As part of our #PeriodPride campaign, ISYD developed an impactful documentary-style video to raise awareness and break myths surrounding Menstrual Health Management (MHM). The video features diverse voices from various community members, each sharing powerful lines that dispel misconceptions and promote a deeper understanding of menstrual health. By showcasing real stories and experiences, the video aims to create a relatable and authentic narrative that encourages viewers to rethink their perceptions about menstruation.

These collective voices and collaborative effort is designed to educate and inform the public while fostering a more open dialogue about MHM. By addressing common myths and presenting factual information in an engaging format, the documentary seeks to reduce stigma and promote a supportive environment for all individuals. Through this initiative, ISYD continues its mission to empower communities and advocate for better menstrual health practices and awareness.

