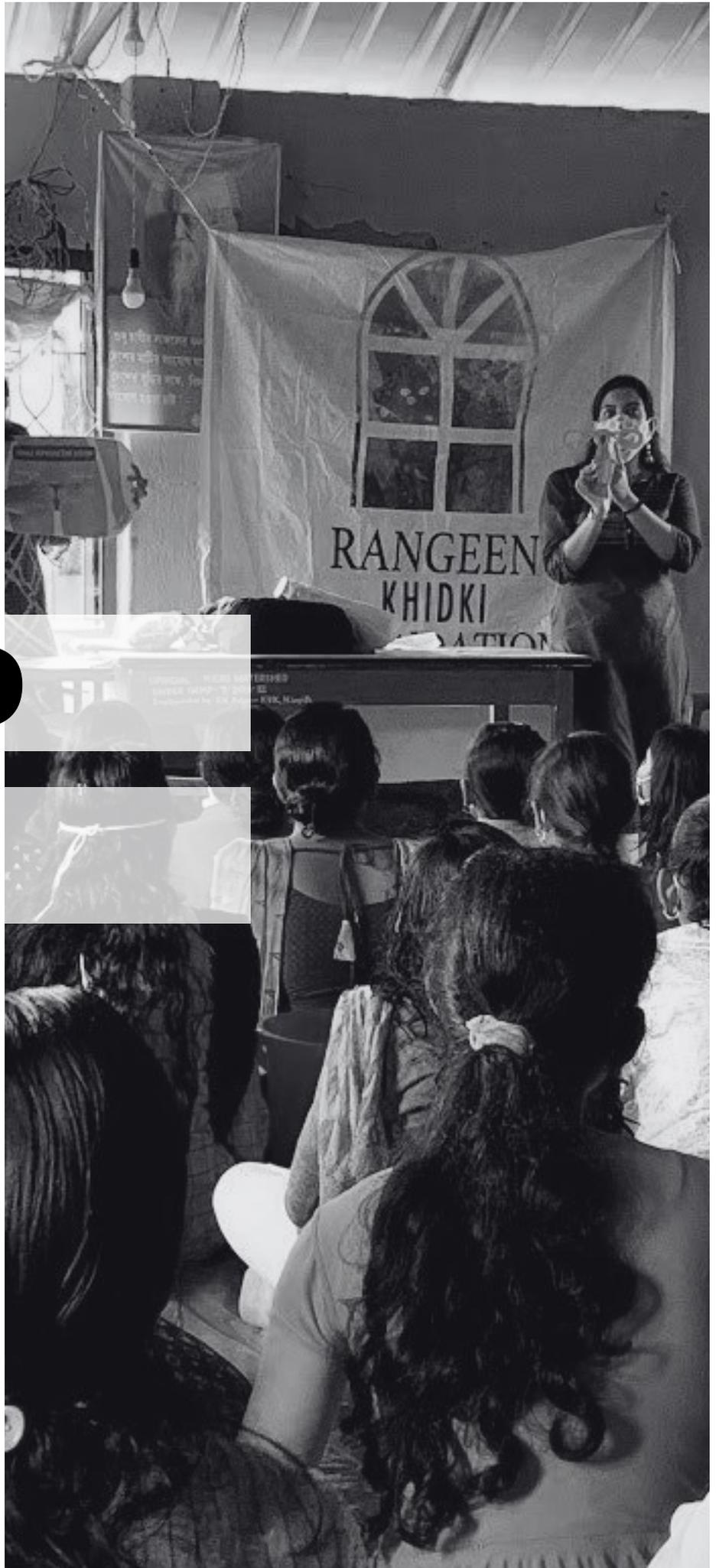


PROJECT PERIOD ADDA

07.09. 2021

**Kultali Block,
Sunderbans Area,
West Bengal**



Introduction



Rangeen Khidki Foundation believes that a holistic menstrual health education program to support communities and organizations in developing menstrual health and advocacy based interventions is of absolute necessity, so that young adults are able to make informed choices that concern their own body. In order to do so it is important to learn about it, only then will we be able to break away from the shame associated with menstruation

“ The stigma associated with menstruation poses a barrier in the understanding of self and their idea of body. There is barely any conversation around menstruation that is initiated around us and this is where Project Period Adda tries to make a difference.



Training Sessions

This program was conducted in collaboration with the peer educators under the National Program- Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The sessions were conducted on the 7th of September, 2021 in the Kultali Block of South 24 Parganas district (in the Sundarbans Area), West Bengal. The first training location was Bhubaneshwari Village where the session was conducted at the Bhubaneswari Swasthya Kendra Hospital. We trained 53 adolescent and young girls through an interactive learning session. The next session was conducted in another nearby village Debipur Gurguria in the local school- the Debipur High School. This session was attended by 48 adolescent and young girls.



Both the sessions were conducted by menstrual health facilitators from Rangeen Khidki, at the end of which a set of cloth pads were distributed to the girls who opted for it. The structural processings of both the sessions were similar and broken into eight broad areas or parts. The discussions, interaction and explanation started with the idea of puberty and bodily changes surrounding puberty. Our facilitators prompted questions which engaged the groups to think about the kind of changes that take place in both male or a female bodies when they hit pubescence.



Menstruation was one of the changes that came up through the discussion which moved the conversation into the second part of the explanation, whereby our facilitators talked about the different parts of the Female Reproductive System and their respective functions. The third part of the explanation revolved around the biological process of menstruation, how it happens and why it happens. The girls had a lot of questions during this part as most of the information was new to most of the girls.

After having a detailed discussion and revision of the processes and functioning of menstruation as a biological phenomenon, the session made its way to the fourth part, which explained the appearance and normalcy of white discharge and how to identify a probable infection in the area. It was also mentioned that in case such a situation arises, they need to consult a doctor at the earliest so as to avoid the spread of the possible infection.

The fifth part of the explanation was interactive and the facilitators discussed period tracking and menstrual cycles. The girls actively participated in trying to calculate and track their own cycles. The session then moved onto the sixth area of discussion about nutrition and the need to lead a healthy and balanced diet as menstruators. The need for exercise and blood circulation were also mentioned. Part seven of the discussion revolved around the introduction of sustainable menstrual hygiene products. Our facilitators first talked about the usage of cloth and then mentioned what sanitary napkins and tampons are made out of.



The explanation then moved onto cloth pads and menstrual cups. Both the products were displayed and passed around the groups for the girls to get a closer look. The functioning, usage, cost and effectiveness of both these products were explained in detail. On asking whether the girls would like to use either of the sustainable menstrual products, most of them responded positively. Lastly, the conversation ended with a discussion on period taboos, their origin, history and relevance in the current society.

Distribution



After the sessions were concluded in both the locations, a set cloth pad kits were distributed to both the groups.

Each kit had 3 cloth pads, an instruction manual and an information pamphlet. All 53 girls from Group 1 at the Bhubaneswari Swasthya Kendra Hospital opted to take the products and use them in their personal lives. 47 girls from Group 2 at the Debipur High School opted to use the products barring 1 girl. Thus a total of a 100 sets of cloth pad kits were distributed to both the groups combined.

Field Challenges

Due to heavy rainfall, coupled with bad roads, some of the girls could not attend the session in both the locations. The weather also posed a challenge for our facilitators as it restricted smooth movement within the respective villages. There was no electricity in both the locations which did not allow us to use digital resources for the session.

Owing to the stigma and shame that surrounds the topic of menstruation, some of the girls took a lot of time to open up and hesitated to interact openly.



Conclusion

A huge shout out to Eco Femme for providing us with the cloth pad kits and supporting us with this distribution drive. We would also like to thank our donors for continuously believing in our work and supporting us. As a result of this program we can now expect the girls to experience menstruation as a natural physiological phenomenon instead of shame. As part of our future plans, we intend to reach out to close to 2000 girls in the coming few months under the RKSK program and destigmatise menstruation

Impact: 101 girls will be disseminating the knowledge on menstruation to their mothers, sisters and friends. These sessions will impact more than 1000 girls indirectly.