



Brown Girl Woke



IA AO SAMOA
LE UNIVESITE AAO O SAMOA
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SAMOA

Title : Tackling period poverty in Samoa – the case study of manufacture and distribution of reusable menstrual pads in Samoa

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Layout of Presentation

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Introduction to Brown Girl Woke

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Overview - Menstrual Health and Hygiene Education and Period Poverty in Samoa

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The evolution of menstrual health and hygiene education programs and sewing and distribution of reusable menstrual pads

4

Challenges Faced, Achievements and Future Plans



Brown Girl Woke



- Established in Samoa in 2017
- MISSION: RECRUIT, TRAIN, EDUCATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON CRITICAL ISSUES HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY!
- Focus on programs that provide opportunities for youth development
- Primary & Secondary After school programs
 - STEM after school programs
 - Read Aloud after school programs
 - Performance arts after school program
- Work shops
 - Safety for Kids (safe touch and adults)
 - Menstrual Hygiene and cycle work shops
 - Prevention to violence
 - Tv3 Youth Show Mental Health
- University Students USP & NUS
 - Paid Internships & Scholarships to run programs
- Work with local and international donors to supply communities with
 - Water tanks
 - Groceries
 - Disaster supplies – masks, sanitizer
 - Books



World Wide Issue

Approximately 500 million women and girls around the world are affected by inadequate menstrual hygiene and management



Impact on Quality of Life

Affects ability to attend work, school, participate in social activities, lack of confidence



Menstrual Health and Hygiene
“menstrual blood is ‘dirty’ and that girls and women can bring bad luck to men.”

Limited Research done in the Pacific

Sexual and Reproductive Health Education is inconsistent in Samoa due in part to it being considered a sensitive topic.

Samoa

- Minimum wage WST2.50 per hour. Cost of a pack of 12 pads minimum WST 3 -4 WST
- High rates of unemployment especially in service sector affected by border closures



Source Wikipedia.com



Reusable Menstrual Pads

- Reusable Pads are environmentally friendly, do not contain non biodegradable plastics
- Can be adjusted in size to accommodate different body shapes and needs
- Reduces the expense of purchasing menstrual hygiene products
- Reusable pads can reduce the fears of soiling of clothing and associated absenteeism from school (Hennegan 2017),
- Cleaning reusable menstrual pads can be a concern (Mohammed et al 2018)
- Including education can improve confidence to discuss menstruation and to seek support (Hennegan 2017),

Time frame of projects

2020



Menstrual Health and Hygiene Workshops with women and girls
distribution of donated reusable menstrual pads
Training on how to maintain reusable menstrual pads

- Funded by AUS DAP
- Partners, BGW, NUS, NOLA

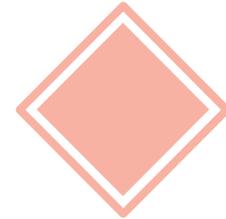
2021



Establishment of a sewing circle for the manufacture of reusable menstrual pads and distribution of reusable pads

- Employment opportunities for 5 rural women
- Distribution of 1000 reusable menstrual pads
- Menstrual health and hygiene education program through BGW after school programs
- Funded by the Canada Fund

2022



Production of Menstrual Health and Hygiene Educational Video and Continuation of Sewing Circle
Funded by VIVA & IWDA

2020 – Education Workshops Distribution of Donated Pads



- 38 participants – women (mothers) and daughters (27) and women member of NOLA (disability NGO in Samoa) (11)
- One rural village venue in Upolu
- Surveys and focus group discussions
- Primary source of information on menstrual health and hygiene was mothers and schools
- Disposable sanitary napkins and cloth were most commonly used products
- Cost and availability were most common factors that determine the choice of product used
- 24(77.4%) of respondents found the reusable pads to be somewhat comfortable or very comfortable
- 24 respondents (77.4%) of respondents indicated that the reusable pad was either somewhat easy or very easy to clean

2021 – Establishment of a sewing circle

- Five Women in Rural Villages in Upolu; one woman was a woman with disabilities
- Trained to make reusable menstrual pads by experienced seamstress, sewing machines purchased
- Trained in Small business management
- Women manufacture reusable pads and paid based on the number of units products that meet quality standards
- Distributed through networks – NOLA disability advocacy, 6 colleges, 5 villages, Special Olympics, 2 schools with people of disability **3000 reusable pads distributed,**
- **1 pack comes with 2 holders, 6 inserts, panty, soap, wash cloth, dry/wet bag**
- Issues – supply of materials is inconsistent, attrition of seamstresses, COVID 19 restrictions restricted movement

The Sewing Circle is focused on supporting women and women with disabilities to train and teach sewing. They will be focused on making reusable sanitary pads for young women, which can then be distributed into the communities and schools to allow girls dignity and pride to stay in school every month. Income generating through the sewing project will support the livelihoods and generate income for the women to support their families

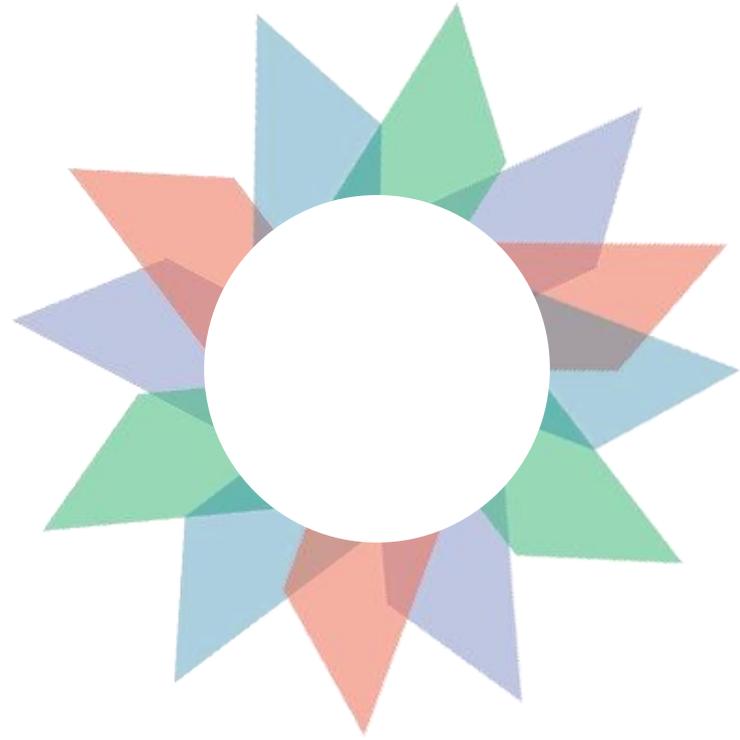
Days for Girls Kit





2022 – Continuation of Sewing Circle and Production of Video

- Currently continuing with the manufacture of reusable menstrual pads with another funder
- Production of Educational Video on Menstrual Health and Hygiene
- Invited to present on work on menstrual health and hygiene at the Samoa Youth Family Health Conference
- [Bgw Palapala Masina \(menstrual cycle\) - YouTube](#)



Thank you

References

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