Adeli Hygiene Mission

Unipads®
Reusable Sanitary Pads

Implementing Partner: Unipads Foundation, Ahmedabad
Technical Partner: UNIPADS India Private Limited, Ahmedabad

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Project Background

Menstrual Hygiene Management

Menstruation is a natural, normal biological process experienced by adolescent girls and women. Yet, in many societies, it is steeped in silence, myths, taboos, and even stigma. Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) is an important issue affecting the health, dignity, self-esteem, and privacy of millions of adolescent girls and women across the globe.

Girls Have Fear / Feel Shameful

Poor water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools, inadequate puberty education, and lack of hygienic MHM items (absorbents) cause girls to experience menstruation as shameful and uncomfortable.
Studies indicate girls feel fear and humiliation from leaking blood and body odor, leading menstruating girls to be absent from school.

Health problems

- Owing to high cost and ignorance, women and girls often use old rags, clothes, or other unhygienic materials as menstrual absorbents, which may lead to reproductive tract infections (RTIs) and many other health problems.
- Adolescent girls are facing various menstrual health problems like abdominal pain, menorrhagia, polymenorrhea, etc.
- However, very few of them seek treatment for the same. These untreated problems are also responsible for the loss of school days.

In India

There are at least 113 million adolescent girls & women that are vulnerable at the onset of menarche and face significant barriers to a comfortable and dignified experience with menstrual hygiene management (MHM).

Why

- Girls do not have access to education on puberty and menstrual health and when they turn to their mothers for information and support, a majority of the mothers consider menstruation as a 'dirty' topic to discuss, further perpetuating the taboos.
- Besides, a majority of the girls & women due to high cost do not have access to quality menstrual absorbents and use homemade alternatives i.e. old clothes, rags, etc.
- In rural areas, the shopkeepers are male, mostly one or two shops in the village, most of the shopkeepers are known, and they do not feel comfortable.

As per existing published research across India, the usage of Sanitary Napkins among rural Indian women ranges between 35% to 57%.
Regarding school absenteeism owing to menstruation in India, this number is around 24%.

Disposable Sanitary pads

The commercially available disposable sanitary pads (either premium quality sold by MNCs or affordable pads subsidized by the government), the studies have shown that it contains fibers that are chlorine bleached to give them a clean sterile look. This process creates dioxin, a highly toxic pollutant that can cause various health problems like pelvic inflammatory disease, hormone dysfunction, endometriosis, and even cancer.

Our Proposed Solutions

- It is found that most of the rural women do not use disposable sanitary pads throughout the year in the village area due to various reasons - costs, forgetting to buy, some known members being at shops and busy with household work, and many other reasons.
- We proposed REUSABLE Sanitary pads i.e. UNIPADS

Why UNIPADS

Health

- Plastic in disposable sanitary pads disturbs vaginal microflora balance and can cause health problems including urinary tract infections, rashes, and genital tract infections. Disposable plastic pads carry BPA and other chemicals for high blood absorption which can cause cervical or ovarian cancer over time and can interfere with the reproductive system as well, says a report carried by Times of India.
- The presence of pesticides and herbicides in pads can directly enter the bloodstream to affect the internal organs. To prevent the smell of menstrual blood, sanitary napkins are equipped with deodorants and fragrances which can cause infertility.
- Whereas Unipads are made of cloth and are chemical-free.

Why UNIPADS

Environment-Friendly

70-90% of the disposable sanitary pad is made of plastic. One pad is equivalent to four plastic bags. A study by WaterAid and Menstrual Hygiene Alliance India, says that disposable pads may take 500 years to decompose, posing a big environmental challenge. Environmental experts, social enterprises, and studies indicate that when these pads are burned in the open or in incinerators, they release toxic chemicals such as furans, a highly volatile chemical compound, and dioxins that are known carcinogens.

UNIPADS is a sustainable solution made with specially designed cloth material, helping reduce sanitary waste.

Affordability

Types Of Pads	Cost Per Month	Cost Per Annum
Disposable Sanitary pads	Around Rs. 50/-	Around Rs. 600/-
Reusable Sanitary pads (12+months)	–	Rs. 249/-

Why UNIPADS

For Women by Women

Designed an inclusive model for marginalized women where pads are manufactured by rural women, thus keeping the manufacturing costs low and providing employment opportunities to women.
UNIPADS has reached marginalized women through fully or partially funded projects

Successful Outreach

- Catered to over 3.1 million beneficiaries globally to date
- Through collaborations, we are expanding reach to 6 states

Unipads Presence

Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Delhi, West Bengal, Assam

Partnerships & Collaborations

UNIPADS
Major Products

1. UNIPADS Reusable Sanitary Pads
2. UNIPADS Cotton Panties

Unipads Regular Kit

Reusable Sanitary Pads
3 Maxi Pads
1 Super Maxi Pad
1 leak Pouch for Storage

Unipads
Cotton Undergarments

Available in different sizes
Small | Medium | Large

Approach and Methodology

Target Area / Expected Beneficiaries

- Rural Area
- Marginalized women
- Adolescent Girls
- Tribal area
- Remote area

Approach

Survey

Carrying out a survey through interactions and workshops
To understand the current scenario on Hygiene for different ages females
Collect data on their health & Hygiene
Also survey feedback post 3 or 6 months of using the product to understand the acceptability and behavioral change.

Approach and Methodology

Awareness Workshop

- Village resource person / local will be trained in advance to support in a workshop and can explain to attendees in their language
- Attendees will speak about themselves and their hygiene problems
- Unipads team shall carry out the workshop on
- Why do we use Pads
- Benefits from Reusable Pads
- How to use it
- How it saves from various health problems
- Distribution of hygiene kit containing Unipads kit and cotton underwear

    a. Benefits from Reusable Pads
    b. How to use it
    c. How it saves from various health problems
    d. Distribution of hygiene kit containing Unipads kit and cotton underwear

Roles & Responsibilities

Unipads India Private Limited	PIA-Unipads Foundation	Sponsor/Donor
• Ensure all certifications regarding the health & hygiene of the products • Manufacturing and Packaging of the products once informed by the PIA as per the timeline • Support PIA on the Technical side - Survey/workshop program /Data Collection, etc. as and when required • Allocate one person to coordinate with the PIA	• Coordination with the UNIPADS, Government, Schools, Donor Companies, etc. • Fundraising work • Ensure visibility of the sponsor/donor companies • Identification of the village resource person and cluster resource person • Carried out surveys, workshops, inauguration programs, • Documentation and reporting to companies, quarterly and annually	• Approval of the Project • Release the Fund • Inaugurate the project • Provide Inputs at any stage to make the • project run better • Selection of the area/beneficiaries

Estimated Budget for 1 year

Sr. No	Items	Price Per Unit (Rs.)	Qty	Estimated in (Rs.)
1.	Unipads (Set of 4 washable cloth pads)	249	8000	19,92,000
2	Cotton Panties (2 for each women/girl)	40	16000	6,40,000
3	Project Implementing Cost - transportation, Workshop, Travelling, Coordination, Survey, Documentation, Banner and Other Expenses - 5% of the cost			1,31,600
Total Project cost for 1 year				27,63,600

***Total Beneficiaries to be covered: 8000**
(Number of Villages 18 - Assuming approx 500 women per village)
***Project duration: 3 years (to be renewed annually)**

Glimpse

References

- A comparative study of menstrual hygiene management among rural and urban adolescent girls in Mangaluru, Karnataka Pradeep Senapathi, Hemant Kumar
- NFHS - National Family Health Survey 2019-20

Annexure A

About Unipads

Unipads is a social business established to tackle this issue at the grass root level, specializing in the manufacturing and distribution of reusable cloth sanitary pads which are made of cloth and can be used multiple times - that are affordable, convenient, and hygienic for women across all segments of the society.

Unipads was founded by Ms. Geeta Solanki in Sep 2018, established in Ahmedabad. Post her career as a marketing professional, she was involved in improving women's health during pregnancy by providing guidance on exercise, diet, and medication for 6 years as a Childbirth Educator.

She has also received the Bharat Ki Laxmi award from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, and also 'Vijayalakshmi Das Award' as "Entrepreneur of the Year - Medium Enterprise" by Satya Micro Capital Ltd., a leading microfinance Institute of India. Recently she was felicitated with the 'Women Transforming India Award' by Niti Aayog & UN, New Delhi for making major economic contributions to the country.

Manufacturing Unit

Manufacturing Unit is located at Vadiya Gam, a very small village in Jamnagar District. Due to the absence of any industries, the entire village is dependent on agricultural income. But due to scanty rainfall, the village has one crop land and hence they are unemployed for 8 months of the year.

We have trained and employed 186 local village women to manufacture Unipads and undergarments. Offering earning opportunities to over 149 village women, called 'Kalyani' who are engaged with us as our distribution cum knowledge partners across different villages and semi urban locations of Gujarat. We have in-house training center for the women and girls from the village and surrounding villages which offers free training on sewing machines, which can later help them secure a job either at Unipads or a life skill that can help them with a livelihood opportunity.

Annexure B
ISO Certifications

DBS CERT

CERTIFICATE

This is to Certify that

Quality Management System

of

UNIPADS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED

202, PRIMATE, OPP. MOTHER MILK PLACE, NR. GORMOH CROSS ROADS, BODAKDEV, AHMEDABD-380054, GUJARAT, INDIA

has been independently assessed by DBS

and is compliant with the requirement of:

ISO 9001:2015

For the following scope of activities:

MANUFACTURING OF REUSABLE SANITARY NAPKINS/PADS, UNDERWEAR, FABRIC BAG, BACKPACK, VARIOUS HEALTH CARE AND TEXTILE PRODUCTS.

Certificate Number: Q-205023052921

Date of Certification:	29th May 2023
1st Surveillance Audit Due:	28th May 2024
2nd Surveillance Audit Due:	28th May 2025
Certificate Expiry:	28th May 2026

This Certificate is property of DBS Certifications and remains valid subject to satisfactory surveillance audits

Head of Certification

UAF

IAF

This Certificate is property of DBS Certifications Pvt. Ltd. and it remains valid subject to satisfactory surveillance audits.

DBS CERTIFICATIONS PVT. LTD.

142, IInd Floor, Avtar Enclave, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063, (INDIA) info@dbscertification.com, www.dbscertification.com

ACCREDITED BY :

United Accreditation Foundation Inc, 400 North Center DR STE 202, Norfolk, VA 23502, United States of America

Annexure B
ISO Certifications

DBS CERT

CERTIFICATE

This is to Certify that

Environmental Management System

of

UNIPADS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED

202, PRIMATE, OPP. MOTHER MILK PLACE, NR. GORMOH CROSS ROADS, BODAKDEV, AHMEDABD-380054, GUJARAT, INDIA

has been independently assessed by DBS

and is compliant with the requirement of:

ISO 14001:2015

For the following scope of activities:

MANUFACTURING OF REUSABLE SANITARY NAPKINS/PADS, UNDERWEAR, FABRIC BAG, BACKPACK, VARIOUS HEALTH CARE AND TEXTILE PRODUCTS.

Certificate Number: E-205023052922

Date of Certification:	29th May 2023
1st Surveillance Audit Due:	28th May 2024
2nd Surveillance Audit Due:	28th May 2025
Certificate Expiry:	28th May 2026

This Certificate is property of DBS Certifications and remains valid subject to satisfactory surveillance audits

Head of Certification

UAF

IAF

This Certificate is property of DBS Certifications Pvt. Ltd. and it remains valid subject to satisfactory surveillance audits.

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ACCREDITED BY :

United Accreditation Foundation Inc, 400 North Center DR STE 202, Norfolk, VA 23502, United States of America

Annexure C

Milestones

Year	Accomplishment(s)
2018	Established as a Private Limited entity
2019	Received the honorable 'Bharat ki Lakshmi' award from Ministry of Women and Child Development, Indi
2020	Reached 25000 girls in Rural Areas with Free MHM awareness campaigns
2021	'Entrepreneur of the year' by Satya Microcapital Ltd., a leading microfinance Institute of Indi
2022	Expanded the manufacturing set-up, employing 140+ local village women
2022	'Women Transforming India Award' by Niti Aayog (GoI) and U
2022	Featured in '50 Inspiring Women' - Gujarat Edition
2022	Impacted lives of 3.1 million women and girls, helping them manage their periods with dignity
2023	Added female undergarments as new products