

Global Business School Network (GBSN) 2022

FILIPINA FIRST

(A social initiative)

A Solution on Social Logistics Challenge in the Philippines

Proposal by:

GREEN INNOVATORS

20th October 2022

Problem Statement

Health and hygiene are essential to everyone's well-being and as part of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH). Part of this is Menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) which is integral to improving the global population health and is covered by the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. According to (Menstrual Health and Hygiene, n.d.), more than 300 million women worldwide are menstruating on any given day and there is an estimated 500 million women who lack access to menstrual products and facilities for MHH management.

In the Philippines, many Filipinas have limited or no access to proper female intimate hygiene and education. A study conducted by the Department of Education shows that only a little above 50% of teachers and students in primary and secondary schools have materials on MHH Management. (DepEd) This causes disruptions in their daily activities and performance and can lead to possible mental health issues. According to (Menstrual Health and Hygiene, n.d.), lack of good hygiene can lead to reproductive and urinary tract infections that can further result in infertility and birth complications. There are also negative attitudes such as shaming, bullying, and even gender-based violence influenced by cultural taboos and discriminatory social norms. (Mercado, 2019) All of these can result in the negative impact on the education, health, and development of women.

There is also period tax and affordability concerns, period shame, and issues in accessing hygiene facilities that are affecting the MHH of women.

The above identified issues pose a social problem as lack of proper MHH management hinders performance and development of women. They also present a logistics problem in the lack of access to MHH products and information or proper education.

Solution Development and Implementation

Meet Filipina First, an all-in-one digital application to handle the female menstrual hygiene needs of Filipinas. Reinventing the menstrual experience for women through a convenient offering of credible and personalized information, expert consultation, and health and hygiene products. The goal is to ensure that every woman gets the comfort and care that she deserves, when Mother Nature comes calling each month. These was developed in consideration of the Philippine Menstrual Hygiene Facts and Period Poverty as seen in Exhibit 2.

Filipina First will be introduced to community healthcare in the remote areas. They will be trained and mobilized to use the application. Closing into the schoolgirls in the remote area, the healthcare centers will be the intermediary between them and the support. These services were selected to combat the pressing issues of female hygiene care in country's pressing issues of female hygiene care the country. Trainings on menstrual trackers, articles, forums, and community events aim to increase awareness and education about the said topic can be utilized. Access to consultations will provide a venue for women to get easy consultations with OB-GYNs and the online store will provide the necessary items needed for their menstrual needs. Sample display of the application can be seen in Exhibit 3.

Environment

With 72% of Filipinos using smartphones (Smartphone penetration rate in the Philippines, n.d.) , it will be easy for them to seek the help they need from Filipina First's digital platform. There is a huge opportunity for more female hygiene products and services, due to the rising awareness and acceptance in Asia. Currently, there are only 15% of women who seek health care for menstrual-related pain due to lack of knowledge and social taboo, but 92 % of Filipino women support menstrual leaves and similar measures (Filipino women who have suffered period pain, n.d.). Revenue in the Feminine Hygiene segment

amounts to US\$0.60bn in 2022. The market is expected to grow annually by 5.25% (CAGR 2022-2026) (Feminine Hygiene Outlook in the Philippines, n.d.).

Stakeholders

Our stakeholders include – female users / consumers, product suppliers, content providers, Brand Ambassadors, medical experts, school/employers, Government (Local Government Units and Rural Health Units), NGOs or Charity Organizations, Local Community, and the Filipina First management team.

Financial Feasibility

Anchoring on the implementation of Super Pink, initial funder of Filipina First is the former who committed to give the equivalent of 1% of its net income in period boxes and subscriptions to support indigent schoolgirls in the Philippines. Sponsorship from other businesses as well as government support will be reached out to expand the project.

Government Partnership

The Local Government Units (LGUs), Rural Health Units (RHUs), and DepEd, will assist in providing the names and locations of the indigent schoolgirls who are experiencing period poverty and lack of awareness. In some way, they can also impact their own circle of family and friends, including their schoolmates. This will raise awareness at the ground roots level, sparking discussion and acceptance of the proper ways of MHH. Other Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Charity organizations are welcome to participate and use the platform as well to donate to the other demographics of the female populations, with minimal fees to cover the overhead in using platform.

Sustainable Impact

In reference to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the proponents identified three underlying supports provided by the recommended solution.

SDG#3 Good Health and Well-being

The importance of health and well-being cannot be understated. Perhaps the greatest benefit of this solution is to mitigate MHH issues that will ultimately help strengthen the population's health. Filipina First aims to address the lack of education, access to MHH products and services, and to eliminate negative societal perceptions about MHH. All of these will improve the health and well-being of Filipinas and is aligned with SDG#3.

SDG#4 Quality Education

Proper education and awareness of MHH will improve society's understanding of the topic and could help prevent negative attitudes towards women like shaming, bullying, and gender-based violence. This can also, in the long run, eliminate the cultural taboos and discriminatory social norms against menstruation and will be one step towards gender equality.

SDG #12 Responsible Consumption & Production

Through offering sustainable products like menstrual cups and reusable sanitary pads, aside from the regular disposable items, Filipina First aims to educate consumers about a more environmentally friendly option that is cheaper and safer in the long run.

Conclusion

Aligning with 3 out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, Filipina First aims to solve a social logistics challenge in the Philippines. Filipina First is a social initiative promoting improvement in the lifestyle of Filipina women in need given the natural physiological experience. It is through the development of an application and establishment of strategic partnerships from different stakeholders that will reap the benefit. Implementation plan can be seen in Exhibit 4 which provides a strong foundation on building the

community trust up to the follow-through. Despite such, we expect challenges in the implementation if there are acceptance delay or resistance, prevention due to traditional culture perception, and delay in deployment or launch to the healthcare community. Nevertheless, we saw the exponential possibility once successfully implemented. This can be seen we saw the initial target to be a more independent person, the development of future generations in taking care of women, more support for future studies and campaigns for the women, and the aspiration to have a stronger collaboration with both private entities and government.

Overall, the goal is to bridge access of feminine care and education to uplift the lifestyle, mental health, and hygiene of Filipina in remote areas, initially zooming on the schoolgirls. Bridging the gap, recognizing the capabilities and potential, aspiring sustainable activities makes the Filipina First initiative aims to help improve the role of women in the society better in the long run.

References

- Menstrual Health and Hygiene*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2022, from The World Bank: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water/brief/menstrual-health-and-hygiene#:~:text=Poor%20menstrual%20hygiene%2C%20however%2C%20can,future%20infertility%20and%20birth%20complications.>
- Mercado, W. (2019, November 15). *Menstruation is OK: from taboo to acceptance*. Retrieved October 20, 2022, from Unicef.org: <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/stories/menstruation-ok-taboo-acceptance>
- Period Poverty in the Philippines*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2022, from borgenproject.org: <https://borgenproject.org/period-poverty-in-the-philippines/>
- Philippines access to healthcare*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2022, from Statista.com: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1225699/philippines-access-to-healthcare-by-factor/>
- Smartphone penetration rate in the Philippines*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2022, from Statista.com: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/625427/smartphone-user-penetration-in-philippines/>
- Sustainable Development Goals*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2022, from United Nations: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- Tax on Tampons*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2022, from mb.com: <https://mb.com.ph/2019/07/23/a-tax-on-tampons/>
- Who are the Philippines' Online Shoppers?* (n.d.). Retrieved October 20, 2022, from Janio.asia: <https://janio.asia/articles/who-are-philippines-online-shoppers/#:~:text=Continuing%20the%20trend%2C%20more%20women,fewer%20women%20have%20credit%20cards.&text=Cash%20On%20Delivery%20is%20still,the%20Philippines'%20population%20being%20unbanked.>

Exhibit 1 - Super Pink's Utilizing a subscription-based model

Basic Subscription	Premium Subscription
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FREE trackers, articles, and forum access 2. Access to doctor consultations* 3. Online store 4. Free community events 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNLIMITED trackers, articles, and forum access 2. Free two (2) doctor consultations 3. \$50 consumables for the online store with a once-a-month free delivery. (Succeeding orders will charge appropriate delivery fees) 4. Free and Invite-only community events
<p><i>*Subject to applicable fees</i></p>	

Exhibit 2 – Philippine Menstrual Hygiene Facts

Local Practices:

Traditional calendar hygiene system

Government Initiatives:

DepEd-UNICEF WASH programs in schools; DepEd's #MeronAko campaign in 2021; No visible programs from local government units and rural health centers (DepEd)

Healthcare access:

1.2 doctors per 1,000 people in the Philippines. (Philippines access to healthcare, n.d.)

Sanitation:

The proximity of toilets to classrooms and the availability of washing facilities inside female toilets are also still lacking in a considerable number of schools, with 17,973 (55.1%) elementary schools and 2,180 (30.3%) secondary schools still without washing facilities inside toilets. (DepEd)

Awareness:

56% of elementary and secondary students have access to materials on menstrual health (DepEd)

Period Tax:

Period products are currently being taxed at normal rates in the Philippines, making it more unaffordable for low-income earners to afford quality products (Tax on Tampons, n.d.)

Access to hygiene facilities:

Only 39% of school-aged children in the Philippines at the time of survey had access to single-sex and usable sanitation facilities at school. (Period Poverty in the Philippines, n.d.)

Mental Health:

Filipinas with no direct access to proper female intimate hygiene education and affordable products, experience disruption in daily activities and performance. 8% of girls reported missing school because of menstruation. They are distracted with the pain and shame associated with the period. There is also a possible mental health effect because of the disruption. (Mercado, 2019)

Period Shame:

There is menstrual period stigma experienced by schoolgirls and working women when buying period products and discussing period concerns with relatives and friends. They also feel ashamed when they have their period. This is considered a taboo in a predominantly Catholic nation. (Mercado, 2019)

Exhibit 3 – Sample application display for Filipina First



Exhibit 4 – Implementation Plan for Filipina First

