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## **Bleed Bright: Overcoming Period Poverty with Menstrual Education**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Bleed Bright is a social innovation project addressing period poverty, which affects many women and girls worldwide. Period poverty refers to the lack of access to menstrual hygiene products, education, and facilities, which can lead to poor menstrual health, social exclusion, and economic disadvantages. Bleed Bright was launched for the first time on March 11, 2023, at the Contemporary Global and Legal Issues Exhibition 2023, targeting pre-university students at Universiti Teknologi Mara, Kampus Dengkil. The project's objective is to empower women and girls to manage their menstrual health effectively and overcome period poverty through menstrual health education and awareness. Bleed Bright collaborates with Libresse, a leading global menstrual care and hygiene company, to provide education and awareness through various channels. Furthermore, Bleed Bright aims to increase legal awareness of women's and girls' rights concerning menstrual health and hygiene. As the demand for sustainable solutions to address period poverty grows, Bleed Bright's focus on education and awareness aligns with the increasing importance of menstrual health and hygiene in society. The project's ability to provide sustainable solutions to this global issue creates significant market potential. In conclusion, Bleed Bright aims to equip women and girls with the knowledge and resources necessary to manage their menstrual health effectively and provide sustainable solutions to period poverty.

**Keywords:** Bleed bright; social innovation; menstrual education; period poverty; awareness

### **INTRODUCTION**

Period poverty is a pressing issue that affects a significant number of women and girls worldwide, with an estimated 500 million experiencing it globally [1]. The American Medical Women's Association defines it as the lack of accessibility or affordability of menstrual hygiene tools and educational materials, such as sanitary products, washing facilities, and waste management [2]. The challenges women and girls face extend beyond a basic lack of supplies or infrastructure. According to a research group of the Red Care campaign, led by Sharifah Fatimah Al Zahra (2021), statistics show that 51% of respondents have no knowledge about menstrual preparation, personal care, and period management, which can have a detrimental effect on the physical and emotional health of women [3]. These findings correspond with the issue highlighted by Rossouw, L and Ross, H, that the lack of knowledge and education on menstrual health can contribute to period poverty [4].

Menstrual education is important for breaking the taboo around periods and promoting gender equality. Many girls and women around the world are still taught to feel shame and embarrassment about their periods, which can lead to a lack of access to menstrual hygiene products and information. Furthermore, the lack of access to menstrual hygiene products and facilities can lead to social exclusion and economic disadvantages for women and girls. Those

who cannot afford menstrual products may miss school or work, limiting their opportunities for education and employment, perpetuating the cycle of poverty, and further marginalizing already disadvantaged communities [5].

To address this problem, Bleed Bright was established as a social innovation project to provide menstrual health education and awareness to women and girls. Social innovation is a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals [6]. The objective of Bleed Bright is to empower women and girls to manage their menstrual health effectively and overcome period poverty by providing menstrual health education and awareness. The project collaborates with Libresse, a leading global menstrual care and hygiene company, to provide education and awareness through various channels. Additionally, Bleed Bright seeks to raise legal awareness regarding the rights of women and girls concerning menstrual health and hygiene. The motivation behind the innovation is to create a sustainable solution to period poverty by providing women and girls with the knowledge and resources they need to manage their menstrual health effectively.

**INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT**

The innovation development of Bleed Bright involves the use of a multidisciplinary approach to address the issue of period poverty. The project uses a combination of education, awareness, and advocacy to promote menstrual health and hygiene. The project was launched for the first time at the Contemporary Global and Legal Issues Exhibition 2023 (CoGLIEEx) on March 11, 2023, particularly for pre-university students at UiTM Dengkil. The project seeks to create a sustainable solution to period poverty by empowering women and girls with knowledge and resources. One of Bleed Bright's innovative features is its collaboration with Libresse, a leading menstrual hygiene and care brand, to spread awareness and education about menstruation health through a variety of platforms, including exhibitions, and social media. Through this collaboration, Bleed Bright can leverage the expertise and resources of Libresse to deliver high-quality education and resources to women and girls.



**Figure 1:** Booth displays at CoGLIEEx 2023

For displaying the Bleed Bright prototype, a sample poster has been included. According to the poster, Bleed Bright provides information about menstrual hygiene products, their use, and the importance of disposing of them appropriately, as well as on period hygiene

and cleanliness. The project also aims to raise awareness of the rights of women and girls regarding menstrual hygiene and health. Bleed Bright also creates brochures and exhibit displays to draw attention to the issue of menstrual health education and period poverty. These materials include the causes, effects, and suggestions given by Bleed Bright for dealing with period poverty. In addition, to promote menstrual hygiene, 250 free samples of pads have been distributed to visitors which is a great opportunity to educate them about proper menstrual hygiene practices.

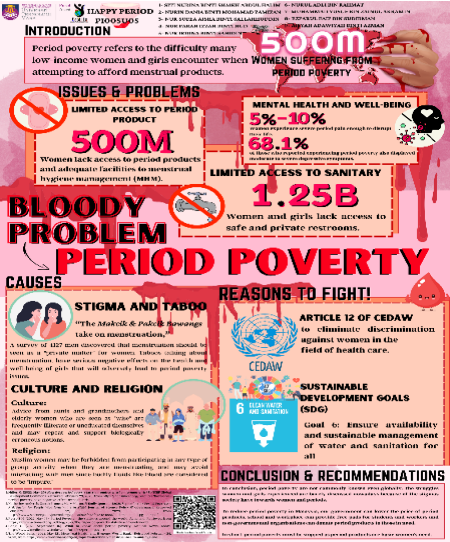


Figure 2: Awareness Poster on Period Poverty

**COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL**

**Relevance of the invention**

The invention of Bleed Bright is relevant in several ways. Firstly, it addresses the pressing issue of period poverty, which affects many women and girls worldwide. By providing menstrual health education and awareness, Bleed Bright empowers women and girls to manage their menstrual health effectively, which can lead to better health outcomes, improved social inclusion, and reduced economic disadvantages. Secondly, Bleed Bright promotes legal awareness regarding the rights of women and girls, particularly regarding menstrual health and hygiene. This can lead to better advocacy and policy development to address the issue of period poverty at a systemic level.

Thirdly, Bleed Bright promotes social innovation, as it addresses a complex social issue through collaboration between a global menstrual care and hygiene company and law students. This collaboration provides a unique perspective on the issue of period poverty and allows for the development of creative and effective solutions. Finally, Bleed Bright has commercial potential for law students, as it can lead to various avenues of revenue, such as merchandise, consultancy services, and product sales. This can provide valuable experience and skills for law students in entrepreneurship and business development.

Bleed Bright contributes to new knowledge and society by increasing awareness and education on menstrual health and hygiene, often neglected and stigmatized. The project aims to provide accurate and comprehensive information on menstrual health, including topics such as menstrual cycle, menstrual products, and menstrual hygiene management. By doing so,

Bleed Bright aims to eliminate shame and stigma surrounding menstrual health and empower women and girls to manage their menstrual health effectively.

## Market Needs and Potential

The problem of period poverty and the lack of access to menstrual hygiene products and education drive the market needs for Bleed Bright. In sub-Saharan Africa, one in ten girls miss school while having a period [7], and in India, almost 23 million girls drop out of school each year due to menstrual-related concerns [8]. These figures highlight the urgent need for solutions that give girls and women worldwide access to period hygiene products and education.

There are many possible commercial potentials for Bleed Bright, including the development and sale of kits for menstrual education and awareness as well as booth services. The first commercial potential of Bleed Bright is by offering booth services at various exhibitions and events. Booth services may include distributing educational materials, showcasing products, and providing consultations or workshops. This approach offers a unique opportunity to engage with a diverse audience, build relationships, and generate revenue through sales of products or consultancy services.

Second, the creation and sale of a menstrual education and awareness kit, named the Bleed Bright Kit are also part of Bleed Bright's commercial potential. The kit will include educational posters and brochures about menstrual health and hygiene, legal matters related to menstruation, and information on how to make reusable menstrual products. This kit can be purchased online or offline, providing a sustainable solution for women and girls who may not have access to menstrual hygiene products and education. The development of Bleed Bright's kit not only serves as a source of revenue for the project but also supports the project's mission to empower women and girls in managing their menstrual health and eliminate period poverty. Additionally, as a corporate social responsibility project, the Bleed Bright Kit can be customised and offered to schools, organisations, and businesses to promote menstrual health education and awareness in various communities.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Bleed Bright is a social innovation project that addresses the issue of period poverty by educating and raising awareness among women and girls about menstrual health. The project has successfully met its goals of raising awareness about period poverty and providing access to menstrual health education and resources, particularly for pre-university students at UiTM Kampus Dengkil. Through collaborations with various organizations and the launch of the Bleed Bright Kit, the project has the potential to generate significant commercial opportunities. The kit and consultancy services provide practical solutions to addressing period poverty, making the project a socially responsible initiative and a viable commercial opportunity. The importance of menstrual education and awareness cannot be overstated, and Bleed Bright's focus on education aligns with the growing importance of menstrual health and hygiene in society.

In the future, the project plans to expand its reach and impact by collaborating with more organizations and implementing more innovative strategies to address the issue of period poverty. Overall, Bleed Bright has the potential to make a significant impact in improving menstrual health and hygiene for women and girls worldwide, while also generating commercial opportunities.



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