

GSL Global Goals Competition

Final Submission - The Red Lotus

Our Vision and Mission

Every year, **India** sends **113,000** tonnes of non-biodegradable menstrual waste to its landfills. Almost all of this menstrual waste is haphazardly disposed of and becomes a breeding ground for pathogens, which endangers the lives of sanitation workers who have to segregate this waste by hand. Such waste takes **500- 800** years to decompose and becomes a hazard to surrounding animals, the environment and to society.

We are on a mission to change that.

With our diverse team of like-minded and creative youth activists and our own hand made disposal packets called 'मे' (Me) packets, we believe that we can develop proper menstrual disposal practices in India by rationalising the current disposal process. We have a dual objective: For the section of society that is unable or unwilling to shift to sustainable period products, we encourage proper disposal through our 'मे' packets, but for younger menstruators who are open to using sustainable products, we encourage sustainable period products. In this way, we aim to target menstruators across the spectrum

Our Activity

The Red Lotus' work covered diverse locations within and outside of India. We branched out from our home base in **Kochi, Kerala** to cover unique communities who are directly impacted by menstrual waste, such as sanitation workers and Afghan refugees in Delhi. Beyond this, we secured a partnership with **Raksha Society**, an NGO that is aiding us in the production of 'मे' packets. We estimate that in the past year, we have dedicated 25 hours a week towards our goals. Some of our seminal drives were held in **Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala in India**, and in **Ulsan, South Korea**, where we distributed thousands of packets alongside holding awareness sessions.

Apart from this fieldwork, we also established a media presence and collaborated with multiple organisations such as the **ADIRA Foundation, Serve. Ease, and Shed Red** to conduct webinars internationally, raising awareness about sustainable menstruation amongst the youth and thereby fulfilling the second of our dual objectives. We believe that by reaching out to schools and other educational institutions, we have the potential to guide younger menstruators towards more sustainable period products and push more for the proper disposal of menstrual waste. We also regularly host Instagram lives, and are working on hosting a podcast based in **Singapore** to expand our reach.

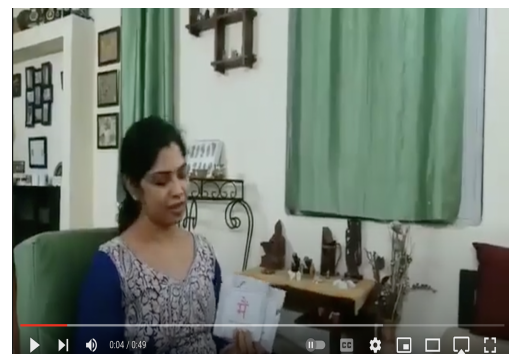
With the Raksha Society!



Drive in Kochi, Kerala



Testimonial by a menstruator!



Our 'मे' Packets

As part of our two-pronged approach, to ensure menstruators dispose of pads in a proper manner, we have created our own disposal packets called 'मे' (Me) packets.

Ensuring Proper Disposal

These packets are made using leftover paper or newspapers and have an adhesive tape on them to ensure that they do not open accidentally,



How do they help?

Our packets are designed to ensure that no waste spills out and are conspicuous to sanitation workers, making the waste segregation process more efficient. In doing so, their exposure to diseases and infection also significantly decreases. Our packets prevent spillage of menstrual waste and are also biodegradable, significantly easing the plight on sanitation workers.

Our Impact

Till date, The Red Lotus has distributed **8000** packets to more than **900** menstruators across **10** states in India. We have raised **50,00 INR** to procure biodegradable pads to distribute with our packets through collaborations with organisations such as the ADIRA Foundation in Maharashtra and Assam, and Serve.Ease in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Through this, we believe we have cut down on **0.23** KG CO2 equivalents that are produced when sanitary products are normally used and have helped ease the plight faced by sanitation workers.

We have also held several awareness sessions across **India** and **Singapore**

To guide younger menstruators towards more sustainable period products.

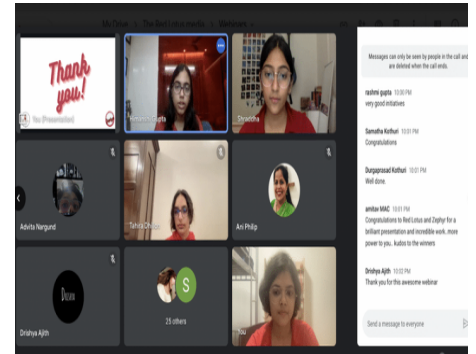
Such webinars have been organised with the Global Indian International School, Navy Children School, Kochi, Mahatma Gandhi

University, and Mumbai University. We have worked with organisations such as Shed Red based in **Canada** and GiveHer5 in India to raise awareness.

Through our sessions, which are held both offline and online, we have reached

out to nearly 5000 menstruators. We are currently working to render ourselves

Even more accessible by hosting a podcast and involving ourselves with more youth magazines, and by involving more non-menstruators in our proceedings.



Webinar with Zephyr Org in New Delhi

Learnings

At The Red Lotus, we have attempted to realise sustainable menstruation in a way that fuses personal and financial capabilities along with larger, worldly ambitions. We have learned that the utility of our model lies in the fact that it allows us to reach out to a broader range of menstruators regardless of age and worldview, and also attempt to provide a solution for problems concerning **Sustainable Development Goals 6, 12, and 13** at the same time.

We are also exploring more options of out-sourcing the production of the packets, and have learned that it is essential for us to produce a wider variety so that communities like those adhering to Jainism can make use of them. We are also increasingly focusing on our social media presence to appeal to media houses and NGOs for more sponsorship and coverage opportunities.



States with TRL presence

us

The Future

We plan on organising drives all across India in the future by building up our volunteer network and nurturing collaborations.

We hope to reach out to more menstruators in rural areas and render ourselves more inclusive by composing a larger team made up of non-menstruators. We are also actively pursuing sponsorship opportunities to support The Red Lotus' ideals.

However, our end goal is to find ourselves redundant in a world where sustainable menstruation is the norm. We hope to knock on doors to only to be turned away. **Until then, however, we'll be hard at work.**

Sunita, the sanitation worker who inspired

