

# PAN KA LAY

Business that participated in Cohort 4 of SPRING

SPRING is a business accelerator programme funded by DFID, USAID and DFAT. It works with businesses to develop products that impact girls' lives in 9 countries.

Coffey is the independent evaluator of SPRING. Coffey's Business Performance Evaluation is part of the overall evaluation and examines the effects of SPRING on business performance. It also looks at how businesses are reaching adolescent girls.

## Pan Ka Lay (PKL) aims to raise awareness and promote education on reproductive health and menstruation in Myanmar.

The business wants to have an impact on stigma and social norms relating to menstruation, as well as advocate for women's empowerment.

In Myanmar, traditional norms, together with strong taboos surrounding sexual and reproductive health, influence the health and wellbeing of girls and women. Only one-third of students report receiving information on puberty, menstruation, reproduction, or contraception.



### Menstruation Insights

77% of girls in Myanmar felt ashamed when they first got their period

70% of girls wear pads twice as long as recommended

50% of girls think menstruation is a disease

24% of girls show signs of infection

## SPRING Prototype and Business Goals

Pan Ka Lay (PKL) was a business at a very early stage of its development when SPRING started. SPRING supported the business as a whole, not only the development of its prototype. PKL's prototype is a social media campaign called **So What!?**, which targets urban and peri-urban girls and women, aged 15 to 24. The campaign aims to:

- Change social norms around menstruation, transforming into something that is seen as natural.
- Improve girls' understanding of menstruation, as well as their health and confidence.
- Create a space for campaigns on sexual and reproductive health to promote the empowerment of women.

## SPRING Support



### Business Focused Support

SPRING's research support was key in shifting from developing reusable and organic pads to developing the **So What!?** Campaign. SPRING also helped develop PKL's website and branding.



### Financial Support

PKL received a grant through SPRING that supported research activities and the development of some communication materials, as well as the launch of **So What!?**.



### Girl Focused Support

PKL already focused on girls prior to SPRING. However, SPRING helped PKL better understand girls and the role of influencers (mothers, sisters, and even men) as key to reaching younger girls.

## Use of Human Centred Design

The introduction to Human Centred Design (HCD) was crucial. In applying HCD, PKL:

- Tested its idea of selling re-usable and organic sanitary pad in rural, urban and peri-urban areas, and realised that there was not a market for this.
- Understood the need for better education on menstrual health, resulting in the **So What!?** Campaign.
- Tested and refined new products, including an educational comic book, with users before launching them.

## Girl Insights and Emerging Signs of Impact

**Even though the campaign is well-received at home, it does not seem to have to have had an impact so far on tackling social norms around menstruation.**

This is not due to the girls' beliefs but more so because challenging these norms would be badly received by the girls' parents.

**Respondents liked that the campaign uses celebrities in their videos and that it normalises menstruation.**

Because of this, users have more trust in the campaign. Users also like that it provides insight on how to deal with menstruation and associated pain.

**Key new ideas were learnt during the campaign.**

Women began to think of menstruation as something to be proud of since it is key to giving birth.

## Research findings on the So What?! Campaign



**Girls confirmed that they follow traditional beliefs around menstruation.**

SPRING research confirmed the need for scientific education around menstruation.

Research emphasised the need to **focus on urban and peri-urban areas**, as their residents tend to be most willing to challenge traditional thinking.

The **role of intermediaries** (mothers, sisters, and male figures) **is key to influencing girls' behaviours**. These groups should be targeted to improve girls' health and wellbeing.

## Going Forward

PKL wants to further develop the **So What!?** campaign by partnering with other media platforms and influencers to channel its message, increase its reach, and raise funds to open an official Q&A service, supported by doctors associated with the campaign. It also plans to expand to schools and develop a comic book to reach younger and lower-income children. PKL is the only organisation in Myanmar where menstruation

is the main focus of all activities, which gives it a more in-depth and comprehensive approach.

**Some potential barriers include:**

- Raising enough funding to support expanding the team to match the increased workload.
- Donor funding is difficult to secure as menstruation is not a priority area of focus in Myanmar.

### Further Reading

Coffey (2019). Case Study Report – Pan Ka Lay. SPRING Evaluation, BPE – Cohort 4