

## Promoting eco-positive sanitary hygiene practices

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Resurgence, a social enterprise founded by Mashiyat Rahman, Naziba Naila Wafa and Rafayet Khan from BRAC University, started off in February 2017. It aims at spreading awareness about menstrual hygiene amongst the underprivileged community of our society by manufacturing low-cost, biodegradable sanitary napkins made out of kochuripana (water hyacinth), which is easily available across Bangladesh.

The young entrepreneurs of Resurgence toiled day and night in order to come up with a foolproof plan to restore the rights and dignities of 10 million refugees by 2022. Their products and services aim to reach the lives of millions of refugees through several different phases - employment, rights to sanitation, public health education, improvement of environmental health, and the breakdown of social stigmas.

The team of Resurgence conducted two pilot projects, one in Mohammadpur Bihari Camp and another in Hazaribagh where they reached out to more than 6000 women, most of whom were garment workers and house servants. The major issues faced by the people in these camps centered around food, shelter and sanitation. Appalled at the unhealthy living conditions of the camps, the team of Resurgence was motivated to do something beneficial for the people. Soon, they came across a company called Jani Pads operating in Kenya that manufactured sanitary napkins from water hyacinth, which inspired the concept for Resurgence. Even after launching the initiative, it took them quite a while to break the social stigmas surrounding menstruation and explain the importance of menstrual hygiene to people. Women were unsure and men were not ready to send women to workshops. However, local leaders helped the team to connect efficiently with the people around.

Resurgence's campaign titled, 'Let's Talk Periods', asked people to post their thoughts about menstruation on social media. After getting a hugely positive response, they became more confident about eliminating the misconceptions surrounding menstruation. During another campaign titled, 'Amar Shorir Amar Odhikar' (My Body My Right), they conducted workshops for children to educate them about 'bad touch' and the importance of consent. An art competition called, 'Meye Bolte Ki Bujho' (What Does Girl/Woman Mean To You), invited them to draw anything that came to their minds upon hearing the word, woman. It resulted in plenty of meaningful pictures, portraying powerful messages about women. In yet another campaign titled, 'They Need Resurgence', the team highlighted the different social barriers that they aim to challenge. Resurgence was the winner of Hult Prize 2017 at BRAC University.

Soon, the team of Resurgence will release an online platform which will answer different queries and questions related to menstruation and will be an aid for pregnant women as well. They also plan to keep working more selflessly for not just empowering refugees but also thousands of other underprivileged groups occupying slums and found across many footpaths.