

Community-based social marketing campaign to promote the use of the menstrual cup in
Colombian Pacific communities.

by

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Abstract

This report presents a proposal for a Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign aimed at promoting the use of the menstrual cup among the menstruating population of the Colombian Pacific. Menstrual hygiene management is a crucial issue in many vulnerable communities, where social inequality, poverty, and limited access to healthcare pose a significant challenge to the safety, dignity, and survival of these populations. In the absence of communication and education plans that normalize menstruation and menstrual hygiene practices, these communities suffer from adverse impacts on their health, education, and sustainability.

Through a collaborative approach that involves local communities, health organizations, educational institutions, and community leaders, this campaign seeks to raise awareness about the benefits of the menstrual cup and overcome the barriers that prevent its adoption to get people to adopt the menstrual cup as the only menstrual hygiene device.

Based on Social Diffusion Theory and Community-Based Social Marketing campaign methodology, the campaign employs various community engagement strategies, including educational workshops, peer-to-peer outreach, menstrual cup subsidies, and media campaigns tailored to the community's cultural context. This report develops a proposal composed of 4 steps (behavior selection, identification of barriers and benefits, developing strategies, and recommendations for future implementation). It seeks to understand the problem surrounding menstrual hygiene and propose an effective strategy to increase menstrual cup use. This strategy seeks not only to positively impact the environment by reducing plastic waste but also to improve life in the menstruating population, which currently faces many challenges due to the lack of education about menstrual hygiene.

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Dedication

I dedicate this report to my family for their unwavering support. I especially want to thank my husband, Alan, for accompanying me on this adventure and being there for me through both the good and challenging times. His support has shown me that I am capable of much more than I ever imagined. I also want to express my gratitude to my parents, Martha and Pastor, who, despite being far away, have always believed in me and my abilities.

1. Introduction

Menstruation is a periodic and natural process in women that usually starts in puberty; this is a physiological phenomenon in which women discharge blood and other organic materials through the vagina due to the shedding of the uterine wall lining when there is no pregnancy (Kamira & Rizkalla, 2023). During this period, it is common for women to experience symptoms such as abdominal and back pain, headache, heavy bleeding, tiredness, and perimenstrual psychological complaints that can significantly impact women's daily activities (Schoep et al., 2019). Hygiene of the intimate area during the menstrual period is essential to avoid certain health problems such as pain, infections, fungi, and unpleasant odors (Kamira & Rizkalla, 2023). According to UNICEF, adequate Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) consists of the use of "clean menstrual management material to absorb or collect menstrual blood, that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary for the duration of a menstrual period, using soap and water for washing the body as required and having access to safe and convenient facilities to dispose of used menstrual management" (UNICEF, 2019, p. 8). As mentioned before, inadequate hygiene during menstruation can cause severe health problems, and that is why it is essential to educate the menstruating population about menstruation as a biological process and proper menstrual hygiene.

Unfortunately, in Colombia, specifically in the Pacific region, education about menstruation among young women is still limited; according to UNICEF Colombia, in a report about menstrual hygiene in girls from schools in rural areas in the Colombian Pacific, 34.8% of the girls surveyed indicated that they did not know anything about menstruation before their first menstrual period and 45% of them did not know or did not answer where the menstrual bleeding comes from (UNICEF Colombia, 2018). The same report states that in Colombia, talking about

menstruation is still considered taboo due to sociocultural aspects (UNICEF Colombia, 2018). In the Pacific community, menstruation is seen as a pollutive and dirty process, which sets apart women and adolescent girls from their daily activities attributable to the belief that menstruation contaminates food and plants, and reflects poor hygiene, thus causing women to perceive menstruation as something unpleasant and uncomfortable that they should be ashamed of (UNICEF Colombia, 2018). Due to these conditions, Colombian women's knowledge about menstruation is still limited, including a lack of knowledge about menstrual hygiene products used for the absorption or collection of blood.

In Colombia, according to DANE (2023), the government entity responsible for planning, collecting, processing, analyzing, and disseminating official statistics, disposable sanitary napkins are the principal element used by women to collect menstruation blood, where 93.1% of women use sanitary pads, 11.2% use tampons, 2.8% use the menstrual cup, and 1.2% of women use old clothes, socks, toilet paper or napkins. What makes sanitary pads and tampons the preferred alternative is their availability, usability, and, in some contexts, their low price. However, using these elements can cause several health issues and environmental damage (Peter & Abhitha, 2021).

Sanitary pads are made up of chemicals such as styrene, chloromethane, chloroethane, chloroform, and acetone (Nicole, 2014), which are considered toxic and can affect women's reproductive functions to a lesser extent. These toxins also create an ideal environment for the growth of bacteria, leading to possible infections (Woo et al., 2019). Regarding environmental damage, 240,000 tons of waste are produced annually in the United States due to the use of sanitary pads and tampons (US EPA, 2022). These data only correspond to the American population; however, each year around the world, around 1.8 billion people menstruate per

month; therefore, the consumption of these products increases, as well as the pollution caused by them (Mouhanna et al., 2023).

It is evident that menstruating is a complex experience and implies social, economic, health, and environmental challenges. There is an alternative menstrual collection device known as the menstrual cup, which could offer a possible solution to these problems. The menstrual cup has recently been considered one of the most economical and safe options for collecting menstrual fluid in quantities very similar to sanitary pads and tampons (Itaya et al., 2022). It is a bell-shaped object crafted from medical-grade silicone, capable of gathering 10 to 38 milliliters of blood, depending on its dimensions. It can be comfortably placed in the vagina for a duration of up to 12 hours before requiring cleansing with soap and water (Mouhanna et al., 2023). The menstrual cup is reusable and can last for 5 to 10 years with appropriate maintenance that involves boiling it for 3 minutes once a month (Pokhrel et al., 2021). This reusable and long-lasting characteristic makes them a less costly and environmentally friendly alternative because it reduces the repetitive purchase of disposable feminine products and reduces the amount of waste produced by tampons and sanitary pads (Howard et al., 2011).

Despite all the benefits mentioned above, the menstrual cup is not the most popular menstrual fluid collector device among the menstruating population. This is due to various factors, such as negative social stigmas surrounding its use, lack of education and information about the benefits of the menstrual cup, and their relatively initial higher price compared to other menstrual products (Grose & Grabe, 2014). In Colombia a menstrual cup can be purchased for approximately \$85.000 COP, or \$21.73 USD (Boom, 2024), which may seem expensive. However, it is worth noting that this is a wise investment in the long run as the menstrual cup can last up to 10 years, making it a cost-effective alternative to purchasing sanitary pads and tampons

every month. In Colombia, a person who menstruates spends approximately \$210,000 COP (\$54 USD) annually on sanitary pads. In 10 years, this adds up to around 2,100,000 COP (\$540 USD) in single-use sanitary pads (Gómez, 2022), which means that a person who menstruates over a period of 10 years could be saving \$2,015,000 COP (\$519 USD) by adapting the use of the menstrual cup as the main menstrual hygiene device. Another element that also may affect the low acceptability or use of the menstrual cup in some cultures is the lack of knowledge of its existence and its usability (Kamira & Rizkalla, 2023) because to utilize a menstrual cup, a woman needs to have direct contact with her genital area and this action may be viewed as taboo or inappropriate in certain cultures (Schooler et al., 2005), as touching intimate areas is closely associated with matters of sexuality (Mehroolhassani et al., 2020).

In Colombia, the use of the menstrual cup is not widely accepted; only 2.8% of menstruating individuals use it, and the adoption of this product tends to be linked to the individual's income level. During 2021, only women with professional or postgraduate education and the ability to save a portion of their income used the menstrual cup (DANE, 2023). Likewise, in specific vulnerable communities, such as those in the Colombian Pacific, the menstrual cup is not a commonly used device by menstruating individuals due to the low income of families and women (DANE, 2023). Often, they cannot afford to purchase sanitary pads and resort to using napkins or old clothes to collect menstrual blood (Ariza Ruiz et al., 2017). The low acceptance of the menstrual cup in these communities is shaped not solely by economic considerations but also by social stigma, lack of menstrual education, and a lack of awareness about the device (Ariza Ruiz et al., 2017). These elements frequently act as barriers, hindering women from embracing the menstrual cup as a feasible choice.

Promoting the use of the menstrual cup in the menstruating population of the Colombian Pacific is essential because it is a reusable option and can significantly reduce the long-term financial burden associated with menstrual hygiene management despite a high initial cost. Likewise, addressing the social stigma surrounding menstruation and educating the population about menstruation as a natural biological process is crucial to closing the gap between education and cultural beliefs, ensuring that the menstruating population is equipped to make informed decisions about menstruation health and menstrual hygiene management.

As a contribution to the solution of these problems, this report aimed to design a Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011) to promote the use of the menstrual cup in the communities of the Colombian Pacific. This type of campaign is ideal because it emphasizes direct contact between community members and eliminating structural barriers; these approaches are often more likely to lead to behavioral changes (McKenzie-Mohr, 2016). This type of campaign methodology involves identifying the barriers and benefits that affect adopting sustainable behaviors (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). Therefore, the literature review was intended to identify the challenges faced by the menstruating population in the Colombian Pacific communities, recognizing the barriers that prevent the use of the menstrual cup, as well as identifying the benefits its adoption can bring at an economic, social, educational, and environmental level. The objective was to then create a strategy and key messages that through social influence approaches (e.g., compliance, identification, and internalization) (Kelman, 1958), encouraged the intention to use the menstrual cup.

2. Campaign Context

2.1 Menstruation in the Colombian Pacific

Historically, in the peripheral areas of Colombia, complex territorial, political, and economic conditions have converged, resulting in these regions' social exclusion. The Colombian Pacific is considered one of the country's most vulnerable regions due to the precarious conditions of housing, health, employment, and education and its high rates of violence (Durán-Gil, 2017). The state of vulnerability of these communities has a vast impact on menstrual management and hygiene, causing the menstruating population to face different personal, economic, social, educational, and environmental challenges during their menstrual period. In Colombia, there is legislation that focuses on offering dignified menstruation to vulnerable populations through education about menstrual management and hygiene (Vacca et al., 2021). However, despite these efforts, Menstrual Hygiene Management has not been explicitly included in public policy, causing a lack of menstrual education in the country's rural communities, leaving the explanation of these topics in the hands of the beliefs and social practices promoted by the community and the family (UNICEF Colombia, 2018).

Menstrual instruction is essential in the health education of adolescent girls; factors such as awareness, culture, and socioeconomic status are fundamental in the influence of adequate menstrual practices (Chothe et al., 2014). Previous research has shown that women and adolescent girls in low and middle-income countries perceive menstruation as a negative experience due to unhealthy environments for managing menstrual hygiene (Sommer et al., 2016; Sommer & Sahin, 2013; Usman Adam et al., 2023), limited economic resources to purchase feminine supplies (Kuhlmann et al., 2017), premenstrual symptoms (McMaster et al., 1997), and social stigma (Sacca et al., 2023). Menstruation is a complicated concept influenced

by the social, economic, and cultural context in which it is formed. This physiological event in women significantly affects several aspects of their lives (Larki et al., 2022). The challenges and consequences that the menstruating population in developing countries face during their menstrual period are described below.

2.2 Menstruation Challenges

2.2.1 Personal and socio-cultural challenges

Teenage girls can see menstruating as a terrifying experience (Burrows & Johnson, 2005) that can negatively impact different aspects of their personal and socio-cultural dimensions, such as their daily activities and their relationship with their body, family, and social environments.

In the Colombian Pacific, 69% of girls see menstruation as a frightening experience, and 47% state they feel insecure during their period (UNICEF Colombia, 2018). This perception stems from the belief that their first menstrual period marks a moment of transformation. It is considered a juncture in time in which girls become women and, therefore, their role in the family changes, being forced to accept more responsibilities and more surveillance by their parents for fear of unwanted pregnancies (Ariza Ruiz et al., 2017). Likewise, menstruation not only affects the family dynamics of women but also limits their daily activities, such as cooking, working, studying, praying, eating certain foods, and having sexual relations (Drakshayani Devi & Venkata Ramaiah, 1994). These limitations arise because, in several cultures, menstruation is perceived as dirty and polluting (Jogdand & Yerpude, 2011). A study carried out in the Colombian Pacific found that women's hygiene is questioned during their period because, in places with low temperatures, women do not bathe when they are menstruating, which results in a rejection by their social environments (Ariza Ruiz et al., 2017).

These limiting social norms and cultural taboos make it difficult for the menstruating population to have a positive perspective on menstruation because, as evidenced previously, many negative elements are associated with this event. In many cultures, menstruation is perceived as a 'girl thing,' which makes it a topic that should be discussed only among women, limiting open communication and normalization of menstruation (Tuli et al., 2019). In Colombia, the family is recognized as the most important space to support adolescent girls during menstruation. The women in the family usually get involved directly, providing support and information, while on the contrary, the men get involved discreetly due to the lack of knowledge and the negative perception they have about menstruation (Ariza Ruiz et al., 2017).

2.2.2 School absenteeism

With the arrival of menstruation, women must learn how to manage it not only at home with their families' support but also how to deal with menstruation in public environments such as school. Several studies have overseen school absenteeism due to menstruation in developing countries (Daud et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2018, 2018; Grant et al., 2013; Miirio et al., 2018; Shah et al., 2022). Menstruation in schools has been found to trigger feelings of shame, anxiety, fear, and distress among menstruating students (Mason et al., 2013). Academic literature on this topic has identified the barriers that challenge women in school environments and divided them into psychosocial and physical categories (Shah et al., 2022).

Young women frequently encounter psychosocial obstacles when managing menstruation because of cultural stigmas and taboos surrounding the subject; these barriers lead to feelings of embarrassment, stress, and a lack of confidence during their menstrual cycle while at school, and consequently, girls hesitate to seek guidance from their parents or teachers regarding appropriate menstrual hygiene practices (Shah et al., 2019). Regarding physical barriers, the elements

causing school absence are the lack of water and privacy, the inadequate infrastructure to dispose of absorbent materials, and the lack of menstrual hygiene products and analgesics to relieve menstrual pain (Davis et al., 2018; Miirio et al., 2018). These barriers make many students in developing countries decide not to go to school, or if they do decide to go, it is common for them to try to hide that they are menstruating, being on the lookout for any blood stains or bad odors (Ariza Ruiz et al., 2017).

According to UNICEF Colombia, in the Colombian Pacific 1 in 4 girls have missed school at least once in their life due to menstruation, 64% of them have missed one day, and 26% have missed two days (UNICEF Colombia, 2018). The principal causes that keep women from this region away from schools are menstrual cramps, heavy bleeding, lack of sanitary pads, discomfort, and fear of blood stains on their clothing (UNICEF Colombia, 2018). The study stated that 63% of girls in school preferred to stay at home while menstruating, since 40.2% affirmed that during their menstrual period, their concentration decreased, and 28.8% prefer not to participate in school activities for fear of blood stains on their clothing (UNICEF Colombia, 2018).

2.2.3 Economic challenges

According to Sacca et al. (2023), menstruating population requires menstrual hygiene products throughout their reproductive life, and sometimes, the costs of these products can be very high for some sectors of the population. Period poverty is the term that refers to the "inability to access clean menstrual hygiene products" (Sacca et al., 2023, p. 1).

In Colombia, between 2021 and 2022, 15.1% of women faced economic challenges in acquiring menstrual hygiene products (DANE, 2023). Girls and adolescents with primary and secondary education levels are the most affected population who struggle with managing

menstruation. The most common product used for menstruation management is sanitary napkins; however, in the most vulnerable populations in Colombia, it was reported that 3.3% of women without income used old clothes, socks, toilet paper, or napkins to attend to their menstrual period (DANE, 2023). Lack of access to menstrual hygiene products can negatively impact menstruating individuals' physical, emotional, and mental health, and it is usually directly related to school absenteeism and the interruption of women's work activities (Michel et al., 2022).

2.2.4 Environmental challenges

Plastic pollution in recent years has increased exponentially, making it one of the leading causes of the environmental crisis affecting people's health and marine ecosystems. With the growing demand for plastic packaging, plastic production is projected to exceed 1 billion tons by 2050 (Salazar et al., 2022). Menstrual hygiene management devices contribute to plastic pollution, as the average menstruating person uses 10,000 sanitary products in their lifetime (Valentin & Hechanova, 2023). Popular menstrual products like sanitary napkins and tampons often have a significant negative impact on the environment due to their disposable nature. It is estimated that a sanitary pad can take between 500 and 800 years to decompose or, if they contain high levels of plastic, may never truly biodegrade (Peberdy et al., 2019).

In Colombia, like in many other countries in the world, the most used menstrual blood collectors are sanitary napkins, followed by tampons (DANE, 2023). Depending on factors such as personal preferences, resource availability, economic status, traditions, cultural beliefs, educational level, and knowledge about menstruation, women develop their own strategies to manage their period (Kaur et al., 2018). For this reason, many women choose to use sanitary pads and other disposable menstrual hygiene products since they are highly marketed, easily available, and accessible (Peberdy et al., 2019).

Unfortunately, the environmental impact of menstrual hygiene products has been overlooked. A study conducted by Peberdy et al. (2019) revealed that most study participants were unaware of the amount of plastic produced by disposable menstrual products and the resulting environmental damage. In recent years, researchers have been studying the environmental impact of menstruation (Blair et al., 2022; De Luna-Cabrera et al., 2022; Peberdy et al., 2019; Woo et al., 2019). With the increasing popularity of eco-friendly alternatives like the menstrual cup, academia has taken great interest in understanding its benefits and promoting its use (Babagoli et al., 2022; Grose & Grabe, 2014; Pokhrel et al., 2021; van Eijk et al., 2019).

2.3 Menstrual Cup

It is vital that menstrual products are comfortable and do not cause any injury to the perineum, vulva, vagina, or genitourinary tract, and do not result in mobility reduction or skin infections. When selecting a menstrual product, elements such as cost, accessibility, ease of use, disposal method, availability of water and sanitation facilities for washing and changing, and the product's environmental impact should be considered. Unfortunately, the menstruating population faces challenges such as ignorance, prejudice, cultural norms, safety fears, and limited availability, which can prevent them from trying different products to find the one that suits them best for managing their menstruation (van Eijk et al., 2021).

The menstrual cup is a reusable menstrual blood collector device that has been available for sale since 1930; however, its use has been relatively uncommon among the menstruating population (Mouhanna et al., 2023). This device is an alternative to disposable menstrual hygiene products such as sanitary pads and tampons; it is made of medical silicone, which can be folded to be inserted into the vagina and will collect menstrual blood in quantities similar to sanitary

pads and tampons. Depending on the amount of flow, it can be used for 6 to 12 hours, and its total durability is estimated to be up to 10 years (Kaur et al., 2018).

2.3.1 Benefits of using a menstrual cup

Regarding the benefits of the menstrual cup, studies have shown that this menstrual blood collector device is accepted among women because it offers better leakage protection (Hytel et al., 2017), it is an economical option as it can last up to 10 years, eliminating the need for repetitive purchases of sanitary pads and tampons (Stewart et al., 2009), its versatility allows women to participate in various physical activities even during their periods (Valentin & Hechanova, 2023), the need to change is less frequent compared to that of sanitary pads, as it can remain in the vagina for up to 12 hours, and it produces less odors (Bharatnur & Aishwarya, 2023). In addition to these economic and personal benefits, using the menstrual cup is considered a pro-environmental behavior due to its impact on reducing plastic pollution (Valentin & Hechanova, 2023).

2.3.2 Barriers that prevent menstrual cup use

Despite the menstrual cup's great benefits, several studies have been dedicated to analyzing factors affecting menstrual cup acceptability among the menstruating population. A study (Itaya et al., 2022) in Japan found that factors that prevent women from using the menstrual cup are discomfort when using the cup, concerns related to hygiene, and mental resistance to using the cup. The group of women surveyed stated that inserting and removing the cup took them a long time and made them impatient, and for some, these processes caused pain (Itaya et al., 2022). In addition, women stated that they resisted using the cup because their hands and the toilet could get dirty, and they were afraid of inserting a dirty cup into the vagina (Itaya et al., 2022). On the other hand, a study conducted in India found that although women are

interested in using the menstrual cup, there are a few factors that prevent them from doing so; these factors include a lack of knowledge about the insertion and removal of the cup, the unavailability of the menstrual cup in local medical stores, and cultural beliefs (Agrawal & Ruprai, 2020).

As is evident in these studies, the reasons for not using the menstrual cup can vary significantly between developed and developing countries. In the case of Colombia, only 2.8% of the menstruating population uses the menstrual cup; the percentage of women who use the menstrual cup increases as their educational level increases (DANE, 2023). Between May 2021 and May 2022, 6.0% of women with professional and postgraduate education used the menstrual cup, while this percentage is 1.0% among women with primary and secondary education (DANE, 2023).

It is evident that women, girls, and adolescents facing vulnerable conditions face significant challenges while using the menstrual cup. Nonetheless, in a systematic review and meta-analysis (van Eijk et al., 2019) about leakage, acceptability, safety, availability, and menstrual cup use in high, middle, and low-income countries, researchers found that the menstrual cup is an acceptable and safe alternative for menstrual hygiene management in all countries regardless of income level. This study also recognizes that the menstrual cup is not a widely known device and that to increase usability indicators, it is necessary to implement programs that promote the use of the menstrual cup as an eco-friendly alternative to disposable sanitary products in addition to providing information, training, and follow-up support to ensure proper usage (Eijk et al., 2019).

2.4 Campaign target audience

For the planning and execution of this campaign, the target audience was established as the menstruating population of the Colombian Pacific. The decision to direct the campaign to the menstruating population, not just women, sought to promote inclusion and recognition of diverse experiences. Although menstruation primarily affects women, it is essential to recognize that not all menstruating people identify as women (Frank, 2020).

By focusing on the menstruating population, the Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign sought to ensure that it includes all people who experience menstruation regardless of their gender identity and age. This approach aligns with the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, recognizing that menstrual health is an issue that transcends social, gender, and age boundaries (UNFPA, 2022). Additionally, targeting the menstruating population can allow the campaign to reach a broader audience and address the specific needs and challenges faced by menstruating individuals. This fosters a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of menstrual health and hygiene, ultimately leading to more effective promotion and support for menstrual cup use in the Colombian Pacific region.

Because the menstruation population is a diverse group with a wide range of ages, needs, and concerns, the Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign aimed to propose strategies that are tailored to the unique needs of this population, which includes women, adolescents, transgender, non-binary, and menopausal individuals. This involved analyzing the target audience's demographic characteristics, values, and behaviors and identifying key messages and communication formats that will resonate with them. By taking a nuanced approach to audience segmentation and messaging, the campaign hopes to maximize the effectiveness of its outreach efforts and ultimately achieve its goals of promoting menstrual health and hygiene.

3. Relevant Literature

3.1 Community-Based Social Marketing Campaigns

Adopting a new product like the menstrual cup can be stressful for some individuals, implying a change of attitude and behaviors (Kamira & Rizkalla, 2023). Historically, diverse types of campaigns with different approaches have been used to foster sustainable behaviors through attitude and behavior change (e.g., Information-Based and Social Marketing Campaigns) (Vantamay, 2019). According to McKenzie-Mohr (2000a; 2011), conventional information-based social marketing campaigns with an attitude-behavior approach that seeks to change attitudes through large-scale information distribution have been shown to have little or no effect on promoting sustainable behavior. These information-based campaigns effectively raise awareness and enhance knowledge (Vantamay, 2019); however, their ability to create lasting behavioral changes is limited because they do not address the barriers that limit people from adopting sustainable behavior (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011).

Community-Based Social Marketing Campaigns can be an effective tool in promoting behavioral changes (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). This approach combines psychology and social marketing experience to identify behaviors to promote, barriers and benefits associated with those behaviors, and develop strategies to address them in a segmented community (McKenzie-Mohr, 2000). This programmatic approach has been proven to be successful in achieving significant changes in behavior (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). Some sustainable behaviors that have benefited from the effectiveness of these campaigns are conservation, energy efficiency, transportation, waste reduction, and water efficiency (Cole & Fieselman, 2013; Kennedy, 2010; Martin et al., 2015; Mildenerger et al., 2013; Vantamay, 2019).

Due to the effectiveness that Community-Based Social Marketing Campaigns have proven to have in promoting sustainable behaviors, this report used the first three steps of the methodology proposed by McKenzie-Mohr (2011) to create a campaign that encourages the use of the menstrual cup among school-age and adolescent girls in the Colombian Pacific. The methodology proposed by the author (**Figure 1**) to create a behavioral change involves five steps: selecting the behavior to promote, identifying barriers and benefits, developing strategies, piloting, and broad-scale implementation and evaluation.

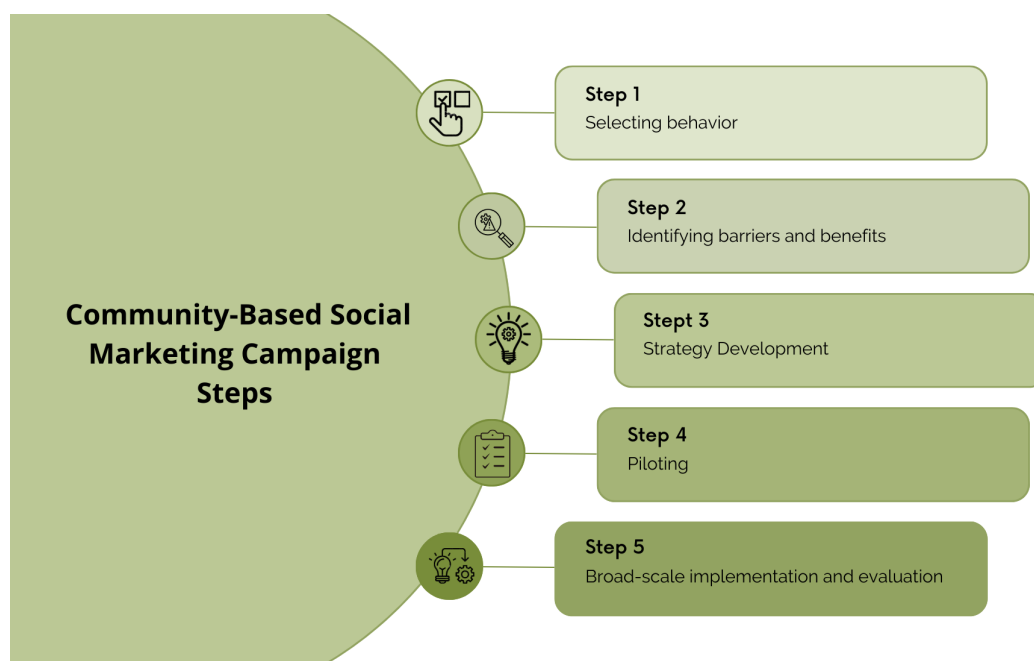


Figure 1: Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign Steps based on McKenzie-Mohr (2011)

The first two steps of this model are essential for the campaign's success. Step one is where the behavior to be promoted is selected. In this step, it must be guaranteed that the chosen behavior is non-divisible and is an end-stated behavior. This means that the selected behavior cannot be broken down into sub-actions and that the adoption of the behavior actually produces the desired outcomes. Regarding the second step, it is vital to recognize the barriers that impede people from engaging in the behavior and the factors that motivate them to act to establish

appropriate strategies (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). Some of the main obstacles that prevent people from taking sustainable actions are lack of motivation, forgetfulness, structural barriers (e.g., money, safety), lack of social pressure, and lack of knowledge (Aronoff et al., 2013).

Although the first two steps are important, creating a strategy in the third step determines the campaign's success. Part of the success of Community-Based Social Marketing Campaigns in encouraging the adoption of new behaviors is its emphasis on creating effective and systematic strategies to remove barriers that prevent the adoption of the desired behavior (McKenzie-Mohr, 2000) through using social influence approaches (Abrahamse & Steg, 2013).

3.2 Social Influence Theory

According to Social Influence Theory (Kelman, 1958), attitude and behavior change is the result of social influence. To achieve a change in attitude or behavior, Kelman (1958) assures that there are three influence mechanisms: compliance, identification, and internalization.

Compliance: Occurs when people decide to adopt the suggested behavior or attitude because they expect a reward from another individual or a group, or because they want to avoid punishment. The positive or negative results of the person's compliance determine their acceptance of the influence (Kelman, 1958).

Identification: Occurs when an individual accepts influence to establish or maintain a satisfactory relationship with another individual or group. The individual decides to adopt a new behavior or attitude to please another (Kelman, 1958).

Internalization: Occurs when the induced behavior or attitude is congruent with the individual's values system or is considered helpful because it solves a problem or a need (Kelman, 1958).

To determine which mechanisms suit a particular scenario, one should consider whether the desired behavior change is short-term or long-term. The first two mechanisms are highly effective in bringing about short-term changes, while the last one is generally more beneficial in achieving long-lasting changes in attitude and behavior. However, despite these differences, using the three mechanisms in a single strategy can positively affect behavioral change since it covers all the social aspects that influence individuals when accepting influence (Kelman, 1958).

McKenzie-Mohr (2011) suggests seven tools that use social diffusion to promote sustainable behaviors: commitment, social norms, social distribution, prompts, communication of effective messages, incentives, and convenience. For this report, the main concepts of Social Diffusion Theory will be considered to create the strategies, in addition to the tools recommended by Dr. Doug McKenzie-Mohr in his book *Fostering Sustainable Behavior: an Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing* (Figure 2).

BARRIERS	TOOLS
Lack of Knowledge	Communication, Social Difussion
Lack of Motivation	Commitment, Norms, Incentives
Social Stigma	Social Norms
Structural Barriers	Covenience

Figure 2: Tools to overcome the barriers that prevent the adoption of the menstrual cup in the community of the Colombian Pacific. Adapted from Aronoff, J., Champion, B. L., Lauer, C. S., & Pahwa, A. (2013). Teaching old dogs new tricks: The effectiveness of community-based social marketing on energy conservation for sustainable university campuses.

In Colombia, there has been a notable absence of academic exploration into menstruation, menstrual hygiene, and the adoption of the menstrual cup. Consequently, a substantial disparity exists between the community's needs in these areas and the available academic literature. To the best of the author's knowledge, only one study (Ariza Ruiz et al., 2017) has explored the emotional, physical, and social aspects of women's menstrual experiences in the Pacific region. Regarding campaign implementation to promote the use of the menstrual cup, just one private brand has undertaken an initiative to promote menstrual cup usage in vulnerable Colombian communities (Bloom, 2018). However, this effort merely involved distributing menstrual cups without offering comprehensive support to the menstruating population or addressing the structural barriers hindering the widespread adoption of the menstrual cup.

Report purpose: This Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign aims to raise awareness, foster understanding, and encourage the adoption of the menstrual cup within the Colombian Pacific community. This campaign seeks to empower the menstruating population by providing them with information about the benefits of the menstrual cup, addressing any misconceptions or barriers they may have, and promoting sustainable and cost-effective menstrual hygiene practices. Through community engagement, education, and support, the campaign aims to improve the acceptance and use of the menstrual cup, contributing to improved menstrual health and well-being in the Colombian Pacific region.

3.3 Messaging for a Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign

Studies have shown that strategically designed messages with clear objectives and intentions influence attitudes and behavior change in public health, medicine, and environmental care (Hurst & Stern, 2020; Kidd et al., 2019; O'Keefe & Jensen, 2007). When designing messaging strategies for environmental campaigns, it is essential to understand the nuances between gain-

framed messages and loss-framed messages. Gain-framed messages highlighting the benefits of adopting the recommended behaviors stand out for increasing risk perception and efficacy, ultimately leading to stronger environmental action intention (Ngo et al., 2022). On the other hand, loss-framed messages emphasize the negative consequences of not engaging in the behavior; they are more persuasive in high-threat scenarios, invoking fear and urgency to distance people from potential losses (Stadlthanner et al., 2022). Research indicates that both framing approaches can be effective; however, their impact varies depending on different factors such as message framing, message source credibility, and target of the message (Rothman et al., 2006).

In the context of promoting the use of the menstrual cup in the Colombian Pacific, both gain-framed and loss-framed approaches can effectively engage the target audience and encourage them to adopt the menstrual cup as the preferred menstrual collector device. Using gain-framed messaging, the campaign can highlight the multiple advantages of using the menstrual cup, such as improving menstrual hygiene, cost savings, and environmental sustainability. At the same time, utilizing loss-framed messaging can underscore the potential risks and negative outcomes of not using the menstrual cup, including environmental impact and unnecessary spending of money.

4. Methodology

To create a Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign to promote the use of the menstrual cup in the menstruating population in the Colombian Pacific, the first three steps proposed by Dr. Doug McKenzie-Mohr are as follows (**Figure 3**).

Step 1 – Select the behavior to be promoted

In this step, the non-divisible and end-state behavior to promote was selected. In this case, it was the use of the menstrual cup by the menstruating population in the Colombian Pacific.

Step 2 – Identification of barriers and benefits

Through a literature review, the barriers that prevent the menstruating population in the Colombian Pacific from using the menstruation cup were established, as well as the benefits of adopting the cup as the primary menstrual blood collector device.

Step 3 – Developing strategies

Based on the information gathered from the literature review, this step involved formulating a strategy that addresses the social, educational, economic, and environmental challenges faced by communities in the Colombian Pacific. The approach involved utilizing social diffusion tools to overcome barriers that prevent the use of the menstrual cup. Additionally, messages intended to highlight the menstrual cup's benefits were created to encourage the menstruating population to adopt a positive attitude towards the menstrual cup and make it a part of their daily lives.

Step 4 – Recommendations for future implementation

Guides and recommendations were provided for piloting and large-scale implementation of the campaign in Colombia to assist future government or private entities in executing the campaign effectively.

Steps	Action	TOOLS
Step 1	Select the behavior to be promoted	Literature review
Step 2	Identification of barriers and benefits	Literature review
Step 3	Developing strategies	Social diffusion approaches
Step 4	Recommendation for future implementation	

Figure 3: Report Procedures

5. Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign

5.1 Campaign name

Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time

5.2 Target audience

The menstruating population of the Colombian Pacific

5.3 Campaign general objective

This Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign aims to raise awareness, foster understanding, and encourage the adoption of the menstrual cup within the Colombian Pacific community. This campaign seeks to empower the menstruating population by providing them with information about the benefits of the menstrual cup, addressing any misconceptions or barriers they may have, and promoting sustainable and cost-effective menstrual hygiene practices. Through community engagement, education, and support, the campaign aims to improve the acceptance and use of the menstrual cup, contributing to improved menstrual health and well-being in the Colombian Pacific region.

5.4 Campaign specific objectives

1. **Increase awareness:** Increase awareness of menstrual hygiene and menstrual cup use among the menstruating population in the Colombian Pacific.
2. **Education and understanding:** Educate the menstruating population of the Colombian Pacific about menstruation, menstrual hygiene, and the benefits and proper use of the menstrual cup through workshops and information materials.
3. **Accessibility and affordability:** Increase the accessibility of menstrual cups by establishing partnerships with local businesses or NGOs that subsidize or facilitate access to menstrual cups within the target community.

4. **Cultural sensitivity:** Develop inclusive and culturally sensitive campaign materials that resonate with the diverse communities in the region and adapt to their beliefs and culture, ensuring that the target audience feels represented and comfortable.
5. **Community involvement:** Facilitate community engagement events, so the menstruating population of the Colombian Pacific, through workshops, debates, and interactive sessions, learn about menstrual health and using the menstrual cup.
6. **Partnership and stakeholder involvement:** Establish collaborations with local healthcare providers, community leaders, and educational institutions to promote the adoption of the menstrual cup, ensuring that the target audience has constant support during the learning curve of the use of the menstrual cup.
7. **Environmental impact:** Emphasize the environmental benefits of the menstrual cup, to reduce the plastic pollution caused by disposable sanitary products in target communities during the campaign period.
8. **Long-term sustainability and adoption:** Foster long-term sustainability by ensuring a continuing support mechanism with the goal that the menstruating population who initially adopt the menstrual cup continue using it beyond the campaign's conclusion.
9. **Policy advocacy:** The campaign can effectively encourage the promotion of policies for menstrual hygiene management, menstrual cup use, and the reduction of the environmental impact of plastic pollution caused by the use of sanitary pads and tampons. This can be achieved by engaging key stakeholders, such as local authorities, women's rights organizations, and environmental organizations through developing a comprehensive communication strategy to raise awareness and educate the community. By developing specific policy recommendations based on the results

of the research, organizing advocacy campaigns and lobbying efforts to influence policymakers, and by establishing mechanisms to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies, the campaign can build coalitions, amplify advocacy efforts, and ultimately shape public policies, programs, and practices to promote menstrual cup use, improve menstrual hygiene management, empower the menstruating population, and reduce plastic pollution.

5.5 Campaign steps

5.5.1 Step 1: Behavior selection

Menstrual cup use among the menstruating population in the Colombian Pacific.

5.5.2 Step 2: Identification of barriers and benefits

The benefits and barriers associated with the use of the menstrual cup were determined based on the findings outlined in the literature review.

Benefits

- **Cost-effective:** The menstrual cup is reusable and durable, making it a cost-effective option over disposable menstrual products. This can result in substantial long-term savings for users because they will not have to buy sanitary pads or tampons periodically.
- **Environmentally friendly:** The menstrual cup is an eco-friendly alternative to disposable sanitary products due to its reusability, which generates less waste and plastic pollution.

- **Convenience and discreteness:** When used correctly, the menstrual cup is an effective device that prevents leaks. It can remain in the vagina for over 12 hours and reduces the number of necessary pad changes per day when used with sanitary pads.
- **Increased awareness of menstrual health:** Using a menstrual cup can lead to a deeper understanding of one's menstrual cycle, potentially improving overall menstrual health.
- **Menstruating population empowerment and independence:** Using a menstrual cup reduces dependency on disposable products and empowers users to manage menstrual hygiene independently.

Barriers

- **Social stigma:** Social taboos surrounding menstruation can lead to hesitation to try new menstrual products. Cultural norms and stigmas can create barriers to open discussions and acceptance of the menstrual cup.
- **Cultural and religious factors:** Cultural or religious beliefs may influence perceptions about menstrual hygiene practices, leading some menstruating individuals to avoid the menstrual cup.
- **Learning curve:** Some menstruating individuals may experience initial discomfort or difficulty in correctly inserting and removing the menstrual cup. The early stages of using the cup can be discouraging for some due to the learning curve.
- **Hygiene concerns:** The menstrual cup may raise concerns for some menstruating individuals regarding hygiene and cleanliness due to a lack of knowledge about the cup cleaning process.

- **Lack of education and awareness:** Many menstruating individuals are unfamiliar with the menstrual cup and may not have access to complete information about how to use it and its benefits. This lack of awareness contributes to the hesitation to try this alternative.
- **Accessibility:** The initial cost of the menstrual cup and the lack of availability in stores make it difficult for low-income communities to access these devices.
- **Lack of knowledge about environmental impact:** People are unaware of the environmental impact caused by disposable feminine hygiene products, and the majority do not prioritize caring for the environment in their choices of menstrual hygiene devices.

5.5.3 Step 3: Strategy

Strategy description

Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time is a Community-Based Social Marketing campaign that aims to change menstrual health practices in the Colombian Pacific region by promoting the use of the menstrual cup among the menstruating population. The campaign strategy consists of three phases: Awareness and Education, Behavior change and Maintenance (**Figure 4**).

These three phases aim to overcome cultural, social, knowledge, and accessibility barriers related to menstruation, menstrual health, and hygiene: the campaign seeks to encourage open conversations about this topic to break the taboos surrounding menstruation. Through launch events, comprehensive workshops, community support, and increasing accessibility to menstrual cups, *Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time* will equip the menstruating

population with knowledge about the benefits of the menstrual cup, emphasizing economic empowerment and sustainability.

By engaging local influencers, training community ambassadors, ensuring easy access to the menstrual cup, and encouraging peer support, this strategy seeks to create a lasting impact, empowering the menstruating population and inspiring cultural change toward cost-effective and environmentally sustainable practices.

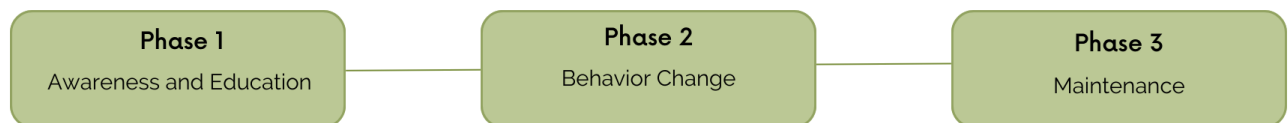


Figure 4: Strategy Phases

Strategy phases

Phase 1: Awareness and education

Phase description: In this initial phase, the focus is on laying a solid foundation for understanding menstrual health, dispelling taboos and myths related to menstruation, and introducing the concept of the menstrual cup. The campaign will strive to create promotional materials that utilize language and imagery that are culturally appropriate, respectful towards traditions, and in line with local norms. The goal is to ensure the target audience can relate to and identify with the campaign's messages, increasing their acceptance.

Phase objective: Raise awareness and educate the Colombian Pacific community about menstrual health, debunk myths around menstruation, and introduce the benefits of using the menstrual cup as an environmentally friendly and cost-effective option.

Key messages:**Gain-framed messages**

- Understand your body: Let's break the silence on menstruation!
- Discover the menstrual cup, a sustainable and affordable choice for your health and the environment.

Loss-framed messages

- Misinformation harms! Break the silence on menstruation and understand your body.

Tactical plans:**1. Community workshops**

- Conduct interactive workshops in educational institutions listed in **Figure 5** and community centers listed in **Figure 6** to educate the menstruating population about menstruation and menstrual health and raise awareness about the menstrual cup and its benefits.
- Collaborate with teachers and local health professionals (e.g., nurses, pharmacists, and gynecologists) to provide accurate information about menstrual hygiene and the menstrual cup.
- Myth-busting sessions as part of the community workshops led by healthcare professionals.
- Distribute informal brochures and materials in community centers, schools, and health clinics.
- Initiate community activities like challenges to encourage the menstruating population to share their questions, thoughts, and experiences related to menstruation and menstrual health.

Educational Institutions
Universidad Tecnológica del Chocó (UTCH)
Fundación Universitaria Claretiana (FUCLA)
Corporación Universitaria Remington
Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia (UCC)
Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA)
Universidad Antonio Nariño (UAN)
I.E. La Unión de Bajirá
I.E. Manuel Mosquera Moreno
I.E. Agrícola del Valle
I.E. Matías Trespalacios
Centro Educativo Punta de Arusi
Centro Educativo Indígena Parecito

Figure 5: List of educational institutions in the Colombian Pacific to conduct interactive workshops.

Community Centers
ASOREWA (Asociación de Cabildos – Autoridades Tradicionales Indígenas Embera Dóbida, Katio, Chamí y Dule - Departamento del Chocó)
FEDEOREWA (Federación De Asociaciones de Cabildos Indígenas Del Departamento Del Chocó)
COCOMACIA (Consejo Comunitario Mayor de la Asociación Campesina Integral del Atrato)
ACADESAN: (El Consejo Comunitario General del San Juan)
ASCOBA (Asociación de Consejos Comunitarios del Bajo Atrato)
COCOMOPOCA (Consejo Comunitario Mayor del Alto Atrato)
COCOMINSA (Consejo Comunitario Mayor de Istmina y Medio San Juan)
Diócesis de Quibdó
Diócesis de Istmina-Tadó

Figure 6: List of community centers in the Colombian Pacific to conduct interactive workshops.

2. Local Influencers campaigns

- Collaborate with local influencers*, such as those listed in **Figure 7**, to share informative content on social media platforms.
- Create engaging and culturally sensitive videos or posts to reach wider audiences.

*** Influencers selection criteria:** Several criteria were considered when selecting possible influencers for the *Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time* campaign. Priority was given to influencers who deeply resonated with the target audience, particularly women of menstruating age, with high credibility. It was essential that these influencers shared the values of the campaign and possessed a

significant level of engagement and influence across multiple platforms (e.g., Instagram, and TikTok). The influencers had to be from the Colombian Pacific and have strong ties to the local community, cultural sensitivity, and commitment to diversity and representation. Previous campaign experience, creativity, and collaboration skills were also crucial factors. By carefully considering these criteria and the influencers' number of followers on the leading platforms, a list of influencers was created (**Figure 7**) to effectively promote the use of menstrual cups in the Colombian Pacific and generate a positive change toward sustainable menstrual hygiene practices.

Local Influencers	Influencer Category	Number of Followers
Andrea Tovar @andreatov	Life style	Instagram: 1M TikTok: 20.5K
Gloria Martinez @goyo	Music and life style	Instagram: 886K TikTok: 128.7K
Marce la Recicladora @marcelarecicladora	Environmental care and life style	Instagram: 515K TikTok: 379.2K
Velia Vidal @veliamar	Social activism	Instagram: 7.140
Nubia Carolina Córdoba Curi @nubiacarolinacc	Social activism	Instagram: 14K
Yuri Bonilla @yurisabor	Fashion and life style	Instagram: 111K TikTok: 1.1M

Figure 7: Local Colombian Pacific Influencers

3. Public awareness events

- Organize and participate in public events, such as fairs and carnivals listed in **Figure 8**, to distribute information. The list comprises the top 10 most popular festivals and

carnivals in the Colombian Pacific. This selection was strategically made to ensure high geographic coverage for awareness generation activities. The list includes the 10 most popular and busiest festivals and carnivals in the Colombian Pacific. This selection was made strategically to ensure high geographic coverage for awareness-raising activities.

- Use visual aids like posters, and banners to reinforce key messages.

Fairs and Carnivals
Fiestas de San francisco de Asís "San Pacho"
Fiestas del Corregimiento de Tutunendo
Fiestas del Corregimiento de San Francisco de Ichó
Fiestas del Corregimiento de San Francisco de Ichó
Fiestas del Corregimiento de la Troje
Fiestas Corregimiento de las Mercedes
Fiestas del Corregimiento de Tagachi
Fiestas del Corregimiento de Nemotá
Fiestas del Corregimiento de Nauritá
Fiestas del Corregimiento de Guarandó

Figure 8: Fairs and carnivals in the Colombian Pacific

Phase 2: Behavior change

Phase description: This phase aims to encourage a shift in behavior towards the adoption of the menstrual cup by addressing concerns, providing firsthand experiences, and promoting trial use through easy or free access to the product.

Phase objective: Promote the adoption of the menstrual cup as a preferred and sustainable menstrual hygiene product, ensuring the menstrual cup is accessible and affordable to the menstruating population.

Key messages:

Gain-framed messages

- Use the menstrual cup, a sustainable and affordable choice for your health and the environment.
- Empower yourself with a choice that lasts!

Loss-framed messages

- Don't compromise your health, finances, or the environment with disposable sanitary products. Opt for the sustainable and cost-effective menstrual cup instead.

Tactical plans:

1. Subsidies, incentives, and discounts

- Provide free menstrual cups for the most vulnerable population, such as girls in public schools in the Colombian Pacific, and menstruating individuals in a state of poverty.
- Establish partnerships with local stores, such as those listed in **Figure 9**, to guarantee access to menstrual cups at an affordable price.
- Offer incentives such as discounts, special promotions, or free samples to encourage initial trial and adoption.

Local Shops
Tienda Medica Mg Sas
Tienda Naturista Choco Verde S A S
Tiendas D1
Drogueria Farma Pacific
Confinimax
Mercames
Oimpica

Figure 9: List of local stores in the Colombian Pacific that would distribute the menstrual cup.

2. Peer education program

- Train local ambassadors* such as teachers and school staff, community leaders, health care professionals, women's groups, and youth leaders to share their positive experiences using the menstrual cup.

*** Local ambassadors selection criteria:** To select teachers, school staff, community leaders, health professionals, women's groups, and youth leaders as local ambassadors to talk about menstrual health and promote the use of the menstrual cup, these individuals must have credibility within the community, communication skills, and a genuine commitment to promoting menstrual health in the Colombian Pacific community. These people must have previous positive experiences with the use of the menstrual cup so that they can transmit their knowledge and support to the community in the menstrual cup adoption process. Local ambassadors should be

- experts at engaging diverse audiences, dispelling myths, and encouraging open conversations about menstruation.
- Organize community-based events (e.g., Health and wellness workshops, community meetings and forums, demonstrating and training sessions, distributions and subsidized sales, community outreach and door-to-door campaign, and peer-to-peer support groups) for peer educators to engage with potential users.
 - Collaborate with health clinics and providers, such as those listed in **Figure 10**, to offer educational sessions on menstrual cup usage. After evaluating their extensive coverage, these clinics and health providers were strategically chosen due to their presence and capacity to provide care throughout the territory. Profamilia and Comfachocó are two health providers with franchises throughout the Colombian Pacific territory.

Health Clinics and Providers
Profamilia
Clinica Santa Sofia del Pacifico
Sociedad Medica Vida Somevi SA
Ips Servicios Medicos S.A.S
Centro Médico Cubis
Clinica Vida (Sociedad Médica Vida)
Hospital San Francisco de Asís Ese
Comfachocó

Figure 10: List of clinics and health providers in the Colombian Pacific.

3. User testimonials

- Collect and share success stories from members of the menstruating population who have switched to the menstrual cup.
- Create video testimonials to be shared on social media and during community events.
- Encourage teachers and mothers in public schools and rural communities to switch to the cup and share their experiences with girls and girl-adolescents.

Phase 3: Maintenance

Phase description: The maintenance phase focuses on sustaining positive behavior change by reinforcing the benefits of using the menstrual cup and fostering a supportive community during the learning curve and adoption of the menstrual cup.

Phase objective: Establish long-term habits and acceptance of the menstrual cup as the preferred menstrual hygiene product.

Key messages:

Gain-framed messages

- Stick with the cup! Sustainable periods, sustainable habits.

Loss-framed messages

- Abandoning the cup risks sustainability. Maintain your commitment to sustainable periods and sustainable habits.

Tactical plans:

1. Community support groups

- Organize regular meetings in person or online to provide ongoing accompaniment to new users in the menstrual cup use learning curve.

- Establish and maintain community support groups in person or via WhatsApp where individuals can share experiences and tips about menstrual cup use.

2. Continued education

- Conduct periodic workshops and information sessions in schools, community centers, and local gathering places to address new concerns or misconceptions about menstrual cup use.
- Distribute updated educational materials about menstrual health and menstrual cup use to schools and community centers.

3. Social media engagement

- Continue the social media and influencers campaign with periodic updates on the benefits of using the menstrual cup and success stories of menstrual cup adoption.
- Encourage community members to share their ongoing experiences with the menstrual cup.

4. Celebrating successes

- Acknowledge and celebrate community successes in menstrual cup adoption through various traditional and non-traditional communication channels.
- Recognize and reward individuals or groups contributing significantly to the campaign's success.

5.5.4 Step 4: Recommendations for future implementation

When considering the future implementation of the campaign *Pacific Cycle*:

Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time, it is crucial to consider key recommendations to ensure the acceptability of the menstrual cup and the success of the Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign. These recommendations include being culturally sensitive, establishing

strategic partnerships and collaborations, using appropriate communication channels, piloting, campaign monitoring and evaluation, creating a final report, and setting a realistic timeline for implementation.

Cultural sensitivity

To ensure the acceptability of the menstrual cup by the menstruating population in the Colombia Pacific, it is essential to be culturally sensitive, which refers to the awareness and appreciation of the ethnic, racial, and cultural characteristics of the target audience as well as recognizing their beliefs, experiences, norms, values, and behavior patterns in the creation of communication messages (Resnicow et al., 1999).

To deepen the commitment and trust of the Colombian Pacific community in the menstrual cup, continuous training in cultural sensitivity is essential for the staff who will oversee implementing the campaign; this will allow them to have an extensive understanding of both the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the target audience.

Menstruation, menstrual hygiene, and the menstrual cup have been topics considered taboo in these communities, so it is necessary to start the conversation about these topics subtly, respecting ideologies and culture. These cultural and ideological elements must be also incorporated in the design, delivery, and evaluation of campaign promotional materials to improve the possibilities of acceptability by the community (Resnicow et al., 1999). In addition to the continuous training of staff in cultural sensitivity, and the cultural adaptation of promotional materials, it is recommended for the implementation of this campaign to include leaders or influential people in the region in the planning and execution stages so that the campaign is authentic and resonates with the diverse cultural fabric of the Colombian Pacific region.

Partnerships and collaborations

Partnership is a crucial mechanism that strengthens the implementation of change strategies (Duane et al., 2021), and in Community-Based Social Marketing Campaigns, partnership plays an essential role in the long-term success and sustainability of the campaign (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011).

For the campaign *Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time*, it is essential to have the support of various partners during the planning and execution stages; these partners can be local health organizations, NGOs, private organizations, or government agencies (**Figure 11**) that are interested in helping the community, promoting social responsibility initiatives, or seeking to promote environmental causes. Currently, within the context of the Colombian Pacific, brands do exist that sell and promote the use of the menstrual cup (e.g., Bloom, Copa Uva, Copas Eco Mujer, and Flow Fem). However, when it comes to impacting the community through Community-Based Marketing, these brands are falling short, relying solely on social media efforts to promote their products, and leaving aside the support that menstruating populations need to adopt the products. *Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time* can help to close this gap, offering support to the communities throughout the entire adoption process of using the menstrual cup.

Partnerships that offer financial support are also crucial for this type of campaign because if the objective is to reduce the barrier to accessing menstrual cups, it is necessary to subsidize the menstrual cups for menstruating individuals. Providing free cups or cups at low cost increases the likelihood that the menstruating population will try to use them and subsequently adopt the menstrual cup as their preferred menstrual hygiene device (Pokhrel et al., 2021).

It is important to have partners who not only finance the campaign but also support the menstruating population during the transition from sanitary pads or tampons to the menstrual cup. This is why it is necessary to create strategic partnerships with educational (**Figure 5**), health (**Figure 10**), and community institutions (**Figure 6**) that provide the necessary guidance and support for menstruating individuals during the learning curve. Partnership with educational institutions is essential as they contribute to the conversation and education about menstrual health and hygiene and become facilitators for younger populations, encouraging them to use the menstrual cup (Mara et al., 2020).

By collaborating with these partners, the campaign can leverage their knowledge, experience, and connections to effectively promote the use of the menstrual cup, address the barriers associated with accessibility, and ensure the cultural appropriateness of the campaign.

Local Health Organizations	NGO's	Private Organizations	Government Agencies
Red Cross Colombia	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF Colombia)	Bloom	Scretaria de la Mujer
Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	Copa Uva	Alcaldia del Choco
Organización Paramericana de la Salud (OPS)	Ayuda en Accion	Copas Eco Mujer	Ministerio de Salud y Protección social
Worls Health Organization (WHO)	Fundacion Plan colombia	Nosotras	Banco Mundial
Project Hope	Misión Salud	Leonisa	Superintendencia Nacional de Salud
Misión por Colombia	Asociación Colombiana de Salud Pública	Flow Fem	Instituto Nacional de Salud

Figure 11: Partnerships and collaborations for the campaign implementation.
Communication channels

The target audience of this campaign is the menstruating population; because the audience is quite diverse, it is necessary to explore and innovate different communication channels and forms of communication to effectively reach the audience and transmit the message about the benefits of the menstrual cup. To reach and engage with the Colombian Pacific community, the communication strategies need to be tailored to resonate with the cultural context of the region and build trust around the menstrual cup among community members.

It is recommended to take advantage of the reach of traditional and new media to transmit the message to all sectors of the target audience; leveraging platforms such as social networks (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram, Threads, TikTok, Facebook, X, YouTube, Telegram, LinkedIn and Snapchat), local radio (e.g., Caracol Radio, Brisas de Acandí, Android Chocó, Emisora Villa digital, Atrato Stereo, Manduco Radio and Areito), local newspapers (e.g., Siglo 21, El Opinador, Periódico el Manduco, Periódico Batalla and Periódico Chocoano), and local television channels (e.g., CNC Televisión, RTV Televisión, and Canal Chocó) allows an interactive and participatory engagement facilitating dialogue and education about menstrual health and the use of the menstrual cup. Incorporating creative approaches such as narratives, user-generated content, influencer marketing, and live Q&A sessions adds depth and dynamism to the conversation, capturing the attention and interest of diverse audiences. Through innovative communication channels and formats, the *Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time* campaign can effectively break down barriers, normalize debates about menstruation, and empower the menstruating population of the Colombian Pacific to make informed decisions for their health and well-being.

Piloting

The fourth recommendation for creating a Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign is piloting. Piloting is essential because it allows testing of the campaign in a small community segment with characteristics similar to the target audience in order to analyze whether the proposed strategies generate the desired behavioral change. The objective of piloting is to identify and address possible issues that the campaign has before a large-scale implementation; it is an opportunity to test and refine the strategies and solve the problems at a low cost (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011).

In the case of the *Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time* Campaign, it is recommended to carry out a pilot test before the official implementation of the campaign. According to McKenzie-Mohr (2011), to conduct a pilot test, it is necessary to guarantee that the campaign is tested in two groups; the first must receive the campaign's intervention, and the second will serve as a control group. The population participating in the pilot must belong to a community different from the target audience but with similar characteristics, and the participants must be selected randomly to guarantee that both groups are as similar as possible (McKenzie-Mohr, 2000).

Second, to evaluate the campaign's effectiveness, it is necessary to focus on measuring the behavior change rather than the level of awareness or attitude change. Since the objective is to achieve a behavior, this is the only measure that should matter. The pilot test should be run as many times as necessary until the result of the desired behavioral change is obtained. Once these results are achieved, the campaign will be ready to be implemented on a large scale (McKenzie-Mohr, 2000).

Monitoring and campaign evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating the performance of the *Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time* campaign is essential to identify what is being done well and areas for improvement to make the necessary adjustments in the strategies to achieve the behavior change objective.

As part of monitoring and evaluation, one of the first actions to be carried out is to conduct a baseline assessment before launching the campaign to understand current knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding menstrual health and the use of menstrual products in the menstruating population of the Colombian Pacific. Once the campaign is finished, the results of the baseline evaluation and final evaluation results can be compared to measure the campaign's impact on the community. Secondly, it is essential to define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are aligned with the objectives of the campaign, such as the level of knowledge about the menstrual cup, changes in attitude towards the menstrual cup, or changes in purchasing behaviors and use. Establishing clear and measurable indicators for each objective will help track campaign progress and evaluate long-term impact.

Monitoring and evaluation of the campaign must be done constantly at all stages since this will allow the performance of each stage to be evaluated and determine whether the behavior change is occurring. To collect this information, quantitative and qualitative data collection methods are recommended to have a more detailed understanding of the effectiveness of the campaign. Some methods that can be used are surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations of campaign participants. Finally, it is recommended to collect feedback from the community through suggestion boxes or online feedback forms to measure the level of acceptability that the campaign is having.

Final report and dissemination

After completing the campaign, a final report is recommended to be created that documents the progress, achievements, challenges, and lessons learned during the campaign. This report is essential because it informs others about the efforts made, regardless of whether the results have succeeded. This document will benefit future organizations that seek to implement campaigns or communication plans to help vulnerable communities and promote sustainable behaviors, as they can use this campaign to propose their strategies.

Demonstrating the positive results of the campaign is essential to show the investors that the campaign is successful and worthy of financing. The report should be shared with stakeholders through workshops, presentations, or publications to promote knowledge about Community-Based Social marketing campaigns, menstrual cups, and behavior change.

Timeline for implementation

The *Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time* campaign is recommended to be carried out in a 20-month timeline (**Figure 12**). For the first two months, the focus should be on wrapping up the investigation and ensuring all relevant stakeholders are familiarized with the insights presented in this document. This report encapsulates all preceding research necessary for executing the campaign, including selecting the behavior to promote, identifying the target audience, establishing benefits and barriers, and developing campaign strategies. To conclude the investigation phase effectively, it is advisable for the staff involved in the campaign implementation to conduct field research; this will enable them to update the information provided in this report according to the current context in which the campaign will be implemented. Months 3 and 4 should be spent planning and preparing for the campaign launch, including developing materials, hiring, and connecting with the required resources, and

training the campaign promoters. In month 5, a pilot test should be carried out, followed by the implementation of the three campaign phases (Awareness and Education, Behavior Change, and Maintenance) from months 6 to 18. In month 19, it is recommended to evaluate the campaign, and in month 20, develop the final report.

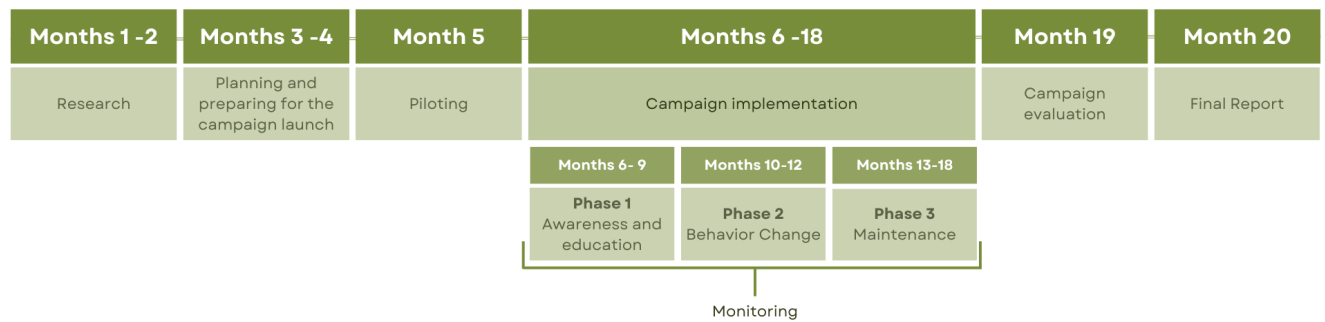


Figure 12: Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time campaign timeline.

6. Implications

The planning and execution of a Community- Based Social Marketing Campaign such as *Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time*, holds significant implications for communication professionals in the practical field.

This campaign offers a structured and organized approach for professionals to execute communications and marketing campaigns to promote sustainable behaviors. It includes steps such as behavior selection, identification of barriers and benefits, development strategies, campaign testing, and results assessments. Additionally, this campaign provides professionals with practical social diffusion tools and strategies to promote sustainable behaviors.

Furthermore, the campaign underscores the importance of community engagement and participation in behavior change. Communication professionals should utilize interactive communication techniques to foster dialog and collaboration with community members through the campaign process. This includes organizing community events to collect ideas, feedback, and support for the campaign objectives. Moreover, leveraging a multichannel communication approach is critical for effectively reaching the target audience; this involves utilizing a mix of traditional and digital media to maximize reach and engagement.

This campaign has a significant impact as it emphasizes the significance of discussing menstruation and menstrual hygiene in public and private settings. The goal is to make this topic a part of the public agenda and promote its normalization. In conclusion, this campaign presents an innovative alternative for creating sustainable behavior promotion strategies, messages, and formats, offering the communication field an exciting opportunity to address social and environmental problems.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, the campaign *Pacific Cycle: Revolutionizing Periods, One Cup at a Time* to promote menstrual cups in the Colombian Pacific is very promising for addressing critical issues related to menstrual health and hygiene in the Colombian Pacific. Through social diffusion tools, this campaign aims to propose practical and sustainable solutions that promote the empowerment of the menstruating population through the use of the menstrual cup.

Promoting the use of the menstrual cup as the only menstrual hygiene device would bring significant benefits to the menstruating population of the Colombian Pacific. Firstly, it is a cost-effective alternative since the menstruating population would not have to buy sanitary pads or tampons once a month. Second, using the menstrual cup would be relevant in preventing school absenteeism since it is safe, comfortable, and does not require constant change. Third, using a menstrual cup can significantly reduce plastic pollution because it is reusable and can last up to 10 years.

The methodology used by the Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign has proven to be more effective than information-based campaigns, which is why this campaign, by leveraging community participation, culturally sensitive messaging, and partnerships with local stakeholders, anticipates significant advances to overcome the taboos that exist around the use of the menstrual cup and guarantee the free or low-cost accessibility of menstrual cups.

Additionally, this campaign's educational and awareness-raising approach will contribute to destigmatizing menstruation and promoting informed decision-making about menstrual health.

Through research on the target audience, identification of barriers and benefits of the menstrual cup, proposal of strategies that address each of the barriers, and implementation recommendations, this report provides valuable knowledge and guidance for future efforts to

promote menstrual health through menstrual cup use. The ideas proposed in this report seek to empower the menstruating population in the Colombian Pacific by offering them an alternative that provides solutions to many of the problems and challenges they face in relation to menstruation, in addition to generating a positive impact on the environment thanks to the reduction of plastic consumption.

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