

Overview

[The Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University](#) (GHELI) supports interdisciplinary education about world health through the production, curation, and dissemination of educational public goods. This exemplar work was a final project for “World Health: Challenges and Opportunities,” a General Education course at Harvard College taught by GHELI Faculty Director Sue J. Goldie. For this creative assessment designed with support from GHELI, students systematically analyze a societal health challenge they care about and create a “real world” product intended to influence policy or motivate change.

Abstract

A picture book teaches young Indian people about periods and menstrual hygiene.

Artist

Anant Pai (2019)

Caption

Menstruation is a natural phenomenon that impacts women all over the world. However, in many places, including in India, there is a stigma around menstruation. Girls who are on their period may be shamed or told to stay home, which can impact schooling and daily life. This picture book follows three young girls from different countries who switch places and must navigate their first periods in cultures different from their own. The book aims to reduce stigma around menstruation and provide information about periods and menstrual hygiene.

Artist Lens

In order to help educate young people in India about periods, I’ve created a picture book in English. The book is intended for use in English classrooms, so the vocabulary and difficulty are still suitable for women that are just beginning to finish puberty (12-15 years of age). Additionally, there are a number of words in the book that are underlined (and defined in the glossary)—these words are related to feminine hygiene and represent the “vocabulary” words for this unit of the English class. Given that the most evidence-supported intervention to improve feminine hygiene is educational campaigns, this is my chosen approach.

Through this book, I attempt to situate periods for young women in India within a global context, helping women identify with a global community of women who have this experience. Given the intense stigma and shame associated with menstruation, I believe the most important takeaway from this book to be that: periods are a natural phenomenon. In this way, I hope to educate women about the purpose of a period while preparing them to be advocates within their communities. While there is recognition in the book of the difficulties they will surely face, the ultimately feminist message of solidarity and the importance of women helping women aims to be the wind in the sails of new generations of women fighting for equality.

Media

Digital

Discovering the (Super)natural: Educating Young People about Periods.



By: Anant Pai

[Watch Narration of Discovering the \(Super\)natural: Educating Young People about Periods](#)