

BE ARTSY

## 2018 RATO BALTIM PROJECT PLAN.



### BACKGROUND

In West Nepal, women and girls have limited or no access to toilet facilities, rubbish collection, clean and easily sources water, and education about their bodies and menstrual cycle. Women and girls also have limited funds, mean means that even if menstrual health management tools were known of and available, they are difficult to afford. These factors can mean that girls miss school, feel humiliated and dirty, and are exposed to increased risk of sexual exploitation.

Compounding these factors is the prevalence of the cultural practice of chhaupadi. In Nepali, 'chhau' means menstruation and 'padi' means a woman. This practice dictates that during menstruation, girls and women are considered impure and deprived of their most basic needs. Prohibitions include:

- Forbidden from entering the family home, instead staying in cattle sheds or makeshift huts
- Forbidden from touching men and food others will consume
- Forbidden from consuming milk, yogurt, butter, meat, vegetables and other nutrient foods
- Forbidden from crossing water
- Some of them restrictions in attending school

Those subject to this practice risk exposure to rape, snakebites, smoke inhalation, and animal attacks, as well as the psychological trauma of considering themselves as 'dirty'.

The exclusion of girls by this practice from school during menstruation is harmful to their education. A lack of education about biological functions, puberty, and menstruation, as well as the tools to hygienically manage it, contribute to this ongoing exclusion. Moreover, poor menstrual hygiene is not only linked to low education outcomes, but to employment, health, and overall development.

The Government of Nepal outlawed the practice in 2005. This advance in legislation to curtail the practice did not result in a significant impact on its prevalence. Extending on the initial policy push to address chhaupadi, in August of 2017 the Government passed a law that punishes those forcing women to adhere to chhaupadi-mandated exile while menstruating with a fine of 3,000 Nepalese rupees or three months jail-time. However, we believe that these advances may continue to have minimal impact on its prevalence. The practice is strongly embedded in social norms and cultural practices. In order to effectively address the practice of chhaupadi, interventions must be made on the local level, addressing its socio-cultural basis and the reasons it continues through education and meaningful community engagement. Yet it is a significant step forward in the right direction on the political level, and represents a developing social change in opinion. Combined with programs such as Rato Baltin that address

education on the local grassroots level in remote areas where the practice is still prevalent, we believe that there is significant potential for change into the future.

## The Objective

The project aims to address the lack of sexual and menstrual hygiene education and dignity among communities in West Nepal where the practice of chhaupadi is still present. This mission can be broken into the following objectives which have shaped the Rato Baltin project:

- Address the socio cultural basis and implications of chhaupadi through community consultation
- Educate women, girls, boys and communities on sex, biology and menstrual health management practices
- Reduce school absenteeism of girls in targeted remote communities of West Nepal
- Provide girls and women with tools to facilitate menstrual dignity
- Achieve long term project sustainability of the program

## The Opportunity

Through partnerships and workshop training creation and implementation, *be artsy* will pursue the project objectives by:

- Partnering with socially conscious menstrual cup supplier to donate Menstrual cups (selfcare product) to the project
- Providing girls in schools with menstrual cups, hygiene kits and adequate training in use and upkeep
- Partnering with and training local doctors, nurses, teachers and volunteers to work with communities in workshops and maintain ongoing follow-ups
- Conducting workshop training in sex education and menstrual hygiene for girls, women and boys
- Using participant photography to engage girls and communities in the topic of menstruation and what can be improved for them during this period

## OUR PROPOSAL FOR 2018

*be artsy* is active in Nepal through its Nepali partner organisation *be artsy, Kala Sakhti Nepal*. *be artsy* will implement its 'Rato Baltin' (Red Bucket) project in stages throughout 2018, in remote communities of West Nepal where the practice of chhaupadi is still active. The project itself is named after its approach to addressing menstrual hygiene and education in remote West Nepal communities. While the colour red has cultural and religious significance in Nepal, it is also related to menstruation. 'Bucket' refers to the menstrual kit that girls will receive as part of the program, contained in a metal bucket.

To be effective, it is vital that projects working in this area address the socio-cultural reasons the practice continues to persist in some communities, while also providing menstrual and sex education and hygiene tools.

Our 2017 Rato Baltin Pilot Project successfully provided menstrual health management, hygiene, and reproductive and sexual education and training to over 1,000 individuals in remote communities of West Nepal. 250 volunteer girls were provided with menstrual cups donated by Ruby Cup, a UK based company. The 2018 Rato Baltin Project will continue the work completed in 2017 by providing donated menstrual cups to girls that attend school, as well as pursue workshops and trainings of girls, boys, women, and communities. It will extend on the pilot design by providing girls that do not attend school with access to menstrual cups, and implement a men's group workshop focusing on menstruation and reproduction.

The project will have a five-tiered approach.

1. Workshops will be held to provide sex education to both male and female teenagers in local schools
2. Hygienic education will be provided through workshops to all women in targeted communities
3. Menstrual cups and training will be provided to volunteer girls attending school in targeted communities
4. Participative photography workshops will be utilised to showcase how girls feel about their periods and the chhaupadi tradition, and what they would like to change about the experience
5. Access to menstrual cups and training will be provided to girls not attending school that show commitment to using the cups through a small, symbolic payment or assistance in local implementation of the project, if any amount of financial recompense is not feasible

## Rationale

The project is designed to mitigate the negative effects of chhaupadi, educate communities about the biological functions of their bodies and how to care for them, and stimulate community reflection and conversation about chhaupadi. It is not designed to be a top-down, outside-led 'quick fix' solution. This would be ineffective as chhaupadi continues to be practiced based on deeply held beliefs. If communities perceive foreign non-Nepali figures are attempting to eradicate the practice from a place of cultural judgement, this would inhibit any efforts at menstrual hygiene, health, and sex education. The project would ultimately have a negative impact on communities and participants.

Menstrual cups are a cost effective, sustainable and environmentally friendly solution to menstrual health management. They are made of medical grade silicon, which has no negative health impacts on the body. The cups are easy to clean between each use. The use of menstrual cups reduces waste that must be disposed of, as one cup can be reused for 10 years.

As the donated Ruby Cups are solely to be provided to girls that attend school in order to address school absenteeism, as well as provide a hygienic solution to menstrual health management, *be artsy* will separately acquire Ruby Cups to be distributed to girls that do not attend school for individual reasons. The girls will self-nominate to participate, and provide a small, symbolic financial payment for the cup as a commitment that they will use it. This will assist in ensuring the girls that participate are committed to using the cups, and embed value in the program.

If girls are unable to provide symbolic financial payment due to economic stress and limited funds, assistance in small local project implementation tasks may be exchanged as a substitute.

Participative photography enables girls to present their own thoughts and impressions of their experiences. Participants are not constrained by their ability to communicate by conventional means such as written or spoken word. Girls may feel shy or socially inhibited from speaking about their experiences, and depending on their level of literacy, may not be able to fully communicate their experiences. Participative photography can stimulate critical dialogue about concerns, enabling participants to visualise and reflect their experiences within their communities.

As *be artsy* and the Rato Baltin project are new endeavors, there is limited capacity for large scale implementation. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the 2018 project will enable the organisation to adapt and change the project going forward, based on lessons learnt. The 2018 project has been designed in respect to the lessons learnt from the 2017 Pilot Rato Baltin Project. This dynamic, flexible approach to project implementation, emphasising sustained and effective monitoring and adaptation, will ensure that the project leaves a positive footprint in communities.

## Execution Strategy

*Ruby Cup*, a socially conscious menstrual cup business, will donate Ruby Cups to *be artsy* to distribute to girls that attend school in remote West Nepal communities. The focus on girls that attend school is a condition of the donation.

*be artsy* will also buy and provide menstrual cups to girls that do not attend school, for a symbolic price to exhibit commitment to their use. Girls involved in this initiative will be a maximum of 20 years old.

The 2017 Rato Baltin Pilot Project was successfully implemented across several stages to maximise its reach, monitor the impact of interventions, adjust for unexpected results, and to not exceed organisational capacity. In 2017 we were active in two Districts: Achcham and Kalikot. *be artsy* implemented the project in two villages of each District: Basti, Kunti Bandali, Chilkhaya and Rachuli.

From our experience in 2017, we perceive a high level of need for the project in Achcham. As such, we will focus on this district during 2018. *be artsy* will return to Kunti Bandali and Basti, where we will deliver the project trainings and workshops to class 6 and 7, as well as conduct menstrual cups training and dissemination, and follow-ups with 2017 users. *be artsy* will extend its work in Achcham to three more villages, to be determined in early January based on population demographics, the placement of schools, and the prevalence of chhaupadi.

Implementation execution will be structured as follows:

1. Employ local staff, with appropriate and decent salaries

2. Prepare training material and menstrual kits
3. Determine the location of three additional target schools in Achcham
4. Training local doctors, teachers, and nurses who have already been contacted and shown interest in the project
5. Delivery of training material, translated into Nepali, so that teachers can continue with lessons into the future
6. Training and educating boys and girls in sex and menstrual hygiene, as well as all-female and male groups so they can talk without fear of embarrassment or taboos
7. Deliver an educational menstruation and reproduction workshop to men groups to clarify its biological basis
8. Through participative photography, invite 20-25 girls in each village to volunteer to identify and take pictures of what could be improved in their lives while they menstruate
9. Deliver a menstrual hygiene kit and training to the girls who took part in the photography project
10. Deliver a menstrual hygiene kit and training to the young girls not attending school from the women's group that commit to pay a symbolic price between 50 and 100 Nepalese Rupees.
11. Exhibit photographs in the town centre or central meeting point to engage the community in the girls' perspectives and consider what measures can be taken to improve their lives
12. Record names of volunteers for the cup program that could not participate in this round, for future initiatives
13. Monthly telephone follow-up with the local doctors, teachers and nurses
14. Biannual face-to-face follow-up with the girls by the *be artsy* Staff Nurse and volunteers to check how implementation of the cup is progressing

No *be artsy* staff member or volunteer will use the term 'chhaupadi' without it first being used by participants.

### **Human and Material Resources**

Human resources will be invaluable to the success of the project. It is particularly important to engage local Nepali individuals to work within the targeted communities to implement and monitor the ongoing impact of the project, and wellbeing of the participants. The project will engage:

- Female teachers and nurse/s in every village (depending how many in each village are willing)
- 1 x Staff Nurse or health trainer
- 2 x Trainer assistant and administrative worker in Kathmandu

- 2 x Nepali Volunteers
- 1 x Male volunteer
- 2 x Foreigners nurses to help train the Nepali nurses (optional)
- 1 x Project Manager
- 10 x Local girls working as Mentors, taking care of 2018 follow-up and possible new trainings in September

*Ruby Cup* will donate menstrual cups to *be artsy* for use in the school-based project. Donated cups will number:

- 250 x Ruby Cups for 2018 (first stage)

*Be artsy* will donate to young women not in school. We will ask them to pay a small fee and sign a contract like the girls participating that attend school, to be sure they will use them. The fee will be between 50 and 100 NPR (100 NPR= USD \$1)

- 75 x Women's Ruby Cups for 2018

#### **Menstrual kits will require:**

- 325 x metal buckets
- 325 x menstrual cup (Ruby Cup)
- 325 x bar of soap
- 325 x towel
- 325 x instructions and FAQ for use of the menstrual cup in Nepali

#### **For the schools we will require:**

- 6 x menstrupedia comic
- Educative posters for every school
- Puberty curriculum books

#### **Timeline**

Key project dates are outlined below. Dates are best-guess estimates and are subject to change.

Description	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Employ local staff												
Determine additional villages in Achcham												
Source materials for menstrual kits												
Receive Ruby Cups in Nepal												
Print instruction and FAQ material for menstrual kits												
Compose menstrual kits												
Organise logistics to project site												
Commence project on location												
Train local partners in villages												
Commence workshops and participative photography												
Follow-up calls to participants												
Project evaluation												

## EXPECTED IMPACT

We expect the 2018 Rato Baltin Project to primarily assist in mitigating the impact of chhaupadi on the lives of girls in remote communities of West Nepal. Expected project impacts are:

- Increased knowledge of sexual education among women, men, girls and boys
- Increased knowledge of menstrual hygiene and biological processes among women, men, girls and boys

- Increased capacity to employ menstrual health management tools and hygienic processes
- Increased community conversation concerning the practice of chhaupadi and its impact on girls
- Reduction in the prevalence of chhaupadi
- Increased confidence among girls who received a menstrual cup
- Reduced school absenteeism among girls who received a menstrual cup and are enrolled in school

## BUDGET

The following table details the pricing for delivery of the services outlined in this proposal.

Description	Total Cost
Salaries - Human resources	Rs 462.000
Supplies and workshop resources + cups for women	Rs 340.650
Utilities, bureaucracy + food and accommodation	Rs 660.060
Transportation	Rs 290.000
<b>Total NPR</b>	<b>Rs 1.753.250</b>
<b>Total Euro</b>	<b>15.246 €</b>
General expenses/administration – 10% of total Euro	1524 €
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>16.770 €</b>
Exchange Rate: 1 Euro = 115 NPR (Rs)	

## PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

To monitor the wellbeing and practices of participants who were given both donated and non-donated Ruby Cup's, *be artsy* volunteers will carry out monthly follow-up calls. Girls will be encouraged to ask any questions they have now that they are using the cups. If they are no longer using the cups or are hesitant to try now that they are menstruating, volunteers will talk through their concerns. Volunteers will also monitor participants general physical and mental wellbeing. These practices will ensure that the participants do not feel they have been abandoned, and inspire confidence in the program. It will also enable *be artsy* to evaluate the implementation of the program.

To evaluate the impact of the 2018 project, *be artsy* volunteers will carry out one-on-one discussions and focus groups with participants on follow-up trips to the villages, as well as conduct surveys with participants and the broader community. This will constitute the project evaluation, from which we will be able to measure the impact

of the project and the extent that it has met the project objectives. This evaluation will allow us to reflect on the impact of the 2018 project and use lessons learnt in future implementations.

*be artsy Kala Sakhti Nepal* will take a leadership role in the project evaluation, to ensure a non-biased perspective in the results and determination of the program's effectiveness.