

# PROJECT IMPACT EVALUATION 2020

RATO BALTIN



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## DESCRIPTION

In West Nepal, the lack of safe sanitary options often results in health problems, school absenteeism, and even death. Menstruation is a topic that evokes embarrassment and insecurity. It also leads to degrading traditions for women following “Chhaupadi”.

Chhaupadi is defined as the banishment of women during the period of their menstruation from their usual residence, due to supposed ‘impurity’. It has been criticized for violating the basic human rights of women and for the physical and mental health impacts it has. Despite having been outlawed and criminalized, it continues to exist.

The **Rato Baltin Project**, run by the NGO **be artsy**, is a Menstrual Health Management (MHM) and sexual education program that aims to contribute to the eradication of this menstrual practice in the far west, in Achham. The project is designed to focus on and include girls, boys, women and their communities. At *be artsy*, we are convinced that education is the only way to change these deeply rooted beliefs. The project has a four-tiered approach:

1. A workshop that provides reproductive health education, sex education, and sexual health orientation to both male and female teenagers in local schools of targeted communities.
2. Menstrual health education delivered through workshops to all women in targeted communities.
3. Menstrual cups and training provided to volunteer girls attending school and young women in targeted communities
4. Participatory photography workshops utilized to showcase how girls and women feel about Chhaupadi and their menstruation, and what they would like to change about the experience.

An important component of the Rato Baltin project is the distribution of menstrual cups in Achham, a province in the far west of Nepal. The menstrual cup is a healthy and environmentally friendly solution to help manage menstrual health (MHM). Our donor **Ruby Cup** is a UK based company, which manufactures this life-changing silicone menstrual cup.

In 2020, the project aimed to cover **18 remote villages in 3 Municipalities of Achham**, where menstrual cups were to be distributed along with menstrual health management and sexual education workshops to be conducted. But like in most countries, the Covid-19 pandemic affected our plans and the project couldn't be implemented as expected. Because the follow-up of the project was essential, the villages covered in 2019 were monitored over the phone due to lockdown measures in place. This allowed us to observe the ongoing changes in 2020.

In the course of the project, we have already distributed **1,467 menstrual cups** to school girls and young women and despite the situation in 2020, we were able to distribute **188** more cups to the new users. Each girl and woman received a cup and training on how to use it. They were also given a metal bucket (baltin) to store clean water and to be able to boil the cup (to clean it), as well as a hand towel and soap for their convenience.

Every year, trainers and mentors conduct a three month follow up, a six month follow up, and new menstrual cup users receive training where the inspiring documentary MIRA is also shown to the community.

This year, due to the pandemic, mentors and trainers had to face challenges to complete the three month follow-up.

In 2020, a new menstrual cup user training was conducted by the trainers or the women and girls of the ages of 22 and under. These participants maintained social distance and the workshops were conducted in an open place.

The follow up was done over the phone and it was faced with various challenges such as network problems and the availability of the beneficiaries' time for a call, but eventually these were successfully completed.

Upon the request of the local girls in the Dhakari Rural Municipality, Rato Baltin trainers conducted Menstrual Cup training in October 2020 for the new cup users and distributed menstrual cups for local school girls. The new menstrual cup training was conducted in 3 schools (in the villages:

Dhungachalna, Dhakari and Hichma) for a total of 37 school girls and 1 women's group (Dhakari).

Similarly, in the Mangalsen municipality, training was conducted in 4 different schools (Kalagaun, Bannatoli, Jupu, and Basti) for young school girls and 1 women group (Kalagaun) in February, August and December of 2020. Here, follow-ups were conducted with menstrual cup users who were young school girls from 5 different schools Kalagaun, Bannatoli, Jupu, Basti, Kuntibhandali), and 1 women 's group at (Kalagaun).

Similarly, in the Turmakhad Rural Municipality, training was conducted in 1 school (Raniban) for young school girls and women's groups (Toshi) in February 2020. Here, follow ups were conducted with menstrual cup users who were young school girls from 1 school at Raniban, and 1 women 's group at Toshi.

## INTENDED USE OF THE EVALUATION

This project evaluation aims to measure any changes in the lives of individual participants and communities targeted in the program and to reach new project donors for **be artsy** to achieve its objectives to:

- Educate women, girls, boys and communities about reproductive health, MHM, and sex education.
- Introduce menstrual cups and their benefits to the people in power, such as faith keepers and local political representatives of the communities.
- Reduce school absenteeism of girls in targeted remote communities of West Nepal.
- Provide girls and women with the tools to facilitate menstrual dignity.
- Achieve long-term sustainability of the program.

## FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The main focus of the evaluation is to address the following question:

What changes have occurred in the lives of the girls and their communities in terms of the practice of Chhaupadi since the implementation of our program?

To ensure the program is based on best practice methodology and lessons learned, the evaluation also aims to address the following questions:

1. How culturally accepted and sustainable is the use of menstrual cups in the targeted remote communities of West Nepal?
2. What (if any) aspects of our program can be improved in design and/or implementation?
3. How can we focus on finding out in which season the menstrual cup users, students and women could be approached easily? (They spend a lot of time working in the fields.)

## DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Throughout the 2020 project implementation period, a **face-to-face follow-up** couldn't be carried out **every two months** with the menstrual cup users and was therefore completed through phone.

When the lockdown was eased, be artsy local staff in Achham travelled to targeted communities only for the new menstrual cup training and they followed all the safety measures.

Unfortunately this year we had to avoid contact as much as possible, so conversations with community members, local political representatives and faith keepers were not conducted.

## THE RESULTS

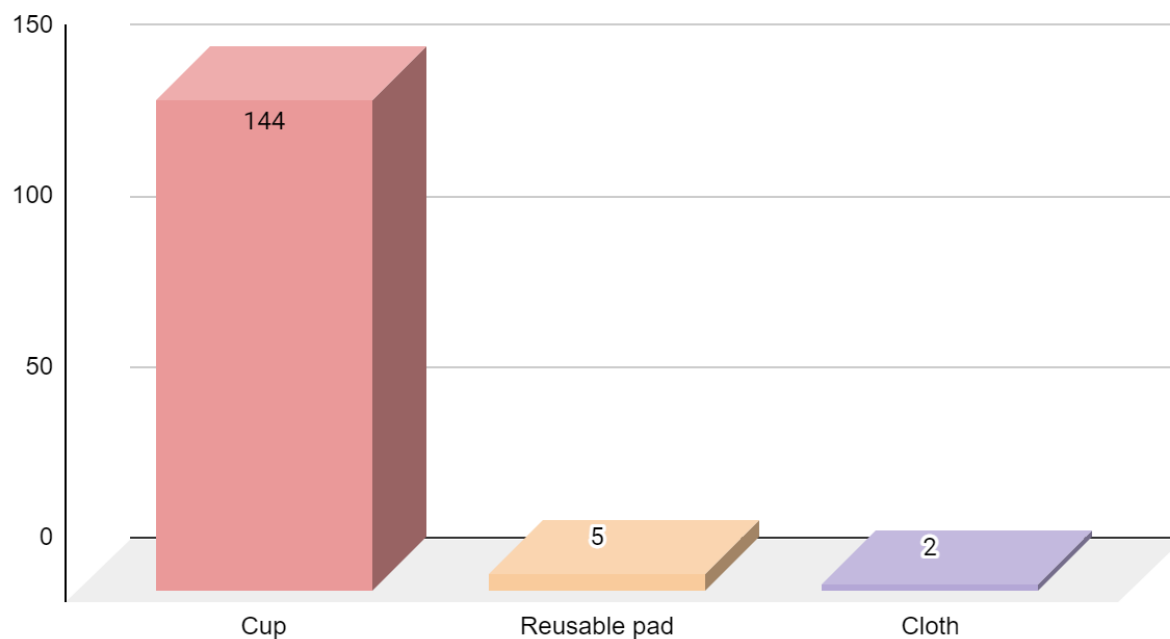
### CHHAUPADI

After the 3 month follow up, 151 beneficiaries were the total respondents in 2020.

The main purpose of this follow up was to verify acceptance of the menstrual cup as a healthy hygienic protection. The questions the girls and women who received the cups asked us allowed us to understand if the use of the cup had an impact on their health and hygiene during menstruation.

Out of 151 girls, 7 say they use other things than the menstrual cup, and when asked why they do not use the menstrual cup their response is that they are scared. Out of 7 girls scared to use menstrual cup 1 girl was not willing to use a cup anymore.

## What do you use during your menstruation?

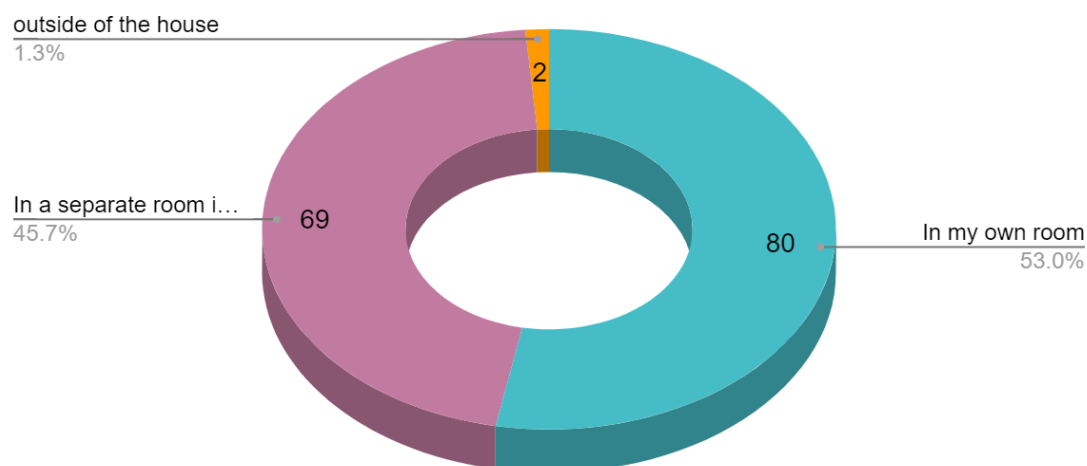


Out of 150 girls, 92 say they could insert a cup easily, 42 girls find it comfortable to use, 10 girls feel uneasy and 6 girls are still trying to use it.

145 girls didn't feel any infection or problem after using the cup, whereas 5 felt irritation in the vulva.

Out of 151 girls, 80 girls responded that they sleep in their own room during the menstruation whereas 69 girls responded that they sleep in a separate room inside the house. Only 2 girls responded that they sleep outside the house when they menstruate.

## Where do you sleep during your menstruation?



## MENSTRUAL CUPS

Ruby Cup donated 3000 cups for the Spring project in 2019 and 300 medium size in 2020. This year we distributed 188 out of this donation. The acceptance rate is 99% and the only girl who didn't want to use it told us that she was scared to use it.

Despite the fact that this year's follow up couldn't highlight the reason why some girls wouldn't use the cups, we have learned from the previous years that some misinformation and myths about the use of the cups can spread among girls and women. Some participants reported one can get scared of what they had heard from others.

The myths are listed below:

- False belief that the hymen will break when inserting the menstrual cup.
- False belief that the vagina will tear or be enlarged because of the insertion of the menstrual cup.

## DIRECT IMPACTS ON THE COMMUNITY

Employment of local girls as coordinators, trainers and mentors in Achham:

1. Number of trainers: 3
2. Number of mentors: 5
3. Number of coordinators: 2

As employees of the Rato Baltin project, they earn a salary which makes them economically more independent. The experience they gain will make them leaders in their community and allow them to develop new skills that they will be able to use in the future.

## BUDGET EVALUATION RATO BALTIN NEPAL

Statement of Expenditure		
RATO BALTIN 2020		
	Change Rate	134.5
Salariaies	NPR Amount	EUR Amount
Program Manager's Salary	Rs181,000.00	€ 1,345.72
Program Officer and project manager assistant	6,000	€ 44.61
On the field Team Manager Junior (May til April 2021)	35,200	€ 261.71
Social mobiliser during project and follow up	32,000	€ 237.92
Trainers' Salaries	Rs66,000.00	€ 490.71
<b>Salaries in Nepal Total</b>	<b>320,200</b>	<b>€ 2,380.67</b>
Transportation in Nepal		
Transportation in KTM - taxis	4,000	€ 29.74
Regional Travel of the Trainers and Mentors	11,500	€ 85.50
<b>Transportation in Nepal Total</b>	<b>15,500</b>	<b>€ 115.24</b>
Nepal office expenses and communications		
Office rent	80,500	€ 598.51
Office supplies ( water, electricity)	1,510	€ 11.23
Office utilities	40,532	€ 301.35
Communications (Achham & Kathmandu )	1,700	€ 12.64
Internet	Rs11,570.00	€ 86.02
Possible reparation of Computer, Printer, Peripherals Purchase	Rs500.00	€ 3.72
Training Materials (photocopies, forms for the field, etc)	Rs9,695.00	€ 72.08
<b>Total Nepal office expenses and communications</b>	<b>146,007</b>	<b>€ 1,085.55</b>
Taxes in Nepal		
Nepal Salaries 1%	Rs1,050.00	€ 7.81
Nepal transportation 10%	0	€ -
Rent		
<b>Taxes in Nepal Total</b>	<b>1,050</b>	<b>€ 7.81</b>
Audit and SWC		
Audit 2076/77 (55% Rato Baltin 45% covid)	13,750	€ 102.23
Monitoring (Ngo, SWC, etc) (55% Rato Baltin 45% covid)	5,500	€ 40.89
<b>Audit and SWC Total</b>	<b>19,250</b>	<b>€ 143.12</b>
<b>Expenses Total Rato Baltin in Nepal</b>	<b>502,007</b>	<b>€ 3,732.39</b>



## DISCUSSION AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

This year we have managed to maintain the presence of **our team in the fields despite the sanitary measures due to COVID 19**. Thanks to the goodwill of the trainers, the follow-up of the project went well, and we were able to implement some workshops.

We have seen the need to design a workshop component aimed at boys, too, in order to holistically disseminate MHM knowledge and sex education. We will pursue the implementation of a group workshop for school boys to be delivered in 2021.

In every village, we also plan to organize talks with representatives of the municipalities as well as spiritual and religious leaders.

**Next year, the project is not going to be expanded to a lot of other villages.** Instead, we will focus on having people working in the field during the whole year. We will try to reach more women and help them to stop Chhaupadi by assisting and encouraging them with the help of the mentors and training visits.

Our plan is to have a staff made up entirely of Achhami girls. We will employ at least 2 girls from each village to work as social mobilizers and assist the trainer once per month throughout the whole year. We have been working to establish a strong mentor team in Achham, that can help in the future years of the project.

This year we have been working with the new social enterprise BeArtsy Nepal as a counterpart, and because they were already working in 2019 as individual volunteers in the project, so things run smoothly and easily. They could get approval with SWC and implement the local girls in Achham and we can trust that they will work with us in the long run.

In addition to that, we will continue to have Achhami girls conduct the workshops on the field, and they will become team managers in the future.

By means of these measures, the project can be managed more efficiently, and we will be able to count on the trainers in each municipality, who will take care of their menstrual cup users and foster Chhaupadi awareness year-round.

## CONCLUSION

The challenges we faced while implementing the project in 2020 were due to the Covid 19, but despite the constraints, our local trainers have shown their motivation and willingness to keep working to bring changes in their community.