Johanna Bermúdez tried to respond with the social stigmas that surround menstruation and reproductive education. In August 2022, congresswomen system.

The poverty is a form of gender violence detrimental to the prosperity of our nation as a whole.

In Honduras period poverty is widely prevalent with over 60% of the population living under the poverty line. Accessing the proper menstrual hygiene products poses a significant economic challenge for the majority of the population; and yet, the Honduran government still labels essential menstrual products as a “luxury product.” As such, these are excluded from the basic basket, a list of consumer goods and services (considered essential for a household to maintain a basic standard of living) that are exempt from taxation and subject to government imposed price ceilings. The lack of price ceilings and the 15% luxury sales tax makes menstrual hygiene products even more inaccessible affecting the most vulnerable.

Besides from the health risks taken by many, according to the World Bank, in 2016 period-poverty induced absences accounted to an average of over 60 missed days of school for girls across Honduras. One in every three Honduran girls drops out of school and though period-poverty is not the sole cause, it’s a major one that denotes systematic gender inequalities in the Honduran education system.

Menstrual poverty in Honduras is critical yet widely unrecognized partly because of the sexist social stigmas that surround menstruation and reproductive education. In August 2022, congresswomen Johanna Bermúdez tried to respond with the Ley Rosa (Pink law) which aimed to exempt this basic need from taxation. Unfortunately, the Congress neglected this bill and it was never even introduced. After speaking with a politician involved in the previous attempt to remove the luxury tax, he said that there wasn’t enough “political will and public support” and there were “more important things on the agenda.” We must bring to the attention of members of the public and private sector and the public how period poverty is a form of gender violence detrimental to the prosperity of our nation as a whole.

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4 file:///Users/rolandokattanr/Downloads/Proyecto-Ley-Rosa.pdf

5 Conversation with Kilvett Zabdiel Bertrand, Executive Secretary of the National Party
The Goal

I want to foster public awareness of period poverty and its dire effects to my Honduran compatriots to create enough political will to pass a law that includes menstrual hygiene products in the basic basket, thus exempting them from discriminatory forms of taxation. To this end, I will inaugurate a conference that brings together key actors from the public and private sector on international Menstrual Hygiene Day (MHD, May 28th). The goals of the conference are to:

1. Publicize the legislation on menstrual products that will be presented to Congress,
2. Host influential speakers that address the importance of the bill,
3. Empower local NGOs focused on gender issues through speaker panels,
4. Bring all major news outlets to report on the event to gain public awareness and political momentum for the legislation.

Implementation

Pre-conference:

Understanding what is needed: Throughout the past months, I have been working with both a local NGO called Nosotras la Preferimos Sencillas (NLPS) and an international NGO called PERIOD; these NGOs seek to advance menstruating rights in Honduras and the world respectively. We concluded that a proper law that exonerates menstrual hygiene products from taxation is currently the most pressing need for Hondurans.

The Law: I have been meeting with Mrs. Zulmit Rivera, the Honduran Minister of Youth and she will support and collaborate with both the conference and the process involved with passing the law. She will connect me and my NGO partners to relevant lawmakers to draft and introduce this legislative project. I intend to capitalize on PERIOD’s experience with legislative projects like this one in other Latin-American countries such as Mexico6 and the local knowledge from NLPS to successfully draft a law that can make products more accessible to Hondurans.

The conference:

Recruitment: Mrs. Aline Flores, the coordinator of the gender committee of the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise7 (COHEP) has demonstrated interest in this awareness project. I will heavily lean on her, the Minister of Youth and NLPS to get as many key actors to attend the conference such as important business owners, other local NGO representatives and representatives of the public sector. On my end, I will use social media and cold recruiting techniques to attract as many relevant figures as possible having in mind the nature of the event and constraints of our venue.

Program: The program will include a keynote presentation of the bill and its importance by the Minister of Youth and other congress members. Then we will host an international speaker provided by PERIOD as well as a panel that engages local NGOs in dialogue of their causes and struggles.

Branding: We will get as many news outlets and members of the press to report on the event so that our impact is as far-reaching as possible. Months prior to the conference we will use social media advertisement to spread awareness of period poverty in Honduras, the conference and the legislative intentions.

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6 https://www.canva.com/design/DAFKw6G0uWU/tuTBkkyKg7PRhAbT6GYjjiw/view?utm_content=DAFKw6G0uWU&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton
7 https://www.cohep.org/
**Sustainable Impact**

Menstrual poverty is an urgent issue that few people in our gender-discriminating society are aware of. Through this conference I intend to spread awareness on the matter and with the help of my government partners, get Congress to pass the bill. This bill will be a solid first step in Honduras’ battle against menstrual poverty and gender discrimination. It will spark a conversation on the historical neglect women and girls have had to overcome in our system. Additionally, Even though the conference is my focus, I will continue to work with both my NGO partners as a volunteer to help initiate a PERIOD Chapter in Honduras. We will use the conference as a platform to promote this new Chapter and hopefully get donations to give out menstrual kits in areas of critical need.

**Positionality**

As an international student born and raised in Tegucigalpa, Honduras I have a good understanding of the geographical, social and political context in which I will be working. Similarly, I’m not a menstruator myself and acknowledge the limitations of my knowledge in understanding the full nuances of the issue I’m tackling. This is a conversation I had with my NGO partners in our initial meetings so that all parties were comfortable with my involvement on the subject. Ms. Daniela Palma, the executive director of NLPS expressed her content with my involvement of the issue since part of the problem is the lack of awareness from the majority of non-menstruators. On the other hand, my family and I have been very politically involved in the country which has facilitated the connection with many government officials that have helped me in the process of writing this proposal. Lastly, I would like to emphasize how I have spent most of my extracurricular time at Yale organizing Model United Nations conferences for high school students which has provided the necessary expertise to plan the event I am proposing. Overall, I intend to always proceed with the guidance of my NGO partners’ expertise and more accurate knowledge of the issue at hand.

**Contribution to Peace**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrined human dignity in its preamble: “Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” Dignity, stands not only as a fundamental human right but also as the basis of all fundamental rights—without it, we cannot achieve peace in the world. The lack of access to proper menstrual products hinders the daily functions of menstruators and strips away the right to dignity and thus peace. A peaceful society is one where everyone’s basic needs are equally attended to. One where the most vulnerable are not placed at a disadvantage on a day to basis and discriminated on the basis of a natural process to the human body.