

A game to break the “shame” of menstruation

Experts debate if social gaming can change perceptions about female menstruation.

Innovative social impact games are effective in bringing positive changes in attitudes and behaviors, a social impact gaming expert told a panel today.

Mariam Adil, founder of Gaming Revolution for International Development, used games to tackle the stigma around menstrual hygiene affecting young women in developing countries.

“There is a silence around menstrual hygiene that is so deeply rooted and we can't solve these issues if we don't talk about them and break the stigma,” Adil said.

Since conversation isn't always an option in some developing countries, especially when involving females, she created a way to reach out to communities and change behaviors.

In some developing countries, women are frowned upon during their menstrual cycles. Adil is committed to change that feeling of shame.

As a result, she created a game during her graduate program at George Washington University that targeted this stigma and empowering girls not to be ashamed during their cycle.

“Having grown up in Pakistan and as someone who felt this oppression - this was real to me and I wanted to do something about it,” Adil said.

Adil offered a preview of her recently launched game [Mohim](#), which in her native language Urdu means “effort.” Three years in the making, the game's objective is to bust myths around menstrual health and hygiene in Pakistan and other developing countries.

“I remember my father would switch away from a channel about sanitary pads because it was somehow shameful,” Adil said.

The game is only available on [iPhones](#) for now. The idea behind it is to encourage the use of sanitary pads. The player will have to

catch sanitary pads using underwears. The more sanitary pads one catches, the higher the score.

Once the player reaches the highest score - a key emerges and it unlocks a door to a bathroom. “There is a myth about how you shouldn’t shower or bath during your period, which is absolutely wrong,” Adil said.

The game wants to break that myth and encourage washing during menstrual cycle.

Next January, Adil will introduce her game to 5,000 women in Kenya. The mobile game will be customized to Swahili language.

“Gone are the days of crushing candies, it’s time to catch those pads with undies,” Adil said.