



## Reusable Period Product Project Update Report

To,

The Green Grant Committee,

University of Northern British Columbia

1<sup>st</sup> November 2024

Subject – Reusable Period Project Update Report

Respected Committee Members,

The Northern Women's Centre (NWC) is pleased to submit an updated report for the Reusable Period Project (RPPP). Please see the following pages for a detailed explanation of the updates.

# 1 Summary

The Reusable Period Product Project is an initiative by Mya Knudsgaard and the Northern Women's Centre, with the support of UNBC Green Grant. The project provides safe and sustainable menstruation choices for UNBC students free of charge. In addition to making available reusable menstrual products like reusable pads and liners, period panties, menstrual cups and discs, this project is aimed at creating awareness around safe menstrual practices through social media posts, in-person tabling and workshops and campaigns.

The initial project funding was provided to the project by the UNBC Green Committee in the spring of 2024. This report provides an update on the current status of the project as well as future plans.

## 2 Community Perception

We are happy to report that the community's perception of this program has been overwhelmingly positive! We have received much positive feedback both in person and on each of our surveys. Community partners like the Northern Pride Centre have collected some products for their student collective and have expressed interest in collaborating for future grant applications.

Appendix A has the testimonials we have received from the students so far. These testimonials are collected through order forms, social media comments and messages. We are keeping these testimonials anonymous.

## 3 Financial

### Expense summary

Currently the majority of the funds received by the Green Committee for the RPPP have been allotted for specific products. A summary of expenses can be seen in Table 1 below. Certain Expenses were higher than anticipated due to the unforeseen circumstances (See Logistics: Product Ordering).

Table 1: Green Grant Funds Allocation

| Item                    | Cost per unit | Total       |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Nixit Suction Free Cups | \$ 28.60      | \$ 343.20   |
| Menstrual Cups          | \$ 36.63      | \$ 1,014.00 |
| Reusable Liners         | \$ 14.40      | \$ 144.00   |
| Reusable Pads (mini)    | \$ 9.60       | \$ 240.00   |
| Reusable Pads (Maxi)    | \$ 11.40      | \$ 456.00   |
| Reusable Pads (Super)   | \$ 13.20      | \$ 264.00   |
| Reusable Underwear      | \$ 33.60      | \$ 00.00    |
| Total                   |               | \$ 2,461.20 |

### Future Expense Planning

The planning for the allocation of future funding has been considered. The NWC currently has a stock of reusable products. The additional funding would be used to build additional stock of products, depending

on the existing stock, the demand for products, and fulfill orders of reusable underwear. The planned spending of the new funds is outlined in Table 2. The remaining funds will be kept until there is no remaining stock of a certain product. We anticipate that without any additional funds, the remaining funds from the Green Committee (\$2500) have the capacity to sustain the project until late 2025.

Table 2: Future Funds Allocation

| Item                                  | Cost Per unit | Units Ordered | Total      |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| <b>Nixit Suction Free Cups (Disk)</b> | \$ 28.60      | 25            | \$ 715.00  |
| <b>Reusable Underwear</b>             | \$ 33.60      | 40            | \$ 1344.00 |
| <b>Menstrual Cups</b>                 | \$ 25.35      | 10            | \$ 253.50  |
| <b>Total</b>                          |               |               | \$ 2312.50 |

## Future Funding

The project has applied for the City of Prince George Community Grant – September 2024 intake. We intend to apply for donations with different product sellers like Diva, Joni, Care and other Canadian small business. These companies offer education resources, demonstration tools and sustainable menstrual products as donations to projects like ours.

We are in conversation with United Way, BC for more funding opportunities. We also intend to partner with community organizations like PG Sexual Assault Centre (PG SAC) and Northern Pride to apply for larger grants like – Prince George Community Foundation and Imagine Grants.

After September 2025, the Northern Women’s Centre will be eligible to apply to cover this project under BC Gaming Grants. BC Gaming requires any new project to be operational for a year before funding is considered. The continued support of the Green Committee would greatly help us in maintaining this project until we are able to qualify for this funding.

## 4 Demand

Currently we have received a total of 76 orders, 33 online orders and have distributed an additional 43 products through the pick-up time. An outline of the ordered and picked-up products through the online form, and in-person tabling can be seen below in Table 3.

Table 3: Product Demand

| Item                                  | Units Received | Units Distributed | Remaining Stock | Demand % |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------|
| <b>Nixit Suction Free Cups (Disk)</b> | 12             | 10                | 2               | 13.15%   |

|  |     |    |     |        |
|--|-----|----|-----|--------|
| <b>Menstrual Cups</b>                    | 40  | 23 | 17  | 26.5%  |
| <b>Reusable Liners</b>                   | 10  | 5  | 5   | 6.57%  |
| <b>Reusable Pads (mini)</b>              | 25  | 9  | 14  | 11.84% |
| <b>Reusable Pads (Maxi)</b>              | 40  | 13 | 27  | 17.10% |
| <b>Reusable Pads (Super)</b>             | 20  | 4  | 16  | 5.26%  |
| <b>Reusable Underwear <sup>[1]</sup></b> | 0   | 14 | -14 | 18.42% |
| <b>Total</b>                             | 147 | 64 | 83  | NA     |

[1] Row is not included in any “Totals”

## 5 Environmental Impact

To enhance the positive environmental impact of this project we wanted to look further into the impact of reusable menstrual products and ways to maximise their efficiency. Three different life cycle assessment (LCA) were researched. All reported that reusable products are significantly more sustainable and environmentally friendly than their disposable counterparts. However, we wanted to delve deeper into making our program more sustainable. Once reusable pads reach the end of their life cycles they can be recycled like other cloth fabrics. We are planning on developing resources on how to recycle or compost the pad components at the end of its lifespan. Additionally, to optimize the sustainability of cups and discs, one LCA compared the impact of various sterilization methods. It was determined that using boiling water in either a pot or kettle is the ideal way to sterilise these products (see Table 4). We will be promoting this message in our project going forward [1,2,3].

Table 4: Cup/ Disc Cleaning Impact Comparison [1]

| Impact category   | MC, cooker Scenario | MC, kettle Scenario | TC       | TO       | PC       | PO       | Unit         |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| Land use  | 1.06E+00            | 7.62E-01            | 1.13E+01 | 3.87E+01 | 9.52E+00 | 4.51E+01 | Pt           |
| Water scarcity  | 3.60E+02            | 2.06E+02            | 9.63E+02 | 8.56E+02 | 8.63E+02 | 1.02E+03 | m3 depriv.   |
| Resource use, mineral and metals  | 3.52E-09            | 3.11E-09            | 1.30E-08 | 6.46E-09 | 1.67E-08 | 1.41E-08 | kg Sb eq     |
| Resource use, energy carriers   | 3.02E+01            | 1.76E+01            | 7.58E+01 | 4.31E+01 | 9.97E+01 | 9.30E+01 | MJ           |
| Climate change  | 2.20E+00            | 1.25E+00            | 5.87E+00 | 5.01E+00 | 5.99E+00 | 8.84E+00 | kg CO2 eq    |
| Eutrophication terrestrial  | 2.00E-02            | 1.33E-02            | 6.21E-02 | 1.72E-01 | 5.42E-02 | 2.20E-01 | mol N eq     |
| Eutrophication marine   | 7.47E-03            | 6.68E-03            | 9.96E-03 | 8.67E-02 | 5.54E-03 | 8.95E-02 | kg N eq      |
| Eutrophication freshwater   | 2.30E-03            | 9.66E-04            | 2.34E-03 | 1.34E-02 | 1.89E-03 | 1.39E-02 | kg P eq      |
| Acidification terrestrial and freshwater  | 8.22E-03            | 5.50E-03            | 3.62E-02 | 4.95E-02 | 2.44E-02 | 6.23E-02 | mol H+ eq    |
| Ecotoxicity freshwater  | 4.22E+00            | 3.92E+00            | 1.01E+01 | 2.55E+01 | 7.61E+00 | 3.00E+01 | CTUe         |
| Cancer human health effects   | 5.30E-08            | 4.24E-08            | 9.04E-08 | 7.07E-08 | 6.79E-08 | 9.16E-08 | CTUh         |
| Non-cancer human health effects   | 6.96E-07            | 5.98E-07            | 2.07E-06 | 1.58E-06 | 6.57E-07 | 1.26E-06 | CTUh         |
| ionizing radiation, HH  | 3.22E-01            | 1.57E-01            | 7.24E-01 | 4.61E-01 | 6.73E-01 | 6.87E-01 | kBq U-235 eq |
| Photochemical ozone formation, HH   | 4.20E-03            | 2.93E-03            | 1.72E-02 | 1.38E-02 | 1.85E-02 | 2.37E-02 | kg NMVOC eq  |
| Respiratory inorganics  | 5.22E-08            | 4.09E-08            | 3.70E-07 | 3.09E-07 | 2.59E-07 | 4.70E-07 | disease inc. |
| Ozone depletion   | 1.42E-07            | 1.05E-07            | 8.02E-07 | 3.23E-07 | 4.55E-07 | 9.28E-07 | kg CFC11 eq  |
| The colour scale indicates the level of impact – from green (lowest impact) to red (highest impact)<br>Additionally, the colour scale helps the understanding of how far the values are from each other; the more similar the colour, the closer the values are |                     |                     |          |          |          |          |              |

Additionally, we wanted to prioritize working with companies with strong environmental initiatives. Aisle and Nixit have both stressed their commitment to climate activism and sustainability. These organizations are also based in Canada. We are also looking at more Canadian local and small businesses to promote these local Canadian businesses, reduce the travel cost and carbon footprint associated with long shipping times and reduce dependence on capitalist organizations exploiting labour and natural resources [4,5].

## 6 Logistics

Over the course of the summer the project resseeded a survey to students to inquire on what products they would like to have available to them.

The advertising for the project began in May 2024 and the project officially started in September 2024. In the first two weeks of September, we collated resources for educational and awareness purposes. In the second week, we opened up the order form. We have created a Linktree to have all the resources with regards to this project easy to find for student, all in the same place. To this end, we have instructional videos and resources compiled on our Linktree. The Linktree is linked to all our social media channels.

How the project works:

- UNBC students who menstruate place an order for one product through our order form- This form is available on our social media handles.
- Once the student completes the form, an email is sent to the student to inform them about their pick-up day and time.
- Pick-up days are twice a week and vary depending on stat holidays.
- If the student cannot make it during their assigned days, alternate pick-up times are discussed.
- If the student does not show up for the pickup, we send a reminder email and inform the student that their product will be on hold for two weeks.

- If the student does not show up after two weeks, we put the product back into the inventory.

Based on the recommendation of other program directors we have decided not to actively stock period underwear because of the large size range and the resulting large up front cost to supply. Instead, it can be ordered by students on the online order form. Students will expect a larger delay for period underwear since it will only be ordered from suppliers based on orders the NWC has received.

On 25<sup>th</sup> October, we had an awareness and semi-educational session on using, cleaning and storing menstrual products. This was headed by our staff and volunteers. On the spot product pick up was also available. Further, on November 19, in collaboration with IWAW, PGSAC and UNBC Medical Clinic, we are hosting the Scarlet Tide Brigade workshop. This workshop has an educational piece on addressing common myths, concerns and misinformation about menstruation and the use of menstrual products. The workshop also has an interactive piece on sewing one's own reusable menstrual pads! In the future we are planning to host one free pick up/ educational event per month (similar to Oct 25) while school is on.

## Product Ordering

The project has had a few challenges in the past few months. Initially, we had contacted Saalt, an American company, on the recommendation of another Canadian university that had been a long-time customer of theirs for a similar program to the RPPP. Unfortunately, When the order was placed, Saalt informed us that they are no longer able to provide menstrual products to Canadian universities. As a result, we had to order cups and disks through other companies. The cups were ordered from Aisle, and the discs from Nixit. We are currently looking for more affordable alternative companies to order these products. Until then, Nixit and Aisle become our safe options to avoid running into similar logistical problems as the one with Saalt. We are also in communication with other universities who have similar programs about other possible vendors.

## Advertisement

The project's advertising has been taking place as outlined in the prior report. We plan to launch round 2 of burst advertising on social media and more campus posters around Scarlet Tide Brigade. This second phase serves two purposes – first, to bring attention back to the project, and second, to increase participation for the Scarlet Tide Brigade.

When the project was officially announced on social media, we had a number of other student lead organizations post about the project to help promote it. We are continuing to partner with other organizations to help spread the word about the project.

## 7 Conclusion

We are grateful for the support of the UNBC Green Grant in making this project possible. We were expecting challenges as this is the pilot version of the project. These two months have been a learning curve for us however, we have been able to adapt. We intend to apply these learnings to make the project better and more successful going on. The additional funding by the Committee will help us sustain the project for the time being and giving us the opportunity to maintain the project until alternative funding

becomes available. We are looking forward to continuing the success of this project and providing sustainable menstrual products to the students of UNBC!

Regards,

*Mya Knudsgaard,*

*UNBC APSc. Student*

And,

*Tanvi Guhagarkar*

*Executive Director*

*Northern Women's Centre*



## 8 References

- [1] (Vilabrille Paz et al., 2020). Vilabrille Paz, C., Ciroth, A., Mitra, A., Birnbach, M. and Wunsch, N. (2020) Comparative Life cycle assessment of menstrual products. GreenDelta GmbH, commissioned by einhorn products GmbH
- [2] S. Fourcassier, M. Douziech, P. Pérez-López, and L. Schiebinger, “Menstrual products: A comparable Life Cycle Assessment,” *Cleaner Environmental Systems*, vol. 7, no. 100096, p. 100096, Dec. 2022, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cesys.2022.100096>.
- [3] A. Hait and S. E. Powers, “The Value of Reusable Feminine Hygiene Products Evaluated by Comparative Environmental Life Cycle Assessment,” *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, vol. 150, no. 1, p. 104422, Nov. 2019, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resconrec.2019.104422>.
- [4] “Why nixit | nixit menstrual cup,” nixit canada, 2024. <https://nixit.ca/pages/why-nixit> (accessed Oct. 30, 2024).
- [5] “Impact,” Aisle. <https://periodaisle.com/pages/impact> (accessed Oct. 30, 2024).



## 9 Appendix A

“Thank you so so much! This is so awesome!”

“So excited about this program! Thank you very much for helping so many unbc community members this way 😊”

“Thank you so much for doing this! Im so glad you guys actually care about womens rep health.”

“I am really grateful for this program! I've been wanting to try reusable period products but was hesitant due to cost. Thanks again!”

“Thank you for offering such an amazing program!!”

“I really appreciate this initiative!! Hopefully this helps make environmentally menstrual products more accessible 😊”

“This is amazing!!!!”

“An amazing initiative.”

“I received one of your reusable pads for free the other day - thank you! I actually prefer them to normal pads.”