



Fund for Innovation and Transformation

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CENTRE FOR AFFORDABLE WATER AND SANITATION TECHNOLOGY (CAWST)

# Creating Safe Spaces for Learning: My Body, My Health, and My Future (M3 virtual platform)

## Context

Despite being a natural reality for 1.8 billion persons of reproductive age around the world, menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) remains a taboo topic, resulting in unmet needs for millions of women, girls, transgender men, and non-binary people. Many face infrastructural, attitudinal, and social barriers to managing their menstruation in a safe, healthy, and dignified way.

## The Innovative Solution

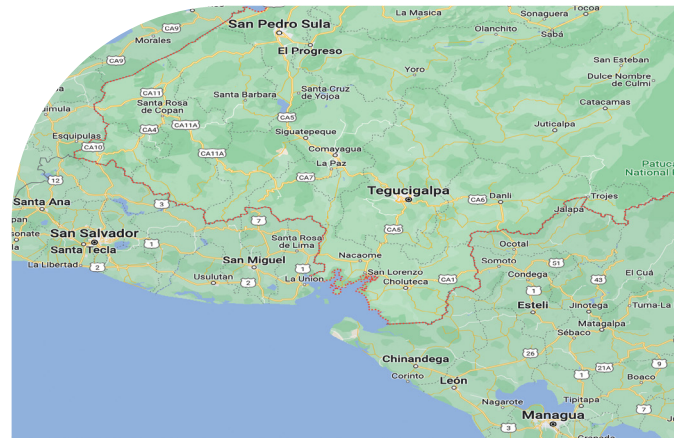
Supported by FIT, The Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology (CAWST) and Pure Water for the World Honduras planned to test an interactive learning platform to increase knowledge, shift attitudes and change behaviours around menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) in Trojes, Honduras. The baseline study, including an in-depth formative research component to capture primary data, revealed that while the MHH needs as a whole are not being met in the region, the key assumption about availability was shown to be incorrect, thereby serving as a key decision factor in NOT moving forward with testing.

## Advancing Gender Equality

The baseline study determined that for future testing designs in Trojes, Honduras there is a need to further normalize and destigmatize conversations around menstruation, especially for men and boys.

## Testing Framework

Prior to the testing, the project team conducted a collaborative evaluation planning and baseline to assess menstrual knowledge and behaviors including access to menstrual hygiene products, mainly through focus group discussions in Trojes, Honduras. Local youth were then engaged to conduct formative research to explore a series of factors known to influence behaviour, and to assess the diverse



**COUNTRY**  
Honduras

**AMOUNT**  
\$85,000

### TESTING PERIOD

4 months  
Ended after baseline



**GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE (GE3)**

**THEME: EDUCATION**

lived experiences of girls, boys, parents and teachers. It was through these baseline evaluations that a key assumption was invalidated resulting in the decision to not move forward with the testing.

## Results and Impact

Since the results are drawn from the findings of the baseline study and formative research, they don't represent the findings from an intervention:

The baseline results showed a high level of access among participants to safe menstrual hygiene products, mainly in the form of disposable sanitary pads. This dispelled an assumption that reusable menstrual pads were needed or desired by the target population.

The formative research explored the diverse lived experiences of girls, boys, women and men, with the intention to use these insights to inform the design and content of the e-learning platform and ensure its relevance to the project stakeholders.

## Key Lessons

1. The baseline survey results dispelled the assumption that reusable pads and the skills to make them are a top priority for all communities. Primary data indicated that in the target community, reusable pads are not desirable and that disposable products are readily available and accessible.
2. Highlighting the difference between menstrual hygiene management and menstrual health and hygiene needs to be a priority at the forefront of project activities. It has become increasingly clear that 'hygiene management' is only one piece of the puzzle and there is need for a more holistic approach that looks at physical and emotional health, engaging and educating non-menstruators and empowerment and rights.

"Testing is an incremental process and results are critical in making program decisions to ensure solutions are needed and relevant. Using the evidence from our baseline evaluation has allowed us to revisit the assumptions upon which we designed our project. As we reflect on our findings, we were able to pivot our priorities and adjust our approach with the aim of continually building our understanding of the menstrual health and hygiene needs in Trojes."

– Karen Joe, CAWST

### PARTNER ORGANIZATION

- Pure Water for the World, Honduras

### TARGET PARTICIPANTS

The intended participants included adolescent girls, boys, and supportive adults who would enable adolescents to reach their greatest potential and fully exercise their right to participate in life. Specific target numbers were not yet identified.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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### ABOUT FIT

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South.

