

As way of introduction, we are co-founders of Dignity – a social enterprise that provides a women’s well-being initiative for buy one give one sanitary items in the workplace. This creates access to sanitary items for women in the workplace and for students in New Zealand schools going without. Dignity was started through the Viclink Entrepreneurial bootcamp in 2016/2017, and we went on to successfully pitching and gaining our first customer Flick Electric.



We have ten corporate partnerships including ANZ, Xero, Chapman Tripp, Russell McVeagh, Flick Electric and Cigna. The Dignity initiative has allowed 90 New Zealand schools and youth organisations to have access to sanitary items thanks to the buy one give one model.

As a result of the Dignity initiative women in the corporates feeling 85% more personally supported and our schools have reported that the students were able to stay at school during their period.

Period poverty is a complex problem that manifests itself in a myriad of ways and the impact of Dignity in schools has been multifaceted. Since the beginning, the reduction of absenteeism has been recorded. During Term 1 2019, 72% (21) of schools mentioned that a core outcome of having free sanitary items meant their students were able to stay in school during their period.

Other outcomes of the initiative include:

- 81% felt it reduced feelings of shame for students.
- 87% of schools felt it improved their students’ self-esteem.
- 69% felt it improved their ability to partake in sport.
- Donations resulting in teachers/nurses no longer paying for the items themselves occurred in 85% of schools.

Other anecdotal outcomes:

- Relief and happiness
- Improved cleanliness (not having to use toilet paper as pads)
- Less visits to the school nurse
- Reduced cost to families

Our goal is to eradicate and research period poverty in New Zealand and then into the Pacific Islands. The work we do relate directly to SDGs 4, 5 and 10.

We want to share, advocate and lobby agencies to become:

1. Aware of period poverty and the impact upon women
2. Pledge to fund sanitary items in all schools to all girls providing them dignity and support for their education.

We hope our mahi finds you well and thank you for the opportunity to share our story.

Contact

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Dignity – Creating a movement for free sanitary items for all women in New Zealand

Most relevant SDGs:

