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### **Stayfree India launches #ProjectFreePeriod to help women step out of the sex trade**

*Stayfree India and the DDB Mudra Group are aiming to partner with non-profit organizations to help women cultivate their own #DreamsofProgress*

Link to the film:

<https://www.facebook.com/StayfreeIndia/videos/1824183327601459/>

Mumbai | April 2018

While Stayfree is a feminine hygiene brand, it believes that its purpose is to help women and girls make each day count, as they move toward their dreams.

Which is why, the efforts of Stayfree is not just to normalize period days, but to encourage women to nurture their dreams of progress. No matter which section of the society she belongs to, whatever be her age or her community.

And that brought into focus a community that had a completely different outlook toward their periods.

While almost every woman dreads her period days, here were women who looked forward to it. For whom their period was the only respite from the lives they were being forced to lead.

These are the women of the sex trade.

While the belief is that these women need to be rescued from this trade, the truth is that they will struggle to find other ways to sustain themselves. And so even the rescued ones often return and are plunged even deeper into this world of exploitation. With their period days often being the only days of the month that they get for themselves. The DDB Mudra Group & Stayfree India thought this forced break could be a way to help these women cultivate their own #DreamsofProgress.

And so was born #ProjectFreePeriod.

Through collaborations with professional skill trainers, a vocational training programme was created to equip these women with skills that could help them sustain themselves outside of the sex trade. While finding relevant skills was the easy part, the challenge was to condense them into 3-day training modules. So that the 3 days of their periods could be turned into 3 days of learning.



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And finally, in January, with the help of Prerana, a local NGO, the first edition of #ProjectFreePeriod was launched in the red light district of Mumbai. In the workshops since, over 30 women have been a part of this programme and have been taught skills that range from candle-making, embroidery, henna-art, soft-toy making to a basic beautician course. There shall be stalls put up in flea markets and malls to display the products of their newly acquired skills; to create more awareness and support for this initiative.

Project Free Period now runs through the month and has a consistently expanding curriculum of skills. So much so that the women are finding ways to make more time to learn and hone new skills. Through recruitment drives on social media, the initiative has also put together a database of volunteers to keep scaling up this project.

The plan is now to take the training out of the classrooms, for both the women and the trainers; through simple instructional videos that can be shared through Whatsapp.

As the initiative is spreading its wings, Stayfree India and the DDB Mudra Group are aiming to partner with other non-profit organizations to replicate this model and access and wider database of students.

Quoting on the initiative, Rahul Mathew, National Creative Director, DDB Mudra Group said, "To go from normalizing periods in the lives of women to using periods to normalize the lives of women in the sex trade; is a great example of the kind of power and influence brands can wield. Project Free Period turns the period from a pause to an opportunity, for these women to sustain a life outside of the trade."

Quoting about #ProjectFreePeriod, Mugdha Dandekar, Project Manager, Prerana said, "This project brings a chance for the women in the red-light areas to step out of the exploitative lifecycle. Uneducated and with no income security, such an opportunity to learn an alternative vocation is crucial. Working in the red-light areas of Mumbai, we often see such initiatives in practice, but this considers the comfort and convenience of our women. The women have chosen the days they would like to come for the training, so that it doesn't disrupt their lives. The change has to be gradual, not on weekly or monthly basis, and this project understands that. Therefore, we see a strong commitment from our women to hold onto this opportunity and give change a chance."



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Agency credits

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### **About DDB Mudra Group:**

The DDB Mudra Group, a part of the Omnicom/DDB Worldwide Group, is India's largest integrated marketing communications and services network. Operating out of fifteen leading cities, the agency has a comprehensive presence across the length and breadth of the country. The agency consistently ranks among the top awarded networks in India and continues to be a leading presence by helping build powerful brands and inspiring change. The DDB Mudra Group have been pioneering brand partners in the fields of Advertising, Media Planning & Buying, Digital & Data-driven Marketing, Technology, Health & Lifestyle, OOH, Retail Design and Visual Merchandising, Experiential Marketing (Promotions, Events, Rural), Trade Marketing, Youth Marketing, Localization Pre-Media Services, Content Creation, Strategy and Design Consultancy DDB Mudra Group is a part of the Omnicom Group (NYSE).

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