

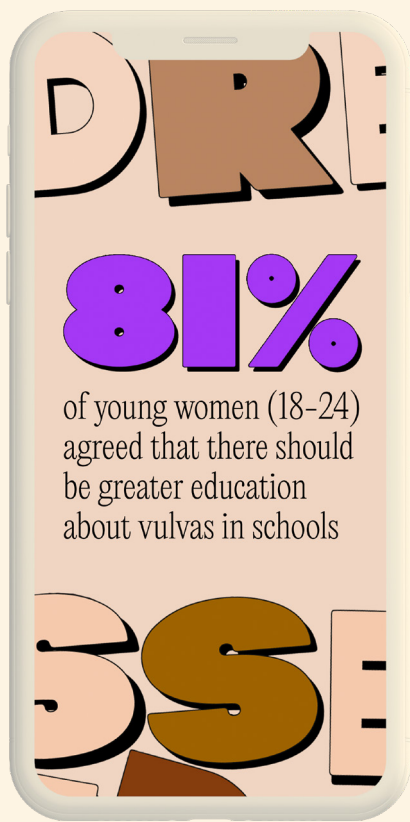
THE TRUTH, UNDRESSED.

Brought To You By

Canesten®

UNDRESSED. THE TRUTH UNDRESSED. THE TRUTH UNDRESSED. THE TRUTH UNDRESSED. THE TRUTH UNDRESSED.

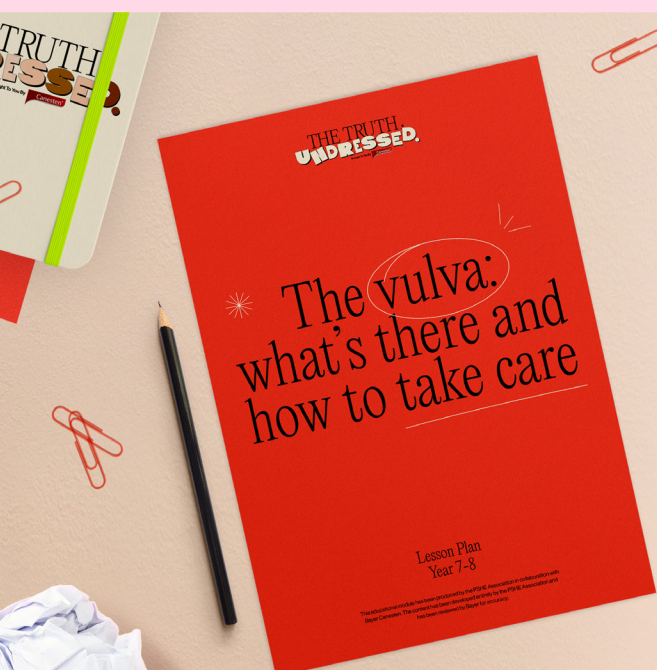
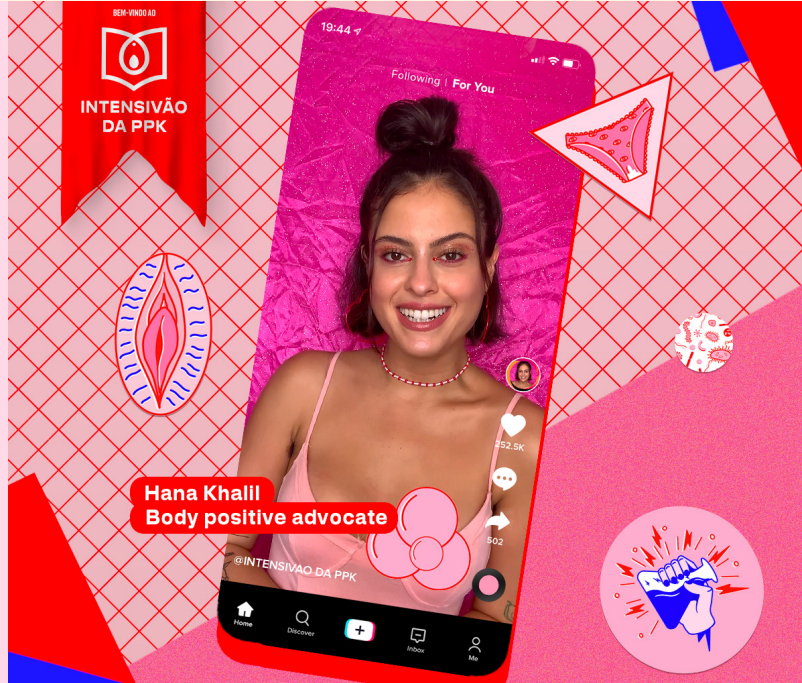
Canesten faced a challenge many healthcare brands can relate to. Consumers only interact with the brand when they have a health issue that requires treatment. Consumers also tend to avoid engaging with subjects like thrush and bacterial vaginosis due to the feeling of shame associated with having a vaginal infection. Our research showed that shame is an intense, enduring emotion causing feelings of disgust, anger and apologies. This feeling affects people to the extent that they do not dare to ask their doctor questions about intimate health and would rather turn to the internet for advice, a place where misconceptions and myths flourish.



We also discovered that access to education on the subject was abysmally low. 60% of women in the UK only found out about vaginal infections when they experienced one and only 6% found out about health conditions through school or university. There was a real health need for better education and access to information on the topic. . 81% of young women agreed that there should be better education in schools.

To eradicate shame and drive long-term societal impact we set out to provide real medical, factual knowledge on vaginas and vaginal health. To help Canesten add meaningful value to consumers' lives and encourage people to become more proactive about their health we fundamentally shifted our brand approach and put purpose at the heart of what we do.

We had previously launched iterations of Canesten's brand purpose platform, Vagina Academy, in Brazil, Italy and Australia as a digital school of intimate health, mainly housed on social. The challenge for the UK was that medical product advertising is tightly regulated. It was very challenging to discuss the topic of vaginal health in a purely educational way. With vulvas being so sexualised on the internet and one of the most taboo topics, social media platforms are heavily moderated and censor remotely sensitive, intimate content.



So we created The Truth, Undressed, an editorial-style microsite full of educational articles with real photographs that teach the reality of how our bodies look and behave. The platform includes a set of lesson plans for teachers and students, driving social assets and articles that cover most topics that are usually missed in education—everything from anatomy, cultural pressures and labiaplasty, health conditions like BV, thrush and vaginismus, pubic hair and the choices that come with it, to even what a vagina should smell and taste like.

For the first time in education, we showed real photographs of diverse representations of vulvas and discharge. Our intention was to move imagery of vulvas away from a sexualised depiction and into an informative, educational space to equip young people with the essential information they need to understand their bodies. In our efforts to be more inclusive and represent the truth for all kinds of people who have a vulva, we worked with people from the LGBTQIA+ community and featured all skin tones, body types, gender identities, pubic hair choices, and had the unique task of an equal representation of outies and innies (labia shapes).



Great attention was given to ensure the images show what vulvas look like in a desexualised, educational context. For example, through depicting daily nude situations outside of sexual scenarios, such as dressing or showering; by using bright, daytime lighting which enables us to see the anatomy clearly and avoids nighttime connotations; carefully selected environments, settings and props as well as poses where our cast appear confident and empowered. Making sure our models always felt comfortable and respected was a priority and we worked with an intimacy coordinator throughout.

To enable this campaign to exist in the public realm as well as on a microsite, we created short form social video ads for Tiktok and Instagram to drive traffic to the site. Because images of real vulvas are censored on social media, we had to adapt the driving creative to work around the regulations of the social platforms. We worked with policy teams to find creative ways to discuss the problems of censorship without falling foul of community guidelines. The series of ads were designed to demonstrate the problem of the missing information around vaginas and vulvas and the potential consequences, and offered our platform as a solution.

A key component of The Truth, Undressed is the partnership with the PSHE Association, the national curriculum body for PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) education in the UK. The PSHE Association gave expert advice on finding the best ways to communicate sensitive information to young people. Their influence can be seen throughout the site, from the flex and adaptation of the content to be appropriate to different age groups, to the ways that LGBTQIA+ topics are talked about, to how to talk about vaginas and vulvas in a way that truly reflects what young people may encounter.



This partnership also gave us the credibility to be part of the current sex and health education curriculum. We co-developed lesson plans to equip teaching professionals with materials to teach secondary students the reality of how our bodies look and behave. Teachers can choose from a range of photographs of real vulvas, as well as illustrations of realistic situations, medically verified photographs of vaginal discharge and labelled diagrams. Teachers also have the option of choosing lesson plan materials without imagery. The programme includes a guidance document to help teachers navigate more sensitive and challenging topics including gender inclusivity, safeguarding and consent.

Since launch, The Truth, Undressed has landed gold-tier coverage across national, consumer and marketing industry titles across the UK, Europe, US, Asia and Australia. With 44 pieces of key coverage so far, the work has reached an audience of 92.1 million. It's both brilliant and encouraging to see that most of these pieces have chosen to include our photography, as well as the illustrations – demonstrating support for The Truth, Undressed being rooted in social purpose and empowering all of society with greater knowledge on intimate health.