

Project Report: Pads to Keep Them in School

Project Leader: Puri Goyo

Location: Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, Uganda

Implementation period: Summer Vacation

Introduction:

The Pads to Keep Them in School project was initiated to address the crucial issue of period poverty in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. This project aimed to empower underprivileged women and young teenage girls with the skills to produce reusable sanitary pads while also educating them about menstrual hygiene. The project does not only fight the challenges faced by refugee girls due to the lack of access to sanitary products but also aims to promote social justice and environmental sustainability.

The issue/problem

Refugee girls in Kiryandongo face challenges due to period poverty, including risks of missing school, embarrassment, humiliation, and health issues. Many girls resorted to using old rags and leaves to manage their menstruation, which had consequences on their physical and mental health. Period poverty was not only a barrier to education but also affected the overall well-being of refugee girls in the settlement.

The solution

The project's primary objective was to provide unprivileged women and girls with reusable sanitary pads. These sustainable and environmentally friendly pads were not only cost-effective but also reduced the environmental impact associated with single-use commercial pads.

The project team conducted educational sessions in schools within the refugee camp to teach teenage girls about menstrual hygiene and the use of sanitary pads. Refugee women were also educated on these topics, enabling them to guide their daughters effectively. We as a team collaborated with a reliable reusable pads company and we were able to produce 400 reusable pads ensuring that each eligible female refugee student received sanitary pads.

Costs and benefits

The implementation of the project incurred estimated costs of \$970 for the materials needed to produce reusable pads. The benefits of the project were as follows.

We mainly target the students who need the pads most, especially the teenage candidates taking their exams this year and ensuring that girls can attend school without fear of humiliation. The distribution took place at Arnold Primary School and intended to serve at least a teenage population of 576 girls who were

in need of pads. Unfortunately, the pads were not enough to sustain the population. We afforded to deliver 400 packets of reusable pads to serve a population of 400 teenage girls in need of pads who were at very high risks of missing out school. These statistics were obtained after approaching the headmistress of Arnold primary school, Grace who after listening to our request to help the girls stay in school said in her own words "My heart is filled with gratitude for the things you have done and continue to do for these girls and to all the refugee communities in Uganda" She also added by saying I am really grateful for that marvelous idea. Our girls will be able to attend classes without any humiliation and will be able to do their final exams. Here are some quotes from the beneficiaries: Mhudi, a 15 year-old student at Arnold Primary School: "Having these reusable pads is life changing for me. I used to miss a lot of my school days especially because my menstruation takes seven days, but now I will be able to attend regularly without any worries and I will be able to do well in my exams too". Nyutuyu, a refugee mother. "I am grateful for the education my daughter and I have received about menstrual hygiene. It's not just about the pads; it's about knowledge that will help us stay healthy".

As a project leader, the journey has been personally transformative. Witnessing the positive changes our project has brought to the lives of these refugee girls and women has deeply affected me. It's more than just implementing a project; it's about the realization that small actions can create big changes. The determination and resilience of these girls, despite their changing circumstances, have been a great source of inspiration.

Future Plans

After seeing how impactful this project was, we wish to continue to establish a sustainable supply chain for reusable pads by partnering with manufacturers and training refugee women to produce them. This will ensure a continuous and affordable supply for the community. We also wish to expand our educational programs beyond the schools to reach a broader audience, including women and girls in the entire settlement.

Conclusions:

The Pads to Keep Them in School has made a significant impact on the lives of female refugees in the Kiryandongo refugee settlement. By addressing period poverty and providing education on menstrual hygiene, this project has empowered girls to pursue their education and improved overall well-being. The environmental benefits of reusable pads are contributing to a sustainable future.

As a project leader, I am very grateful to the Go Make a Difference Project for their support, which allowed us to make a positive change in our community. This project brings the spirit of social justice, empowerment, and sustainability and it has raised the voices of refugee girls in Kiryandongo, ensuring they have a brighter future.

Project Team Members

Puri Rebecca Goyo(Project leader)

James Achuli (Assistant project leader)

Nyeki Martin

Gworong Jacobs

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the donors for their support and look forward to continued efforts to make a difference in the lives of refugees.

Puri Goyo

Project Leader,” Pads to keep them in school”

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1exBFg8z_BVHDnI5d-jma56GF1LddA1I2?usp=drive_link