



Kenya



I-Care Pads

Afri-Can Foundation 

I-Care produces high-quality, washable sanitary pads, and provides healthy menstrual hygiene training and financial literacy that inspire confidence and equip vulnerable girls and women. In schools, I-Care also establishes health and saving clubs.

Launched in 2012, Not-for-profit , Menstrual Hygiene Management , Policy & Governance , Cross-sector , Cross-sector: Education , Women's Empowerment , East Africa: Kenya

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Problem Addressed

Millions of girls in Kenya miss 3-5 days of school every month during their periods. Lack of financial resources to afford sanitary towels causes them to stay at home. Most of these girls are forced to use unhygienic materials such as old clothes, and in some cases cow dung! These materials often cause leaking and girls stain their clothes in school. This causes embarrassment. To avoid these terrible situations girls rather stay at home every month and eventually fall behind in school.

In many areas in Kenya girls and women also have to cope with horrible stigmas and taboos, which exclude them from being a part of the community. Women are not allowed to touch animals or have to stay in a separate house during their menses. Confidence enables us to live abundantly and happily, but so many females are denied this opportunity simply because they lack the means and knowledge for healthy menstrual hygiene.

Innovative Approach

Afri-Can Foundation's I-Care program is innovative in its following aspects:

- 1. Product:** I-Care produces high quality, comfortable and washable sanitary pads which can be used up to 1 year. The pads have been developed in collaboration with Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI) who carried out a feasibility study, research on the product development and assessment of its impact to the girls and women.
- 2. I-Care Clubs:** Through the clubs, girls have the opportunity to gather, share and discuss the issues affecting them. For the clubs some tools and materials have been developed which includes 'The Red Visitors' booklet. In this booklet a story line has been developed, including colourful graphics, where girls talk about the challenges they are facing. Taboos and common practises are being played in a SKIT, and the fun factor is an important component of this program. Through the Club, girls and boys are also able to save money through a savings scheme model. The curriculum used in the savings scheme model contains both social and financial themes. Pupils get to learn about themselves, children's rights, how to save, basic financial concepts, and enterprise development.
- 3. Inclusive Education:** Boys are included in MHM education programs, in order to more effectively break through the taboos that exist around the issue.

Program Solution

I-Care produces high quality, affordable, and reusable sanitary pads and provides practical life enhancement training that enables young women and girls to live freely and take charge of their lives. Through the program, myths and taboos surrounding menstruation are demystified. Boys are partly included as well to allow for a more open dialogue and a better understanding among the whole community.