



PADS 4 HER

Children's hope charity organization
Masaka, Uganda

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Introduction

The Sanitary Pad Pilot Project was an initiative that was developed and implemented by children's charity organization based in Uganda.

The Project was carried out in Masaka district, targeting young girls in upper primary and secondary schools and local communities.

This project was made possible with the financial support from the fundraising campaign initiated among friends and well-wishers of the organization with the aim of providing girls with re-usable sanitary pads as well as a training session on menstrual hygiene management. We were able to raise \$2500 (approx. 9,219,790 UGX) to enable the project be implemented. With the money raised, we were able to do a survey then reusable pads and cotton knickers were bought and given to the girls, those still in school and dropouts. The project was undertaken in November and December 2022 and an assessment survey to determine its impact was carried out in January 2023. In addition to these activities, the funds collected were put towards the administration of questionnaires among the project beneficiaries at the pre-project and post-project stages.

Background

Women and girls in rural settings and in particular girls in schools suffer most from stigma and lack of services and facilities to help them cope with the physical and psychological pains they undergo during their menstrual periods. Some of the problems they face are: inadequate preparations for young girls not yet experiencing menstrual hygiene, lack of or inadequate water to clean and wash the body, lack of materials for managing menstrual hygiene, no private space and wash rooms and inappropriate facilities for disposal of materials for those who have used pads. This has devastated girls affecting their health, education and wellbeing. In spite of these issues, menstrual hygiene has been routinely ignored by professionals in the health and education sectors.

Therefore, children's hope charity organization hopes for girls to be able to keep their dignity during menstruation with safe, healthy and sustainable menstrual hygiene materials.

Study and analysis

At the beginning of this project keeping in mind the project goals and objectives we did a survey to make sure we were reaching out to the right beneficiaries.

Figure one demonstrates the children's class distribution. Given that the target population of the intervention was children who had begun having periods. Indeed, the majority of supported girls are between the ages of 12 and 16, as depicted in figure 1 below.

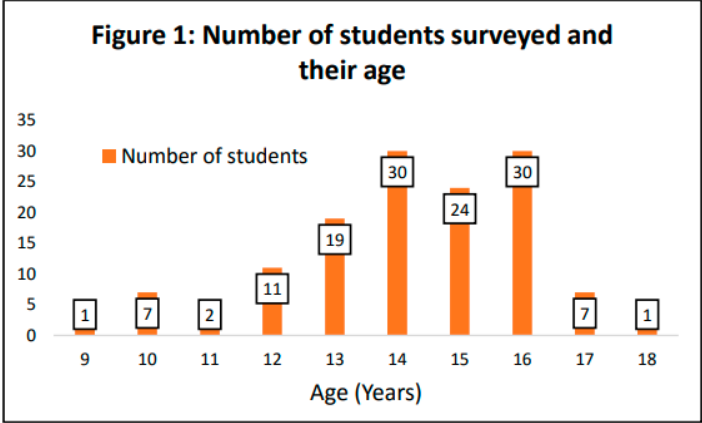


Figure 2 displays the reported age at which the supported girls began having menstrual periods. 72% of girls said they started having periods between the ages of 12 and 14. However, approximately 10% of girls started when they were younger than 12 years old, and approximately 15% started when they were between the ages of 15 and 16.

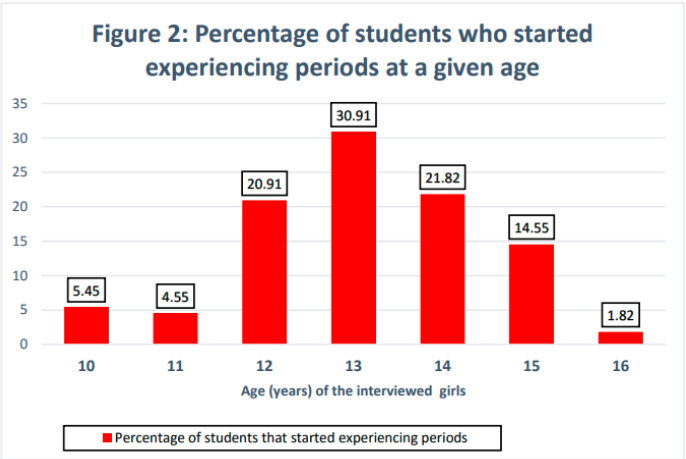
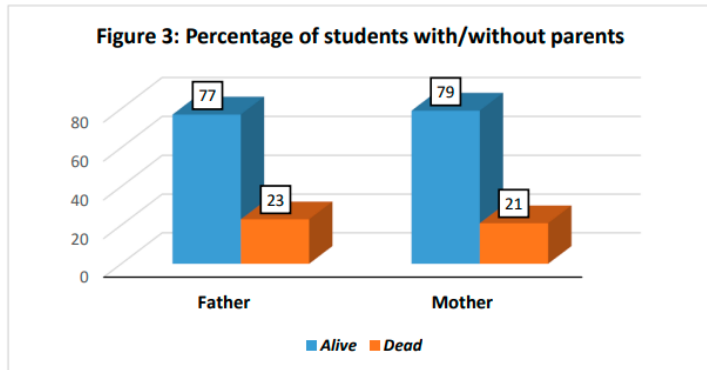
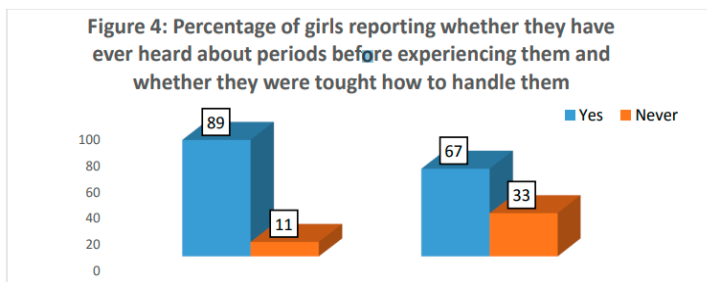


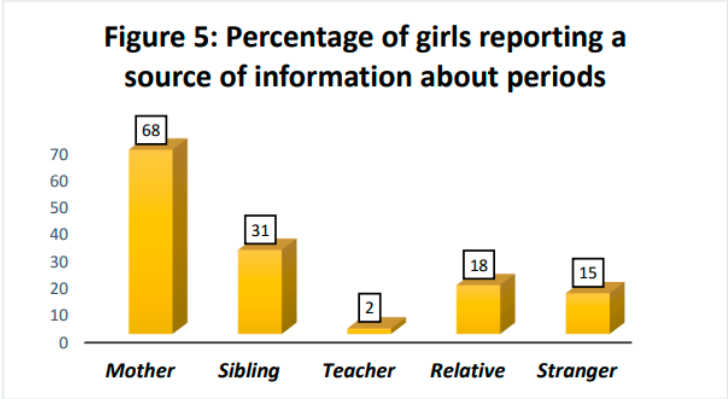
Figure 3 demonstrates that a sizeable portion of children do not have a father or mother. For instance, 21% of the girls supported reported that their mothers and 33% reported that their fathers had passed away.



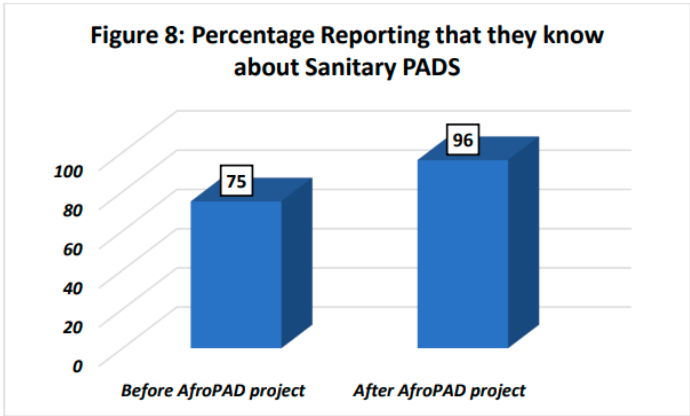
The study collected data on sex education and the preparation of girls for menstruation. For instance, the results on whether the children had been taught about periods and how to handle them prior to experiencing them are shown in figure 4. The majority of girls (89 percent) reported having heard about periods, but only a few had been taught how to deal with them. About 33% of the girls said they had not received any guidance on how to deal with their periods before they started having them.



The majority of the supported girls reported receiving information about their periods from their mothers and siblings, with only 2% reporting receiving it from their teachers (see Figure5).

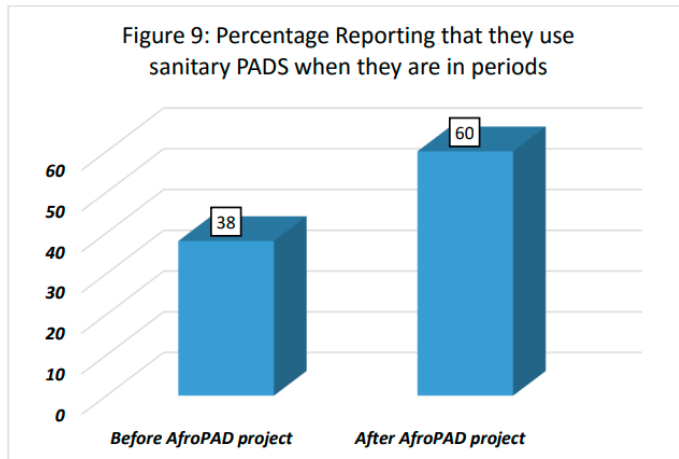


The study found out whether the girls were aware of sanitary pads. Both prior to and following the intervention, this data was gathered. 75% of the supported girls were aware of sanitary pads prior to intervention, while 25% stated that they were unaware. However, awareness of sanitary pads increased following the intervention. In the follow-up survey, 96% of the girls interviewed said they were aware of sanitary napkins (see Figure 8).

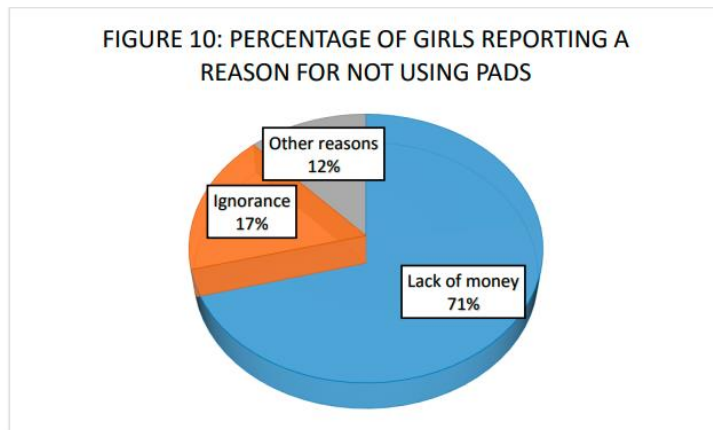


The study gathered data on the use of sanitary pads during periods in addition to knowledge of sanitary pads. Figure 9 shows that while 38% of girls reported using sanitary pads during their menstrual periods prior to the intervention, 60%

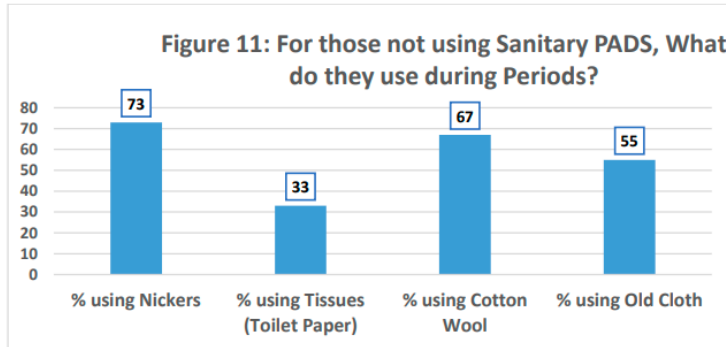
of girls reported using them afterward. Based on these results, it appears that the intervention increased utilization rates by 22 percentage points.



The majority of girls (71%) stated that they did not have the financial resources to purchase sanitary pads when asked why they did not use them. Other girls (17%) said they didn't know much about sanitary pads, and the remaining girls said they didn't care because they thought there were other options that worked as well as sanitary pads.



What girls who do not use sanitary pads use is shown in Figure 11. The majority of the girls who do not use sanitary napkins stated that, in that order, they use nickers, cotton wool, old cloth, and toilet paper. The means pose a risk due to their lack of cleanliness, which may result in additional infections.



Learning about menstruation and distribution of sanitary kits.



After creating a connection without target community, the next step was creating awareness about menstruation. Menstruation as a subject has been an issue of taboo and cultural silence. This has created a very poor understanding among the women, worldwide and further to this, women are not able to pass on the correct education to these young adolescent girls. Thereby creating a sense of shyness, embarrassment and hesitation towards the subject. Therefore, it was essential to mobilize young women who have expertise issues of menstrual hygiene management to teach small groups of young girls. Majority of the women were unaware why menstruation happens every month and from where the menstrual blood is coming. Moreover, the knowledge on usage and

disposal of sanitary products was not correct. Hence the sessions were able to create biological understanding of menstruation. With a final discussion on menstruation the trainers moved on to the diverse menstrual products available in the markets for menstrual management. In the Ugandan context, as sanitary pads and washable cloth are the most common form of sanitary products available. The trainers further taught participants the, disposal methods and the pros and cons of the products. After these sessions we were able to distribute



Project impact

During the initial intervention the study and the training sessions highlighted that menstruation was a close issue for our communities. people prefer not talking about the issue in their daily lives and lacked any formal knowledge which they can share to their daughters. Mothers continued to be the main source of information who themselves were unequipped to share what actually menstruation was in reality and some adolescent girls don't have the privilege of

having mothers. Almost all the girls said that they were unprepared for their first menarche and cried when they saw the change their bodies were going through. Also, during knowledge exercises many of the girls felt shy and ashamed to even name their body parts.

We now believe that adolescent girls and young women that were part of our project are:

- i. Well aware about menstruation and how to handle it.
- ii. Well prepared for when they under go through that period
- iii. Self-confident

Conclusion

With regard to the impact of the intervention, the results indicate an improvement in the use of sanitary Pads, knowledge about menstrual periods. The activity was a success that we were able to donate sanitary pads to 500 girls in masaka district, we do acknowledge that simple interventions like these do greatly impact livelihoods.

We thank all the donors that have contributed to this cause for your generosity and continue to ask for more support to further our goal of ensuring good menstrual hygiene management, mental health, retention of girls in school and many more of our projects.