



PROBLEM STATEMENT

85% of adolescent girls interviewed by PACT Zambia confirmed that they miss school during their period, and according to the UN office in Zambia, only 19% of girls pass their final exams in secondary school. The high dropout rate for girls has several possible explanations, however, monthly menstruation acts as a compounding factor. Inadequate access to menstrual hygiene products (e.g. sanitary towels) is a debilitating monthly concern, and girls and young women often resort to using rags or even newspaper, leaving them vulnerable to leakages and vaginal infections. Repeated absences from school leads to low educational attainment and school dropout.

OUR SOLUTION

The Kozo Girls initiative addresses the challenge of menstrual-related absenteeism by offering cost-effective, re-usable sanitary pads. All end users, whether school-age or not, will save money over time by using reusable products, and receive information on menstrual hygiene management through the instructional insert. The initiative also offers employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for adolescent girls ('Kozo Girls,') who will be equipped with marketable skills to make washable, reusable sanitary pads. Pads will be sold by Kozo Girls in their communities, and through retail outlets across Zambia. Customers without the need to buy pads for themselves can also gift the product to vulnerable adolescent girls through official channels.



PROGRESS

To date, PACT has trained 42 Kozo Girls aged between 17-24 to make the reusable pads, equipping them with basic business skills to sell pads at a local level. To date, Over 1,000 Kozo Pads have been sold, and of the 28 Kozo Girls interviewed in March 2018, 100% reported that they still use the Kozo Pads received during their training. Those interviewed cited 'comfortable' and 'cost effective' as the most common reasons for liking the product, and 25 of the 28 Kozo Girls interviewed think that they've saved money. 100% of those interviewed would be interested in working in a factory-like setting to mass produce pads.

LOOKING FORWARD

The expansion of the program has the potential reach over 100,000 adolescent girls and young women in 2018 alone, and PACT is positioned to scale this highly replicable model in Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, and Tanzania. PACT plans to launch Kozo's own marketplace, and to expand their product line and reach an international audience. Through this platform, Kozo will also be able to fulfill procurements from other organizations looking to distribute their products. Kozo has already received inquiries from other African and European INGOs, requesting as many as 20,000 Kozo Pads. Their market research also suggests the bulk distribution could be highly scalable through a variety of government channels including women's prisons, schools, orphanages, hospitals, and refugee camps.

¹ http://zm.one.un.org/mdg_status_zambia