



Case Study

Community Chest



WINGS
WORLDWIDE INITIATIVES
FOR GRANTMAKER SUPPORT



FOUNDATION
CENTER
Knowledge to build on.



COMMUNITY
CHEST
Inspiring a Nation
of Active Citizens

Global Philanthropy Data Charter Case Study

Community Chest

Background:

The highly emotive gender issue relating to the negative effects on the education of the girl child due to menstruation has captured the attention of the world. In an environment where gender discrimination against women is still rife, the additional burden of menses impacting negatively on school attendance for girls, merits serious attention. However, whilst there is no doubt this is an issue of concern, many urban legends abound about the exact size and scope of the problem. It has sprouted many highly visible media campaigns from climbing the highest peaks, to plumbing the proverbial depths of the deepest oceans and running the length of the Great Wall of China, for the cause.

What are the facts?

In August 2016, AfricaCheck (www.africacheck.org) conducted an investigation and published a report on the question:

Do 7 million SA girls miss school every month due to the lack of sanitary pads?

The investigation was precipitated by the protest action at the 2016 International Aids Conference where the SA Minister of Health, **Aaron Motsoaledi** was heckled on behalf of the “7 million girls” who miss school every month because they don’t have money to buy sanitary pads. The report also makes reference to activist Ntombi Zodwa Maphosa’s statement to Conference that girls miss out on 25% of learning during a school year. It goes on further to state that the “7 million” claim had been circulating since 2014, when two cyclists were interviewed by News 24 as they were embarking on an arduous cycle tour on behalf of Subz, an organisation raising funds to provide re-usable sanitary towels for the “millions” of SA school girls who don’t have access to sanitary pads.

In attempting to ascertain the data source for the figure, Africa Check was told that the figure was deduced from the 2011 census report produced by Statistics South Africa. The census report showed that there were 9 million girls in SA between the ages of 10 and 19. Seven million of them fell in the lower living standards measure (LSM) brackets. However this statistic was shown to be incorrect and the 2015 census put the figure at just over 5.1 million of girls in this age bracket and further mining of the recorded data shows that in terms of the deductive reasoning of Subz, potentially 3 770.514 girls are not able to afford sanitary pads. While the figure remains concerning, it does negate the “7 million” claim.

Furthermore, in the year that these claims were made it showed that there were 6.3 million girls registered in schools from pre-grade R to grade 12. Of this number, 1 568 369 were in grades pre-R, Grade R, 1 and 2. This means that they were not likely to be menstruating.

So while the “7 million” number has been negated, the question still remains: **“How many girls miss school because of their inability to source sanitary pads?”** From the Africa Check report it is apparent that there are few reliable research reports that give clear insight into the size and scope of the problem so that appropriate and effective solutions can be found.

Community Chest Sanitary Towel Survey

In 2015, Community Chest in partnership with Johnson & Johnson as supplier of the product, conducted a sanitary towel campaign in a number of schools in Cape Town. The key features of the campaign were:

- provision free dignity packs of sanitary towels and sexuality education material to all girls in the target schools
- workshops of sexuality education for girls and boys at schools
- a questionnaire for girls to complete that probed patterns on absenteeism due to menstruation and other sexual education and feminine health issues

10 High Schools participated in the survey.

| Name of School | No of Respondents | ‰ |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|------|
| 1. Lentegeur High | 547 | 24.3 |
| 2. Wynberg High | 416 | 18.4 |
| 3. Rosendal High | 319 | 14.1 |
| 4. Elsewood High | 263 | 11.7 |
| 5. Thembelihle High | 195 | 8.6 |
| 6. Sizimisele High | 191 | 8.5 |
| 7. Strandfontein High | 185 | 8.2 |
| 8. Tafelsig High | 72 | 3.2 |
| 9. Matthew Goniwe High | 65 | 2.9 |
| 10. Inthlanganiso | 2 | 0.1 |
| Total Number of Respondents | 2257 | |

The attached data-chart shows the results of the survey.

Additional notes:

The issue of access to sanitary pads for girls at school is a highly sensitive and emotive issue as it adds a further burden to the school going girl child and success at school. Girls are expected to do chores and family care tasks at home, that boys are not expected to do. So missing school due to a lack of sanitary pads does have an additional negative influence in the education of girls.

Quality information is required to ensure that the prevalence and geographic scope of the problem needs to be established so that the myriad of solutions that are being applied in a “spray and pray” way can be directed to where the problem is, in a way that respects the dignity of the girls in need of the support for the duration of the time that they require it.

The Community Chest survey highlights some other issues that girls encounter with regards to feminine health like poor sanitation at schools and the extreme discomfort that some girls experience with pelvic cramps during menses that may be indicative of other health issues or the lack of adequate sexuality education that makes girls unprepared for the onset of menstruation.

Recommendations:

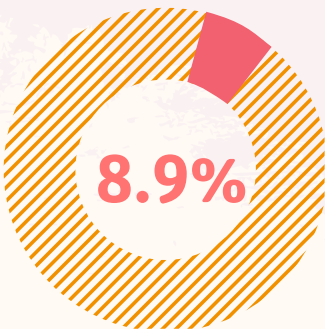
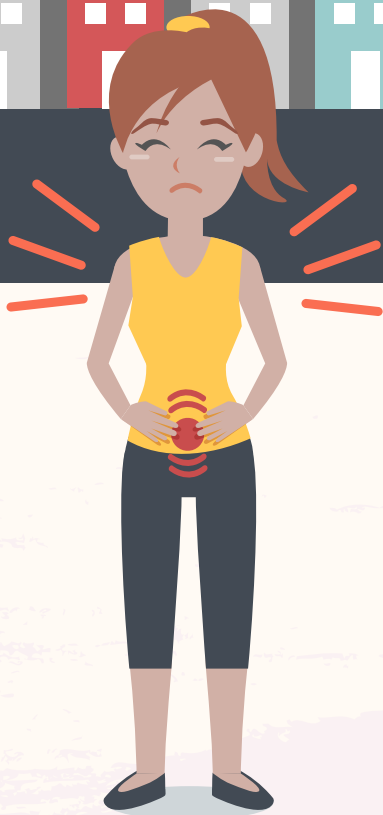
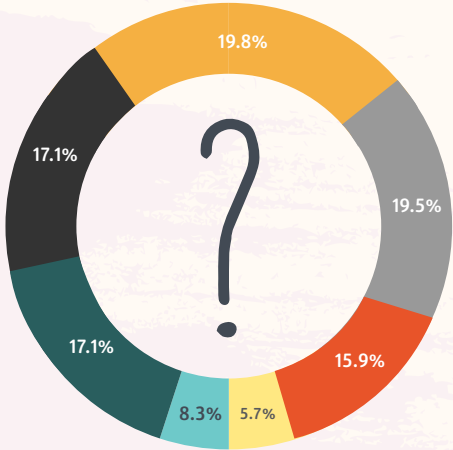
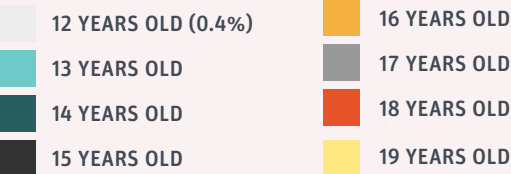
- As there are so many fundraising campaigns for this issue it is important that there is collaboration of the efforts so that the funding makes a meaningful impact on the issue and funds are not miss-directed
- An audit should be conducted should to map the current scope and reach campaigns to distribute free sanitary towels to determine where the gaps are
- Further extensive research needs to be done so that there is reliable information regarding the size and scope of the problem that can be used to ensure that all school girls who do not have access to sanitary wear are accommodated in the supply chain
- Alternative, more cost- effect, but safe methods should be offered to girls
- Solutions should not be one-off hit and miss in nature, but should be sustained through the school life of affected girls

CAPE FLATS SCHOOLS

sanitary towel survey

In 2015, The Community Chest of the Western Cape conducted a survey amongst 10 Cape Flats schools to investigate patterns of absenteeism due to menstruation and other sexual education and feminine health issues.

HOW OLD ARE YOU?



DO NOT HAVE PADS

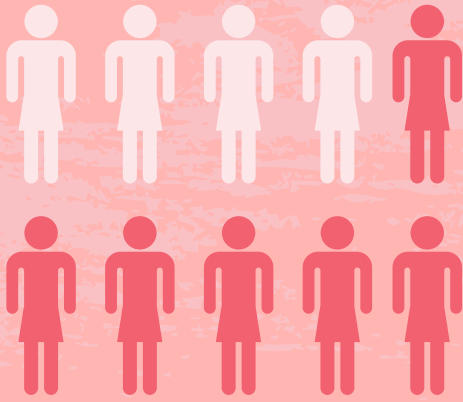


88.6% OF RESPONDENTS DO NOT STAY OUT OF SCHOOL WHEN THEY HAVE THEIR PERIOD.

THERE WERE A TOTAL OF **2257** RESPONDENTS. ALL RESPONDENTS WERE **BETWEEN THE AGES OF 12 AND 19**



WHAT REASONS MAKE IT HARD FOR YOU TO COME TO SCHOOL WHILE ON YOUR PERIOD?



43.7% STAY HOME BECAUSE OF BAD PERIOD CRAMPS

29.2% STAY AT HOME BECAUSE THEY DO NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE AT SCHOOL WHILE ON THEIR PERIOD



17.4% UNCOMFORTABLE USING THE SCHOOL TOILETS



75.9% of respondents felt it was not okay to stay away from school while on their periods.



51% of respondents said that their school did not provide them with pads.

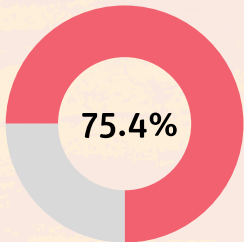


Only **16.6 %** of respondents **struggled to get access** to pads at home.

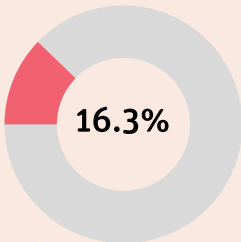


39.7% off all respondents said that they could not afford pads.

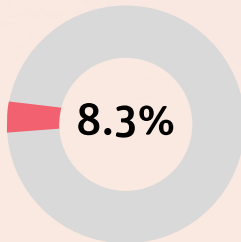
HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU SPEND ON PADS A MONTH



Spent R0-R40



Spent R40-R80



Spent R80-R100



73.2% SAID THAT THEIR MOM WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO TALK TO THEM ABOUT THEIR PERIOD.

*The schools participating in this survey all fall under the Cape Flats community. The schools include: