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ActionAid UK explains

Period poverty

Who are we?

ActionAid is an international charity that works with women and girls living in poverty. Our dedicated local staff are changing the world with women and girls. We are ending violence and fighting poverty so that all women, everywhere, can create the future they want.

We work in 45 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. In each country, we have dedicated staff members and local partner organisations, like Agnes and her team at the Network of Communities in Development in Ghana (pictured right), who support women and girls as they claim their rights and help lead their communities out of poverty.

What do we do?

ActionAid puts the rights of women and girls at the heart of all we do because we know the denial of these rights is one of the biggest causes of poverty worldwide, and a grave injustice.

Our three main areas of work are promoting women's economic empowerment, prioritising women's rights and leadership during humanitarian emergencies and ending violence against women and girls.



How are we tackling period poverty?

Periods are a natural process and a part of nearly every girl's life. But without access to toilets or sanitary products at school, many girls are missing out on their education as they have little choice but to stay at home for a few days each month.



1 in 10 girls in Africa misses school because she doesn't have access to sanitary products, or because there aren't safe, private toilets for her to use.

Thanks to the work of our partner organisations and supporters, we are ensuring no woman or girl is held back because of her period. For example, in Nepal, we have been working to end period shaming practices like 'chhaupadi'. Elsewhere, in Somaliland, we have been distributing sanitary products in displacement camps.

We recognise that access to sanitary products is not a 'nice-to-have.' That's why we work with women and girls, community leaders, men and boys, schools and governments to help end period poverty around the world.

- We train women and girls to make reusable sanitary pads, so they always have access to affordable products.
- In our girls' clubs and safe spaces in schools, we provide information about periods, sex and pregnancy so girls are better informed about their bodies.
- During humanitarian emergencies, we provide hygiene kits containing sanitary towels, soap and clean underwear to support women and girls in managing their periods.
- We're working with local communities to end the practice of chhaupadi, a period-shaming tradition in Nepal.

But there is still so much more to be done to end period poverty around the world.

Ending period poverty in Uganda

Charity (pictured right) lives in the Imvepi refugee settlement in Uganda. She is currently in primary school, but when she gets her period, Charity often has to stay home because she doesn't have access to sanitary pads.

It's an issue that a lot of women and girls face in the settlement and often means they have to miss out on crucial things, like getting an education.

ActionAid Uganda has been working at the settlement since 2018 and teamed up with the Community Transformation Agenda (COTA), set up by Juliet Tumwesigye (pictured on the front cover). Together, we have been distributing reusable pads and conducting workshops, supporting women and girls to manage their periods safely and with dignity.

Charity now has access to reusable sanitary pads every month, which means she can go to school, get an education and build a secure future. After attending the workshops, Charity also says she is more confident about managing her period.

However, there is still work to be done. For example, at the school Charity attends, the toilet facilities are not great. That's why we must continue our work ending period poverty in Uganda and across the world.



Stand with women and girls

Women and girls across the world are standing up for their rights and working to end period poverty. You can join them.

Here are some ways you can contribute to a world where everyone is able to handle their periods safely and with dignity:



£3

could provide hygiene kits containing soap, clean underwear and sanitary pads



£10

could help build safe, clean toilets in schools so girls can manage their periods in privacy



£15

could go towards educating girls – and boys – in menstrual hygiene and reproductive health



£26

could provide a pack of five reusable sanitary pads for 10 girls to help them manage their periods



£45

could help build lockable toilets in schools to give girls the privacy they need during their periods



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Get in touch

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