

1. Project Title: Dignity & Education for 2,000 Girls: Menstrual Health in Ethiopia-Amhara Region

2. Vanity URL: dignity-and-education-ethiopia-girls

3. Themes

- **Primary Theme:** Gender Equality
- **Secondary Themes:** Education, Reproductive Health, Physical Health, Child Protection

4. Project Summary

This project will provide 2,000 vulnerable schoolgirls in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, with comprehensive menstrual health support—eliminating the monthly barrier that forces them to miss school. We will distribute high-quality reusable menstrual kits (pads, underwear, soap, carrying pouch), conduct health education workshops reaching all 2,000 girls, train 40 female teachers as menstrual health mentors, and establish sustainable resupply systems through Parent-Teacher Associations. This integrated approach ensures immediate relief and long-term systems change, keeping girls in school and on track to complete their education with dignity.

5. Requested Funding Amount \$30,000 USD

6. Donation Options

- **\$25** – Provides one month of menstrual health support for a girl, including a portion of her reusable kit and access to health education workshops.
- **\$50** – Provides complete menstrual kits for two girls—each containing 6 reusable pads, underwear, soap, and a carrying pouch.

- **\$75** – Provides three girls with full menstrual kits AND ensures they participate in comprehensive health education workshops.
- **\$100** – Supports an entire classroom of 30 girls with complete kits and access to a trained teacher-mentor.
- **\$250** – Trains one female teacher as a certified Menstrual Health Mentor, supporting over 200 girls across multiple years.
- **\$500** – Establishes a fully functional resupply system in one school, managed by the Parent-Teacher Association, creating permanent change.
- **\$1,000** – Transforms an entire school (200+ girls) with full kits, workshops, teacher training, and PTA-managed sustainability system.
- **\$5,000** – Provides seed funding for program expansion, including monitoring and evaluation, training materials, and advocacy.

7. What is the issue, problem, or challenge?

In Ethiopia, over 50% of girls miss 1–5 days of school per month because they cannot afford menstrual supplies. This means losing up to 20% of the academic year—every year. A pack of disposable pads costs 50–70 Ethiopian Birr (\$0.90–\$1.30), an impossible expense for families already struggling to afford food. With 68% of the population living below the poverty line, menstrual supplies are an unaffordable luxury.

Deeply rooted cultural taboos surround menstruation. Girls have no access to accurate information about their own bodies. Many schools lack private, safe spaces for girls to change. Without proper supplies, girls resort to rags, leaves, or mattress stuffing—causing infections, rashes, and reproductive health complications.

The result? Girls fall behind academically, lose confidence, and eventually drop out entirely. Early dropout leads to child marriage—Ethiopia has one of the highest rates in the world—adolescent pregnancy, and entrenched poverty. The cycle continues for another generation.

In Bahir Dar's public schools, the problem is acute. The girls we serve come from families displaced by conflict, headed by widows, or scraping by on less than \$2 per day. For them, a

sanitary pad is not just a hygiene product—it is the key to their education, their future, and their right to participate fully in society.

8. How will this solve the problem?

Component 1: Direct Distribution of Quality Menstrual Kits (2,000 Girls)

Each girl receives a complete menstrual kit containing 6 high-quality reusable pads (sourced from local women's cooperatives, lasting 12–18 months), 2 pairs of underwear, 2 bars of gentle soap, a waterproof carrying pouch, and illustrated instructions in Amharic. By sourcing from local women's cooperatives, we simultaneously support women's economic empowerment.

Component 2: Comprehensive Menstrual Health Education (12 Schools)

We conduct 12 interactive workshops reaching all 2,000 girls. Topics include the biology of menstruation, proper hygiene practices, how to use and care for reusable pads, breaking stigma, and confidence-building. Workshops are led by trained female facilitators using participatory methods—games, stories, and open discussion.

Component 3: Training Female Teachers as Menstrual Health Mentors (40 Teachers)

We train 40 female teachers (3–4 per school) to serve as ongoing resources for girls. Training covers accurate menstrual health information, counseling skills, creating girl-friendly classrooms, and addressing stigma. These teachers become permanent assets in their schools.

Component 4: Sustainable Resupply Systems through Parent-Teacher Associations

Working with 12 Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), we establish small, school-based revolving funds. PTAs manage inventory of replacement pads, collect modest contributions from families who can afford them, and use proceeds to replenish supplies—ensuring no girl is ever turned away for inability to pay.

Component 5: WASH Integration and Advocacy

In coordination with our existing Clean Water & Safe Toilets for Schools parent project, we advocate for improved sanitation facilities and ensure girls have access to private spaces for changing.

Implementation Timeline (12 Months): Months 1–2: Procurement and community sensitization. Months 2–3: Train 40 teachers. Months 3–6: Distribute 2,000 kits and conduct 12 workshops. Months 4–9: Teachers begin mentorship; establish PTA systems. Months 6–12: Monitoring and follow-up. Month 12: Final impact assessment and reporting.

9. Potential Long-Term Impact

For Individual Girls: When girls stop missing school each month, attendance improves by 15–20%. Regular attendance leads to better grades, higher promotion rates, and increased likelihood of completing secondary school. Each additional year of schooling increases future income by 10–20%. Girls who understand their bodies have lower rates of reproductive tract infections and better overall health outcomes. Through workshops and mentorship, girls develop confidence, leadership skills, and agency.

For Families: Educated girls marry later, have fewer children, and invest more in their own children's education and health. A girl who completes secondary school is 6 times less likely to marry as a child. By preventing infections, families avoid medical costs that push them deeper into poverty.

For Schools and Communities: Trained teachers and active PTAs create schools where girls feel supported, safe, and valued. Open conversations about menstruation erode harmful taboos. Fathers, brothers, and community members begin to understand that menstruation is normal and that supporting girls is everyone's responsibility. By sourcing kits from local women's cooperatives, we create income-generating opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

For the Nation: This project contributes directly to national development priorities: universal primary education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), and good health and well-being (SDG 3).

Every girl who stays in school is a girl who can become a teacher, a nurse, an entrepreneur, a community leader—a driver of Ethiopia's progress.

Measurable Outcomes We Will Track:

- 85% of girls report regular school attendance during menstruation (from 45% baseline)
- 90% of girls demonstrate accurate knowledge of menstrual health (from 30% baseline)
- 12 schools with active girl-support systems (trained teachers, PTA supplies)
- 15% increase in girls progressing to next grade level
- 70% of community members report positive attitudes toward menstruation