



The PaddedGirls Project

Empowering Rural Women through Sustainable Menstrual Hygiene Management

FUNDED BY

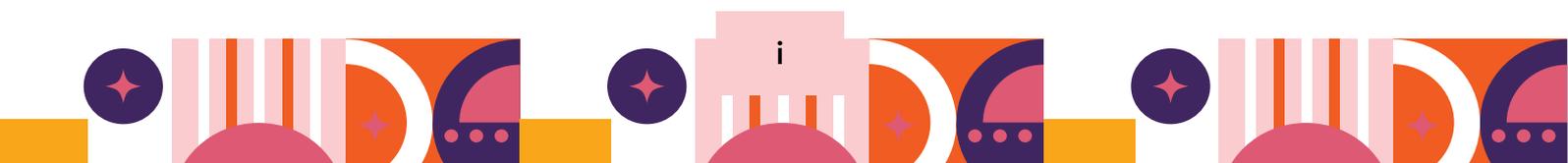


IMPLEMENTED BY



Project Information

Country	Nigeria
Partner	Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI)
Project	Padded Girl's project
Project Reference Number	
Total no. of beneficiaries/ areas assisted through this contribution from US	423
Grant Duration	6 months
Project Location(s)	8 communities across 3 LGAs



About **BBYDI**

At Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI), we are driven by our passion and commitment to achieving women's education and empowerment, good governance, promoting civic engagement and peaceful political participation, youth entrepreneurship, advancing civic liberties and championing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Founded in 2014, BBYDI started as a student initiative on the campus of the University of Ilorin. Over the years, we have built a reputation as an NGO at the forefront of demanding the formulation of youth-oriented policies through a series of advocacies and partnerships with other civil societies. Our methodology is to use data-driven analyses to seek transparency and accountability from the government. Our diverse projects have directly engaged individuals and communities, fostering environmental stewardship, economic empowerment, and knowledge enhancement.

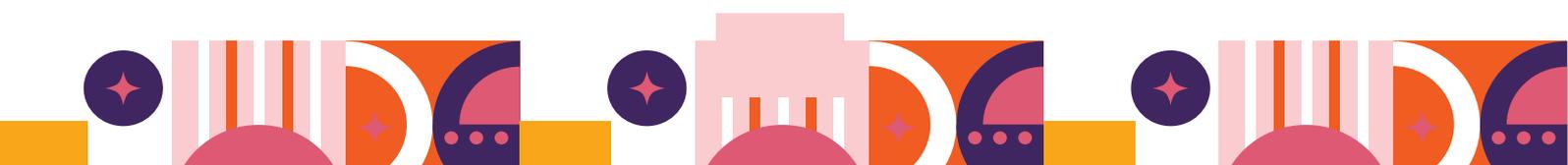
Through our innovative programs, we have reached out to over 2 million Nigerians both online and offline. Our engagements have focused on the implementation of SDGs, the provision of quality education, empowering local communities and building an enabling environment for entrepreneurship to thrive. In 2019, we launched an initiative called "Localizing the SDGs" which is targeted at getting the SDGs to the local communities and accelerating the implementation of the goals through grassroots interactions and empowerment. We appointed Ambassadors in various regions of all 36 states in Nigeria and trained youths on how to support the Global Goals by providing them with some tools and resources including translation of the SDGs into various local and global languages transmitted across different media. Over the past years, BBYDI's initiatives have made a significant impact, reaching over 500,000 individuals directly and over 2 million indirectly across various age groups and backgrounds in several communities spanning all 36 states in Nigeria.

We have collaborated with esteemed partners and sponsors such as Box, Force of Nature, LEAP Africa, Nigeria Youth Futures Fund, Global Campaign for Education, International Fact-Checking Network, and US Global Engagement Centre and Becera, whose support has been instrumental in amplifying the impact of our endeavours. As we continue to evolve and expand our reach, BBYDI remains committed to empowering communities, women and youths, driving sustainable development and building a brighter future for all.



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Contextual Background

**500
million**

Number
of women
who lack
access to
menstrual
products

Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) is globally essential to the well-being and empowerment of women and adolescent girls. According to the World Bank data, more than 300 million women worldwide are menstruating daily. However, in total, an estimated 500 million lack access to menstrual products and adequate facilities for menstrual hygiene management. This lack of access is most acute in rural areas, where many females are deprived of hygienic menstrual materials due to insufficient education, enlightenment, and low purchasing power.

According to the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme 2012, menstrual hygiene management is defined as: "Women and adolescent girls are using a clean menstrual management material to absorb or collect menstrual blood, that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary, using soap and water for washing the body as required and having access to safe and convenient facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials. They understand the basic facts linked to the menstrual cycle and how to manage it with dignity and without discomfort or fear."

The challenges that menstruating girls and women face encompass more than a basic lack of supplies or infrastructure. While menstruation is a normal and healthy part of life for most women and girls, in many societies, the experience of menstruators continues to be constrained by cultural taboos and discriminatory social norms. The resulting lack of information about menstruation leads to unhygienic and unhealthy menstrual practices and creates misconceptions and negative attitudes, which motivate, among others, shaming, bullying, and even gender-based violence. For generations of girls and women, poor menstrual health and hygiene is exacerbating social and economic inequalities, negatively impacting their education, health, safety, and human development. Thousands of women and girls in rural communities are combating period poverty—the inability

to access safe and hygienic menstrual products to effectively manage their periods. This situation has far-reaching consequences: young girls miss valuable days of school due to poor menstrual management, and women, mainly stay-at-home mothers and farmers, experience reduced productivity. This knowledge and finding led to the inception of the Padded Girls project.

The Padded Girls Project targeted key communities in three Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Kwara State with the sole aim of empowering residents through sensitization on menstrual and personal hygiene and the production and use of reusable sanitary pads. The communities selected for this project were core rural areas with limited or no exposure to modern sanitation practices and menstrual hygiene education.

A pre-project survey conducted in these communities revealed alarming findings: a large percentage of women and girls did not practice personal hygiene during their periods, often resorting to using various unhygienic materials, which exposed them to a high risk of vaginal infections and diseases. This critical gap in menstrual health management underscored the urgent need for intervention.

The Padded Girls project was designed to address this pressing issue by providing comprehensive education on menstrual hygiene management and training on how to produce reusable sanitary pads. By focusing on these core rural communities, the project aimed to instil a sense of empowerment and self-sufficiency among women and girls, enabling them to manage their menstrual health effectively and safely.

The Padded Girls project not only addressed a significant public health issue but also aimed to improve the overall quality of life for women and girls in these rural areas. By promoting menstrual hygiene and providing practical solutions, the project contributed to breaking the cycle of period poverty and fostering a healthier, more productive community.

Overview of Intervention

The Padded Girl's project aimed to educate and sensitize 400 selected women and girls in 8 communities on menstrual hygiene management. It included training them on how to make reusable sanitary pads using locally sourced materials that are easily available and accessible. This intervention aimed to drastically reduce the shortage or lack of access to hygienic menstrual materials within rural communities and provide comprehensive education on menstrual hygiene from well-trained medical students. The education covered how to keep the body clean before, during, and after the menstrual cycle, and the health risks associated with poor menstrual hygiene.

The project focused on females of menstrual age, particularly targeting remote rural areas in three Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Kwara State: Moro, Ilorin South, and Asa. It was designed as a high-impact, evidence-based health and empowerment literacy development intervention, leveraging innovation, collaboration, and learning to improve access to hygienic menstrual materials among females in rural areas.

With approximately 300 million females of menstrual age menstruating worldwide, our solution specifically targeted rural communities with limited access to hygienic menstrual materials. The Padded Girl's project responded to a critical deficit in the availability of functional sanitary pads in these areas, aiming to provide a sustainable and empowering solution for menstrual hygiene management.

Our solution oversaw three proven results and success approaches:

1

Self-Assisted Teaching and Income Generation

The project provided hands-on training on how to manually make reusable sanitary pads using locally sourced fabrics with thread and needle. This practical skill not only equipped the participants with a sustainable solution for their menstrual hygiene needs but also offered an opportunity for income generation. By commercializing the sewn sanitary pads, the participants could create a source of livelihood, promoting economic empowerment.

2

Menstrual Health Sensitization

The intervention included comprehensive sensitization on menstrual health, emphasizing the benefits of proper hygiene, the dangers of neglecting menstrual health, and the importance of taking care of the body during the menstrual cycle. By establishing that menstruation is a natural and non-shameful process, the project aimed to break the stigma and educate participants on the importance of menstrual hygiene.

3

Use of Local Dialects for Effective Communication

To enhance understanding and communication among the participants, the project adopted local dialects, primarily Yoruba and Hausa. This approach ensured that the teachings were accessible and comprehensible to the natives of the targeted communities, facilitating a more effective and inclusive learning experience.



400 selected women and girls

The Padded Girls project not only addressed a significant public health issue but also aimed to improve the overall quality of life for women and girls in these rural areas. By promoting menstrual hygiene and providing practical solutions, the project contributed to breaking the cycle of period poverty and fostering a healthier, more productive community.

Project Team

The success of the Padded Girls project is driven by a dedicated team of professionals and volunteers with diverse expertise. The Project Director oversees coordination and resource management, while Community Engagement Officers build trust with local leaders. Health Educators deliver menstrual hygiene training, supported by Professional Fashion Designers who lead hands-on pad-making workshops. Monitoring and Evaluation Officers assess the project's impact and Photographers and Videographers document activities. Local Language Interpreters ensure effective communication, and volunteers provide essential support. The Procurement Team sources materials efficiently. This collective effort ensures comprehensive education, skill development, and a significant impact on menstrual health in target communities.



25

experts,
volunteers &
professionals
were involved



Scale Vision and Scope of **Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative**

The Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) envisions expanding the Padded Girls project to address menstrual health and hygiene challenges across a broader spectrum of communities in Nigeria. Our goal is to replicate the success of the initial intervention in Moro, Ilorin South, and Asa Local Government Areas to other local communities, particularly focusing on the Northern states of Nigeria, where menstrual health issues are most prevalent due to higher levels of poverty, limited access to education, and cultural stigmas surrounding menstruation.

Given the high levels of menstrual health challenges in the Northern states of Nigeria, BBYDI aims to prioritize these regions in our scale-up efforts. The Northern states have some of the highest poverty rates in Nigeria, which limits access to affordable menstrual hygiene products. Cultural and socioeconomic barriers often restrict girls' access to education, exacerbating the lack of knowledge about menstrual hygiene. Strong cultural stigmas and taboos around menstruation in Northern communities hinder open discussions and education on the subject, making our intervention even more critical.

Based on risk statistics and identified needs, the initial states for expansion will possibly include the core northern communities in states like Kano, Katsina, and Borno. Kano, with its high population density and significant poverty levels, presents a critical need for menstrual health interventions. Katsina, facing similar challenges, also has a substantial population of young women and girls in need of menstrual hygiene education and resources. Borno, as a region affected by conflict and displacement, has unique challenges that make menstrual health management even more critical for the well-being of women and girls.

Our long-term vision is to create a sustainable, nationwide network of empowered women and girls who are well-educated on menstrual hygiene management and equipped with the skills to produce and commercialize reusable sanitary pads. We aim to seek short and long-term partnerships to cultivate local leadership and encouraging economic empowerment to build resilient communities where menstrual health is no longer a barrier to education, productivity, or overall well-being. Through strategic partnerships, continuous learning, and adaptive implementation, BBYDI is committed to scaling the Padded Girls project and making a lasting impact on menstrual health and hygiene across Nigeria.



Implementation



The implementation of the Padded Girls project was a comprehensive and structured process that began immediately after the identification of the problem. The project was executed in several distinct stages to ensure its success and maximize its impact.

1. Community Engagement and Selection

The Padded Girls project, launched in November, has made significant strides in its mission to empower and educate women and girls across rural communities in Kwara State. To ensure the success and acceptance of our project, we took a proactive approach to community engagement and participant selection. We embarked on a series of courtesy visits to each of the identified communities that would directly benefit from the project. These visits were not mere formalities but served as opportunities to establish rapport and build relationships with community leaders and members. The project began with advocacy visits to 7 communities, including Elemere, Asomu, Gaa Alaanu, Olooru, Akata Olosun, Shaoo, and Eyenkorin, with Gerewu later included to meet the target of 8 communities

During these visits, we made a concerted effort to explain the project's goals and objectives in a clear and concise manner. We emphasized the positive impact that the project could have on their lives and the community as a whole. We also engaged in open and transparent discussions, addressing any concerns or questions they may have had. Concurrently, we initiated a process of selecting participants for the project. Our goal was to identify individuals within the target age range who would most benefit from the intervention. We employed rigorous selection criteria that considered factors such as socioeconomic status, educational background and demonstrated motivation to participate.

To ensure fairness and transparency in the selection process, we worked closely with community leaders and members. Their insights and knowledge of the community were invaluable in identifying suitable participants. We also organized information sessions and workshops to provide prospective participants with additional information about the project and the selection process. Through this thorough and engaging approach to community engagement and participant selection, we were able to garner the support and trust of the communities involved. This laid a solid foundation for the successful implementation of the project, ensuring that those who participated were genuinely invested in its outcomes.

Implementation

2. Baseline Survey

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the target group's menstrual hygiene practices and challenges, a baseline survey was conducted using a well-designed questionnaire assessment tool. This pre-survey served as a critical step in gathering crucial information that would shape the project's activities and interventions. The questionnaire was meticulously crafted to capture individual experiences, beliefs, and fears related to menstruation. The survey respondents were carefully selected to represent a diverse range of participants from the target group. This ensured that the findings would accurately reflect the menstrual hygiene needs and challenges faced by the entire population. The questionnaire covered various aspects of menstrual hygiene, including:

- **Menstrual hygiene practices:** This section explored the participants' current menstrual hygiene practices, such as the type of menstrual products they used, their frequency of changing menstrual products, and their access to clean water and sanitation facilities during menstruation.
- **Menstrual hygiene challenges:** The participants were asked about the challenges they faced related to menstruation, such as physical discomfort, emotional distress, and social stigma. This information helped us identify the key barriers that needed to be addressed by the project.
- **Menstrual hygiene knowledge:** The survey assessed the participants' knowledge of menstrual hygiene, including their understanding of the menstrual cycle, the importance of menstrual hygiene, and the potential health risks associated with poor menstrual hygiene.
- **Individual experiences and fears:** The questionnaire included open-ended questions that allowed the participants to share their personal experiences

and fears related to menstruation. This qualitative data provided valuable insights into the emotional and psychological impact of menstruation on individuals.

The baseline survey findings were carefully analyzed to identify common themes and patterns. This analysis helped us understand the specific needs of the participants and tailor the project's activities accordingly. The survey findings also served as a benchmark against which we could measure the impact of the project's interventions.

3. Recruitment and Training of Volunteers

We recruited volunteers based on their interest and dedication to community growth and development. Volunteers were selected from different departments to cover essential aspects of the project, ensuring professionalism and expertise. This included health educators, professional fashion designers, monitoring and evaluation officers, photographers, videographers, community engagement officers, and local language interpreters. Volunteers underwent thorough training, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills for the project, particularly the making of reusable sanitary pads.



Implementation

4. Procurement of Materials

As a core component of our project, we procured the necessary materials for training and empowerment. This included 400 pairs of scissors, packs of hand-sewing needles and threads, tracing papers, packs of pencils, packs of office pins, 16 hand-sewing machines, five standard sewing machines, and one industrial machine. These materials were essential for facilitating the practical aspects of the training.

5. Sensitization and Enlightenment Session

The sensitization program, a crucial phase in our initiative, centred around medical students from our team educating participants on menstrual hygiene. Conducted in local languages, primarily Yoruba and Hausa, the program aimed to ensure seamless communication and understanding among the participants. The education covered various aspects, including:

- **Hygiene Maintenance:** Participants were taught how to maintain hygiene before, during, and after their menstrual cycle. This included practices such as handwashing, keeping the menstrual area clean, and changing sanitary pads or tampons regularly.
- **Health Risks:** The program also emphasized the health risks associated with poor menstrual hygiene. Participants learned about potential infections, reproductive health issues, and the correlation between menstrual hygiene and overall well-being.

Approximately 500 females were sensitized and equipped with valuable knowledge during the program. Additionally, they were trained in making reusable sanitary pads. This skill not only empowered them with a practical solution for menstrual hygiene but also provided them with an opportunity for income generation. By producing and commercializing these



reusable pads, participants could become entrepreneurs and contribute to their financial independence. The sensitization program played a vital role in raising awareness, promoting healthy menstrual practices, and addressing the stigma surrounding menstruation in the local communities. Our team aimed to create a ripple effect of positive change and contribute to the overall well-being of the individuals and their communities.

6. Training and Empowerment

Using the procured items, we trained and empowered 400 women and girls from the three selected communities. The hands-on training sessions enabled participants to master the creation of reusable sanitary pads, providing them with a sustainable solution for their menstrual hygiene needs and a potential source of income. Leveraging partnerships with skilled tailors and business development experts, the project facilitated comprehensive training sessions in five communities: Gerewu, Gaa Alanu, Asomu, Elemere, and Eyenkorin. Over 255 women received hands-on training, equipping them not only with the skills to produce sanitary pads but also with knowledge on commercialization strategies to generate sustainable income for their families.

Implementation



7. Close-Out Ceremony

The project was concluded officially with a closing ceremony that featured further sensitization and the distribution of tools (including hand-sewing needles and threads, tracing papers, packs of pencils, packs of office pins, hand-sewing machines, standard sewing machines, and industrial machine) for continued empowerment. This ceremony also served as an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the participants and reinforce the importance of menstrual hygiene.

8. Endline Assessment

Although we had a routine monitoring and evaluation team conducting formative assessments throughout the project, we conducted an extensive endline assessment for summative evaluation at the project's conclusion. This assessment was crucial for generating impact evidence, evaluating the success of our outcome indicators, and documenting the project's achievements. The findings will be published as research articles and disseminated across our social media platforms to showcase the project's impact and promote further awareness.

The implementation of the Padded Girls project included a series of impactful activities that ensured the successful education and empowerment of women and girls in the targeted communities. Through strategic planning, community engagement, comprehensive training, and ongoing evaluation, the project achieved its goals and created a sustainable impact on menstrual hygiene management in rural areas.



Summary of Key Activities

The Padded Girls project was a meticulously planned and executed initiative aimed at addressing menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in rural communities. The project unfolded through a series of key activities designed to educate, empower, and equip women and girls with the knowledge and tools necessary for maintaining menstrual hygiene. Below is a detailed summary of the key activities undertaken during the project:

1. Community Engagement and Participant Selection:

- a. **Courtesy Visits:** The project began with courtesy visits to the identified communities within Moro, Ilorin South, and Asa Local Government Areas in Kwara State. These visits were essential for establishing rapport with community leaders and members, explaining the project's objectives, and securing their support.
- b. **Participant Selection:** Based on the visits, we selected 400 women and girls within the menstrual age range who would benefit most from the program. This selection process ensured that the participants were representative of the communities' needs.

2. Baseline Survey:

- a. **Pre-Project Assessment:** A baseline survey was conducted using a questionnaire assessment tool. This survey gathered critical data on the participants' current menstrual hygiene practices, challenges, and overall understanding of menstrual health. The insights gained from this assessment informed the project's educational and training components.

3. Recruitment and Training of Volunteers:

- a. **Volunteer Selection:** Volunteers were recruited based on their commitment to community development and their expertise in relevant areas. This diverse team included health educators, professional fashion designers, monitoring and evaluation officers, photographers, videographers, community engagement officers, and local language interpreters.

- b. **Volunteer Training:** Comprehensive training sessions were conducted for the volunteers, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively implement the project. The training covered menstrual hygiene education, the production of reusable sanitary pads, and community engagement strategies.

4. Procurement of Materials:

- a. **Essential Supplies:** The project procured essential materials required for the training sessions. This included 400 pairs of scissors, packs of hand-sewing needles and threads, tracing papers, packs of pencils, packs of office pins, 16 hand-sewing machines, five standard sewing machines, and one industrial machine. These materials were crucial for the hands-on training sessions.

5. Sensitization Program:

- a. **Educational Workshops:** Medical students from our team led educational workshops in local languages (Yoruba and Hausa) to ensure effective communication. These workshops covered comprehensive menstrual hygiene education, including how to maintain hygiene before, during, and after the menstrual cycle, and the health risks associated with poor menstrual hygiene.
- b. **Community Outreach:** The sensitization program extended beyond the workshops to include community outreach efforts. This involved engaging with the broader community to raise awareness about menstrual hygiene and the importance of supporting women and girls in managing their menstrual health.

6. Training on Reusable Sanitary Pads:

- a. **Hands-On Training:** Participants received hands-on training on how to manually make reusable sanitary pads using locally sourced fabrics, thread, and needles. This practical skill not only provided a sustainable

Summary of Key Activities

solution for their menstrual hygiene needs but also offered a potential source of income through the commercialization of the pads.

- b. **Economic Empowerment:** By teaching participants how to produce and sell reusable sanitary pads, the project aimed to foster economic empowerment. This aspect of the training emphasized the dual benefits of health and income generation.

7. Close-Out Ceremony:

- a. **Celebration and Empowerment:** The project culminated in a close-out ceremony that celebrated the achievements of the participants. This event also featured further sensitization activities and the distribution of tools and materials for continued empowerment.
- b. **Networking Opportunities:** The ceremony provided an opportunity for participants to network with key stakeholders, including community leaders, volunteers, and project partners.

8. Endline Assessment:

- a. **Summative Evaluation:** An extensive endline assessment was conducted to evaluate the project's impact and document its achievements. This assessment involved gathering feedback from participants, analyzing the data collected throughout the project, and measuring the success of the outcome indicators.
- b. **Impact Reporting:** The findings from the endline assessment will be published as research articles and disseminated across social media platforms. This will showcase the project's impact, highlight best practices, and promote further awareness of menstrual hygiene management in rural communities.

Through these key activities, the Padded Girls project successfully addressed critical gaps in menstrual hygiene management, empowered women and girls with practical skills and knowledge, and fostered economic empowerment and community engagement in the targeted communities.



Activity **Timeline**

Activity	Timeframe	Location (LGAs)	Description
Community Engagement	Week 1	Moro, Ilorin South, Asa LGAs	Courtesy visits to selected communities to introduce the project, gain support, and select participants.
Baseline Survey	Week 2	Moro, Ilorin South, Asa LGAs	Conducted pre-project assessment to gather data on menstrual hygiene practices and challenges.
Recruitment of Volunteers	Week 3	BBYDI Office	Selected volunteers based on expertise and dedication to community development.
Volunteer Training	Week 4	BBYDI Office	Trained volunteers in menstrual hygiene education, reusable pad production, and community engagement.
Procurement of Materials	Week 5	BBYDI	Procured necessary materials, including sewing machines, fabrics, scissors, needles, and threads.
Sensitization Program	Week 6 - Week 7	Moro, Ilorin South, Asa LGAs	Conducted educational workshops on menstrual hygiene using local languages to ensure effective communication.
Training on Reusable Pads	Week 8 - Week 10	Moro, Ilorin South, Asa LGAs	Provided hands-on training on making reusable sanitary pads and discussed economic empowerment opportunities.
Close-Out Ceremony	Week 11	Olooru Community	Celebrated project achievements, distributed tools for continued empowerment, and provided networking opportunities.



Scope of Impact Evaluation

Endline Assessment	Week 12	Moro, Ilorin South, Asa	Conducted comprehensive
Impact Reporting	Post-Project	Project Headquarters/ Online	



The scope of the impact evaluation for the Padded Girls project encompasses the final assessment processes, including endline evaluation, practice methodology, and tools employed. This comprehensive evaluation focuses on measuring changes in outcomes such as literacy, usage, and commercialization of the hand-sewn sanitary pads. The primary aim is to answer the following critical questions:

1. To what extent has the project reached females/women within the menstrual age? The endline evaluation measures the project's reach and engagement with the target demographic, analyzing data on the number of participants trained and sensitized across the selected communities.
2. To what extent has this project been of benefit to the targeted beneficiaries and the communities at large?

The evaluation assesses the benefits accrued to the participants, including improvements in menstrual hygiene management, economic empowerment through commercialization of reusable pads, and overall health and well-being. It also examines the broader community impact, such as increased awareness and reduced stigma around menstruation.

3. What changes are visible in the target communities looking at the behavioural change of participants, the role of culture and traditions, and usage of the reusable sanitary pads?

This aspect of the evaluation explores behavioral changes among participants regarding menstrual hygiene practices, shifts in cultural and traditional perceptions of menstruation, and the adoption and regular use of reusable sanitary pads.

By systematically addressing these questions and employing robust evaluation methodologies, the impact evaluation aims to provide comprehensive evidence of the project's effectiveness in enhancing menstrual hygiene management, empowering women, and fostering positive community change in the targeted areas.

Impact Reach and Analysis

The Padded Girls project, launched in November, has made significant strides in its mission to empower and educate women and girls across rural communities in Kwara State. Since its inception, the project has successfully reached and impacted 422 females within the menstrual age group across 8 selected communities. This initiative is pivotal in addressing the prevalent challenges of menstrual hygiene management and economic empowerment among women in these underserved areas.

The project began with advocacy visits to 7 communities, including Elemere, Asomu, Gaa Alaanu, Olooru, Akata Olosun, Shao, and Eyenkorin, with Gerewu later included to meet the target of 8 communities. These visits were crucial for engaging community elders, women, and girls to garner support and participation. Despite initial challenges, the communities embraced the project's objectives enthusiastically, underscoring the pressing need for improved menstrual hygiene practices and economic opportunities. Community engagement played a pivotal role as local volunteers, alongside BBYDI members, conducted house-to-house campaigns using placards and banners strategically placed within each community. This grassroots approach effectively disseminated information about the project's benefits and training schedules, ensuring widespread awareness and participation.

Central to the project's success was the integrated training on the production of reusable sanitary pads. Leveraging partnerships with skilled tailors and business development experts, the project facilitated comprehensive training sessions in five communities: Gerewu, Gaa Alanu, Asomu, Elemere, and Eyenkorin. Over 255 women received hands-on training, equipping

them not only with the skills to produce sanitary pads but also with knowledge on commercialization strategies to generate sustainable income for their families.

We witnessed a growing sense of empowerment amongst the women and girls, driven by the newly found knowledge and skills coupled with their eagerness to try out the reusable pads. The initiative instilled confidence, breaking down the stigma associated with menstrual hygiene in all forms and helped the women see themselves and their periods from a new perspective. The top participants in each community who showed interest in the production of reusable sanitary pads for commercialisation purposes but could not afford sewing machines were given hand-sewing machines. A total of 10 hand-sewing machines were donated to the women.

By providing essential materials such as fabrics, scissors, needles, and thread, the project empowered participants to create sanitary pads locally, addressing both health and economic challenges prevalent in rural areas. This dual impact approach not only promotes better menstrual hygiene practices but also contributes directly to poverty reduction efforts by enhancing women's economic independence and productivity within their communities. Initiating conversations around menstruation within the cultural context resulted in a gradual shift in perceptions. The training provided a platform for women and girls to have discussions and re-orientate themselves. We achieved commendable turnout and active participation in all the communities visited for the project. The positive response indicates participants' genuine interest and willingness to engage with the project, reflecting the relevance of the initiative.



Baseline and **Endline Assessment**

Monitoring and Evaluation Update

Output

S/N	Key Benchmark	Achieved Benchmark	Reasons for Variation (If any)	Source of Variation
1	Advocacy visits to 8 communities	8 communities visited and elders engaged	N/A	Pictures
2	Publicity about the project in 8 communities	Publicity in 8 communities	N/A	Media coverage
3	Train 400 women on the production of reusable sanitary pads in 8 communities	423 women trained in 8 communities	More than expected participants in some communities	Attendance record

Outcome

S/N	Key Benchmark	Achieved Benchmark	Reasons for Variation (If any)	Source of Variation
1	Improved knowledge of women on the production of reusable sanitary pads and entrepreneurship/commercialisation of their products	423 women gained practical knowledge on production and commercialisation	More than expected participants in some communities	Attendance sheet, Pre-project survey
2	Reduction in poor menstrual hygiene in 8 communities in Kwara State	423 women and girls sensitized on menstrual and personal hygiene	More than expected participants in some communities	Attendance sheet, Pre-project survey
3	Reduction in the poverty rate in 8 communities in Kwara State	Approximately 50 participants started producing reusable sanitary pads for commercial purposes	Project concluded as planned	Project completion report

Success Stories



Before the Padded Girls project, we could barely understand the benefits and dangers of menstrual health and the health implications but thanks to BBYDI and the project team, we now have a clearer understanding of our body and what it reacts to as regards menstruation.

Mariam, Asomu Community



We are really grateful to the BBYDI Padded girls' team for giving us the proper education on menstrual health and how best to calculate the days to which the next cycle falls on to aid proper preparation and fight against sudden appearance. It is a delight that the project has enabled us overcome our fears regarding menstruation and better understand that it is not a thing to be ashamed.

Adijat, Akata Olosun Community



We didn't even expect the items that were given to us for free in the course of learning and practicing like the pairs of scissors, needles, threads, pins and a host of other items. Aside from the health sensitization that we were able to get educated on, we were also able to commercialize the sewn handmade sanitary pads which serves as a means of empowerment and another source of income for the women while some took it upon themselves to continue the sustainability of the project by sewing it and giving it out to those that need it more for free. We have no idea we could even get this kind of opportunity in our community. We thought we'll just keep buying and disposing off the pads until the making of the reusable sanitary pads was introduced to us and with this, we are very much grateful.

Adeola Iyanda, Olooru Community

Success Stories



A year ago, I never thought I'd be teaching others how to make sanitary pads. The Padded Girls project changed everything for me. Now, I feel empowered to help my community stay healthy and informed.

Amina, Gaa Alaanu community.



Now I don't miss school because of my period. The pads I received from the project have made a big difference. I want to study hard and become a nurse to help other girls like me.

Zainab, Elemere community.



With the skills I learned, I hope to start my own business making reusable pads. It's not just about earning money; it's about giving back to my community by providing affordable menstrual products.

Fatima, Gerewu community.



I used to hide when I had my period. Now, I educate others to break the silence. The project taught me that menstruation is natural, and we should talk about it openly.

Halima, Asomu community.



Thanks to the project, I've seen women's attitudes change. We're more open about menstrual hygiene, and more girls are staying in school. It's a big step forward for our community.

Mariam, Eyenkorin community

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Padded Girls project by Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) has achieved significant success in fulfilling its objectives and meeting performance targets across the implemented communities. Through rigorous monitoring and evaluation, it is evident that the project has surpassed baseline figures, demonstrating marked improvements in learning outcomes and community engagement. The initiative's impact extends beyond mere provision of menstrual hygiene solutions; it has fostered a culture of learning and empowerment among participants.

The project's approach of distributing free hand sewing materials and providing training on reusable sanitary pads not only addressed menstrual hygiene challenges but also empowered women economically. The introduction of hand sewing machines further enhanced participants' skills and competitiveness, fostering a spirit of entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency within the communities.

Feedback from beneficiaries and community members has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the project's role in enhancing community well-being and social cohesion. The initiative was particularly lauded for its inclusive learning environment and practical, hands-on approach to skills development. This approach not only ensured sustainability but also empowered women to take charge of their menstrual health and economic independence.

Moving forward, it is recommended that similar initiatives be scaled up to more communities, especially in regions with high levels of menstrual health challenges and economic disparity, such as Northern Nigeria. Continuous monitoring and evaluation should remain integral to future projects to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure lasting impact. Furthermore, leveraging digital platforms and community networks for ongoing engagement and support will be crucial in sustaining the momentum and maximizing the project's long-term benefits.

In conclusion, the Padded Girls project has set a precedent for effective community-led interventions that integrate health education with economic empowerment. By building on these successes and lessons learned, BBYDI is well-positioned to continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of women and girls across Nigeria.

Publications

1. <https://www.lacommuna.com/features/reclaiming-our-blood-money-reducing-period-poverty-through-empowerment-and-reusability>



2. <https://medium.com/@brainbuildersintl/padded-girls-training-women-on-reusable-pads-to-ease-period-poverty-822a65c02282>



3. <https://confidencenewsng.com/brain-builders-youth-development-initiative-raises-awareness-of-menstrual-hygiene-in-kwara-school>



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Last but not least, we express our appreciation to the participants of the Padded Girls project for their enthusiasm, resilience, and willingness to embrace change. Your active involvement and feedback have been invaluable in shaping the success of this initiative. Together, we have made significant strides towards improving menstrual hygiene management and empowering women in rural communities. With continued support and collective effort, we look forward to achieving even greater impact in the future.

Project Sponsor



Appendix

1. [Asomu Community](#)
2. [Closeout Ceremony](#)
3. [Gaa Alaanu Community](#)
4. [Eyenkorin Community](#)
5. [Elemere Community](#)
6. [Courtesy Visits](#)
7. [Akata Olosun](#)
8. [Gerewu Community](#)
9. [Olooru Community](#)
10. [Danialu Community](#)
11. <https://photos.app.goo.gl/SVoPV9JwxZNo3SSH7>
12. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rZxZkygag7w11y3gh4FJiaKuityYKYtO>
13. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11BjPvhgsxCwOgNKiXRpK1ilxoDM7d99m>
14. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dNzhoHNwkq5jFF5dE8JyrorequCK45Z2>
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11BjPvhgsxCwOgNKiXRpK1ilxoDM7d99m>
15. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dNzhoHNwkq5jFF5dE8JyrorequCK45Z2>

Notice

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