

# A monthly challenge, a sustainable solution



**Organisation: Stichting AFRIpads Foundation**  
**Document: Annual Report 2023**

## Board:

Sanne Bolkenstein (chair)  
Nicoline Evers (board member)  
Hans Spaan (board member)  
Sølvi Hart (board member)  
Willeke Westra (board member)  
Carina Bolkenstein-Bast (board member)  
Lucas Gmelig (board member)

# Index

AFRIpads Foundation in 2023	P 2
Donations	P 4
Special thanks	P 16
Financial report	P 17
Outlook 2024	P 18



# AFRIPads Foundation in 2023

## The Foundation

The main goal of the Foundation is to raise funds to increase school attendance amongst girls in Uganda, Malawi and Kenya. The Foundation concretizes this goal by



buying AFRIPads kits from the AFRIPads Ltd., a social enterprise based in these countries. This company provides low-cost, washable sanitary pads for young girls to curb the high rates of menstrual-related absenteeism. The Foundation donates AFRIPads kits to vulnerable girls who can't afford to

buy these pads themselves, in remote areas like former war zones and refugee camps. This way, even the most vulnerable girls get the chance to stay in school and fulfil their academic potential.

The AFRIPads Foundation works completely independently from, but in close collaboration with, the AFRIPads Ltd. Where the main focus of the Ltd., being a social enterprise, is to become financially independent and self-sufficient, the AFRIPads Foundation is an NGO with the ambition to keep all girls in school, even when they have their period! The Foundation uses almost all of its funds to support girls with AFRIPads kits.

## Changes in the board

**Carina Bolkenstein** decided to leave the board in 2023 and enjoy her well deserved retirement. We would like to thank her for all her contributions, dedication and energy which she has given over the years to the AFRIPads Foundation, we will miss you



dearly! Carina has been an immense support for the Foundation since its beginning in 2009, and we wouldn't be where we are today if it hadn't been for her. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours and hope you will enjoy your retirement!

Carina transferred her treasurer duties to Nicoline Evers. Next year, in 2024, the AFRIpads Foundation will celebrate its 15th anniversary. This will also mark the end of **Sanne Bolkenstein's** direct involvement in the board: she announced to step down and hand the chair to someone else. **Nicoline Evers** and **Sølvi Hart** will also give up their seats on the board, so at the end of 2024 we will see some new faces on the board. 2024 will be used as a transition year though.

## Employee Fund

The Employee Fund is a fund employees of the AFRIpads Ltd. can apply to for help with extraordinary medical costs, which are not covered by the healthcare insurance, particularly when it comes to mental health. As the AFRIpads Foundation, we realise that the AFRIpads Ltd. employees are critical in reaching our mission, and we feel we need to step in when necessary. This is why we donated to the Employee Fund.

## Foundation management

All practical facilities the Foundation needs are provided by Bert Bolkenstein and Carina Bolkenstein-Bast, free of cost. Bert Bolkenstein enabled both the start of the AFRIpads organisation in Uganda, and the AFRIpads Foundation in the Netherlands. Bert and Carina offer the Foundation:

- Secretarial support;
- Office facilities;
- Administration.

The board consisted in 2023 of:

- Sanne Bolkenstein (chair)
- Nicoline Evers
- Hans Spaan
- Sølvi Hart
- Willeke Westra
- Lucas Gmelig (joined in October)



## Donations

The AFRIpads Foundation donates AFRIpads kits to projects which are carried out by the AFRIpads Ltd. in Uganda, Kenya and Malawi. These projects are meant to introduce the AFRIpads product in remote areas. This introduction requires thorough and intensive planning and organisation. A project usually consists of:

- Contacting local organisations to introduce AFRIpads to, mostly schools;
- Giving menstrual and feminine hygiene education to groups of girls;
- Demonstrating the use of AFRIpads;
- Donating AFRIpads kits (sanitary pads that last for one year), including underwear and the informational booklet 'Girl Talk'.



Through financing these projects the Foundation realises three goals:

1. New groups of girls in Uganda, Kenya and Malawi are provided with sanitary pads, enabling them to go to school even when they have their period, and to participate in social activities such as sports;
2. The target group for the use of AFRIpads is enlarged;
3. The Foundation pays for the AFRIpads kits which are distributed through the AFRIpads Ltd. AFRIpads Ltd. has a certain guaranteed revenue this way which contributes to the continuance and growth of the company, providing local employment and economic stimulus.

*"Based on our monthly data we used to have an average of 15% absenteeism rate of girls in standard 4 to standard 8. After the last distribution in 2021 of AFRIpads and underwear we have seen the absenteeism rate decrease to 5% of girls in standard 4 to standard 8." - Francis Soko, headteacher of Chalomwe Primary, Malawi*

In 2023, the AFRIpads Foundation was able to help 23,760 girls through 17 donations. We will share 3 of them below.

## Donation together with Together Alive Health Initiative (TAHI)



The donation recipients at TAHI, based in Uganda, were vulnerable girls in the community who received the AFRIpads quality menstrual dignity kits. All 2000 girls received the menstrual products and underwear made and distributed by the social enterprise entity of AFRIpads in a top quality factory in Uganda,

employing more than 80 women. The in-house specialised trainers from AFRIpads helped deliver the menstrual health & hygiene training with TAHI on the day of the delivery. Besides the AFRIpads menstrual kit, all girls received a pair of underwear and a Girl Talk booklet.

All kits were distributed between September and October 2023 at TAHI programming to girls aged 12-17 across 3 sites. The training on the use and care of the menstrual products and on menstrual health and hygiene in general is critical both to be sure that the solution can work for the girls, as well as helping to break misconceptions and taboos. Fathers, mothers and boys also joined in for support.



## Donation together with Action For Fundamental Change And Development (AFFCAD)

Between October 19th and November 22nd, 2023, the AFRIpads donated 1937 schoolgirl kits, underwear and Girl Talk books to Action For Fundamental Change And Development (AFFCAD) to 11 primary schools including two private schools and nine government schools. The



kits were distributed to school going girls between the ages of 9 and 17 years, including girls with disabilities and refugees. The following schools were selected; Nateete Muslim Primary School, Kawempe Mbogo Muslim Primary School, Kawempe Tuula Church of Uganda Primary School, Kyambogo Primary School, East Kololo Primary School, Summit View Primary School, Katwe Primary School, Bukoto Muslim Primary School, Kyaggwe Road Primary School, Ggaba Demonstration Primary School, AFFCAD School and Little Stars Primary School.



*"Thank you so much for thinking about our girls. Many of them come from vulnerable communities and are always disturbing me about pads. Most of the time I am forced to buy pads for them from our own pockets."* **Nayebare Jane, Senior woman teacher of Kyambogo**

**Primary School.**

These schools were selected due to the fact that they have high numbers of girls from vulnerable communities including refugee girls and girls living with disabilities. During one of the interventions by AFFCAD in these schools, menstrual hygiene and management clearly stood out as one of the issues



affecting attendance and completion of girls' education so the aim of the distribution was to increase retention and completion rates of girls in schools.

*"Thank you so much AFFCAD for providing us with sanitary towels. These are really helpful to us as girls."* **primary six pupil, a health prefect at Kyambogo Primary School.**

The sanitary towels were distributed on October 19th and 21st and November 22nd, 2023 in the selected eleven schools. In one of the schools, the pads distribution was one of the major activities in celebration of the International Day of the Girls Child which is celebrated annually on October 11th globally.



*"Thank you for thinking about us and our girls. As you can see, our school is really vulnerable and we really needed help. We truly appreciate it."* **Ntono Aisha, Deputy Headteacher, Summit View Army Primary School.**

In each school, girls from primary four to primary seven and a few older girls from primary two and three were collected into one room where we introduced to them the topic at hand which was menstrual health and management. The session kicked off with either a word from the



Headmistress of the Senior woman teacher and thereafter the team started training. In the first two schools, the training was conducted by the team from AFRIPads and the rest of the trainings were conducted by AFFCAD staff; Ms. Namatovu Doris Isabel. The training was conducted using two methods; demonstration and plenary explanations.

The girls were given a step-by-step

demonstration of how the AFRIPads were to be used and their maintenance which included washing, drying and storage. Thereafter, they were given an opportunity to ask questions: the duration of usage of the pads was



one of these questions, to which we responded that they could be used for up to one year. This was the most common question across all the schools.

*"Thank you so much AFFCAD for providing us with these sanitary towels."* **pupil from Kawempe Tuula Primary School.**



Each of the girls was also given 1 school girl kit, one underwear based on their size and 1 girl talk book. The girls found the books easy to read as they had more pictures and were not too wordy. The language used in the books was also easy to understand. The materials provided were good and were very helpful to the girls to which they were distributed.

The only challenge we faced was the issue of time management as we were to distribute so many pads to different schools that were not in the same geographical area but nevertheless all pads were distributed as planned. The lesson learnt is that so many girls are in need of reusable sanitary

towels but have not been able to get access. The distribution of these pads has been a great support to the girls including the teachers who in most cases we think can't afford such things.

*"I would like to thank the AFRIPads Foundation for supporting AFFCAD with these reusable sanitary towels. Menstrual hygiene and management remains a challenge in the communities that we serve and providing girls with these kits will greatly support them during this time of the month and ensure that they do not miss out on school and also complete their studies."* **Prudence Atukwatse, Executive Director AFFCAD.**



## Donation together with Girls To Lead Africa (GTLA)

### Background



Girls To Lead Africa is a leadership incubator for girls and young women based in Kanungu, Uganda. GTLA believes that nurturing leaders who understand the challenges facing communities and have the skills necessary to engage in policy discussions and leadership processes will help achieve gender equality. This is

because young women are vastly underrepresented in policy making positions at all levels and this disparity leads to policies which perpetuate gender inequities and make it difficult for women to contribute to the development of their communities. GTLA's mission is to disrupt this status quo by training and mentoring girls to get positions of leadership right from school. Once the girls join students' councils, they are able to advocate for girl friendly policies, stand up for themselves and for their peers.

### Activity Executive Summary

Girls to Lead Africa held training and sensitization of school girls on Menstrual Hygiene and Management under the Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights program. This was conducted in primary and secondary schools in the sub counties of Nyanga, Mpungu, Kirima, Katete, and Kihanda in Kanungu District.



Training in every school involved sensitization on menstrual hygiene and management, demonstrations on the usage of environmental friendly reusable pads manufactured by AFRIPads, as well as distribution of a menstrual kit consisting of a 5 pieces pack (school girl kit) to each girl of menstruation age, and a cotton pair of knickers. Subsequently, a

Question and Answer Session summed up every training before embarking on distribution of menstrual kits to girls.



The main objective of the activity is to tackle and end period poverty which remains a big challenge to school going girls and women in the rural areas and highly contributes to school dropout in Kanungu District. Sessions in every school had a perfect attendance of girls and their teachers, both females and

males.

This report assesses the training's success and its effectiveness on the organization's output.

### ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

<b>Activity Name:</b>	Menstrual Hygiene and Management training and Distribution of AFRIPads menstrual kits, knickers and Girl Talk comic books	
<b>Date:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> and 31 <sup>st</sup> October , 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023	
<b>Duration:</b>	5 days	
<b>Areas Covered:</b>	Nyanga, Mpungu, Kirima, Katete, and Kihanda sub counties	
<b>Planning Team:</b>	Girls To Lead Africa Staff	

### ACTIVITY BREAK DOWN

Sub-county	School	No. of Beneficiaries
------------	--------	----------------------

<b>Nyanga</b>	<p><u>Visited</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bukorwe Primary School</li> <li>2. Ishasha Primary School</li> <li>3. Nyanga Community Secondary School</li> <li>4. Kazinga Primary School</li> <li>5. Nkunda Primary School</li> </ol> <p><b>Total</b></p>	<p>105</p> <p>87</p> <p>120</p> <p>55</p> <p>64</p> <p><b>431</b></p>
<b>Mpungu</b>	<p><u>Visited</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kanyashogi Primary School</li> <li>2. Kashenyi Primary School</li> <li>3. Karambi Parents Primary School</li> <li>4. Karambi Primary School</li> <li>5. Bishop Calist Secondary School</li> </ol> <p><b>Total</b></p>	<p>93</p> <p>72</p> <p>71</p> <p>89</p> <p>95</p> <p><b>420</b></p>

<b>Kirima</b>	<u>Visited</u>		
	6. St. Kagwa Primary School Migyera	40	
	7. Migyera Primary School	66	
	8. Kazuru Primary School	67	
	9. Kirima Primary School	57	
	10. Kangarame Primary School	45	
	11. Kitariro Primary School	51	
	12. Rutugunda Primary School	48	
	13. Keita Primary School	56	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	
	<b>Kihanda</b>	<u>Visited</u>	
		1. Kentomi Nursary and Primary School	55
		2. Kihanda Primary School	99
		3. Kihanda Technical School	49
4. Rugando Church School (Nursary & Primary)		53	
		59	
5. Kihanda Hillside Primary School		48	
6. Rurama Primary School		64	
7. Kihanda Secondary School			
<b>Total</b>	<b>427</b>		

<b>Katete</b>	<u>Visited</u>	
	1. St. Peters Primary School	58
	2. St. Peters Secondary School	70
	3. Kishuro Primary School	88
	4. Mpangango Primary School	54
	5. Nyarurambi Primary School	40
	6. Katete Community Secondary School	65
	7. St. Jude Ibumbwe Primary School	44
	8. Katete Moslem Primary School	43
	9. Tabaro Comprehensive Nursery & Primary sch.	49
	10. Katete Seed School	96
	11. Great Lakes High School	
<b>Total</b>	<b>705</b>	

A total of **2413** menstrual kits were given out in the **5** sub counties as shown above.

The activity was well executed. This was indicated by the positive feedback from the beneficiaries. The trainees paid much attention to every detail during the training, and exhibited a higher level of interest from the beginning to the end.

The team was not able to cover all the intended schools in most of the sub counties due to a poor road network and too much rainfall and shortage of Menstrual Kits. The remaining 87 Kits are for Kitunga Primary School in Kirima Subcounty which we failed to reach because the road was cut off by the heavy rains which washed away the bridge and we could not cross over. We already informed them that they will get their kits when the first term begins. The unfavorable rough terrain in the sub counties of Mpungu, Kirima and Kihanda led to delays on the way, hence poor time



management.

## Conclusion

Every training session was successful. The trainers perfectly explained the concepts of menstrual hygiene and management and perfectly demonstrated the usage of the reusable pads which kept the trainees interested and actively participating throughout all sessions. Every girl received her own menstrual kit to avoid sharing which may come with other consequences.



## Special thanks

We would like to take this opportunity to give our special appreciation to some organisations or persons who really helped us grow and reach as many girls as possible in 2023. **Van Vlissingen Foundation**, **Victrix** and **Love Stories Intimates** supported a wide range of schools and communities in 2023. **Victrix** did this for the second time: thank



you for your continuous trust and partnership! A special thanks to **Nadine Mottu** and **Celine Denizot** from the **Education and Health department of Vistra**. Thank you so much for your generous and continuous donations, they have been a tremendous help for us, and thousands of girls, since 2015.

We have some large donors who wish to stay anonymous, so we won't name them, but please know we are very grateful for your generous contributions! Not all contributions come (purely) financially: **Hope Nankunda** has been advocating girls' rights in Uganda for many years, and has helped the AFRIpads Foundation in carrying out donations. Many thanks to you!



Many thanks also to **Michelle Tjeenk Willink**, who is our contact person at AFRIpads Ltd. Thank you for your hard work!



Finally, we would like to thank **you**, because if you're reading this, you're somehow involved with or supporting the AFRIpads Foundation. We can only do what we do thanks to the loyal support of our donors and raving fans. Together, we can make sure

that a period is simply the ending of a sentence, not the end of a girl's education! Thank you!!!

## Financial report AFRIpads Foundation 2023

### Euro account:

Income:		Expenses:	
Donations geef.nl	€3.321,68	17.004 AFRIpads kits	€133.818,-
Donation Paypal	€2.861,62	Organisational costs	€318,-
Donation large donor A	€75.000,-	Banking costs	€157,34

Donation large donor B	€25.000,-	Administration	€351,31
Donation large donor C	€10.000,-	Website	€579,94
Donation large donor D	€15.000,-	Partin	€78,-
Other donations	€8.687,10		
<b>TOTAL IN</b>	<b>€139.870,40</b>	<b>TOTAL OUT</b>	<b>€135.302,59</b>

#### USD account:

<b>Income:</b>		<b>Expenses:</b>	
Donations	\$30.000,-	6.756 kits	\$50.672,20
Interest	\$343,32	Bank charges	\$39,79
<b>Total IN</b>	<b>\$30.343,32</b>	<b>Total OUT</b>	<b>\$50.711,99</b>



## Outlook 2024

In 2024, we'll see some changes in the board, as announced. We look forward to further professionalising our organisation to make sure we can continue to do our great work. Thanks to our loyal donors with whom we've built a lasting relationship, we are confident that we can help another great number of girls in 2024.

Thank you for your help and support!

