



**ENSURING THE RETENTION OF
GIRLS IN SCHOOLS THROUGH PROMOTION
OF REUSABLE SANITARY PADS**



In April 2021, Save the Children in Mozambique (SCIMOZ) embarked on a training and production of reusable sanitary pads for girls in menstrual age in the province of Manica, within the scope of the implementation of the NORAD project. The process has so far involved 382 girls who are manufacturing and using these pads, ensuring their own personal hygiene and that of other girls in their respective communities. It is expected that 1,400 reusable sanitary pads will be produced in the districts of Tambara, Manica, Machaze and Macossa.



A girls group in pads production learning moment in Chicueia community, Manica district.

With sanitary pads, SCIMOZ expects to reduce the dropout rate of girls during the menstrual period, deconstruct myths and taboos around menstruation, educate the girls about menstrual health and hygiene and reduce the cost of purchasing conventional pads.

A girl can produce at least one reusable pad per hour. These are made on the basis of fabric (*capulana*) and cotton towel that can have a shelf life of up to at least six months. 24 matrons trained girls aged between 13 and 23 years in the production of these sanitary pads, enabling them to produce for their own use and to replicate in their communities.

The production process begins with the acquisition of *capulanas*, towels, buttons, scissors, needles and sewing threads. It is advisable, depending on menstrual flow, for each girl to have four to five patches and change it every 4 hours, washing it with soap and water and drying it naturally in the sunlight. It can also be ironed.



"WE HAD DIFFICULTIES TO BUY SANITARY PADS EVERY MONTH AND WE COULD MISS SCHOOL DURING THE MENSTRUAL PERIOD"

Joaquina Sandone, 13 years old, attends the 9th grade at Mavonde Primary and Secondary School. She dreams of becoming a nurse when she finishes grade 12, given her passion for Biology. Joaquina's menstrual period started for the first time in December 2020 and she says that before hearing of and knowing how to make reusable sanitary pads, it was very difficult to manage the menstrual cycle because her father didn't have the money to buy conventional sanitary pads for her and her sisters. She had to constantly ask her older sister, who lives in Beira to buy her the pads.

Joaquin said:

"These sanitary pads are very good; I feel good when I wear them and I can play as I want. We also don't spend money to buy conventional pads in stores every month."

Another beneficiary, Rutendo Chepadi, aged 18, and from the same community as Joaquina, a 12th grade student, is equally happy to finally have access to these pads. For her, reusable sanitary pads are comfortable and minimize costs compared to conventional ones, in addition to being easy to wash and conserve. or

Rutendo shares:

"All you have to do is wash them off with lots of soap and water and they get clean again. Before it was very difficult to find money to buy pads and many girls ran the risk of not going to school when they were having their menstrual period. That's why Save the Children's idea of bringing these pads was very good for us girls."

Meanwhile, 13-year-old Maria, from the Chicueia community, hasn't had her first menstruation yet, but she participates in the pads production groups because she takes the opportunity to learn about different subjects about sexual and reproductive health, as well as learning how to make reusable sanitary pads

"I already have five sanitary pads produced by me and I would like to see Save the Children continue teaching the girls in my community. I have already taught my three friends and they have produced two pads for each one."

The Sexual and Reproductive Health component in the NORAD project is one of the cross-sectional areas that is being implemented since 2019 and focus its efforts essentially on the group of teenagers and young people in 7 secondary schools. Last year 24 matrons were trained to gain skills to produce reusable sanitary pads and facial masks using locally available products.

The trainings resulted on the production of 4,032 reusable sanitary pads and benefited 1,947 teenage girls.