11 WAYS TO REDUCE
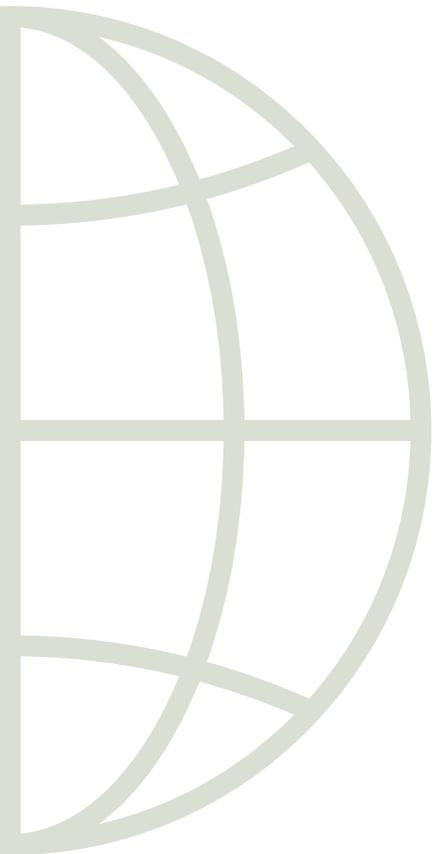# PERIOD POVERTY

11 WAYS TO REDUCE PERIOD POVERTY

This report outlines practical recommendations to reduce period poverty in informal settlements jointly developed by

- **100% for the Children & Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Children (KAACR)**
- **Specialists and representatives from key organizations in the field (listed under "Acknowledgements")**

The recommended actions range from improved market regulation, building a national policy & market convergence framework, influencing national policy reform through Social Return on Investment and implementing school-based soap production. Each recommendation identifies key barriers, suggests practical actions, and considers both climate and operational feasibility.

A central focus of these recommendations is on scaling access to reusable menstrual products as a climate-smart, dignifying and low-waste solution that strengthens both environmental sustainability and long term affordability. By reducing dependency on single use pads, these recommendations address not only menstrual equity but also waste management challenges and resource pressures intensified by climate change.

The recommendations are organized around three themes:

1. **Strengthening Market Systems and Policy Frameworks**
2. **Improving Access and Affordability of Reusable Menstrual Products**
3. **WASH Infrastructure and Hygiene Solutions**

Together, these approaches aim to reduce period poverty, empower women-led enterprises, and build resilient menstrual health systems that support education, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. By combining local innovation with policy engagement, these recommendations offer a roadmap for lasting impact in Kenya's informal settlements and beyond.

Acknowledgements

Strengthening Market Systems and Policy Frameworks

1. Strengthening Market Regulation and Quality Assurance of Reusable Menstrual Products

Weak regulation and inconsistent product quality undermine trust in reusable menstrual products. Substandard or counterfeit products enter the market without certification, causing health risks and discouraging adoption. Strengthening quality assurance and market surveillance, with regular inspections and certification, is essential. Collaboration between regulators, women-led enterprises, and small-scale producers can build capacity and ensure compliance. Public awareness of approved products and linking certification to procurement will boost confidence and accountability.
This approach protects users, supports local production, and promotes sustainable, climate-resilient menstrual health systems.

2. Building a National Policy & Market Convergence Framework for Climate-Resilient MHM

This recommendation proposes the creation of a National Policy and Market Convergence Framework that formally links menstrual health management (MHM) with Kenya's climate resilience, procurement, and economic development policies.

The solution includes introducing a "Green Procurement for Dignity" clause requiring public institutions to purchase locally produced, environmentally safe reusable menstrual products; establishing an accreditation system for youth and women led MHM enterprises; and integrating MHM innovation into Kenya's climate adaptation policies—specifically the Nationally

Determined Contribution (NDC) and the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP). By combining public–private partnerships, circular production models, and evidence based policy reform, the recommendation is to build a coordinated, self sustaining MHM system that creates green jobs, reduces waste, and ensures equitable, climate-resilient access to menstrual health products across Kenya.

3. Integrate Community Health Promoters (CHPs) into Kenya's Menstrual Health Strategy

Kenya must formally integrate menstrual health education, product access, and stigma reduction into the Community Health Promoter (CHP) system to end period poverty for all girls and women, not just those in school. CHPs already serve households with reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health (RMNCAH), gender-based violence (GBV), and WASH services.

Because Community Health Promoters live within the same communities they serve, they uniquely understand the cultural, social, and gender norms that fuel menstrual stigma, silence, and exclusion. This makes them the most trusted and effective frontline workforce to drive menstrual equity at the household and community levels.
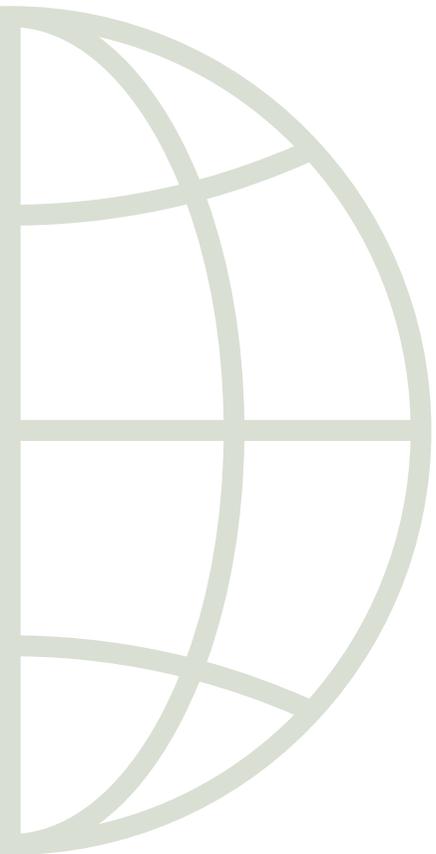
4. Conduct a Social Return on Investment (SROI) Report to Influence Policy Change

This recommendation proposes commissioning a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis to quantify the financial, health, and educational benefits of reusable menstrual products compared to disposable pads in Kenya's national distribution programme.

The results would be used to advocate for policy adaptation within the Ministry of Health and to support the design of a woman-to-woman distribution model that strengthens delivery reliability, local accountability, and community empowerment. By generating evidence to justify policy change and shifting to a more sustainable distribution approach, the recommendation aims to deliver a cost-effective and environmentally responsible menstrual hygiene system.

5. Integrate Menstrual Health into County and Emergency Planning

Institutionalize menstrual health within county development and emergency preparedness plans, ensuring menstrual products and information are included in all response kits. County governments, supported by NGOs and national ministries, should use community data to guide planning, budgeting, and monitoring.

This integration safeguards menstrual health access during crises, reinforcing gender equity and climate resilience in urban governance.

Improving Access and Affordability of Reusable Menstrual Products

6. Community Based Supportive Production

Supporting community based production of reusable menstrual health by-products, such as storage bags for reusable menstrual cups, empowers women with sustainable income opportunities while improving menstrual health management.

By training local women in safe, quality production of by-products and linking them to purchase agreements, the recommendation creates reliable livelihoods and fosters circular, sustainable economies. This approach strengthens women's economic independence, reduces waste, and ensures lasting community resilience.

7. Community Based Menstrual Cup Pilot to Address Affordability and Stigma

This recommendation proposes a community led pilot program in Kibera that distributes reusable menstrual cups through trained local women educators who will provide both the products and practical training on safe use, hygiene, and stigma reduction. Partnering with a reliable menstrual cup supplier, the project ensures affordable access and uses bilingual educational materials to build awareness and acceptance. The model combines local distribution, peer education, and gradual community co-financing to create a cost-effective, self-sustaining, and climate-friendly menstrual health solution that reduces long term costs, school absenteeism, and waste.

8. Strengthening Community Engagement and Tackling Stigma through Local Champions

This recommendation calls for empowering existing community structures – such as women's groups, youth networks, and religious councils – to become less fragmented on menstrual health interventions. Strengthening their capacity enables them to act as local champions for awareness, education, and product distribution. Structured campaigns engaging men, elders, and faith leaders should address stigma and normalize menstruation as a shared responsibility.

Training male and faith-based advocates can further shift social norms and promote acceptance of reusable products. Supporting grassroots groups through micro-grants and peer education fosters local ownership, sustainability, and climate resilience—ensuring menstrual health efforts continue even during social or environmental disruptions.

9. Voucher-Based Access Model for Reusable Menstrual Products in Informal Settlements

This recommendation proposes developing an electronic voucher-based system to make reusable menstrual products affordable and accessible for girls and women in informal settlements.

By linking vouchers to training, local women-led distribution points, and community partnerships, the recommendation promotes menstrual health, empowerment, and local entrepreneurship while reducing waste and dependency on external aid. Over time, the approach aims to evolve into a sustainable, community driven market model that enhances gender equality, education continuity, and climate resilience.

WASH Infrastructure and Hygiene Solutions

10. Design a 'Nyumba Kumi' Community-Run Rainwater Harvesting System Pilot

Kibera faces persistent water scarcity and increasing climate risks, including droughts and floods. This policy proposes leveraging the Nyumba Kumi community structure, groups of ten households, to establish community-managed rainwater harvesting systems with shared rooftop collection units, gutters, and storage tanks to capture and store rainwater for domestic use.

Community members would contribute small maintenance fees and receive training in water safety, system upkeep, and climate adaptation, reducing dependence on costly vendors and unreliable municipal supply. The initiative enhances public health, livelihood creation, and climate resilience while aligning with Kenya's Vision 2030, the National Climate Change Action Plan (2023–2027), and SDGs 6 and 13.

11. School-Based Soap-Making Scheme Financed Through Small Parental Contributions

This recommendation proposes establishing a school-based liquid soap production scheme, managed by teachers and students and financed through small parental contributions to ensure a continuous and affordable soap supply for hygiene and menstrual care. Using low cost ingredients (around 500 KSh per 5 liters), schools would produce soap on site, guaranteeing consistent availability while teaching practical skills and promoting community ownership.

Surplus soap can be shared with contributing households, creating incentives for participation and enabling a self sustaining, climate resilient hygiene solution that reduces reliance on external supply chains and supports long-term health outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Menstrual health is both a matter of (climate) resilience and equity. Despite progress in access, persistent gaps in affordability, product quality, community awareness, and WASH infrastructure continue to compromise girls' education, health, and dignity.

The recommendations in this report outline practical, scalable actions to close these gaps focused on reusable, long term menstrual products, from voucher-based access to reusable products and local manufacturing, to stronger market regulation, policy alignment, and integration of Community Health Promoters.

By implementing these recommendations, Kenya can move beyond short-term distribution toward a future where menstrual health is a right, not a privilege, integrated across health, education, and climate agendas, and accessible to every girl and woman.

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