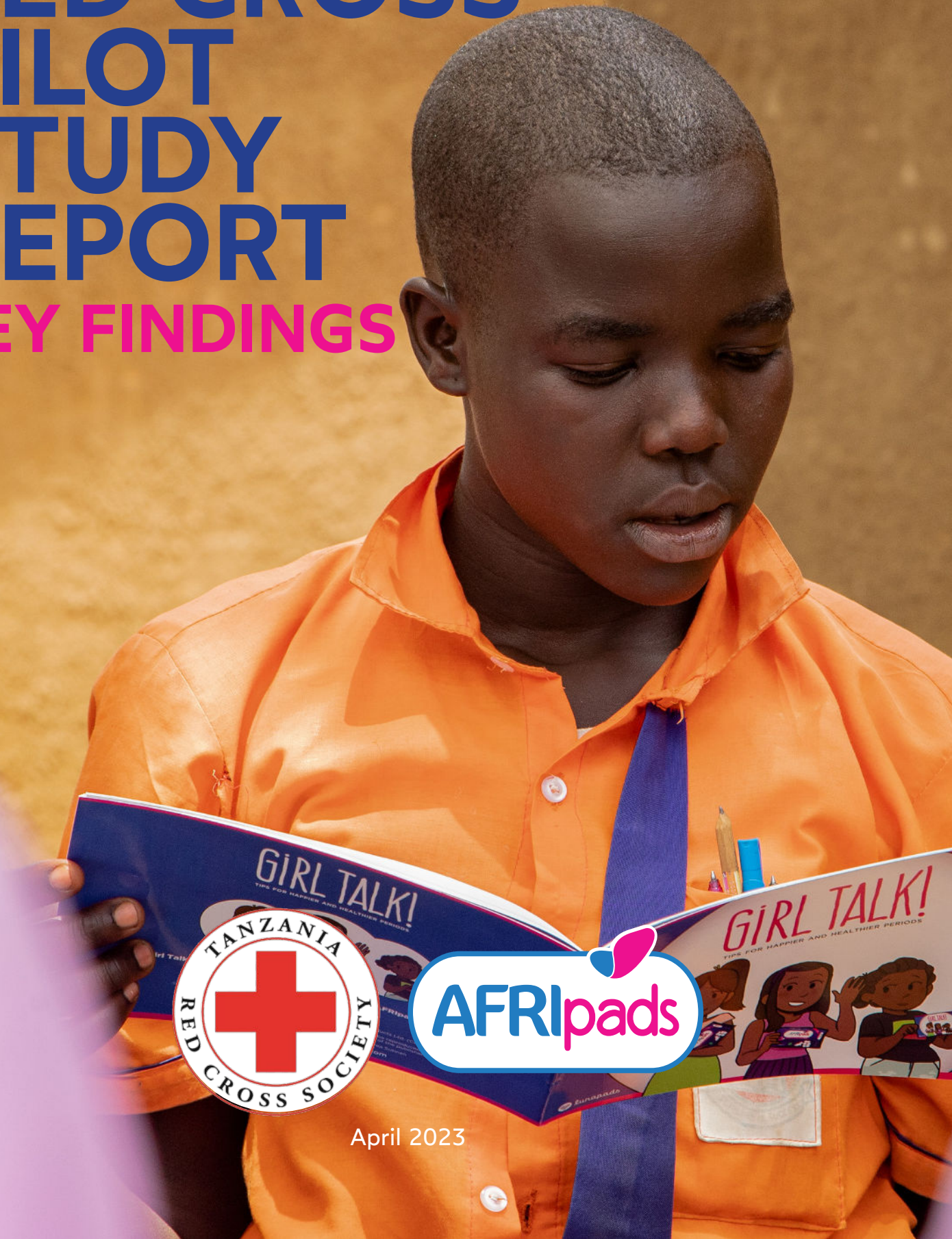


TANZANIA RED CROSS PILOT STUDY REPORT

KEY FINDINGS



April 2023

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The Tanzania Red Cross, established in 1962, provides humanitarian services by helping those in need, both Tanzanians and refugees from neighbouring countries. For more information please see their website: [Tanzania Red Cross Society | Driven by the Power of Humanity \(trcs.or.tz\)](http://trcs.or.tz)

AFRIpads Ltd is a social enterprise and global thought leader dedicated to providing a holistic Menstrual Health Management solution. AFRIpads is the world's leading social enterprise manufacturing reusable menstrual products. For more information please see their website: [AFRIpads – The world's leading social enterprise manufacturing reusable sanitary pads.](http://www.afripads.com)

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Tanzania Red Cross Pilot Study Report: Key Findings



**Pilot
location:**
Kigoma,
Buhigwe District,
Tanzania

Across 2021 and 2022, the Tanzania Red Cross Society worked in partnership with AFRIpads to undertake a pilot study in Kigoma, Buhigwe District, Northwest Tanzania. The pilot study was integrated into the Red Cross's ongoing Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project in the region. The pilot introduced AFRIpads reusable sanitary pads, AFRIpads Underwear, and menstrual hygiene education to adolescent girls to improve menstrual hygiene management. A baseline and endline survey were conducted to measure the acceptability and uptake of the product.



Objectives

The aim of this pilot was to understand the acceptability, uptake and benefits of AFRIpads reusable sanitary pads and AFRIpads Underwear among school girls aged 11-16, and how they can contribute to improving Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH).

Intervention

In August 2021, AFRIpads delivered two online Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions to 9 Tanzania Red Cross staff, including regional staff from the Kigoma office. The training covered the AFRIpads Menstrual Health and Hygiene curriculum, and the AFRIpads Data Collection guide.

Thereafter, Tanzania Red Cross, in partnership with the Buhigwe District Primary Education Department, identified a primary school in the region to deliver the intervention to Tanzania Red Cross distributed 200 AFRIpads School Girl Kits and 200 AFRIpads Underwear to 200 school girls in October 2020.

Each School Girl Kit contains:

- ① Super Maxi Pad
- ② Maxi Pads
- ② Mini Pads
- ② Storage pouches

Tanzania Red Cross also provided information and advice on how to use and care for AFRIpads, as well as education on menstrual hygiene management.



Methodology

In October 2021, prior to the distribution of the AFRIpads products, Tanzania Red Cross field staff used the AFRIpads baseline survey to collect data from a representative sample of 120 girls. The girls used the products for a period of 6 months to ensure adequate usage. The AFRIpads endline survey was conducted in March 2022, with a sample of 47 girls. Data from the baseline and endline survey was collected using the KOBO collect platform, an open source tool for mobile data collection.

Through our partnership with the Tanzania Red Cross, AFRIpads translated its survey tools into Kiswahili, expanding our ability to work with partners across Tanzania. The AFRIpads baseline and endline surveys collect data from the beneficiaries on the sanitation facilities, menstrual experiences, and the menstrual materials they use. Specifically, the AFRIpads surveys try to understand washing, drying and changing practices, as well as menstruation experiences such as pain, leaks, impact on daily life and school attendance of beneficiaries.

Key Findings

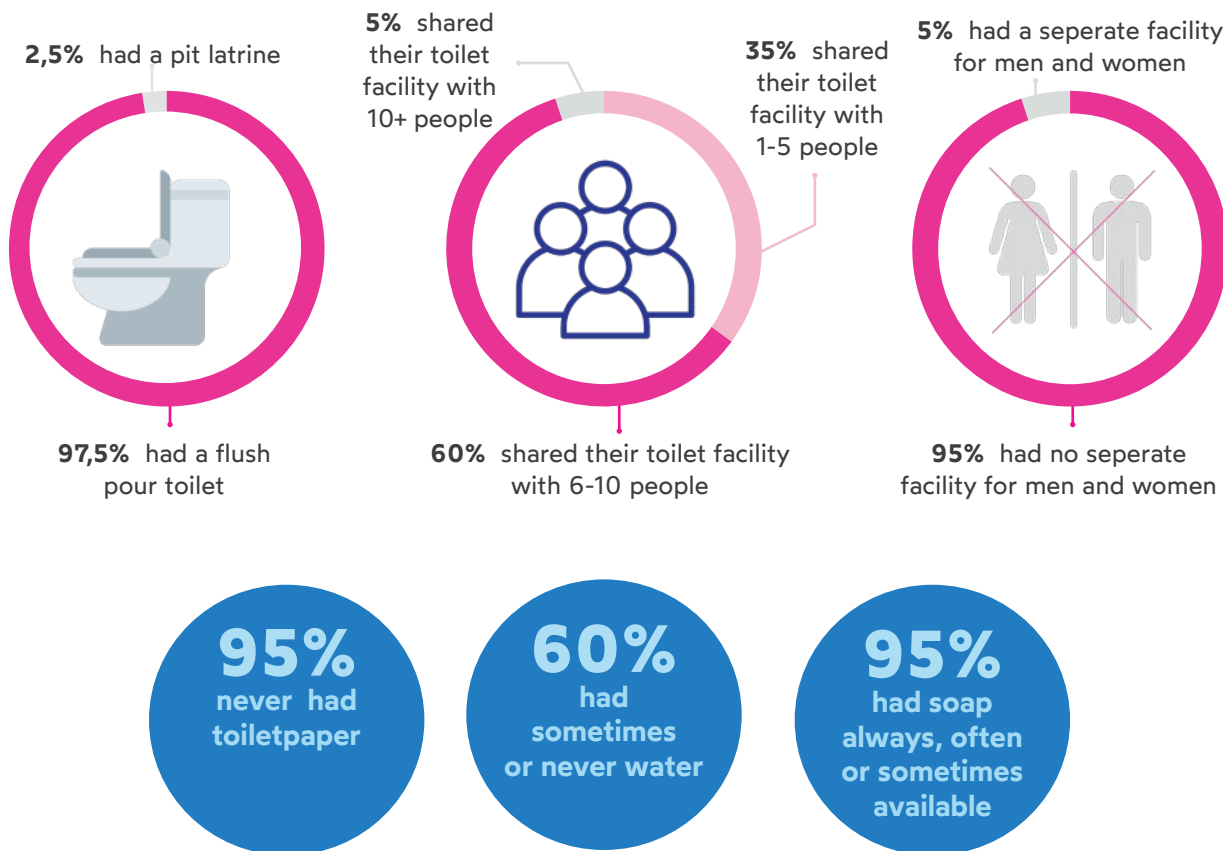
Data was collected from 120 beneficiaries at baseline who were between the ages of 11 and 16. Endline data was collected from 47 beneficiaries who were between the ages of 12 and 16. All beneficiaries were in primary school, in classes Primary 5 to 7. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the sample size at the endline was smaller than expected. However, the findings remain robust and insightful.



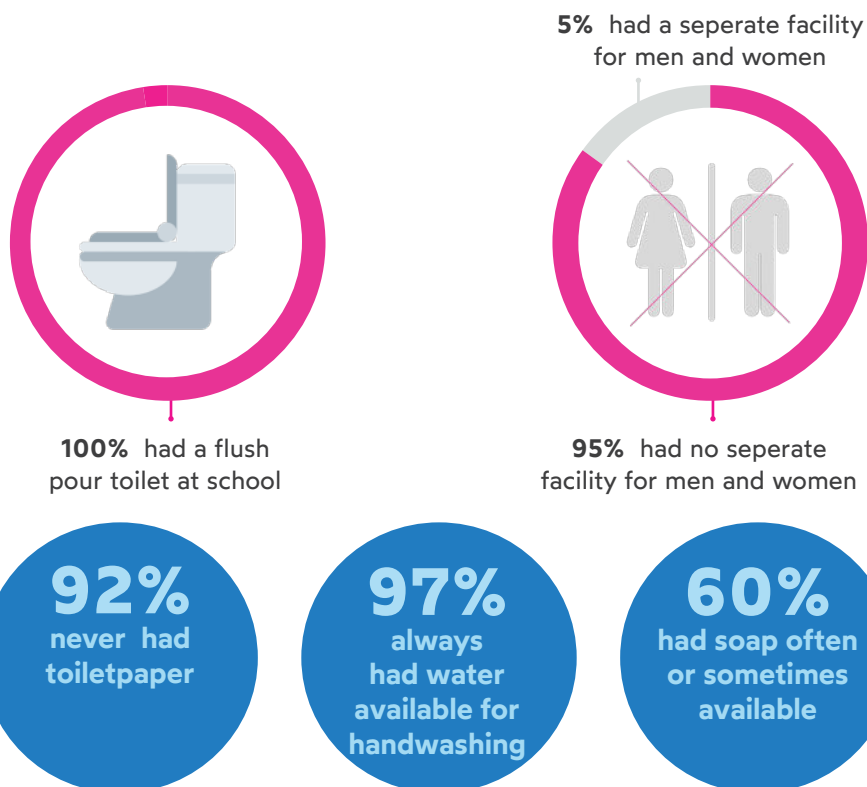
Sanitation Facilities

The AFRIpads baseline survey asks beneficiaries a range of questions about the sanitation facilities available to them at school and at home. This provides important insights into the environment in which beneficiaries manage their menstruation.

AT HOME



AT SCHOOL



Menstruation Knowledge

The AFRIpads baseline survey asks beneficiaries a range of questions about the sanitation facilities available to them at school and at home. This provides important insights into the environment in which beneficiaries manage their menstruation.



At baseline, the survey also asks respondents about their menstrual knowledge and from whom they obtain information. The baseline survey found that whilst **70%** of respondents felt they **had enough information about menstruation**, **30% did not**. **86%** of respondents **felt able to talk about menstruation with their family and friends**, with the majority of respondents obtaining information from their mother or friends, and some reporting that they receive menstrual health information from school teachers.



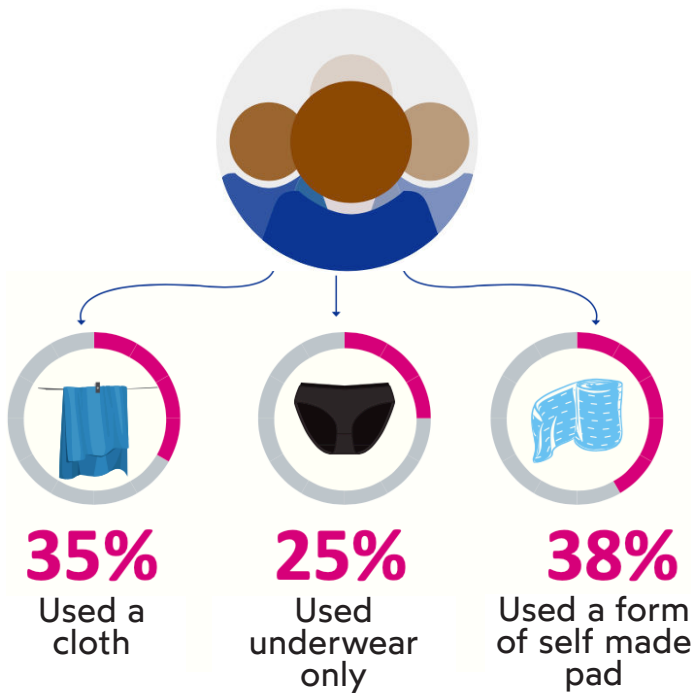
Both at baseline and endline, **the majority of respondents reported having their first menstrual period between the ages of 11-14**. The baseline also asked respondents if when they had their first period, they knew what it was. **60% of respondents did know**, however **significantly, 40% did not**. The majority of respondents, over **80%**, reported that **their mother was the first person they told about their menstrual period**, whilst other respondents reported telling their friends.



Product Experience

Baseline Experience

Materials used to manage menstruation:



Feedback about these materials:



99%

Were unsatisfied with this as a way to manage their menstruation



98%

Did not have enough menstrual products

When asked why they used these menstrual materials, the majority of respondents noted that this was because it was cheap, and because it was the only product available to them.



At the baseline, the majority of the respondents **(90%)** changed their products **2-3 times per day**, mostly inside their home.

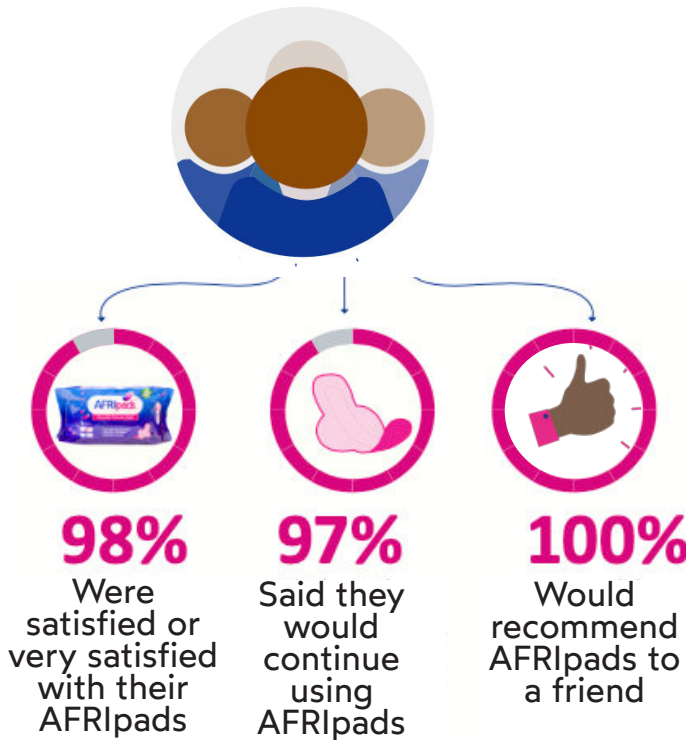
Half of the respondents **(50%)** reported when they are away from their home, **to not change their product at all**, mainly because they did not have any other products to change to, or because they lacked adequate washing facilities.

At the endline, the majority of respondents **(87%)** felt they **did not have enough underwear** to manage their period. Most respondents reported that they would want **at least 2 or more underwear**.

When asked what the most important qualities are for them in terms of donated menstrual materials, the respondents said that most importantly they need products which are reusable, comfortable, do not leak, and can be worn for several hours.

Endline Experience

Materials used to manage menstruation:



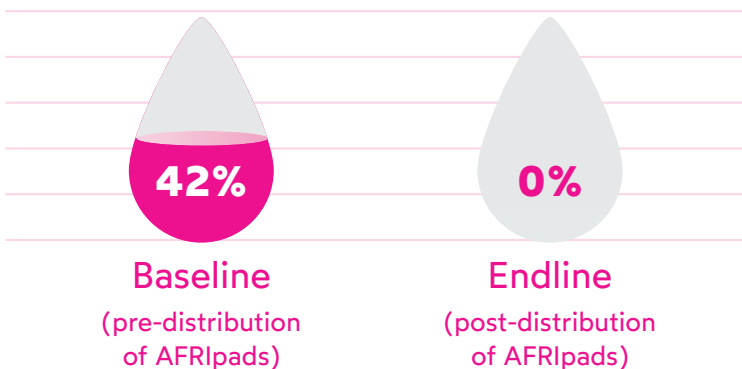
100%

Of users said AFRIpads underwear fit perfectly

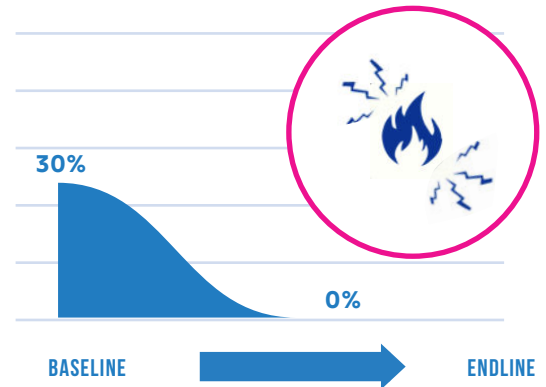


100%

Were very satisfied with the AFRIpads underwear

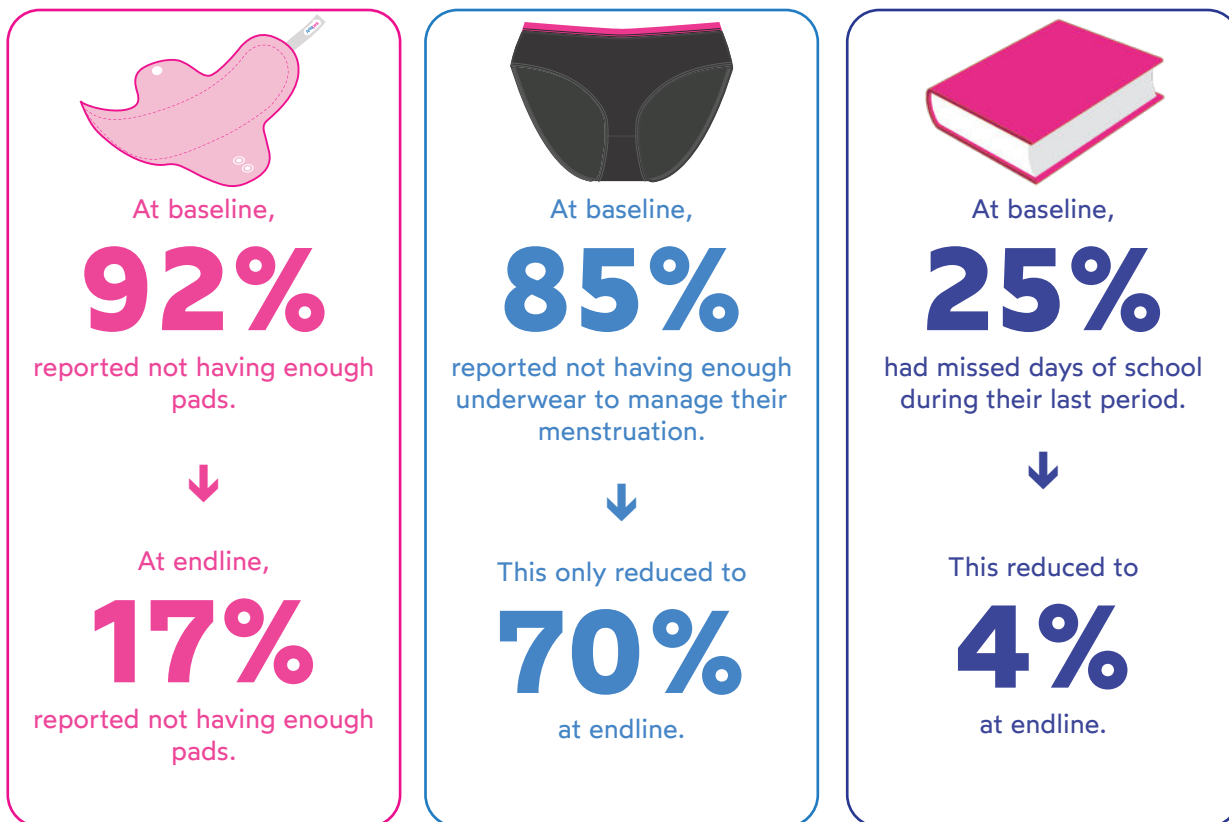


LEAKING: While 42% of beneficiaries sampled reported leaking at baseline, 0% reported leaking at endline.



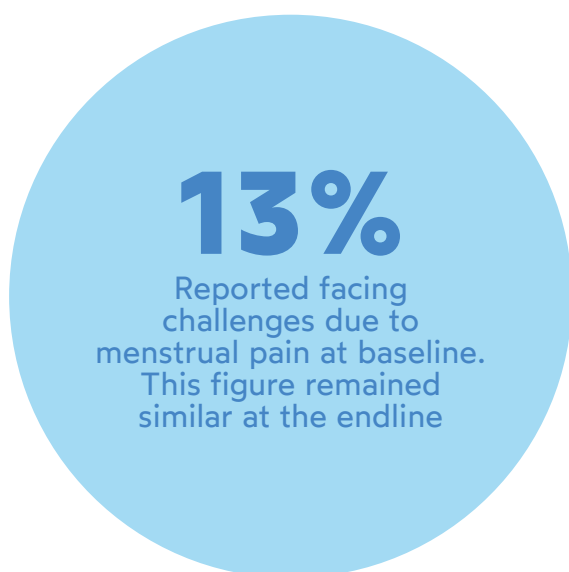
ITCHING & BURNING: At baseline, 30% of beneficiaries experienced itching and burning, 0% reported at endline.

Challenges faced during menstruation changed between baseline and endline



When asked why they missed school, at baseline respondents reported that this was because they did not have enough menstrual materials (18%), they were afraid people would know they were on their period due to leaking (16%) or they were not comfortable changing their pad at school (12.5%).

The respondents who reported not going to school at endline noted that this was due to menstrual pain, rather than a lack of access to menstrual products.



Recommendations:

- Although the number of girls reporting that they do not have enough pads dropped from over 90% at baseline to 17% at endline - some girls require more products to manage their menstruation than others.
- Although 85% of respondents reported not having enough underwear to manage their menstruation at baseline, this only reduced to 70% at endline. This indicates that school girls surveyed for this pilot project require more underwear.
- Challenges persist as a result of menstrual pain, which remained at the same level between baseline and endline. Interventions to manage menstrual pain would be beneficial.

Conclusion

The findings from this pilot demonstrate that reusable pads (AFRIPads) are highly acceptable to school girls in Tanzania. Beneficiaries reported a high rate of satisfaction (98%) with AFRIPads Menstrual Kits. 97% reported that they would continue using their AFRIPads, and 100% of the school girls reported that they would recommend AFRIPads to a friend. These findings validate that AFRIPads Menstrual Kits are an acceptable product choice for girls in the project site. The results show that this is due mainly to the level of protection and comfort the reusable pads offered.

Nonetheless, a significant number of girls reported wanting more pads and underwear to manage their menstruation, and menstrual pain continued being a significant challenge. This calls for additional investment in providing menstrual products for school girls in Tanzania, as well as suitable interventions to address menstrual pain.



