



Impact Report 2021



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2021 was a year of adjusting to a 'New Normal'. A new way of working and living to ensure we can continue to control the spread of COVID-19 around the world.

With many of the extreme preventative measures reduced, 2021 was an opportunity to relish in the possibility of meeting with our colleagues, partners and beneficiaries in person — albeit at a distance!

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1 Acronyms

IOM

International Organization for Migration

MHH

Menstrual Health and Hygiene

MHM

Menstrual Health Management

NGO

Non-Governmental Organization

R&D

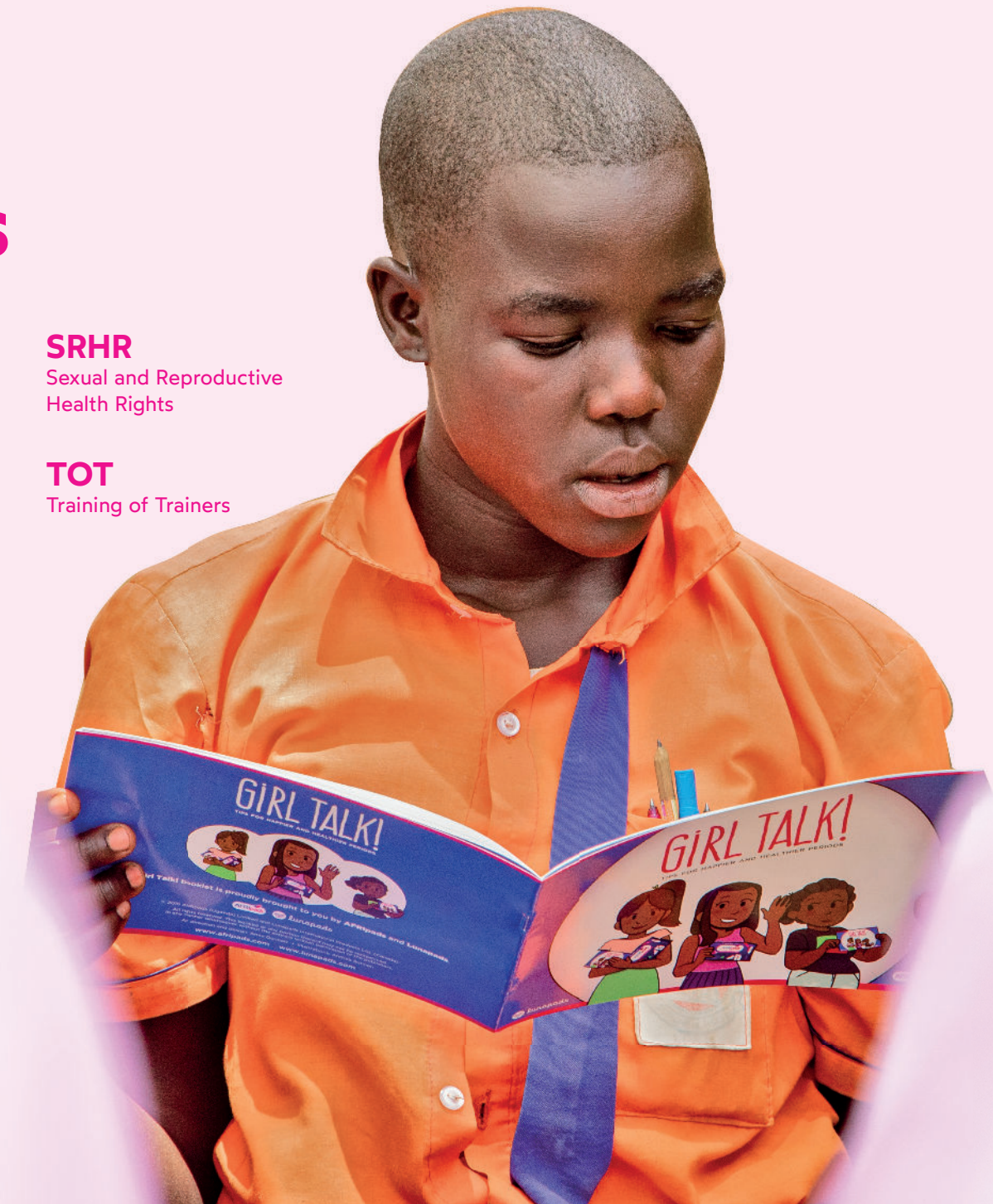
Research and Development

SRHR

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

TOT

Training of Trainers



2 Directors' Message

From our start-up beginnings in a rural Ugandan village, to navigating the challenges of turning our vision into a vibrant social business, **AFRipads has a long track-record of resilience and perseverance.** Against the world's collective hopes that the virus would fade away in 2021, the COVID pandemic carried on and mutated, reminding us that change is one of the only constants in life, and of the importance of adapting.

At AFRipads, we do this by listening, learning, reacting, and evolving. Throughout 2021, **we repeatedly turned to the beneficiaries we serve and our partners** in order to understand the changing landscape and their evolving Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) challenges and needs.

We jumped into action by adding a **new Partnerships & Evidence department at AFRipads** that is strictly focused on helping our partners deliver effective menstrual health programs. Our team has a strong background in research, monitoring, and evaluation, and training — paired with solid MHH expertise — and the added value of their contributions in 2021 shines through in examples like our pilot study with International Organization Migration (IOM) Mozambique featured in this report. **AFRipads is committed to building the evidence-base** for addressing menstrual health as a matter of human rights, and for holistic and appropriate MHH programming. Through our new department, and together through our partnerships, we know that we can help move the needle.

Over the course of the year, the AFRipads team spent time in Kenya, Malawi, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, seizing the opportunity when COVID transmission rates were low for much needed face-to-face interactions with our partners. And our **dedicated manufacturing team** proved once again what it means to be **an 'essential worker' in the midst of a global pandemic** by camping on-site at our factory throughout Uganda's 8-week lockdown in June and July. We are deeply indebted to our team for their commitment and resilience, as their work throughout these lockdowns prevented any global shortages or stockouts of our life-changing reusable menstrual kits.

Finally, in 2021 we brought our partnership capacity with the United Nations to a new level when AFRipads was awarded two Global Long-Term Agreements (LTAs) for the provision of our AFRipads Menstrual Kits to the global programs of IOM and UNFPA/UNICEF. These agreements demonstrate AFRipads' position as one of the **most trusted manufacturers and suppliers of reusable menstrual products** in humanitarian and development contexts worldwide. We look forward to leveraging these invaluable UN partnerships in 2022 to further grow and scale our impact around the world as we work together to advance menstrual health and dignity.



**Sophia and Paul
Grinvalds,
Co-Founders,
AFRipads Ltd**

**AFRipads is
a proud pioneer of
the MHH movement.
10 years ago 'menstrual
health' wasn't on the map.
We've made important gains,
but the decade ahead calls
for intensified effort and
investment to make
menstrual equity a
reality for all.**

...
**Sophia and Paul
Grinvalds,
Co-Founders,
AFRipads Ltd**



3 The AFRipads Holistic Approach

As an impact-driven organization, we know that menstrual health goes beyond menstrual products. At AFRipads, we've leveraged our over a decade of MHH experience to develop a range of additional resources to ensure we are offering an effective and long-lasting solution to managing menstruation. Our holistic MHH solution **now includes** an extensive MHH Education Curriculum, a Data Collection Toolkit and much more.

Our reusable Menstrual Kits are cost effective, waste reducing, quality certified and offer complete protection for a minimum of 12 months.



The AFRipads Data Collection Toolkit (2020) is a practical M&E tool designed for NGO practitioners working in the development or the humanitarian context, that want to better understand the menstrual hygiene practices, challenges, and needs of their target group.

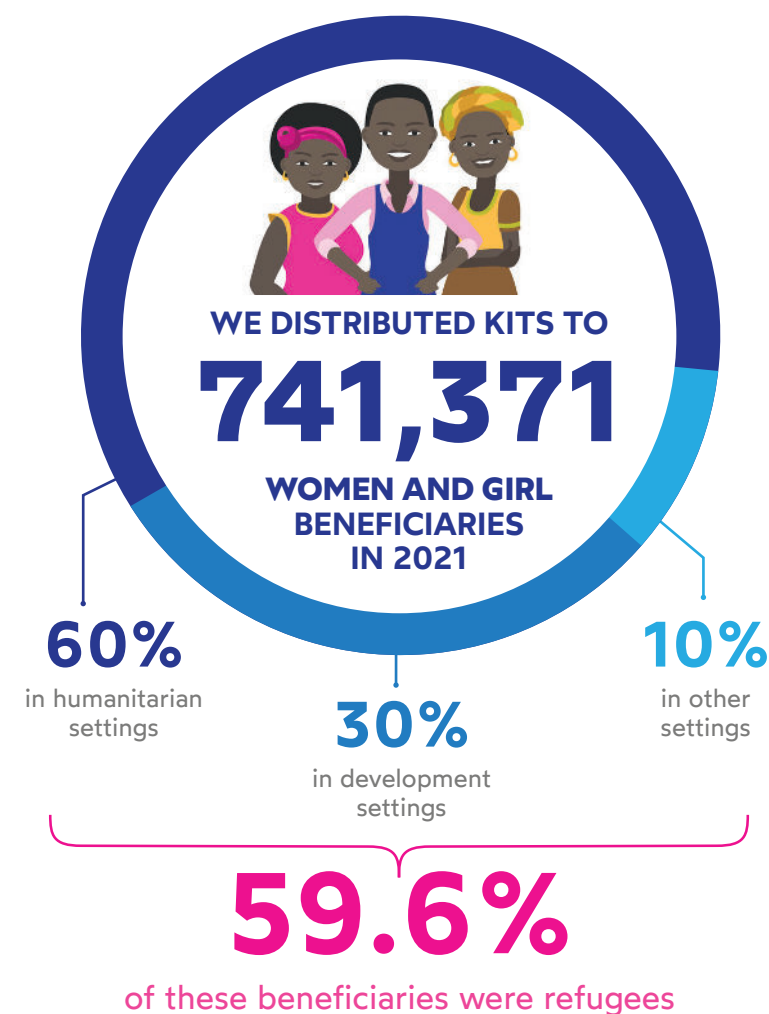
Education is key to breaking barriers, addressing taboos and improving MHH worldwide. This is why we actively support our partners with **Use and Care** materials, an **MHH Education Curriculum** and **Capacity Building services**.

Our innovative MHH solution drives change through products, education and evidence.



4 Our Impact in 2021

2021 was a great year at AFRipads for continuing to positively impact women and girls across Africa.



WE BELIEVE THERE IS STRENGTH IN COLLABORATION

Worked in
18
countries
in 2021

Partnered with
218
organizations
in 2021



Through the AFRipads Training of Trainers (TOT) we gave **MHH TRAINING CAPACITY** to 212 people

We expanded our training reach by working with **NEW PARTNERS** in

- West Africa
- Tanzania

Our data collection toolkit and surveys are now available in **3 LANGUAGES** English, Swahili and French



5 Building Menstrual Health Knowledge in Mozambique

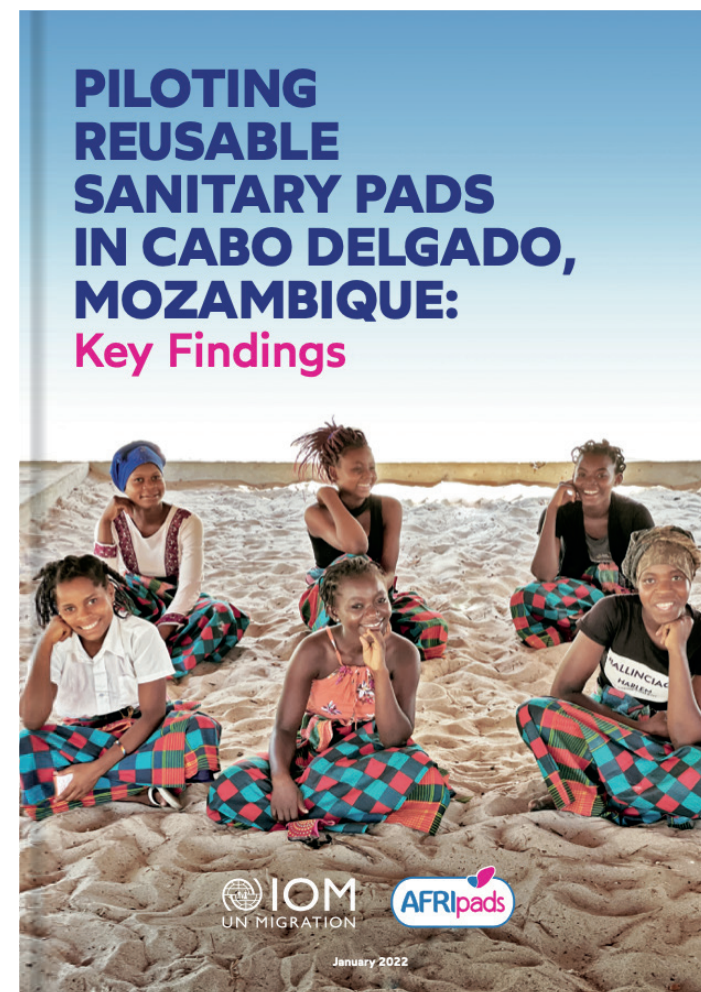
Here at AFRipads, we believe that the best way to build knowledge on Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) is to speak directly to women and girls about their own experiences.

We were therefore so excited when the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mozambique office engaged us to undertake a pilot study. The aim of the pilot study was to build better understanding of the acceptability and appropriateness of AFRipads [reusable sanitary pads](#) among women and adolescents aged 13-29 in Mozambique.

The [pilot study](#) began in August 2020 with AFRipads delivering an on-line Training of Trainers (ToT) session to IOM Mozambique 'It's Our Right' staff. These staff members then cascaded the training to 30 female change agents. The training included building knowledge on MHH and on the appropriate use and care of AFRipads reusable sanitary pads.

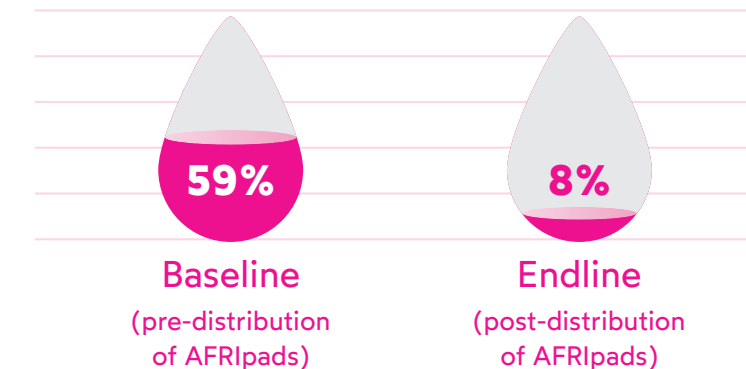
In December 2020, [IOM Mozambique](#) then distributed 1,000 AFRipads Standard 4-Pack Menstrual Kits to 450 beneficiaries in Montepuez district of Cabo Delgado province.

These trainings and distributions were combined with pre and post intervention surveys to measure acceptability of the product.

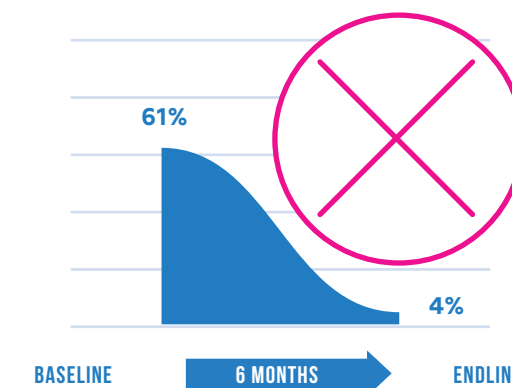
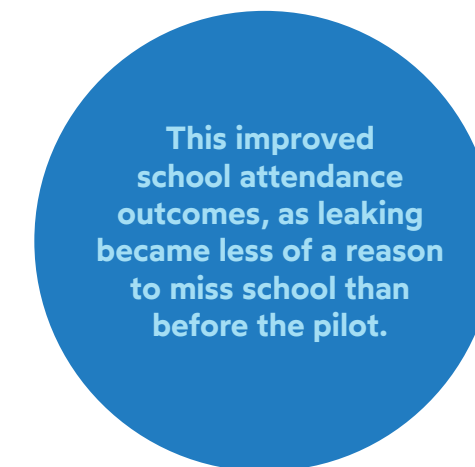
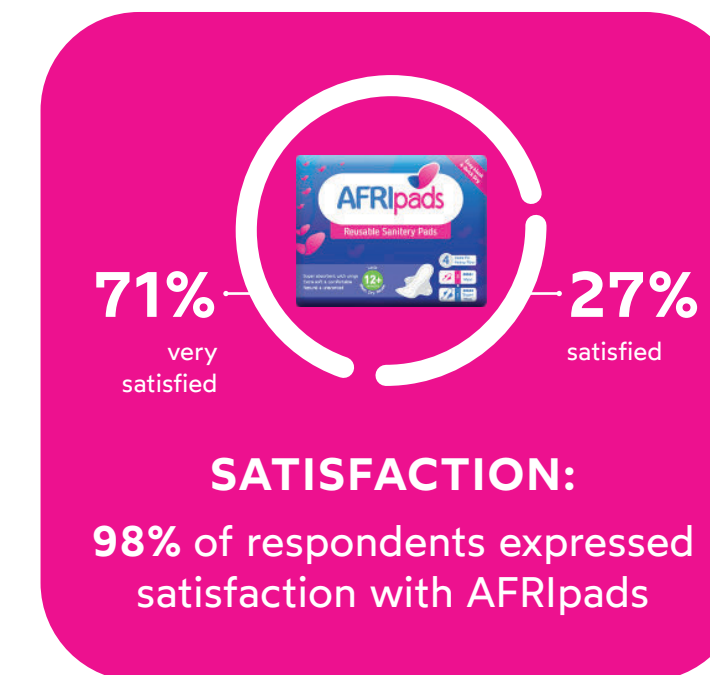


USE:
at baseline, 0% of the beneficiaries sampled used reusable sanitary pads. At endline, **98% of respondents were using their AFRipads reusable pads**

Key Findings



LEAKING: While 59% of beneficiaries sampled reported leaking at baseline, only 8% reported leaking at endline.



CHANGE IN PRODUCT USE:
at baseline, 61% of beneficiaries sampled used layers of **cloth to absorb their menstrual blood**. This reduced to 4% at endline.

6 The AFRIPads Foundation: *A story about life-changing impact.*

The AFRIPads Foundation has been our sister organization since we launched in 2010. Located in the Netherlands, the AFRIPads Foundation is a charity dedicated to raising funds to ensure the AFRIPads holistic menstrual solution can access women and girls residing in the most rural, hard to reach locations across Sub-Saharan Africa.

For donations to women, the AFRIPads Foundation provides the AFRIPads Standard 6-pack and one pair of AFRIPads Underwear. For donations to girls, the AFRIPads Foundation will provide our Schoolgirl Kit and one pair of AFRIPads Underwear. All donations also include our Use and Care guides and access to our educational materials.

Since launching in 2010, the funds raised by the AFRIPads Foundation have impacted over 60,000 school age girls and women.



Netherlands
AFRIPads Foundation



In recent years, the AFRIPads Foundation has shifted their focus to ensure their fundraising efforts provide a menstrual solution to a demographic of girls who may be left behind by humanitarian or developmental menstrual health interventions. These include girls living on the streets, girls with disabilities and girls who have been subject to early marriage.

In July 2021, a particularly alarming story was told on Uganda's national TV channel, NBS TV. The news coverage highlighted a rise of girls exchanging sex for menstrual pads in the Kasese district of Uganda. This devastating reality was in response to girls being unable to afford, or access, menstrual pads in the COVID-19 lockdown. Furthermore, due to a lack of family planning education, this was also leading to a rise in teenage pregnancies - and maternal deaths due to unsafe abortions.

After becoming aware of this situation, the AFRIPads Foundation partnered with Reach a Hand Uganda (RAHU) and the National Women's Council to ensure an immediate donation could be made to the girls in the community who had been forced to surrender their bodies in order to have a dignified period. On 29 July 2021, over 800 teenage mothers and girls in Kasese, in the Rwenzori Region of South-western Uganda received an annual supply of AFRIPads Menstrual Kits and AFRIPads Underwear.



As a mother and a woman leader of Uganda it's disheartening to hear that girls lack sanitary towels and perpetrators have taken it as an advantage on their side to violate their rights by offering small money and defiling our young girls.

Lack of sanitary towels and with little knowledge of SRHR has made our girls fall victims of these perpetrators. It has also led to sexually transmitted diseases, early pregnancies and forced marriages. I call upon mothers of Uganda to take note that the lack of sanitary towels is a social risk to our girls. Girls risk being violated and thus their families should indulge themselves in socio - economic activities that can increase household incomes which can help provide needs of the family as sanitary towels to the girls. The women council leaders should take up the role of passing SRHR information to the girls and mothers. We hope this will utilize the women council structures to tap into information for their benefits on social empowerment.

This will help reduce the risks of our girls being violated.

Hajjat Farida Kibowa, Chairperson, National Women's Council, during the donation



enterprise

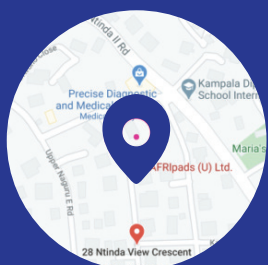
dedicated manufacturing and globally
supplying sanitary pads as a cost-effective,
sustainable solution.

A thought leader

Thank you!

We look forward to sharing
exciting updates to our
products, education and data
collection toolkits.

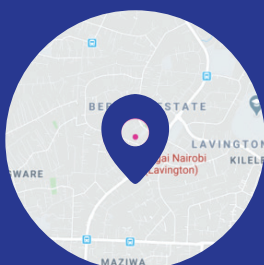
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