

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

AFRIPADS FOUNDATION



www.afripadsfoundation.org/

OUR MISSION

Across East Africa, many girls miss school every month simply because they do not have access to menstrual products. AFRipads Foundation is breaking this cycle. We believe that menstruation should never be a barrier to education, self-esteem, or the opportunity to build a brighter future.

AFRipads Foundation raises funds to reduce school absenteeism among girls in East Africa. We do this by providing the most vulnerable girls with high-quality, reusable AFRipads kits, together with essential education on menstrual health.

41.904 kits

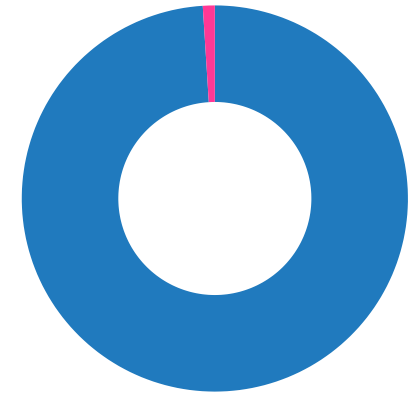
Distributed in 2025

24 months

lifespan of each reusable pad kit

100%

locally manufactured



99%

of all income received in 2025 was spent directly on AFRipads Foundation's mission: providing menstrual products and menstrual health education to schoolgirls across Africa.

OUR WHY

- Access for everyone: Worldwide, more than 500 million women and girls lack access to menstrual products. In Africa, an estimated 66% of women cannot afford them.
- Education comes first: Without adequate menstrual products, girls miss an average of three school days every month. We help ensure they can reach their full academic potential.
- Local impact: All of our kits are manufactured locally in Uganda by the social enterprise AFRipads Ltd. In doing so, we not only support girls, but also strengthen the local economy and create sustainable employment.
- More than just a product: Through our Girl Talk programme, we provide education that helps break down taboos and equips girls with the knowledge and confidence they need to take charge of their future.



A YEAR OF CHANGE

Dear reader, partners and donors,

Thank you for reading our 2025 annual report. This has been a year of change and renewed energy for AFRIpads Foundation, marked by the appointment of a new Board. After more than fifteen years of dedicated service, Sanne Bolkenstein and Nicoline Evers stepped down from their roles as Chair and Treasurer/Secretary respectively.

It is therefore with great pride and enthusiasm that I write this foreword for the first time as the Foundation's new Chair.

Together with Laura Honders, Lucas Gmelig and Hans Spaan, I form the Foundation's renewed voluntary Board. This transition has provided AFRIpads Foundation with a refreshed yet stable foundation from which we can continue advancing our mission well into the future.

We are immensely grateful to Sanne and Nicoline for everything they have contributed over the past fifteen years. Without their dedication, AFRIpads Foundation would not be where it is today. We are delighted that they will continue to remain closely involved with both our work and our mission.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank them personally for everything they have done for schoolgirls across East Africa since the Foundation was established.

Our impact in 2025

Our mission remains unchanged: to ensure that schoolgirls across Africa can manage their periods with dignity and confidence, allowing them to make the very most of their education.

We believe that menstruation should never be a barrier to education, self-esteem or future opportunities. Yet throughout East Africa, countless girls miss school every month simply because they do not have access to menstrual products.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors and partners, we distributed an incredible 41,904 menstrual kits during 2025.

By providing the most vulnerable girls with high-quality reusable AFRIpads kits, together with menstrual health education through our Girl Talk programme, we effectively reduce school absenteeism while helping to break deeply rooted taboos surrounding menstruation.

An inspiring visit to Uganda

Although this report looks back on the achievements of 2025, I would also like to share that Laura and I travelled to Uganda in March 2026.

The visit left a profound impression on both of us. We witnessed first-hand the remarkable work made possible through our close partnership with AFRIpads Ltd. The team in Uganda deserves tremendous recognition for their dedication and professionalism. You can read more about their work on page 8.

Looking ahead

Supported by our proven approach and our extensive network, we look to the future with confidence. Over the coming year we will focus on securing the Foundation's long-term continuity through multi-year partnerships. At the same time, we will remain agile so that we can respond quickly to the rapidly changing economic and geopolitical landscape across East Africa.

As long as poor menstrual hygiene and the lack of menstrual products continue to prevent young women from reaching their full personal and academic potential, AFRIpads Foundation will remain fully committed to its mission.

I am truly honoured to serve as Chair during the coming year. Together, we are building a future in which menstruation is no longer an obstacle to success.

On behalf of the entire Board, thank you sincerely for your invaluable support.



Esme van der Ven

BOARD & ORGANISATION

The year 2025 marked an important period of organisational transition and continued professionalisation for AFRIpads Foundation. With the completion of the official registration of the new Board with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce the Foundation's new governance structure was formally established.

BOARD COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of AFRIpads Foundation consists of four dedicated volunteers who generously contribute their time and expertise in support of the Foundation's mission. Responsibilities are divided as follows:

- Esmée van der Ven – Chair
- Lucas Gmelig – Treasurer
- Laura Honders – Secretary & Communications
- Hans Spaan – Partnerships & Donor Relations

PROFESSIONALISATION & LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

In addition to the formal Board transition, considerable effort was invested throughout 2025 in further professionalising the Foundation's internal organisation. The primary objective was to safeguard the Foundation's long-term continuity.

A key focus was to reduce dependency on individual Board members by embedding operational and organisational responsibilities within the governance structure itself and clearly assigning them to specific Board roles.

Significant progress was made in several areas, including:

- Knowledge Transfer & Continuity: Processes, documentation and communication procedures have been organised and documented to ensure that any future Board transition can take place efficiently, without loss of knowledge or organisational continuity.
- Postal address: the Foundation now operates with its own dedicated central postal address, independent of the private addresses of Board members.

Thanks to these professionalisation efforts, AFRIpads Foundation now has a solid and future-proof organisational foundation from which it can continue expanding its impact in the years ahead.



STRONGER TOGETHER

We believe that lasting impact can only be achieved by working together. During 2025, we further strengthened our relationships with strategic partners and our generous community of donors.

OUR VALUED DONORS & PARTNERS

We are deeply grateful for the support of our partners and the many individual donors who stand behind our mission. We would especially like to acknowledge:

- Naiad Foundation (formerly Victrix Foundation) – For their indispensable and substantial contribution to our projects.
- Pharus Foundation – For making a tremendous difference in schools through their targeted support.
- Daniela Ryf Foundation – For helping us reach girls and young women living in vulnerable communities.
- Stichting EER & Hofstee Foundation – For their valuable multi-year partnership, enabling us to provide continuity and create lasting impact within the communities we serve.

In addition, we would like to thank the many loyal private initiatives and individual donors who continue to support our work year after year. Together, we are making a real difference.

SPOTLIGHT:

WHY OUR DONORS SUPPORT OUR MISSION

The success of AFRIpads Foundation is driven by the passion and commitment of our supporters.

ALEX GILBERT

A wonderful example is Alex Gilbert, who raises funds every year through his popular Winterval Pub Quiz. We asked Alex what motivates him to support AFRIpads Foundation.

What was the 'aha moment' or specific reason that led you to support AFRIpads?

"I was told about it through a humanist (non-religious) charity and it totally captured both me and many of the women in my life. I have said many times that it is one of the best examples of 'triple bottom line' charity work that I have ever seen. Truly fantastic stuff!"

Why do you feel it is important that this specific cause (menstrual health and education) receives more global attention?

"The key to solving so many of the world's problems is educating young women. That can't happen if they are disproportionately affected during their school years. We have to give them exactly the same chance as men."

What makes your annual Winterval pub quiz such a successful charity event?

"My guests have really 'bought in' to the Afripads story and so many have attended every event since the start. It's a fun night: nothing too formal or serious, and people seem to love it."



STORIES THAT MATTER

The large-scale impact achieved by AFRIpads Foundation in 2025 was made possible through the strategic project funding provided by our core partners. Their substantial, multi-year support enables our local implementation partners to create meaningful and lasting change that extends far beyond the distribution of menstrual products alone. Local project reports from 2025 continue to highlight the harsh reality of menstrual poverty. In many communities, girls are still forced to rely on unsafe alternatives such as leaves, old mattresses or scraps of cloth during their periods. Together with our donors, we are creating lasting change. Below, we highlight three inspiring examples of projects that were made possible through the collective support of our partners and donors.

NO MORE MISSED SCHOOLDAYS

For 18-year-old Aisha, who lives in the Bukoto slum area of Kampala, Uganda, menstruation used to be a time of anxiety and isolation. Disposable sanitary pads were simply unaffordable, and reliable information about menstrual health was virtually non-existent. “I always felt deeply ashamed whenever I had my period,” Aisha recalls. Afraid of leaking through her clothes and being ridiculed by classmates, she often felt she had no choice but to stay home from school.

Thanks to the support of one of our loyal donors, our local partner Joy for Children Uganda was able to change this reality. Together, they distributed 800 School Girl Kits, each including reusable menstrual pads, additional underwear and educational information materials. Alongside her peers, Aisha participated in interactive learning sessions where menstruation and menstrual hygiene were discussed openly and without stigma. “The visual teaching materials made everything so easy to understand,” she explains. “For the first time, I felt comfortable asking all the questions I’d always wanted to ask.”

Today, Aisha has regained her confidence. She knows how to care for her body and, thanks to her reusable AFRIpads kit, she no longer misses school because of her period. For Aisha, menstruation is no longer a barrier—it has become a normal and manageable part of everyday life.



PERIOD POVERTY

For girls and young women living in remote communities and refugee settlements, access to safe menstrual hygiene remains an enormous challenge. Without running water or financial resources, monthly isolation is often an unavoidable reality.

Thanks to the generous support of the Victrix Foundation (now the Naiad Foundation), we were able to distribute thousands of reusable AFRIpads kits during 2025 through local partners including Toto Africa and the World Action Fund.

These distributions represent far more than emergency assistance. They restore dignity. Each reusable AFRIpads kit lasts for at least twelve months, relieving girls of a significant financial and emotional burden.

One participant shared her reaction after receiving her kit: "Before this, we had to improvise with old pieces of cloth or even leaves. It was painful and often caused infections. With these soft, washable pads, I finally feel clean and safe again. We are no longer excluded."

By deliberately reaching the most vulnerable communities, we ensure that our programmes are inclusive and that even girls in the most challenging circumstances gain access to both menstrual products and life-changing education.



BREAKING THE TABOO

For many years, menstruation was simply not discussed in the schools of Namayumba Sub-county, Uganda.

Girls who started menstruating carried a heavy burden of embarrassment and silence. Together with our local partner Raising Teenagers Uganda, and thanks to the generous support of the Hofstee Foundation, we tackled this taboo at its source. Across four primary schools, we distributed 250 reusable menstrual kits.

But the most profound change came through education. Interactive learning sessions helped girls better understand their own bodies, supported by clear visual teaching materials and open discussion. The impact extends far beyond the classroom. Following one of the sessions, 13-year-old Grace, a pupil at Building Tomorrow Primary School, proudly said: "I feel so confident now that I'm going to teach everything I've learned today to my friends who don't attend our school."

By providing girls with both high-quality menstrual products and the knowledge to use them with confidence, we are helping transform a culture of shame into one of dignity, confidence and empowerment.

OUR PARTNERSHIP IN UGANDA

Our impact begins at the source: the social enterprise AFRIpads Ltd. in Uganda

We are proud of our close partnership with AFRIpads Ltd. Through their locally manufactured reusable menstrual kits, we can be confident that we provide girls with products of the highest quality while simultaneously supporting the local economy and creating sustainable employment opportunities.

Special recognition goes to the dedicated local team in Uganda.

They are responsible not only for distributing the kits to schools and delivering the Girl Talk educational sessions, but also for ensuring that the raw materials required for production arrive at the factory on time so that new kits can be manufactured without interruption.

Their in-depth knowledge of local communities throughout East and Southern Africa, combined with their practical, hands-on approach, ensures that every kit reaches the girls who need it most. Without their meticulous logistical planning, operational expertise and unwavering commitment, our work simply would not be possible.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2025

As a recognised Public Benefit Organisation (ANBI), AFRIpads Foundation is committed to maintaining the highest standards of financial transparency.

Our organisational structure is specifically designed to ensure that the funds entrusted to us are translated into meaningful impact as directly as possible.

By keeping operational overhead to an absolute minimum and working closely with our production partner, AFRIpads Ltd., we ensure that donations are used primarily to provide reusable menstrual kits and the accompanying Girl Talk menstrual health education programme.

The financial overview below provides a clear picture of both the origin and the allocation of all funds received during the 2025 financial year.

More than 99% of all income was spent directly on the Foundation's charitable mission. The members of the Board serve on a voluntary basis and receive no remuneration. Organisational expenses consist solely of essential operating costs incurred by the Foundation, including insurance, ANBI registration, website hosting and domain management, as well as maintaining a registered business postal address and business banking facilities.

EURO ACCOUNT

EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
Description	Amount	Description	Amount
Organisational expenses	€ 2.468,19	Donations via PayPal	€5.439,21
AFRIpads kits	€319.022,92	Income from foundations and charitable organisations	€225.064,00
		Private donations and interest income	€34.737,13
Total	€321.491,51	Total	€262.791,13
Balance January 1st 2025	€96.055,95		
Balance December 31st 2025	€37.307,08		

USD ACCOUNT

EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
Description	Amount	Description	Amount
		Interest	\$ 48,48
Total	\$ 0,00	Total	\$ 48,48
Balance January 1st 2025	\$3.416,02		
Balance December 31st 2025	\$3.464,50		

LOOKING AHEAD

With the successful distribution of 41,904 reusable menstrual kits in 2025, AFRipads Foundation has once again demonstrated that its model and strong network of local partners can deliver meaningful impact, even in a rapidly changing environment.

The successful transition within the Board and the further professionalisation of the organisation have provided a clear strategic focus and a solid, future-ready foundation for continued growth.

Our strategy for the coming year and beyond is built around two key priorities.

- **Securing Long-Term Continuity Through Multi-Year Partnerships:** The valuable long-term relationships we have established with organisations such as the EER Foundation and the Hofstee Foundation demonstrate how essential stability is to achieving sustainable impact.
- **During 2026, we will actively seek to build additional multi-year partnerships with institutional donors, enabling us to provide long-term support for schools and communities and ensuring the continuity of our programmes.**
- **Remaining Flexible in a Dynamic Environment:** The geopolitical and economic realities across East Africa—including inflation and the logistical challenges associated with Uganda's upcoming elections—require an organisation that is both resilient and adaptable.
- **Thanks to the operational strength of our local team and the flexibility of our manufacturing partner, we are able to respond quickly whenever changing circumstances require us to do so.**

Our ambition remains as strong as ever. As long as inadequate menstrual hygiene and the lack of access to menstrual products continue to prevent young women from reaching their full personal and academic potential, AFRipads Foundation will remain unwavering in its commitment to creating lasting change.

Together with our generous donors, committed partners and dedicated supporters, we will continue building a future in which menstruation is never again a barrier to education, opportunity or success.

