

“Periods do not go on lockdown” –Menstrual Health Management for adolescent girls during lockdown.

COVID-19 has created a severe economic shock, mostly in the form of a loss of income, particularly for the most vulnerable in both rural and urban areas who depend on casual labour, petty trading and other informal activities that are currently affected by the country-wide lockdown. The World Health Organization (WHO) projected a worsening situation because of the potential impact of local transmission of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe, which it ranked between “very bad” and “catastrophic”. Vulnerable households in rural areas face poor hygiene and sanitation conditions. More than 80% of the urban population rely on self-employment and income sources like vending, trading and remittances. These income-generating activities are sensitive to the measures put in place to prevent and limit the outbreak of COVID-19, meaning that households dependent on those sources are deprived of potential income.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased health risks to adolescent girls and women who menstruate as access to sanitary ware and other resources such as water and soap has been limited. Caregivers of adolescent girls who are menstruating are not able to afford sanitary ware and other hygiene products needed during menstruation. An informal trading mother of two girls aged fifteen and eighteen said, “We are struggling financially, we have had to abandon our mini markets due to the lockdown restrictions and this has left us unable to purchase sanitary pads, we are even struggling to buy soap to clean ourselves”. The situation in Bulawayo is further exacerbated by severe water rationing which is due to low water levels in the dams that supply water to the city.

Furthermore, adolescent girls and young women in rural Matobo's access to sanitary ware has worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The people of Matobo district largely rely on commodities imported from South Africa to supply their stores and remittances from family in South Africa for their livelihoods. However, the lockdown and border closures has caused supply disruptions and price hikes. One of our program participants said “Due to COVID-19 sanitary products are scarce and shops in rural areas are empty”. When sanitary products are hard to obtain, individuals may be forced to using unhygienic alternatives that may increase risk of reproductive and urinary tract infections.

The Project, Periods do not go on lockdown seeks to assist the adolescent girls and young women in both urban Bulawayo and rural Matobo disadvantaged by the COVID-19 pandemic and effects to contain it. The project will provide each participant with 2 packets of 10 hypo allergic sanitary pads, 1 bar of bathing soap and 1kg of washing powder. In its inception the project will also provide each participant with a cotton washing towel and 2 cotton under pants. The project will also conduct health talks at every monthly distribution to ensure that the participants have access to reliable information and support around Menstrual Health Management and other Sexual Reproductive Health issues. The main aim of this project is to ensure access to sanitary ware by adolescent girls and young women in rural Matobo and urban Bulawayo affected by COVID-19 and measures to contain it.

Budget

Item	Quantity	Unit Costs (\$)	Total Cost	
Disposable Sanitary Pads 10s pack	2400	1	2400	Disposable sanitary pads will be purchased on a monthly basis for 6 months to distribute to 200 girls in both Matobo and Bulawayo. Each recipient will receive 2 packs.
Bar of Bathing soap	1200	0.6	720	Bathing soap will be purchased on a monthly basis for 6 months to distribute to 200 girls in Matobo and Bulawayo. Each recipient will receive 1 bar of bathing soap.
1kg Washing soap	1200	1.5	1800	Washing powder will be purchased on a monthly basis for 6 months to distribute to 200 girls in Matobo and Bulawayo. Each recipient will receive a 1kg packet of washing powder.
Face towels	200	2	400	Face towels to distribute to 200 girls in Matobo will be purchased at the beginning of the program. Each recipient will receive 1 face towel.
Cotton panties	400	1.5	600	Cotton panties will be purchased to distribute to 200 girls in Matobo and Bulawayo. Each recipient will receive 2 panties.
Fuel for travel to distribute in Matobo	300	1.2	360	The program staff will travel to Matobo district to distribute the materials every month for 6 months.
	9	120	144	The program staff will around Bulawayo to distribute the materials every month for 6 months.
Program staff allowances	6	200	1200	The Program staff will receive a monthly allowance for coordinating the program activities
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