



Femme International is building a world where no one is limited by their bodies natural cycle.

OVERVIEW.

Femme International is a Canadian & Tanzanian NGO dedicated to empowering women & girls through health education, with a specific focus on menstrual health & hygiene.

Femme International was founded in 2013 to address the critical lack of menstrual health education available to young girls in East Africa, with an overarching goal of breaking down the persistent menstrual taboo.

Femme developed an education-based intervention that delivers comprehensive health education workshops to women and girls, as well as provides them with reusable menstrual products.

CORE VALUES.

Collaboration → Menstruation is a globally shared issue & Femme is committed to sharing resources with partners.

Education → Femme uses education as a tool to change beliefs, behaviour and break taboos.

Research → Collecting data to accurately measure menstrual health in East Africa

Advocate → Use experiences to advocate for change at policy level.

THE TWENDE PROJECT.

The Twende Project aims to provide access women access to safe and affordable menstrual products at the community level – directly to the last mile.

Femme will train local women to become sales agents in their communities, where they will sell a variety of menstrual products. The sales agents will earn commission on each product sold, earning them income.



In addition to selling the menstrual products, sales agents will also host educational seminars to teach women the importance of safe menstrual management.

Education will empower women to understand how their bodies work, and why safe menstrual products play a critical role in their overall health and well being.



Femme International uses education and conversation to empower women and girls.

Femme International believes that health education is a right, and by breaking the globally persistent menstrual taboo, we can unleash a generation of strong, confident and healthy women.



The Twende Project will target women living in rural communities in remote areas of Tanzania and Kenya.

Femme will pilot various payment schemes to ensure that the program is accessible to every woman who decides to invest in a menstrual product.

PRODUCTS.

The Twende Project will work with a variety of menstrual products to ensure that women have the ability to choose the product that they feel the most comfortable using.

Products will include menstrual cups, reusable pads, and will eventually expand to include additional SRH products, based off the needs of women in the community. These may include soap, family planning products, etc.



Methodology.

Community-based meetings and workshops: community meetings will be the initial entry point to communities, where Femme will be introduced and The Twende Project explained. It will provide a platform to talk about the issues surrounding menstruation, and to both sensitise and educate gatekeepers, as well as rouse interest in the project and recruit potential sales agents. Community workshops will be comprehensive educational sessions where they will be introduced to the menstrual products being offered for sale. It will be an opportunity to sign them up for payment schemes, and, in the initial roll-out phase, learn more about their needs.

The Twende Project will make essential health products available to women at the last mile.



Menstrual cups are made of surgical grade silicone, and are inserted into the vagina to collect, rather than absorb, menstrual fluid. They can be worn for up to 12 hours, before being emptied, rinsed, and re-inserted. Menstrual cups can be re-used for up to ten years.

Menstrual cups require very little water to maintain and are safer for a woman's body than tampons. Femme has seen tremendous success with menstrual cups in East Africa since 2013.

BREAKING THE TABOO.

The menstrual taboo is persistent and disruptive to women's lives in East Africa, particularly in remote rural communities. These taboos are fueled by a lack of education and understanding of what the menstrual cycle is, which leads to women feeling shame during their cycle. It also leads to menstrual products not being easily accessible.

Community outreach and educational workshops will bring menstrual health to the forefront and start important conversations. The sessions will normalize the topic of menstruation and break down the taboo.

The Twende Project is tackling the menstrual taboo through education and through product availability.

