



## IMPACT REPORT

### THE TWaweZA PROGRAM

This year, Femme re-branded our education program in East Africa to **The Twaweza Program**. In Swahili, “twaweza” means “we can”, because we believe that this is a problem we can fix.

The curriculum shares the same core message as our previous program, but was expanded to include additional topics, based off our experiences and learnings since 2013.

The curriculum goes beyond menstrual health and hygiene to include other aspects of reproductive health and empowerment. The program aims to provide beneficiaries with a comprehensive education about their personal health, and gives them the tools to manage their bodies safely.

Every beneficiary of the Twaweza Program received a Femme Kit – which includes a reusable menstrual product: either reusable pads or a menstrual cup.

**95% of girls report using their reusable pads, and being satisfied with the absorbency, feel, and quality.**

When a 6-week check-in is conducted, menstrual cup uptake is at 70% among adolescent girls.

A very encouraging result was a nearly 20% decrease in the use of fabric-based menstrual products, which tells us that even if girls are not using the product Femme distributed, our workshops have had a significant impact on their ability to make safe, healthy choices when managing their periods.

Deliberate absenteeism during menstruation is an oft-touted statistic, but there is much more to it than simple absenteeism.

**After 6 months, schoolgirls reported an overall 50% increase in attendance, which is incredible. Additionally, there was a nearly 60% increase in girls staying at school all day, and not leaving early.**

Even more exciting was that the Twaweza Program also effectively addresses the reasons girls miss school or leave early – pain, shame, lack of product, or fear of leaking all showed considerable improvement.



***In 2017, Femme International invested in re-developing our Monitoring & Evaluation Framework, and we are excited to share these results.***



***Altogether, these are promising and powerful results that demonstrate Femme’s program is very effective at targeting numerous aspects that come together to result in a significant improvement in schoolgirls’ quality of life.***

# ATTENDANCE VERSUS PARTICIPATION

The Twaweza Program uses an education-based approach, and has an overall goal of improving the quality of life of its beneficiaries. Therefore, it is essential to measure impact beyond school attendance, but looking rather at participation in the classroom.

- **71.8%** of girls are comfortable sitting at their desks during menstruation, meaning they are better able to concentrate, pay attention in school, and participate in school activities.
- **65%** of girls attribute an increase in school performance to their increase confidence and the Twaweza Program.
- **71.8%** of schoolgirls report not missing out on any aspects of their lives due to menstruation, an incredible result.

Even more exciting was that the Twaweza Program also effectively addresses the reasons girls miss school or leave early – pain, shame, lack of product, or fear of leaking all showed considerable improvement.

This increases girls' educational achievement, makes them more likely to graduate and attend post-secondary education, and increases their financial independence and capacity to have and make choices in throughout their lives.

The Twaweza Program not only affects confidence and academic performance, but has direct effects on beneficiaries' overall reproductive health. Unhealthy, unhygienic practices and product choice can severely affect girls' health and wellbeing. From itching and chafing, to more RTIs, to an increased risk of STIs and HIV, poor MHM practices and product choice have long-term health effects.

**Using an 8-symptom checklist, girls are 1.5 times less likely to report 2 or more symptoms.**



*“My name is Emily, I’m a Form 3 student from Ghona Secondary School, and I’m 16 years old. I was among the group of students who participated in Femme’s Twaweza Program. I received a Femme Kit with a menstrual cup inside, I was happy and excited to have and use the cup for the first time. I found the cup easy to use because I was so interested and focused during the training. I fell in love with the cup because it doesn’t cause me any rashes or itching. Compared to when I was using disposable pads, I’m now staying in class for the full time without worrying.”*

## BREAKING THE TABOO

Taboos and stigma severely hamper girls' ability to participate and manage their periods, as well as their self-esteem and coping ability. One of Femme's overarching goals is to break down the persistent menstrual taboo that so often limits women and girls. The Twaweza Program is starting the conversation to normalize and de-stigmatize menstruation by using education.

**84% of girls tell us they are more confident during menstruation as a result of the Twaweza Program, and 89% of girls feel less menstrual shame, again due to the Twaweza Program.**

They are also more willing to speak up about menstruation as an issue at home and at school, and to recognise that it is an issue.

