

Dining for women (D4W) Final Grant Report

1. Information

- a. Organization Name: Sustainable Health Enterprises (SHE)
- b. Project Name: SHE28
- c. Grant Amount: \$46,947
- d. Contact Person: Melissa Driver Beard
- e. Address: 175 Varick Street, New York, NY 10014



2. Outcomes the program was designed to achieve

The program was designed to increase access to pads and knowledge around menstruation. Through the program, 180,000 go! pads will be distributed to ten public schools, ten kiosks, and other schools and institutions that serve youth such as youth villages, orphanages, and NGOs impacting over 3,000 girls' ability to access affordable pads. The schools where we distribute pads will be able to provide double the amount of pads they can provide to girls because of our pads' affordability. At the schools where we distribute pads, 50 targeted teachers/personnel have been trained in puberty education and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in order to deliver MHM after-school program modules to girls and boys with confidence. Girls, boys, parents and teachers will receive MHM education resource materials.



3. What was accomplished in connection with this project? Please address each stated objective. If any project objectives were changed, please also explain the circumstances leading to the modification of the objective(s).

This project, SHE28, has successfully increased access to pads and knowledge around menstrual health and hygiene in Rwanda, most especially among girls ages 10-14 in the Eastern Province of the country. To date, 129,700 go! pads have been distributed directly to 9 public schools (and an additional 6 schools via partnerships with NGO's), 2

kiosks, and numerous NGO's including REAP, YALI, Peace Corps, Trust and Care, VSO, and Kids Play International. SHE is currently capable of producing between 18,000 and 25,000 pads per month.

Cumulatively, SHE28 has reached over 7,500 women and girls through coupling the provision of go! pads with puberty and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) education. Over 50 teachers received MHM training and girls, boys, parents and teachers received MHM education resource materials. SHE has assumed leadership of the Girls Education Working Group and has shared drafts of our MHM curriculum with the Rwandan Education Board (REB). We expect that REB will adopt this curriculum for use in all public schools in early 2017.

In our proposal, we stated that SHE would provide 180,000 pads to 3,000 girls in 15 schools. 5,500 of these pads, rather than the estimated 180,000, have been provided for 2,700 Rwandan girls through the 10 schools mentioned in our proposal. Given 2015-16 budget allocations and the non-release of 2016 funds for school supplies from the Ministry of Education, this is both the maximum that schools can buy and double the amount of competitors' pads that schools buy for girls at current prices. This provision ensured that girls' rooms are stocked with pads for girls to use in case of emergencies. Because we are committed to increasing girls' access to pads, another 17,300 pads were sold at kiosks near the schools. Finally, approximately 76% of the pads produced have been sold to other schools and institutions that serve youth such as youth villages, orphanages, and NGOs, which have the resources to supply girls with pads for regular use rather than only for emergencies and can supply pads to the neediest, most vulnerable girls in Rwanda. Taken as a whole, through these channels, we have increase access for 7,511 girls through school girls' rooms and bulk purchasers. We think this makes for a more sustainable business model in the long term and ultimately increases girls' access to pads.

We communicated this change to Dining for Women in February 2015, and this change was approved. Our objectives have not changed otherwise.



4. Have the number of beneficiaries changed? To report this, please refer to the original numbers in your grant proposal under *Number of women and girls Directly Impacted and Indirectly Impacted*.

SHE28 has partnerships with 10 schools and has provided MHM training to 52 teachers who have, in turn, shared their knowledge through after school clubs with over 3,000 boys and 3,000 girls. Many more students, siblings, teachers, and parents have benefited indirectly from the passing down of this information from person to person and sharing of curricula and educational materials.

SHE28 also works with 2 banana co-ops made up of just over 600 farmers, 70% of whom are women. Co-op members have been provided with basic MHM education and have, more importantly, seen an increase of over 30% in their annual income from selling agro-waste/ banana fiber to SHE.

There have been multiple beneficiaries, both direct and indirect, all along the value chain. SHE28 has trained 52 teachers who have passed their knowledge along to other teachers and community members as well as thousands of students. Additional income

has been generated for 600 banana farmers. Jobs have been created for 24 SHE employees at both the production facility in Ngoma and the main office in Kigali.



5. What challenges did you face in connection with this project? How did you address these challenges?

Our first challenge was overcoming teachers' perceptions on MHM. Some of the participants strongly believed the myths around MHM. After analyzing the facts behind menstruation and comparing those facts with myths and beliefs attached to menstruation, the teachers came to realize that the myths and taboos around menstruation were restrictions on women and girls that were rooted in the cultural context rather than grounded in scientific fact.

Even with a science teacher in the cohort, the group at times did not fully grasp the anatomy and physiology of the female reproductive system. However, a personal exchange of information and experiences created an atmosphere in which all the teachers were highly engaged and helped some of the new teachers better understand the information presented. More time than planned was required for the trainers to

resolve misconceptions. This resulted in less time being available for other subjects planned by the trainer, such as the menstrual cycle and choosing feminine care products.

On the production side, in order to increase our throughput and reach 250,000 or more girls by the end of 2017, we have kicked off a partnership with Johnson & Johnson, who is designing machinery for us that will increase our throughput by tenfold. We have already implemented product improvements suggested by our new partner, and will continue to do so.

With Johnson & Johnson's help, SHE has successfully replicated our patented technology on an industrial scale in Kayonza district in the Eastern Province of Rwanda. At present, we are capable of producing between 18,000 and 25,000 go! pads per month. Originally we had anticipated that SHE would be capable of producing up to 180,000 pads per year or 30,000 pads per month. At present, we have the capacity to produce up to a maximum 25,000 pads per month. We have not yet been able to achieve production levels of 30,000 pads per month for the following reasons:

- a. Heat sealer equipment malfunction;
- b. Introduction of new equipment design by Johnson & Johnson and learning curve with new fluff making equipment;
 - i. Equipment requires higher quality banana fiber (finer fiber with no connective tissue) in order to prevent equipment from clogging;
 - ii. Equipment requires fiber with low moisture content in order to prevent equipment from clogging; and
 - iii. Overly dry fiber produces an excess of dust and less usable fluff.

Despite the challenges associated with using new industrial equipment, there have been benefits such as the production of more absorbent and higher quality fluff, lower electricity usage rates, and the elimination of water in the fluff production process.

Finally, with regard to sales and distribution, we have encountered difficulties in controlling the price at which go! pads are sold from retail outlets. While SHE maintains that go! pads should be sold for 500 RWF per pack, we have found that store and kiosk owners do not always follow our guidelines and are sometimes selling packs of pads for up to 800 RWF. As a result, we are forming a partnership with another NGO who has barcode technology to track price, location, and quantity of packs sold. We are also piloting direct sales strategies in local markets, expos, and pop-up stores.



6. **Is your organization or program situation different than presented in the approved proposal? For example, new executive director, significant program staffing changes or NGO affiliation, loss of large funding, or other significant changes?**

Since the original grant application was submitted, Melissa Driver Beard has been hired as the Executive Director of SHE. Eric Ndayishimiye has been hired as an Assistant Production Manager and Jeannette Murekatete has been hired as a Health and Hygiene Manager.

7. **What were the most important lessons learned?**

Due to the challenges mentioned in question #5, we have learned that it will be important to diversify our supply chain in order to ensure a consistent supply of fiber of the quality needed to work on the new equipment.

We have also learned that Depending on government-funded buyers such as public schools to be the largest customer is inherently risky due to budget cuts and delays in releasing funds.

On the education side, the most important lessons learned were: 1) While menstruation is a sensitive topic, both teachers and students have a genuine thirst for knowledge; 2) Teachers have limited spare time and bandwidth, so it is essential to focus trainings on the topics where teachers have the most outstanding questions and condense the rest.

8. What has changed within your organization as a result of this project?

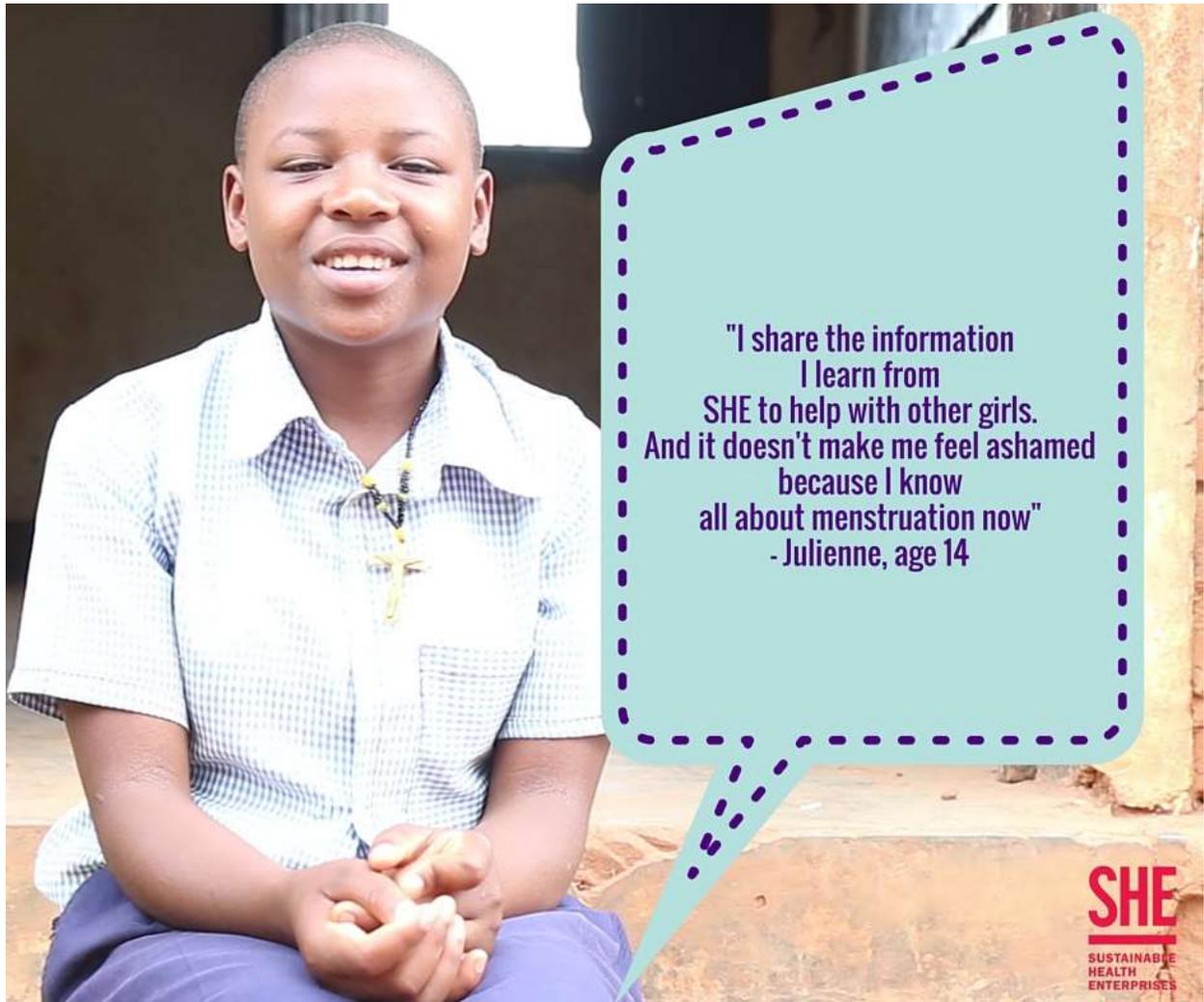
On the production side, we are now focusing more on building out a diversified supply chain to overcome the challenges with the new machinery. On the education side, we now know what to focus on in order to provide teacher trainings that will be the most impactful on the students; and we have learned that not all banana fibers are alike - some process into high quality fluff easily while others turn into dust.



9. Describe the unexpected events and outcomes, including unexpected benefits.

As previously mentioned, we did not expect to face such difficulty with using new equipment designed for us by Johnson & Johnson. We have learned a tremendous amount about communicating issues real-time to partners at Johnson & Johnson, as well as the farmers who provide us with banana fiber. We have also learned how to extract fibers that can be used in our new equipment to produce more pads and higher quality pads.

Additionally, SHE discovered quite unexpectedly that we were contributing to a 30% increase in annual income for banana farmers! Because banana fiber is considered to be an agro-waste product, farmers who sell their fiber to SHE have experienced an unexpected, but welcome, income boost.



10. Did you change your strategy as a result of obstacles you encountered? How will you address these challenges in the future?

SHE's overall strategy remains unchanged. However, we have recognized the ongoing need to continue to seek out unique distribution channels in order to reach girls and women at the local level. As has long been our mantra, the status quo must go. SHE realizes, now more than ever, that we must control our direct and retail sales channels in order to ensure access to high quality affordable pads for the girls and women who need it most.

11. Approximately how many lives have been touched, both directly and indirectly, by the program?

Approximately 7,511 lives have been touched through SHE28 since funding was received.



12. What are the measurements used to monitor success and how was this information measured (e.g., surveys, observation)? Be specific and include measurable results.

The most basic measures of success are production and sales. These numbers are reported weekly and compared against production statistics at maximum efficiency. To date, SHE has not been able to produce pads at sustained maximum efficiency projections of 30,000 pads per month.

Since our last report, we have finalized both the pre- and post-test MHM knowledge surveys that have provided us with great insights into the educational curriculum provided and the level at which it has been received and understood.

Please note that the methodology the student MHM Knowledge Survey was different in the pre and post-test. Pre-test collected data from students in groups and the post test was collected from individual students. Data is informative but methodological differences limit direct comparison.

Despite the generally high level of knowledge at the time of the pre-test, there were a few questions that students did struggle with in answering. These specific questions show improvement between the pre and post-test.

At what age does puberty usually start? Correct Answer: Between ages 10 and 14

	% Total Correct – Pre Test	% Total Correct – Post Test
Schools Overall	56%	80%

Is it normal if a girl does not get her period every month? Correct Answer: Yes

	% Total Correct – Pre Test	% Total Correct – Post Test
Schools Overall	38%	63%

Is it a sign of a problem if a girl gets her menstrual bleeding at a different time each month?

Correct Answer: No

	% Total Correct – Pre Test	% Total Correct – Post Test
Schools Overall	49%	73%

If a girl has sexual relations during her period will she stop having stomach cramps?

Correct Answer: No

	% Total Correct – Pre Test	% Total Correct – Post Test
Schools Overall	59%	82%

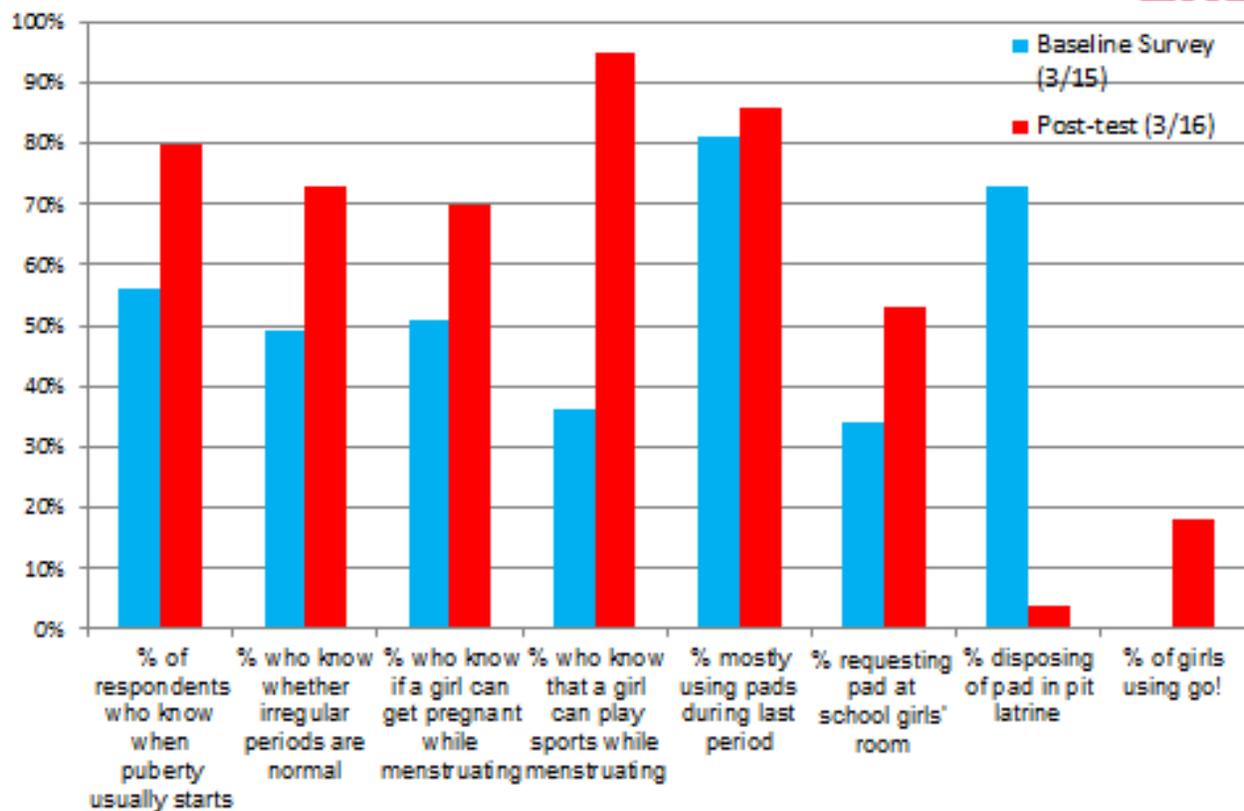
Can a girl or woman become pregnant during her period? Correct Answer: Yes

	% Total Correct – Pre Test	% Total Correct – Post Test
Schools Overall	51%	70%

Can a girl participate in sports during her period? Correct Answer: Yes

	% Total Correct – Pre Test	% Total Correct – Post Test
Schools Overall	36%	95%

Knowledge and Behavior Change SHE



13. If the program is ongoing, provide plans and expected results, including projected timeframe.

In the next 3-5 years, SHE28 entity will expand into selling its pads across East Africa. By the completion of Phase IV: Growth and Scale (2016-2017), SHE will deliver pads to 250,000 girls, boost income for over 1,200 smallholder farmers (the majority of whom will be women) by an average of \$8/week, and create an additional 48 factory jobs for women.

14. Provide a detailed list of all expenses incurred during the grant cycle which have been paid for with the Dining for Women grant.

See attached.



15. Did this grant and relationship with DFW assist your organization in obtaining other funding, partnerships with other organizations, or public recognition in some capacity?

Yes! SHE Founder and CEO, Elizabeth Scharpf has given many different talks and presentations since receiving this grant, one of which was at Boise State University. The husband of a local Dining for Women member was impressed by her speech and stayed in touch with Elizabeth. Ultimately, he connected her to the Arthur B Schultz Foundation who considered and eventually granted SHE \$15K.

SHE28 Stories

"I was a non menstrual sensitive guy; I remember one day I organize a small group of boys for teasing one of our sisters because of her bad smell due to the insufficient hygiene during menstruation. Actually the girl is my best friend, because she invited and encouraged me to participate in SHE club. I often help girls during menstruation, because when a teacher in charge of girls' room or girls 'dean are not around, it's me who bring the key to someone in need. For that, my brothers don't consider me as a full man, but I'm happy for that and I think this contribute to the happiness and full enjoyment of girls at school".

Aphrodis, GS Gikaya/ Kayonza District

"What can I say? Menstrual education through SHE club comes at the right time and change most of us positively and our learning environment is now friendly for boys and girls. Before getting menstrual education, I considered someone who were talking about menstruation in public places as a prostitute, a non educated person. I was that girl who can't buy pads myself because of shame. Now, I can confirm that I'm proud of my periods, I'm able to discuss with boys about menstruation."

Clarisse, GS Gishanda

"Menstrual Hygiene Management? Why this topic at school instead of at home with our parents and ants? This was my first question when one teacher called me for being a SHE club member. Now I have the answer! In SHE club, we are safe, we have all menstrual information we need and our related questions get proper answers. I realize that without menstrual education and follow up done by SHE, I can't be a good girl even if I will have my advanced diploma."

Unknown girl/ GS Nyagasambu

"go! Pads is a good product and I'm happy for it. go! Pads is the one Rwandan menstrual hygienic product appropriate for all girls with low financial capacity."

Unknown girl at Kinyinya, Batsinda

"When i use go! i don't change many times. go! is accessible, comfortable and not expensive and using it is quick and easy."

Saidathe MUKASHYAKAa student in S3, G.S Gikaya

Any message you would like us to convey to our membership and donors about the impact our grant is having on those being served and/or your organization and its mission.

Thanks to you, we have reached over 50 teachers and over 6000 students with MHM education, empowering them to break silence and bust taboos around menstruation and help girls go about their normal lives every day of the month. We have also reached over 7500 girls and women with our affordable pads. We could not have done it without you!