

1 in 10 girls in Sub-Saharan Africa miss school while menstruating due to social stigmas and unavailability of menstrual products. That startling statistic was enough for me to dive into the lack of menstrual health equity in the region. I immediately wanted to help the cause, and there came the idea of creating my own program, EmpowerHER Flow. EmpowerHER Flow aims to address and improve health equity in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly for girls who grapple with the challenges posed by a lack of access to sanitary supplies. EmpowerHER Flow is committed to ensuring that girls have the opportunity to manage their menstrual hygiene. I hold menstrual educational awareness sessions in high schools to educate girls on how to care for their menstrual health and also distribute dignity kits filled with reusable products that I've collected from my partners. I specifically intended to reach Muslim communities as well because they face even greater challenges to manage their menstrual health. When a woman gets her first period, it's a sign that she's coming into her own. Instead, for many African households, it's a sign that she should leave her education and get married. At the heart of EmpowerHER Flow, I want to build a strong sense of community, sisterhood, and support for all. I work to remove the intense taboo around the subject by engaging in active conversations through my sessions. This experience has been so rewarding and has helped me grow. I'm now very mindful of thinking of ways I can help others in the community and how I can make some resources available to them that they unfortunately lack access to. It's helped me realize how much stronger and harder we need to stand up for others so no girl gets left behind.