



HEART

Empowering the People of Africa to Survive and *to Thrive Beyond* the HIV/AIDS Pandemic



Just being a kid can be challenging enough sometimes, trying to figure out how life works and how you fit in. It's challenging for boys and girls alike.

But it gets more challenging for young girls when they reach that time in life when the monthly menstrual cycle begins. For girls in Kenya it gets tougher still!



It's an extremely vulnerable time of the month that can jeopardize a young girl's chances of finishing school and living to anticipate a better life that comes with an education.

The facts clearly affirm this problem, too. According to a recent survey by the Daily Nation, upwards of 54% of girls are likely to drop out of school by the eighth grade due to missing a week per month because of their natural cycle.



When a girl is in class and is experiencing a monthly period, there's a dynamic happening and it carries a risk. Here's why: if there's any spotting on a young girl's garment, they will often be instructed to go home. The exposure is embarrassing enough, but if there's any mocking laughter from fellow students or shaming comments from a teacher (which does unfortunately happen far too often), then the likelihood of her not returning to school is greatly increased.



Shaming is cruel and it has a way of squelching a promising young girl's ambition. No matter how much they enjoy learning and dreaming about life after school



with an education, the fear and embarrassment of being called out "for spotting" strikes at a depth of emotion that all too frequently becomes a deal breaker. Quitting school for something so basic as a need for sanitary napkins and clean undergarments is simply wrong.

Supporting Freedom For Girls is a beautiful way to express your concern for the wellbeing of these girls--these young ladies--who need to stay in school and finish well. Thank you for caring!.



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