



# Every girl deserves dignity.

Together, we have the opportunity to improve the health and well-being of thousands of girls and women. Due to the lack of affordable sanitary protection in developing countries, girls and women often improvise unhygienic and uncomfortable homemade methods to manage their monthly periods.

## Consider the consequences of the lack of affordable sanitary protection:

- **Unhealthy:** Girls and women resort to old rags or leaves to absorb their menstrual flow, increasing their chance of infection. A recent study on menstrual habits found that girls and women re-using old cloth to manage their periods were three times more likely to suffer reproductive tract infections (RTIs)<sup>1</sup>.
- **Absenteeism:** UNICEF estimates that 1 in 10 African girls miss school during menses and eventually drop out completely due to menstruation-related issues<sup>2</sup>.
- **Embarrassment & inconvenience:** In some cultures, menstrual blood is considered dirty and harmful, and girls and women who are menstruating are restricted from participating in some activities.
- **... and potentially worse.** It's estimated that about half of adolescent girls in Kenyan slums have had sex with older men to pay for a range of basic items they cannot otherwise afford, including sanitary pads<sup>3</sup>.

## Softcup: A Simple, Safe Solution

Something as simple and basic as affordable sanitary protection can significantly improve the lives of girls and women so they can:

- Participate in work, school and other activities.
- Maintain privacy about their periods.
- Live comfortably—physically and emotionally—without fear of leaking.
- Prevent infections associated with unsanitary menstrual hygiene practices.

