Skardu Scholarship Student Hostel residents with DfG Kits

Providing girls in Pakistan with pads so that they can attend school

In the 2021 Global Gender Gap Report, Pakistan was ranked fourth-worst in the world for gender parity, and 144th out of 156 countries in terms of educational attainment. Only 46.5% of women are literate, and only 34.2% completed high school. The situation is significantly worse in Pakistan's rural areas, where schools lack essentials such as water, power, and other educational necessities. Girls lack access to basic hygiene products which prevent them from attending school for 3-8 days per month, when they are menstruating. This leads to a further academic disadvantage, and widens the gender disparity gap.

The report revealed that Pakistan will need 136 years to bridge the gap at its present rate of progress. Pads for Pakistan is on a mission to expedite this work and empower communities through donations and capacity building educational programs, with a particular focus on the rural Basha Valley region of northern Pakistan.

In partnership with Days for Girls, we are providing menstrual kits to girls attending Iqrafund's Basha Valley school. We also provide in-person workshops in proper handwashing techniques and the importance of hygiene for public health.

COMMENTARY

'I Need You to See How the Girls in Baltistan Live'

A Pakistani-American teenager travels to a remote section of her parent's homeland and becomes determined to help the local girls get access to desperately needed feminine health care products

BY SAMARA ISLAM MARCH 17, 2023

Drawing of the Chogori Sun monument and remote region of Baltistan. Samara Islam

Rolling Stone

Check us out in Rolling Stone! In March 2024, our Founder, Samara Islam, became the first teenager ever to be published in Rolling Stone. Read her piece about her last trip to the Basha Valley in the summer of 2023, and the important work Pads for Pakistan and its partners are doing.

Read The Article

Hear Hana and Samara talk about their work at Pads for Pakistan as part of Iqra Fund's latest webinar.

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Iqra Fund is a nonprofit organization focused on educating under-privileged girls in the tribal, remote northern part of Pakistan. Founded by Genevieve Walsh in 2011, Iqra Fund has established 16 schools in northern Pakistan for the first generation of girls (and boys), with 100% enrollment for girls in each village. Pads for Pakistan partners with the Iqra Fund in Basha Valley, and supplies the girls there with DfG menstrual kits, which allow them to continue to attend school during their cycles. Otherwise, due to lack of hygiene facilities at school, and access to menstrual products, they often have to stay home.

Learn More

DAYS FOR GIRLS

Pads for Pakistan partners with Days for Girls (DfG), an organization that increases access to menstrual care and education globally. One of the ways they do this is with their DfG kit, which you can see to the right, and which Pads for Pakistan will be distributing.

DfG pads are washable and reusable and can last several years. The patented design includes a protective shield and absorbent liner, and is backed by the latest menstrual health research, and a decade of feedback from women around the world.

The kits will be distributed by hand by our founder, Samara Islam, during her trip to the region in the summer of 2023. Samara will also be hosting educational workshops at the school on this trip.

Learn More

PINKIE

Pinkie Pads are 100% organic period pads specifically designed to fit smaller women and girls, from ages 8 and up. Their smaller size makes them perfect for the school girls in Basha Valley.

Pinkie Pads' top sheet is 100% organic cotton, and they contain a plant-based, super absorbent Japanese polymer core, and leak-proof wings with non-toxic adhesive to ensure that nothing spills out. They are hypoallergenic and free from toxins & dyes.

Additionally, instead of a plastic wrapper, each pad comes in a recyclable baggie that can also be used to dispose of pads sustainably. This is yet another reason they are perfect for the Basha Valley, where there are extremely limited recycling and trash disposal options. Because of this, plastics often end up in the Indus Valley River.

We are so proud to partner with Pinkie Pads, who have donated 330+ pads to Pads for Pakistan to be distributed in the Basha Valley in summer of 2023.

Learn More

Founders

We are Samara Islam and Hana Rashid, two high school students from New York City. We are both first generation immigrants, and all of our parents are from Pakistan.

In 2022, in partnership with Iqra Fund, we spent time in a school in Basha Valley, and learned first hand the issues the communities face there. The children in the schools lack basic hygiene and resources, but girls suffer the most. We launched Pads for Pakistan with the goal of solving this problem in Basha Valley by distributing reusable menstrual kits, and educating people on the importance of hygiene.

Previously, we ran a fundraising campaign to support victims of the devastating floods of 2022 in Pakistan, and successfully raised $130,000 for The Citizens' Foundation. Those funds were used to provide food, medicine, and tents for thousands of people affected by the floods.

We believe it is imperative to aid these remote schools and the girls who attend them, so that we can help future generations in Pakistan thrive.

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