

***A bloody problem: period poverty, why we need to end it and how to do it***

**Dominika Kulczyk launches new report on period poverty and joins a group of world-class philanthropists as part of a partnership with Founders Pledge**

* Kulczyk Foundation and Founders Pledge launch first-ever report on effective funding recommendations to address period poverty
* Dominika Kulczyk, a Polish philanthropist and businesswoman, provided seed funding for the pioneering report and calls upon the international community to unite efforts and commit to ending period poverty
* Report finds lack of developed and existing evidence base in the field on the most effective interventions to address period poverty
* Eight organisations including Days for Girls and Irise International highlighted as best practice

[15 October 2020, London / Warsaw] – Kulczyk Foundation, a Polish private family foundation, and Founders Pledge, a community of entrepreneurs committed to finding and funding solutions to global challenges, have launched a new report on period poverty. [***A bloody problem: period poverty, why we need to end it and how to do it***](https://kulczykfoundation.org.pl/uploads/media/default/0001/05/512f374c564f74f67d1d396c18401781877949bc.pdf) - which reviews the current state of funding and solutions to ending period poverty - finds that there is no unified approach to data collection, fundraising or implementation of period poverty programmes.

The report is part of a new commitment from Dominika Kulczyk, a philanthropist and the richest Polish woman, who provided funding for the report as part of her search for the most efficient and cost-effective programmes addressing period poverty globally. In her efforts to unite the philanthropic resources to fight period poverty, Dominika Kulczyk joins Founders Pledge and their group of individual philanthropists and family foundations coming together to inform and inspire the next generation of philanthropists - [The Foundry](https://founderspledge.com/foundry). This group of visionary donors supports Founders Pledge’s mission to direct philanthropic dollars towards the most effective charities and organisations around the world.

Period poverty has been an invisible issue for years, despite an estimated 1.9 billion girls and women currently menstruating. Menstruation stigmatised is often and invisible, contributing to millions of girls and women worldwide not having what they need to manage their menstrual hygiene, ultimately missing out on education, job opportunities and life quality.

The report reveals the scale and burden of the problem globally, the harms caused by a lack of access to sanitary products, and the effectiveness of activities to tackle period poverty. **The report estimates that total current spending on period poverty worldwide is between $10 and $100 million per year - suggesting this is a hugely underfunded issue when comparing it to the total donations to charitable causes which annually are approximately $449.64 billion in the US[[1]](#footnote-2), and £10 billion in the UK[[2]](#footnote-3) alone.**

*A bloody problem: period poverty, why we need to end it and how to do it* offers a unique perspective on the state of period poverty, but most importantly draws attention to the most cost-effective programmes around the world.

**Dominika Kulczyk, Founder and President of the Kulczyk Foundation** said,

*“Access to complete menstrual health and hygiene is a basic human right. Without it, women and girls cannot pursue full lives with dignity and confidence. It is deeply unfair that girls in all parts of the world miss out on better education, and women on work, because they were too poor to have a period.*

*“We have neglected this issue for too long, and I’m proud to have worked with Founders Pledge to take the first step towards understanding how we can make the biggest impact, quickly. What’s clear, is the need to unite the international community on global standards for reducing period poverty, and better fund those programmes that deliver the highest impact for women and girls who every month have to choose between a meal or a sanitary pad.*

*“I invite the international community to join me and work together to end period poverty.”*

The report recommends greater focus on building a strong evidence base, and investment into eight organisations currently committed to delivering effective interventions. It identifies 80 organisations addressing period poverty, with eight organisations demonstrating the most cost-effective practice.

Eight organisations which are listed as the most cost-effective when it comes to ending period poverty, and which stood out across factors such as a solid theory of change, high quality evidence generation, and organisational strength, are:

* [**Days for Girls**](https://www.daysforgirls.org/), headquartered in the US with offices in Uganda, Nepal, Ghana, and Guatemala
* [**Inua Dada Foundation**](https://www.inuadadafoundation.org/), headquartered and operating in Kenya
* [**Irise International**](http://uadadafoundation.org/)**,** UK and Uganda based
* [**NFCC**](http://www.nfcc.org.np/), headquartered and operating in Nepal
* [**Population Services International**](https://www.psi.org/), headquartered in the United States, Europe, and Kenya
* [**Sesame Workshop’s**](https://www.sesameworkshop.org/) Girl Talk program in Zimbabwe, headquartered in the United States
* [**Simavi**](https://simavi.org/), headquartered in the Netherlands with operations across Africa and Asia
* [**WoMena**](https://womena.dk/), headquartered in Denmark and Uganda

**David Goldberg, Co-Founder and CEO of Founders Pledge** said,

*“One of the most important steps in addressing the lack of complete Menstrual Health and Hygiene globally is finding the most effective solutions through rigorous research, and identifying the organisations implementing high-impact interventions. This report takes valuable steps in that direction and I hope it will help donors and governments tackle this issue with a clearer understanding of what barriers must be overcome.*

*“Founders Pledge is thrilled to team up with Dominika Kulczyk and her foundation to boost the impact of philanthropists working to beat period poverty. Her work and support for women-led projects is a great example of her leadership and philanthropic abilities in Eastern Europe.*

*“I would like to encourage philanthropists to come together and support Dominika’s movement, especially now that we have a better understanding of the effectiveness of the programmes in this space. With a unified and coordinated approach, I believe we can end period poverty.”*

**Marni Sommer, Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences from Columbia University,**who contributed to the report said,

*“There has been remarkable growing attention to addressing the menstruation-related needs*

*of girls, women and all people with periods around the world in recent years, however there*

*remains a long way to go. The social and economic impact of COVID-19 also threatens to*

*reverse progress made to address period poverty, along with ongoing stigma around menstruation that hinders girls’ and women’s equal and successful engagement in education, work and society.*

*“The Kulczyk Foundation’s important review and investment in menstrual health and hygiene*

*not only supports critical efforts to address these issues, but serves as a clarion call to donors*

*and governments that there is much left to do, and collective efforts and resources are*

*needed for rigorous, impactful action going forward.”*

|  |
| --- |
| **Global outlook on period poverty – some important statistics** |
| **Globally, around 500 million people lack complete menstrual health and hygiene.[[3]](#footnote-4)**  **UK**  [Mapping the knowledge and understanding of menarche ...](https://reproductive-health-journal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12978-017-0293-6)Recent report from [Plan International UK](https://plan-uk.org/period-poverty-in-lockdown) revealed that 3 in 10 girls in the UK struggle to afford or access sanitary wear.  [**Poland**](https://kulczykfoundation.org.pl/en/news/events/Taboo_Stigma_And_Superstition_Menstruation_In_21st_Century_Poland)  Kulczyk Foundation’s report into the state of period poverty in Poland revealed similar statistics, with 1 in 5 women and girls struggling to access appropriate products.  **India**  In India [78% of women cannot afford menstrual products](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/feb/04/india-sanitary-towel-hero-padman-bollywood-glory-arunachalam-muruganantham) at all. In India between 6% and 43% said they missed school or work due to menstruation.[[4]](#footnote-5)  **Central Africa**  Only 15% of women in Kongo, Central region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) reported they had everything they need to menstruate.[[5]](#footnote-6) |

ENDS

**Notes to Editors**

***‘A bloody problem: period poverty, why we need to end it and how to do it’* report is available here:** [**www.kulczykfoundation.org.pl/KF\_MHH\_Report.pdf**](http://www.kulczykfoundation.org.pl/KF_MHH_Report.pdf)

**MEDIA FILES**

* *Photo of Dominika Kulczyk, Polish philanthropist and businesswoman photo*[**here**](https://we.tl/t-3nQS4wUDW5)
* *Video of Dominika Kulczyk addressing international community*[**here**](https://we.tl/t-2caanHkwtI)
* *Quotes from Directors and Founders of the organisations highlighted in the report available*[**here**](https://bbpartnerscouk-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/gosia_bbpartners_co_uk/EXuzoB7ueKRPuxecoJJpcQcBcRx6p7g_l4w-CBlvwc3MzA?e=3F5heD)
* *Social media graphics shining a light on period poverty*[**here**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/lc0nu5nwlp70u3l/AACTsVQMzR3G_9PepYOs_z7Ha?dl=0)

**Definition of period poverty**

*Period poverty is the lack of access to sanitary products, menstrual hygiene education, toilets, handwashing facilities, and waste management, often referred to in the field or the literature as Menstrual Health and Hygiene.*

**Report methodology**

In order to assess the status quo and review different approaches currently being taken to address period poverty, Founders Pledge have gone through a detailed process of reviewing available literature and reports from funders, researchers, influencers and implementers from the last five years. They have also conducted interviews with researchers, funders and advocates to:

* Test, correct, and deepen the conclusions we drew from the literature review;
* Understand where the research and evidence gaps are;
* Learn more about organisations working in this area who are pushing the field forward.

**About Kulczyk Foundation**

A private family foundation, The Kulczyk Foundation was founded in 2013 by Grażyna Kulczyk, Dr. Jan Kulczyk and Dominika Kulczyk. Its primary goal is to fight the problems of discrimination and inequality that affect women in order to create a barrier-free world. The Foundation, in cooperation with partners, implements social changes based on sustainable solutions, which it calls the “Domino Effect”.

Kulczyk Foundation website: <http://kulczykfoundation.org.pl>

Follow Kulczyk Foundation on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/kulczykfoundation>

Follow Kulczyk Foundation on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/kulczykfoundation/>

**About Dominika Kulczyk**

Dominika Kulczyk is a Polish entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist. She is the Founder and President of Kulczyk Foundation, a private family foundation fighting discrimination and injustice that affects women and girls all around the world.

Through her foundation, Dominika supports and cooperates with NGOs around the world to implement social changes based on sustainable solutions – a chain of actions which she calls Domino Effect.

With her "Tenderness and Freedom” campaign, Dominika has promoted the idea of a sensitive revolution, aimed at restoring balance between the position of women and men in the world.

Author of over 60 documentaries, Dominika is the producer, lead reporter, and host of a landmark Polish documentary series with TVN Discovery, Domino Effect, an internationally recognized work of impact journalism that seeks to inspire others to support those in need. The program has highlighted individuals and NGOs in some of the poorest regions of the world, demonstrating the work that they are doing to help make a real difference to those who are most in need. She is also a co-producer of the CNN Freedom Project docuseries, drawing attention to modern slavery and child labour in different parts of the world.

Dominika is also a supporter and promoter of the Sustainable Development Goals, Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board of Kulczyk Holding and the Supervisory Board of Polenergia S.A., and the co-founder of the Values Consulting Group. In 2018 she was awarded the Order of the Smile for outstanding services and support for children.

Follow Dominika Kulczyk on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dominikakulczyk>

Photo of Dominika Kulczyk: <https://we.tl/t-3nQS4wUDW5>

**About Founders Pledge**

Founders Pledge is a community of entrepreneurs committed to finding and funding solutions to global challenges. On joining the community, members commit a chosen portion of their current or future personal wealth to charity. Founders Pledge then helps them understand and elevate their social impact, offering bespoke philanthropic strategies based on the latest evidence from the sector.

Founders Pledge offers a streamlined path to impact for successful entrepreneurs, providing end-to-end giving infrastructure, charity research, and a worldwide network of experts.

Since launching in 2015, the Founders Pledge community has collectively pledged over $3 billion for social causes, with more than $465m of that moved to the charitable sector. Spanning 35 countries, its 1450 members include the people behind industry-leading companies such as Deepmind, Skype, Spotify, Uber, and Planet.

Founders Pledge website: <https://founderspledge.com>

**Media contacts**

**Kulczyk Foundation**

Katarzyna Alinska

Director of Communications, Kulczyk Foundation

[communication@kulczykfoundation.org.pl](mailto:communication@kulczykfoundation.org.pl)

**Founders Pledge**

Rachel Baxter

Communications Writer, Founders Pledge

[press@founderspledge.com](mailto:press@founderspledge.com)

1. <https://givingusa.org/giving-usa-2020-charitable-giving-showed-solid-growth-climbing-to-449-64-billion-in-2019-one-of-the-highest-years-for-giving-on-record/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/caf-uk-giving-2019-report-an-overview-of-charitable-giving-in-the-uk.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/05/25/menstrual-hygiene-management> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Chandra-Mouli, Venkatraman, and Sheila Vipul Patel. Source: "Mapping the knowledge and understanding of menarche, menstrual hygiene and menstrual health among adolescent girls in low-and middle-income countries." Reproductive health 14.1 (2017): 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://www.pma2020.org/mhm-briefs> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)