help a girl out®

Access. Educate. Empower.

Our Mission

To accelerate menstrual equity by increasing access to menstrual products, addressing gaps in menstrual and uterine health education, and creating empowerment opportunities for those at risk.

What is Menstrual Equity? Menstrual equity is an umbrella term that refers to efforts that address the challenges women and girls face in accessing menstrual products, adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities, and accurate education and awareness needed to manage their menstrual and uterine health.

History and Impact (to date)

- While Yanique Brandford, founder of ***Help A Girl Out***, was growing up in financial hardship in Jamaica, her mother improvised menstrual pads from cardboard and newspaper to ensure she could attend school.
- Established in 2018, after Yanique discovered school girls and women in the GTA experiencing period poverty.
- 2020 Awarded ***"Canada's Hero Award"*** by International advocacy organization, Global Citizen
- Distributed **2,000,000+** single-use period products to over **15,000** clients across **350** cities in Canada in **3-month supply** kits.
- Educated **20,000** students and community members through health and empowerment workshops, and community awareness efforts since inception.
- Quarterly in-kind and training outreach initiatives to support menstrual equity efforts in the Caribbean and Africa, spanning **13** countries and reaching over **2,500** individuals.
- Multiple notable awards and nominations including Viola Desmond Award, Community Impact Award, Youth Advocate Award, Governor General Award Nomination for The Person's Case, and others.

Period Poverty, Shame and Education gaps in Canada

- **Period poverty** disproportionately affects marginalized groups, including BIPOC, youth, single mothers, homeless individuals, remote communities and gender-diverse people.
  - **1 in 6** Canadians who menstruate have experienced period poverty; rising to **1 in 4** in households earning less than $40,000/yr. Consequently ~1.53+ million women are at risk of period poverty **(Ref: WAGE Canada.ca)**
- **Lack of education and stigma** prevent individuals from seeking help or advocating for their health, impacting those with undiagnosed uterine conditions, poor mental health, and low self-esteem. **(Ref: Plan Canada)**
  - **65% of Canadian women** either received **no menstrual health education** or said the education they received **was not comprehensive** enough.
  - **51% of Canadian women** said their menstrual health education **did not provide all the information they needed** or failed to include diverse experiences and perspectives.
  - **27% of Canadian women** reported receiving **no menstrual health education at all** in Canada.
  - **18% of menstruating Canadians** said that a **lack of knowledge** has prevented them from participating fully in school, work, sports, or other daily activities.
- **Menstrual shame** and stigma are shaped by cultural norms, misinformation, religious beliefs, and family dynamics, making awareness efforts complex and requiring culturally responsive approaches.
  - **1 in 4 Canadians** believe periods are "dirty" or "unclean," while **22%** believe menstruation should not be discussed publicly, demonstrating that stigma remains widespread.
  - HAGO's staff and volunteers are trauma-informed and trained to deliver inclusive, culturally appropriate education that addresses these barriers and fosters informed, stigma-free conversations

Help A Girl Out by the numbers

- **7** member Board of Directors, **100**+ volunteers, core team of **15** volunteers, and **7** member staff.
- **80** partner organizations: schools, shelters, food banks, refugee and unemployment centres.
- Currently distribute **~6,000+** kits annually to **350** cities across Canada.
- Since inception hosted **350**+ *uterine health and wellness educational workshops* across Canada.
- Since inception hosted **120** *sewing workshops* in the GTA teaching **800**+ beginners a sustainable skill.
- 185 volunteer sewists created **10,000+** reusable cloth pads, diverting **~600,000** lbs of waste from landfills.
- 3 flagship programs operating in 9 provinces (ON, BC, AB, QC, MB, SK, NV, PEI, NFL):
  - **Period Product Support Program, The Reusables Project, Educational Workshops**
- **Annual Budget: $650,000**

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Access. Educate. Empower.

Help A Girl Out (HAGO) is a national registered charity advancing menstrual and gender equity through access, education, and empowerment. Founded in 2018 by Yanique Brandford following her own experience with period poverty, HAGO works to remove barriers that prevent women and girls from fully participating in education, employment, and community life.

HAGO has distributed more than **2,000,000+** menstrual products, educated **20,000+** youth and community members, and partnered with **80+** organizations across schools, shelters, newcomer agencies, and community organizations. While our reach is national, Ontario remains our largest service region.

Supporting Women's Social and Economic Opportunity in Ontario

Our work recognizes that menstrual and gender inequity is both a health and an economic issue. The cost of menstrual products, limited access to comprehensive menstrual and reproductive health education, and persistent stigma contribute to missed school and work, reduced confidence, delayed diagnosis of menstrual disorders, and barriers to participation in school, work and community.

These challenges disproportionately affect low-income women, newcomers, single mothers, Indigenous communities, Black communities, youth, and gender-diverse individuals.

Help A Girl Out addresses these barriers through **three integrated programs:**

- **Period Product Support Program:** Provides free three-month supplies of menstrual products to individuals and organizations serving those experiencing financial hardship.
    - Since 2021, over 2,000,000 products have been distributed, ~6000 individual applications annually across Canada, 80% of recipients in Ontario.
    - Partnered with 45 organizations for distribution of menstrual product aid, reaching 100,000+ recipients in Q1-Q2 of 2026.
- **Health and Wellness Education Program:** Delivers curriculum-aligned, culturally responsive workshops on menstruation, puberty, uterine health, mental wellness, self-advocacy, and leadership in schools and community settings.
    - Over 350 workshops have been conducted since 2021, reaching 20,000 Canadians.
    - Annual reach of 3,000+ students, youth and community members through notable partnerships with PDSB, TDBS, and over 40 community organizations.
- **The Reusables Project:** Teaches participants to sew reusable menstrual pads, combining environmental sustainability with practical life skills, confidence building, and community engagement.
    - Since 2021, over 180 skill development workshops have been conducted in 12 Southern Ontario cities,
    - Teaching 1,500+ beginners to sew and make reusable menstrual pads for themselves, their community or business ventures.

Topics for Discussion

- **Supporting women's educational and economic opportunity**: HAGO expands access to menstrual and reproductive health education in schools, workplaces, and underserved communities, helping women and girls stay in school, participate in the workforce, and advocate for their health.
- **Advancing girls' confidence and wellbeing**: HAGO delivers leadership, life skills, and health literacy programs that encourage participation in sports, extracurricular activities, and community leadership.
- **Promoting women's health and workplace inclusion**: HAGO reduces menstrual stigma, improves menstrual and uterine health literacy, and advocates for supportive workplace policies addressing menopause, endometriosis, period poverty, and related health conditions.