

TEEN CANDLE INITIATIVE



EMPOWERING OF TEENS AND VULNERABLE WOMEN THROUGH RESUABLE PADS, IN-KIND GIVING AND PROPER MENSTRAUL MANAGMENT

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ABOUT TEEN CANDLE INITIATIVE

Teen candle Initiative (TCI) is a faith community based non-profit organization (Reg WCBO/23/2447) from Wakiso, Uganda that seeks to build a better, healthier, informed and supportive future/environment for all teens (boys and girls) and women in their lives and environment.

We focus on eradicating period poverty (Period education plus free usable sanitary pads), guide and support teens through growth (Puberty education) as we leverage group storytelling, outreach stories, research, community engagement, school education programs and advocacy for teens negative connotations

Founded in 2021, TCI has been working towards providing empowerment for girls to make healthy life choices, educate them about proper period management habits & practices, personal hygiene through providing adequate, age tailored period education material, sanitary products, break period related taboos, myths and negative connotation hindering young women from thriving.

Boys on the other hand are educated about puberty, the rigorous changes that accompany this pivotal transition, how to harmoniously live through them and also support their vulnerable gender counter parts emotionally, physiological plus creating a favorable stigma free environment.

Our dedicated team of educators, Village Health teams, educators, researchers, and community engagement specialists work to empower local voices, inform policy decisions, and drive positive change through captivating narratives, research-driven insights, capacity building programs

and persistent advocacy for stronger health regulations.

We're excited to share our plan for one-year fundamental development (1st January 2024– 1st January 2025) to intensify efficiency, impact and out reach.

Teen candle initiative boasts more than 4 years of impactful teen engagement, mentorship, educating, and in-kind giving. We also partnered with local communities like Namusera, Kasese, Nansana, Nkoowe, Mende and more than 10 schools so far in raising awareness and inspiring action in a collaborative effort.

In the previous years, our outreach touched more than 1,500 individuals in Uganda, while our online campaign resonated with an extensive audience, connecting with over 50,000 people.

This year, our aim is to broaden our impact significantly. We have set a target to engage with over 100,000 individuals, comprising both active participants and community members. We aspire to extend our influence to 10 districts and involve 50 schools focusing more on primary classes (8 – 12 years) and early secondary classes (12-18) due to the nature of young and vulnerable nature of teens at the stages.

Additionally, we are optimistic that our online reach will expand even further, aiming to connect with over one million individuals through our social media channels and collaborative partnerships.



WHY TEENS? WHY PERIOD POVERTY?

Many global reports, journalist, human right activists and Non-government organizations both local and international acknowledge the existence of period poverty and demonstrate the adverse effects of this silence pandemic which is not limited to culture, society, geographical location, region and as a matter of fact sex of an individual. Most teens and women globally are facing high levels of period poverty and are often ostracized by the society while they face and battle gender equity and on the other hand fight for their rights as women.

Girls and women in most rural areas of Uganda are not spared and face the same challenges of having nothing to use during that time of the month and most have no idea when/why and what menstruation is and are usually shocked when it happens.

Uganda has significantly high poverty rates and majority of its population live in rural areas fighting every day to meet the basic needs of life and definitely have to make the hard decision about whether to buy food or menstrual products when it's that time of the month, endure and manage through the many period taboos and myths leaving no room to cater for proper menstrual management nor afford menstruation products.

The period poverty pandemic is lowly eating social lives and robbing young girls of their futures as they get to miss school monthly, highly vulnerable to abuse and stigma, lack proper sanitary products, face fear, embarrassment thus effecting their education, health, dignity.

On the other hand, a looming crisis is on loose but nobody seems to notice or perhaps is taken lightly yet it's affecting

teens, as girls battle menstruation and so many several more changes their counter parts are also engaged with different body changes they completely have no idea about.

Fact is teens (Both girls and boy) are affected by puberty, the good news is puberty is not a problem to be solved but rather the problem lies in the lack of education about it.

With the lack of education and knowledge this delicate pivotal phase of life may come unprepared, teens are left confused and unsupported which in turn affects their education, self-esteem and confidence.

It's during the puberty stage that a teen's mind is developed, more curious in that they start to form or have their own analysis, beliefs, opinions and say about a variety of topics and if not well guided their perception can be corrupted at a tender age.



IMPACT OF PERIOD POVERTY AND THE UNPREPARED PUBERTY PHASE

Period poverty affects developing countries the most and over 50% of all females resort to using unhealthy items like rags, grass newspapers, soil, dry grass, banana fibers and leaves backcloth (Locally known as “Omutooma”), polythene bags, old mattress pieces etc. to manage their menstruation which are highly unhealthy and can turn out deadly rather than safe sanitary products.

ActionAid (an international Non-government organization whose stated primary aim is to work against poverty and injustice worldwide founded in 1972), its 50 Years' experience has shown us that period poverty can have a far reaching and long-lasting impact on the lives, health, wellbeing, education and safety of women, girls and people who menstruate of all ages.

Period poverty Vs Education. Nearly a quarter of Ugandan girls between the age of 12 and 18 drop out of school when they begin menstruation and an estimated one in 10 girls (statistic attributed to UNESCO) miss School monthly due to lack of supplies and education related to menstruation and the negative connotations of “becoming a woman”, the mystery surrounding the changes can not only create girl's unhealthy perceptions of themselves and their bodies but can affect more concrete aspects of their lives, including their education.

According to the meniscus report by the Biomedical Centre, during non-period days absenteeism averages at 7% but this more than triples to 28% during period days as many girls will skip school to avoid the potential embarrassment and shame associated with one's period showing and monthly occurrence

thus many young women are unable to catch up on the material they have missed and will eventually drop out of school, develop poor self-esteem and also lose confidence.

Unfortunately, even if these girls persist and are resilient enough to stay in education throughout their childhood, they are likely to fall behind boys their age, worsening the existing inequalities.

Period poverty Vs Health. The inability to access safe, proper sanitary products and information on menstrual management forces the young women to resort to unhealthy alternatives which result into many long and short-term dangerous health risks like reproductive and urinary tract infections, which can lead to future infertility and birth complications; while not having access to hand-washing facilities can lead to the spread of other infections, like Hepatitis B and thrush as reported by the world bank.

During one of our outreach programs conducted in Nyakasanga -Western Uganda aimed at giving out free sanitary Pads, one teen shared “I used to sit in sand during my period to absorb and momentarily stop the blood then resort to old clothes once the flow reduces” such an innocent act of desperation can disrupt the PH balance of the private parts causing bacterial infections, stomach infections that lead to diarrhea, nausea, vomiting etc.

Period poverty Vs social life. Many people continue to hold beliefs, reasons, stories and strongly uphold these misconceptions (taboos and myths) which have diminished the physical, emotional capabilities of women due to their menstrual cycles and hinders their participation in the society as menstruation to some is considered dirty and dangerous thus women on period are not allowed near food, some women are denied from enjoying certain foods and some

believe menstruation limits the women's ability to think and work due to hormonal changes effecting their moods and ability to make decisions which is not the case.

The stigma attached to menstruation, the taboos and myths like "Menstruation indicates readiness for marriage and sex", or the inability to afford period products and access safe places to manage menstruation goes deeper than missing school and disrupting lifestyles of young women and women but lead to an increased risk of transactional sex to access sanitary pads, child marriages, early pregnancies, malnourishment, domestic violence and pregnancy complications thus giving birth to further multiple catastrophic shadow pandemics.

Lack of Puberty Education Vs Teens. Many people think puberty is a topic that needs not to be discussed and therefore this can be dealt with on their own by the teens. This gives teens lee way to "experiment" and also "figure" things out with their bodies which in turn comes with many unpleasant short and sometimes long-term results.

Leaving teens to wonder through the rapid physical, psychological and cognitive changes exposes them to uninformed peers, increases their risk of abuse, misinformation and threatens their health due to poor hygiene practices and more pronounced effects on the quality of life and future.

Girls are exposed to stress, shame, embarrassment, confusion and fear due to a lack of knowledge and inability to manage their menstruation and other various body and mental changes.

Boys on the other hand are exposed to feeling low self-esteem, out of control of events in their lives which manifests through unhealthy behaviors and practices.

OUR THREE FOCUS AREAS

1. REUSABLE PAD PROGRAM

Menstruation is a natural fact of life with a monthly occurrence received by girls at the age of 11 years, earlier or later. The proper management of this bodily function is quite challenging, uncomfortable, expensive and impossible for many girls and women and improvising is the order of the day.

Materials like dried grass rapped in polythene bags, old newspapers, rags, soil rapped in polythene bags, banana leaves, fibers, local clothing materials like back cloth locally known as “Mitooma” in Lunyankole and “Lubugo” in Luganda are desperately being used to manage period.

For others, suicidal methods like sitting in sand during menstruation, sitting on an ash pile in efforts to soak/absorb blood, sitting in a trench of dirty running water during your first period are being implored and innocently adopted by many.

Such harmful and unhealthy alternatives are made popular by lack of information (To be corrected through the awareness program) and scarcity of appropriate sanitary products.

Most families and communities in Uganda are struggling every day to meet the basic needs of life like food, surviving on less than \$1 and therefore buying pads is considered a luxury they can't afford or think of and how can we blame them?

This silent pandemic is not given the attention it needs and with it comes other challenges like transitional sex for pads, a spike in HIV/AIDS, early pregnancy and therefore is need for an INNOVATIVE, COST & ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY, DURABLE, SAFE solution to mitigate this crisis.

AT teen candle initiative, we without a doubt believe reusable sanitary pads can bring about the metamorphic change and impact we need for safe, easy and worry-free menstruation days.

A reusable pad can be washed, dried and sanitized by the power of the sun and used again for a minimum of one year with just soap and clean water making them highly cost effective. To put it into perspective, 10 ready to use pieces of re-usable sanitary pads are 4 times more affordable than a year's supply of disposal costs and this is only in the short run.

This program with your support seeks to end the scarcity of sanitary pads through construction of a sewing studio capable of massive production of more than 800 pieces per day to be given out for free.

The program also seeks to provide a free learning environment for making re-usable pads as means to boost the social-economic welfare of people on the community.

SAMPLE OF THE PADS WE MAKE



2. AWARENESS PROGRAM (PERIOD AND PUBERTY EDUCATION)

Every single year millions of teens reach puberty, a delicate pivotal stage of transition to adulthood coupled with drastic changes like periods, wet dreams, body developments, strong emotions etc.

Period and puberty education are a precious gift we must give to our children because every child has the right to know all about their bodies and learn to live in harmony with the changes that come with growing up.

Menstruation, a half-life time process every woman goes through is not being introduced to young people and many start off on this phenomenal journey in the dark.

When not prepared prior which is common in most circumstances, the new developments confuse and scare teens and faced with taboos, stigma, myths, misinformation, no information at all and other challenges that threaten their wellbeing, health, every piece of information, every conversation in the right direction, every support, every story and gesture we give them is paramount.

Its during puberty that a teens mind is developed, more curious in that they start to form or have their own view of circumstances, beliefs, opinions and say about a variety of topics and if not well guided their perception can be corrupted at a tender age and any damage/negligence at this stage can lead to a perpetuation of the cycles of period poverty, uncultured behaviors, harmful practices resulting into intergenerational and/or chronic misinformation and fueling of myths/taboo.

With your support, by receiving vital guiding information, region and culture customized, age appropriate, factual information

to navigate the storms of emotional, physiological, physical changes we give teens the key to a bright informed future because the foundations of our future lie in the hands of the young people and to educate, prepare them is to give them the power survive, thrive and change the world.

3. EDUCATION PROGRAM

Education is one of the best gifts a parent or guardian can give to their children, this gift opens door and opportunities to guide and help kids grow into responsible adults, the system promotes talent growth and abilities paving way for a better future in addition to acquiring new skills and knowledge which can be beneficial in many aspects of their lives

And for many families regardless of their financial position, they strive every day to send and maintain their children in schools however several times the odds are stacked up on them and not in their favor at all.

With the continuous struggle to raise school fees, constant journeys to schools to “plead” and the children being sent every now and then, parents and guardians courageous and determined enough to even start off on this nightmare of education tend to fail along the way (School dropouts) and those resilient enough to complete will under perform due to the distractions thus affecting their chance of a better life.

For many parents the task and strain is too much to even begin the journey, thus kids never see a single black board through their life and this exposes them to life challenges and temptations at a tender age resulting into early pregnancies, early marriages, prostitution tendencies, theft etc.

With your support, the ground can be leveled as we push and also maintain children in schools to have a fair shot at life.

KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES

A. AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

- Engaging teens and sharing experiences and stories, infographics, and videos on social media.
- Organize interactive out reaches and workshops in communities with local influencers, village health teams, school leaders, community leaders, and NGOs for wider outreach.

B. COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

- Train and equip local communities on how to guide and support teens through puberty as far as period management, best hygiene practices restoration approaches for those affected by stigma.
- Provide workshops on reusable period making and responsible, safe sanitary maintenance.
- Establish partnerships with local businesses to support sustainable livelihood initiatives.

C. ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

- Convene stakeholder dialogue forums, applying our advocacy and policy engagement proficiency. Develop research-based policy briefs and launch a targeted online petition for improved teen protection and support policies.
- Collaborate with girl child, boy child, teen and youth focused organizations, legal experts, and governmental bodies for comprehensive policy advocacy.

D. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

- Interactive yet educative workshops and seminars in schools like period and puberty education sessions, showing of films and skits to inspire positive change or hope.
- Establish puberty education clubs in a school for support.
- Partner with local schools and youth organizations to broaden the impact of our youth engagement initiatives.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

NARRATIVE STATEMENT	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	MEANS/ SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	IMPORTANT ASSUMPTION
Overall goal: Reduce period poverty and menstrual stigma through providing free reusable sanitary pads, menstrual management education	Reduced menstrual stigma among young women by society and their opposite gender.	Primary health care reports from health workers, health centers and clinics. School reports from teachers and head teachers.	Support from Wakiso Municipal Council, Diocese Council. Support from Donors and other NGO's or funders guaranteed.
Essential logical support. Vehicle Sewing machines and button machine Tailors/Labor Raw materials (fleece, baby mat, etc)	The project requires a vehicle to pick and deliver project materials, equipment and transport project members. The project also requires sewing machines a button machine for making reusable Need to equip tailors with outstanding pad making skills and techniques for use. Inventory to facilitate the production of the first bunch of reusable pads to be given out.	Check logbook and mileage register Review repairs and procurement receipts. Review training programs/records and conduct field visits. Review procurement receipts.	Support from well-wishers, individuals Support from Donors and other NGO's or funders guaranteed.
Planning and management.	Project plans (annual operational plans) are formulated, documented and regularly reviewed. Monthly meetings with all the resource persons and support staff.	Review Reports Produced	Support from well-wishers, church members. Support from Donors and other NGO's guaranteed.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	MEANS/ SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	IMPORTANT ASSUMPTION
Planning and management.	Progress reports are compiled, documented and circulated on a regular basis e.g. quarterly. Regular consultative meetings with all stake holders held every quarter.	Review minutes of the meetings and prescribe a way forward.	Support from church members, membership Support from Donors and other NGO's or funders guaranteed.

FURTHERMORE

- Track awareness campaign reach through social media analytics and media coverage monitoring.
- Conduct pre- and post-project surveys to assess changes in community knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.
- Evaluate the adoption and impact of increased up take of reusable pads by the community, schools.

PROPOSED BUDGET

This project is already running in the different parts of country and so far benefited over 1200 girls and women who have received reusable pads, menstrual management education and improved hygiene education and once supported its impact and positive foot print extend to reach another unprivileged community or person in dire need.

NO.	UNIT DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY/ SIZE	PROJECTED COST (USD)	PROJECTED COST (UGX 000)
1	Acquisition of land for construction of the training/sewing room and office.	2Acres @ \$ 2670	5,330	19,721
2	Construction of a standard/spacious training/sewing room		10,670	39,479
3	a.Purchase of a vehicle b. Sewing machines c. Button pressing machine	1 20 @ \$130 each 5 @ \$65 each	6,670 2,600 325	24,679 9,620 1,202
4	Inventory (Reusable Pad Making Materials and Tools)		1,300	4,810
TOTAL			26,895	99,511

FUNDING STRATEGY

We are currently seeking funding from multiple sources to reach our USD 26,895 USD (United Stated Dollars Twenty-six Thousand Eight hundred ninety-five) or its equivalent in UGX 99,511,000 (Shillings ninety-nine million five hundred eleven thousand) goal, this includes;

DONOR GRANTS

Applying for grants from health concern organization, government institutions, international development agencies, and corporate foundations.

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborating with businesses aligned with our mission to provide financial support or in-kind contributions.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Organizing activities like private tours and travel programs to generate additional revenue.

OTHER DONATIONS

Engaging religious institutions likes churches, individuals passionate about ensuring hope is reborn is teens and women.

SUSTAINABILITY

We believe in the long-term impact of our work and are committed to ensuring the sustainability of this project beyond just support and preparing teens to creating a better informed future.

CONCLUSION

As stated in our “Together through the flow and growth” statement and through community empowerment, education, policy advocacy, youth aspiration, reusable pads making, we strive to create a comprehensive solution for sustainable management of puberty and its changes like periods, behaviors as well as appropriate hygiene.

Our strategic partnerships with other organizations, passion and active involvement in local community initiatives will enhance the effectiveness and longevity of our endeavors have life reborn for teens but we can't do this alone, but together

More details about our journey and works:

<https://www.facebook.com/Teencandleinitiative>



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT

We believe every support big or small is a step closer to achieving our goals and objectives and most importantly it ensures a better life for a teen out there who has lost hope. Together, life can be reborn for millions.

BANK DETAILS

BANK NAME: **BANK OF AFRICA UGANDA LTD**

ACCOUNT NAME: **TEEN CANDLE INITIATIVE**

ACCOUNT NUMBER: **09417260007**

ADDRESS: **PLOT 23 LUGOGO BY PASS, P O BOX 2750, KAMPALA UGANDA**

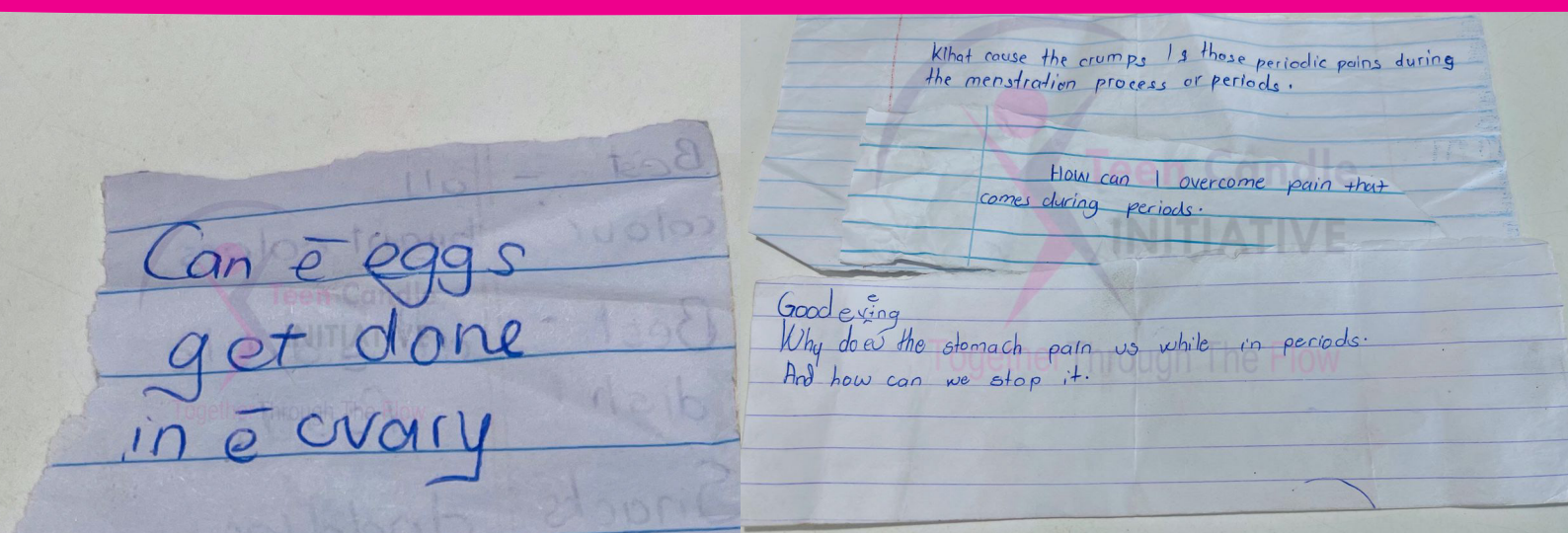
SWIFTCODE: **AFRIUGKA**

ONLINE FUNDRAISING LINK

<https://www.mchanga.africa/fundraiser/69378>



ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK



How can I overcome pain that comes during periods.

How can I overcome pain that comes during periods.

Nakulim Subiyah
Can a girl swim when she is in periods?

Why do some girls take long to start their periods.
like you find some is in S.W but hasn't started her periods.

Ah Rahmah

Nakolyong Agnes

Is it normal for someone to go in periods for three days and stop for one day, and then goes in for the forth day eg. 24th and 25th and then miss 26th goes on 27th.

Niana Rihannah:
Why is it that when ladies, girls and women are going in Mps they feel stomach pain but me I didn't feel that pain and even my blood was very little and there is a girl ^{who} told me that the blood must be much.

Why is it that if I receive periods I don't feel anything my Am always normal in my ways.
Is it normal or not.
NALUZZE SHANTEL.

Why is it when you are in periods you feel pain down?

NAKATO FAITH

Why do people in periods get stomach ache

Is it normal to feel pain while in your Mps
J WABURAH

When in periods, why do you feel pain?
Nokaweesi Prisca Rachina

Is it normal for being in menstruation periods and the meat comes out from your private part.

by Luwedde Burhira

When one have sex during menstruation can they get pregnant.

but they say that also abortion leads to that is it true?

(I mean a girl experiencing mp)

What causes boils on private parts.

What are the steps for being extra hygienic at school coz it is public intimes of using the lavatories.

When some spends 8 months and when she goes in spends one month is it normal. Will she be able to produce.

Nabakooza Victoria S-100
What is ~~de~~ about when you are sick of candidiasis what is the medicine.
Will the person produce.

Is it normal for a person to go in her periods twice a month.

Is it normal for a person to get ~~out~~ things like intestines from the vagina.

But they say that also abortion leads to that is it true?
(I mean u don't experiencing mp)

I have learnt a few things today about menstruation and I no longer fear to buy the pads for my sister because it's a normal thing used to fear and feel embarrassed to ask for pads at the shop that people will laugh at me.

Srenwada f.3

PICFARE

People say that after you completing your MP, that is before making a week that is even if you play sex you cannot get pregnant. But that thing has be confusing mp is it true???

Tahira.

What can you do when you find whiteish like mucus on your panty.

What is age of starting period.

How can one avoid cramps when she is in her periods Leticia.

Can you start your period when your are 14 years.

What can one do if she yellowish mucus (Hellen)

Why is it that before you go into periods, you feel some body weakness a week before you have them?

Esther N.

Kaulharah → If someone goes there for six days is she normal or not

Joselyne → What if someone goes in this month and the next month she doesn't go there but the another month she goes in them again, she goes there for one or two days. Is that person normal?

I bathe every day, twice but my friends keep saying I smell bad, please how can I get rid of the smell.

Samson

Is the increase in feelings towards periods or after periods. Is it normal to be moody during periods and loose appetite.

Good evening

Why does the stomach pain us while in periods?
And how can we stop it?

Hi miss

Is it true that if I bath with pepsi or take
in my private parts after having sex I can
not get pregnant?

120th 10/4/2023/

Rines Secondary School.

N [REDACTED] TEDPISTA (8 months) without seeing my periods
but when I go in my menstruation period but when I
see my period I can be in them for three weeks
and half. The telephone number to my parents
[REDACTED]
when I go into my period I in a day I can use two
minutes when the pad is full of blood which means
in one day I can use 11 non washable pads

Good afternoon.

Is it normal for a person
to have red blood at the
beginning but black blood
at the end?

Why do some people go in periods for three weeks and half?

If some one gets a discharge when she can't tell any one what can
she do like on her own to stop the discharge

The act of skipping months in menstruation periods but some
instead of three
one menstrates 2 days in a month, is it normal?

Nakimera Esther

what causes swelling
underneath

E. Joy

Why do some people spend
1 week or 2 weeks in period? Is it
normal or not?

Brendah.

How dose counting
bricks help

And how ~~and~~ can it
help me or use it

I have a problem when I go in my periods.
There are some vaginal fluids that pass
out and I spend two weeks in my periods.

From Tsosti

Do barren women go under their
periods

Some people discourage me
to use NISA hair removal in
my private parts
will it affect me?

When your brother
see you when you
are in period.

Why is it ^{not} good to sit in
ash as they say in
local people?

②. If a boy know how
can you be?

①. How many hour did
you change?

Why is it bad to sit
with a boy when
you are in
periods

What cause the cramps / & those periodic pains during
the menstruation process or periods.

What can I use if I don't
have apad?