

Cups of Change: Empowering Women to Freedom

The Spark of an Idea

It all started with a birthday celebration in 2023. Surrounded by family in Nigeria, many of whom she was meeting for the first time, the founder experienced the freedom and confidence that comes with using a menstrual cup. No one suspected she was menstruating – no telltale signs, no discomfort. The surprised reactions and questions from other women sparked an idea: every woman deserves this same freedom. A conversation with Mommy Steph solidified the concept, and Cups of Change was born. Though the official campaign launch would wait until closer to the founder's journey on October 1st, the seed was planted during that memorable birthday gathering.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide menstrual cups and education to women in West Africa, empowering them to manage their menstrual cycles with dignity and health. We also aim to create awareness about menstrual hygiene, address the challenges of period poverty, and challenge the stigma surrounding menstruation.

Our Vision

Our vision is a world where all women and girls equally have the same rights and access to menstrual hygiene products and education, and where they are empowered to make informed decisions about their health and bodies.

Period Poverty in West Africa

Period poverty is a significant issue in West Africa, where many women and girls lack access to affordable menstrual products and adequate sanitation facilities. This can lead to a cascade of negative consequences:

- **Missed Education:** Girls may miss school for several days each month, hindering their educational opportunities and future prospects.
- **Health Risks:** Lack of access to proper menstrual hygiene can lead to health problems and increase vulnerability to exploitation and harmful practices.
- **Social Stigma:** Period poverty is often intertwined with stigma and shame surrounding menstruation, further marginalizing women and girls.

Cups of Change is committed to addressing period poverty in West Africa through our programs and advocacy efforts. We believe that by providing access to menstrual cups,

education, and support, we can empower women and girls to manage their periods with dignity and confidence.

Our Programs

Cups of Change offers a variety of programs to support women in West Africa, including:

- **Menstrual cup and reusable pad distribution:** We distribute menstrual cups and reusable pads to women and girls in need, helping to alleviate the financial burden of period poverty.
- **Menstrual hygiene education:** We provide education on menstrual hygiene, including information about menstrual cups, reusable pads, and other products. This education also addresses the root causes of period poverty, such as stigma and lack of awareness.
- **Awareness campaigns:** We run awareness campaigns to challenge the stigma surrounding menstruation and to promote menstrual hygiene. Our campaigns also raise awareness about period poverty and its impact on women and girls.
- **Advocacy:** We advocate for policies and programs that support women's access to menstrual hygiene products and education. This includes advocating for policies that address the systemic causes of period poverty, such as the high cost of menstrual products and lack of access to sanitation facilities. We draw inspiration from successful initiatives in countries like Scotland, Kenya, South Africa, and Botswana, and we strive to advocate for similar progress in West Africa.

Our Current Status and Impact (Pre-Distribution)

Founded seven months prior to planned on-site travel in 1st October 2025, Cups of Change has focused on fundraising and preparation for our upcoming distribution efforts. We have successfully engaged in awareness campaigns and educational outreach, reaching a growing audience through our online platforms. We are actively building partnerships and securing resources to ensure a successful and impactful distribution phase, with the aim of:

- **Improving school attendance and educational outcomes for girls.**
- **Enhancing the health and well-being of women and girls.**
- **Reducing stigma and empowering women and girls to manage their periods with confidence.**

Our Team

Cups of Change is led by a team of passionate and dedicated women who are committed to our mission. The founder, along with her sisters-in-law, Mommy Steph and Mona, bring a diverse range of skills and experience to the organization.

Mommy Steph and Mona will be the eyes and ears on the ground in Nigeria, conducting interviews and gathering firsthand accounts of the challenges women and girls face. This ensures an authentic and nuanced understanding of the situation, going beyond the perspective of a "white privileged lady in the west." Their work will be crucial in creating a dialogue, raising awareness, and driving meaningful change.

And let's not forget the youngest member of the team, Evie, who brings her own unique perspective and energy to Cups of Change!

This collaborative approach, bridging perspectives from both West Africa and the West, is a key strength of Cups of Change. It allows the organization to effectively address the needs of the community while also raising awareness and advocating for change on a global scale.

Our Partners

We are actively building partnerships with local and international organizations, government agencies, and private companies to achieve our goals.

Our Funding

Cups of Change is currently funded by donations from individuals. We are actively pursuing grants and corporate sponsorships to support our upcoming distribution and education programs.

Our Future

We are excited about the future of Cups of Change and the upcoming distribution of menstrual cups and reusable pads. We plan to expand our programs to reach more women and girls in West Africa. We also hope to continue to raise awareness about menstrual hygiene and to advocate for policies that support women's health and well-being.

Freedom Through Cups of Change

Our logo, represents the freedom that Cups of Change strives to provide for women and girls in West Africa. We envision a world where menstruation does not hold women back from pursuing education, careers, and their full potential. By providing access to menstrual cups, education, and support, we aim to empower women with the freedom to:

- **Pursue Education:** Attend school without interruption or shame, regardless of their menstrual cycle.
- **Build Careers:** Engage in work and economic opportunities without limitations imposed by menstruation.

- **Live with Dignity:** Manage their periods with confidence and without fear of stigma or embarrassment.

Join the Cups of Change Movement

Talk about it.

Share it.

Break the stigma and shame about periods.

Without menstruating women, there would be no humans born. Together, we can empower women and girls in West Africa with the freedom they deserve.

Please contact us at jessica.marcus@cupsofchange.org for more information.