

# PadMad - Upcycling Textiles for Menstrual Health & Girl's Education with Madhvi Dalal

Key Learnings



## Iterating Toward a Sustainable Model

The enterprise's approach was forged through trial and error. Early attempts to teach sewing or set up community hubs failed due to dropping quality and internal competition. These setbacks necessitated a fundamental pivot towards a formalised, standardised production process developed in collaboration with national standards bodies. This journey demonstrates that sustainable models are often discovered through adaptation, not preconceived in their final form, and that resilience comes from learning quickly from what does not work.

## Using Education as the Engine for Product Adoption

While the physical product is essential, its impact is limited without confronting deep-seated cultural stigma. The programme's success is fuelled by workshops that include boys and men, community dialogues, and school clubs that create safe spaces for peer support. This foundational work of de-stigmatisation through inclusive education ensures the product is used effectively, transforming a simple item into a tool for lasting behavioural and social change.

## Embedding Circularity within the Local Economy

The environmental strategy emerged from local partnerships, such as using cotton waste from Kenyan textile factories to produce pads within a six-week, hyper-local supply chain. The resulting product, which lasts for years, directly reduces the plastic pollution that places without formal waste collection. This proves that true circularity is achieved by anchoring the supply chain within community and industrial ecosystems, turning local waste into a resilient, affordable, and context-specific solution.

**Listen to the full episode here:**

<https://circularity.fm/padmad-upcycling-textiles-for-menstrual-health-girls-education/>