Materials Needed:
- Soft material for exterior cover – baby flannel is soft and inexpensive
- Terri cloth for the pad portion, flannel may be substituted but more layers need to be added
- Leak proof “PUL” for lining - (Polyurethane Laminate) Soft, Breathable, Waterproof fabric. It is popular and for diaper covers, etc – it can be found in fabric stores in the baby or utility fabric section.
- Velcro or Snaps
- Cotton Thread
- Black Permanent Marker
- Pattern – you can use the attached pattern or create your own

How to create a pattern

1. For the pad portion, trace around a maxi pad.
2. For the outer portion or cover, copy the trace pad and add ¼ inch all the way around the pad. Halfway down draw “wings” on each side, 1½ inches high and long enough to reach ¾ of the way across the pad.

Construction

1. Cut 3 pads out of the Terri cloth or 5 pads of flannel.
2. Cut one pad of the PUL lining.
3. Cut 2 of the cover out of the flannel.
4. Take one piece of the cover and lay it face down. Center the PUL lining in the center of the cover. Put the terri cloth pad layers on top of the lining.
5. Sew all the way around the pad to keep the pad in place while being worn.
6. Take the other piece of the cover and lay it on top of the lower cover so it sandwiches the pad.
7. Sew all the way around the cover about ¼ of an inch from the edge.
8. Go back and stitch around the cover again with a zig-zag stitch.
Install closer, either using Velcro or a snap.

**Option 1 – Install Velcro**

Look at the pad with the bottom facing up and both wings unfolded; you will know this because of the stitching to hold the pad shows only on the bottom. Fold in one wing. Place one piece of Velcro on the folded wing, and the other on the other wing. Make sure one piece of Velcro has the loops up while the other piece of Velcro has the brush up. Sew each piece of Velcro in place. Even if there is adhesive on the back of the Velcro you must sew the Velcro in place or it will come off of the pad with one or two uses.

**Option 2 – Install Snap**

Snaps require that both sides line up. Looking at the pad with the bottom facing up; you will know this because of the stitching to hold the pad shows only on the bottom. Fold in one wing. Mark a small circle on the top of the folded wing of where snap with be installed. Fold in the other wing to line up the other half of the snap and mark is with a circle then unfold again.

Install snaps according to manufacturer’s directions. Be sure that the top and bottom snap together; it is easy to get mixed up when installing the snaps. The easiest way to be sure of correct installation is to fold out one wing. Have the bottom of the snap showing on both wings.

Look at the pad with the bottom facing up and both wings unfolded; again you will know this because of the stitching to the pad will show. With the permanent marker, draw a two-sided arrow in the middle of the pad pointing out to the wings. On each wing draw an arrow pointing towards the fasteners. **NOTE:** *This is a very important step because the pad can be connected with the plastic PLU sheet on the top or the bottom – this is the only way to indicate how to correctly connect the pad with the PLU sheet on the bottom.*
Sani-Panti Instructions

The Sani-Panti project is fast approaching the most important of our projects. These simple but necessary sanitary pads are simple to make and are distributed to the young girls, who without them, often cannot attend school.

It is a widespread but unacknowledged problem that girls in Africa miss school and stay at home because of menstruation. According to UNICEF, one in ten schoolgirls in Africa miss classes or drop out completely due to their period, and substitute pads or tampons for less safe and less absorbent materials such as rags, newspaper or bark.

There are many aspects that link girls’ attendance rates to their menstrual cycles. Firstly, the lack of affordable sanitary products and facilities for girls and women keeps them at a disadvantage in terms of education when they are young and prevents their mobility and productivity as women. Secondly, the lack of clean and healthy sanitation such as toilets and running water means that girls often do not have anywhere to change or dispose of pads safely and in privacy at school. Thirdly, the taboo nature of menstruation prevents girls and their communities from talking about and addressing the problem. Raising awareness and education to eliminate the stigma of menstruation is a large part of the battle.

UNICEF reports that “in countries where menstrual hygiene is taboo, girls in puberty are typically absent for 20% of the school year”. Most girls drop out at around 11 to 12 years old, and miss school not simply because they fear being teased by their classmates if they show stains from their period, but also because they are not educated about their periods, and their need for safe and clean facilities is not prioritized. The idea that monthly bleeding is something shameful, polluting, or taboo may also encourage girls to avoid social contact during their period. Additionally, the cultural implications of menstruation as a stage in a woman’s development may be used to take girls out of school—the idea being that if a girl is ready for motherhood, then she is ready for marriage.

Menstruation is a reason for dropping out that can be added to the potential threat of sexual harassment from male teachers as girls develop. In either case, the result is girls lagging behind with schoolwork and performing badly.

Little Dresses for Africa has seen the need among the young girls and women and encouraged our sewers to take part in sewing and sending what we call “sani-panties”. Improvements in sanitation can go a long way in combating the problem. The distribution of these washable pads and the discussion surrounding their use and the resulting good hygiene enables the girls to manage their periods more easily.

Please join us in this important project. Thank you!

Mulungu akudalitseni!  
God bless your good works!

For more information on how to get involved, please contact Rachel O’Neill at 734-637-9064.

www.littledressesforafrica.org