

Paper Pens Pencils + Sisters and Allies

**Project Team:** Lucy Zhou, Emily Hacket Pain, Jennifer Shin, Alyssa Fa'afua and Amelia Cai

**Project Aims:**

*Paper Pens Pencils:* To provide stationery to decile 1 schools in particular to ensure that every child gets a fair start at school and has the opportunity to achieve.

*Sisters and Allies:* To supply girls from lower decile schools with menstrual products.

**In relation to the SDGs**

*Paper Pens Pencils:*

Goal 4 - Quality Education

Provide children with the necessary resources to receive a quality education.

Goal 10 - Reducing Inequalities

Reducing economic inequality by ensuring that every child has a fair start at school and therefore set them out for life.

Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production

Redistribution of existing stock and unused stock to prevent waste.

*Sisters and Allies:*

Goal 3 - Good Health and Wellbeing

Maintaining menstrual hygiene is essential to staying healthy.

Goal 5 - Gender Equality

Sanitary products help girls have equal opportunities especially at school and empower them to break out of the poverty cycle.

Why did we start this project?

*Paper Pens Pencils:*

We realised that many people acquire surplus amounts of stationery especially pens, pencils, refill, notebooks and spare exercise books. While many are pondering what to do with all their excess stationery, others are struggling to support their children with the stationery requirements or funds needed when they go to school. We discovered that there was no easy and accessible way that people could donate stationery to children and schools in need. People also tend to forget about all their extra stationery until they had no other convenient solution other than to put it into landfill and perhaps they didn't realise that others may greatly appreciate what they had too much of. So Paper Pens Pencils was born to help provide a place where people could donate their surplus stationery and help transform the lives of children.

*Sisters and Allies:*

We are students who are passionate about solving the issue of period poverty in girls schools in fellow Auckland schools. Some of the teachers at our school had talked about their experience teaching at different schools and how some girls were 'absent' for a few days each month due to lack of access to affordable sanitary products. We've also noticed that there are people who are aware of these problems but only standby and we realised that we were guilty of the same thing. We wish that these things were fixed but were standing around waiting for someone else to fix these things for us. This was when we decided to do something about period poverty in girls schools. After we could no longer stand to watch this issue not being acted on anymore, Sisters and Allies was officially established with a dedicated team.

What we have achieved?

*Paper Pens Pencils:*

We have managed to do a stationery and NCEA resources collection at school in December. We have also reached out to businesses and many, including Whitcoulls, Staedtler and Pilot Pens, have kindly donated a generous amount of stationery to support us in helping children receive the best education they can, in fact, we have received more than 18,500 stationery items such as pens, pencils, folders and so much more since December 2018. We have also had several individuals contact us through our website and email to donate stationery which we are so grateful to receive. We have also donated to 16 schools, including a local village school in Fiji and assisted more than 5,500 children. We have set up a Facebook page, LinkedIn page and an email subscription function on our website to create awareness for Paper Pens Pencils as well as make it easier to connect to stationery businesses and individuals who are passionate about quality education for children.

*Sisters and Allies:*

We have around 150 items from three donation initiatives we have started at our school. We also raised approximately 80 dollars from selling FairTrade chocolate outside of school. We have also reached out to a few companies, Wa Initiative, U by Kotex and Lunette for donations and we are currently still in the process of discussing those logistics. One company is in the process of shipping period cups to us from Finland which is reusable and eco-friendly as opposed to pads and tampons.

What have been some obstacles?

*Paper Pens Pencils:*

It's been a little challenging to become noticed on social media but we're hoping that when more people like our page, the more awareness will be raised and we can create a bigger impact through more collections and donations. We are always short on pencils as so many primary schools are desperate for these so instead of always looking to the corporate businesses for supplies they might have, it may be easier sometimes to do some fundraising to raise the funds to purchase the pencils ourselves so we might look at some ways to fundraise for stationery going forward.

*Sisters and Allies:*

Some negatives of our project were, due to the stigmatisation around the topic, not many students at our school donated. The gut reaction to feel uncomfortable and stay as far away from the topic as possible is an obstacle in having more student contribution. As students, particularly from well-off schools, they may find it harder to see the need for projects supporting period poverty, especially as sanitary products are taken for granted. However, our posters and initiatives to inform them of the issue definitely pushed them out of their comfort zone and exposed them to such a terrible problem.

Looking into the future.

*Paper Pens Pencils:*

We have started to set up collection points in community centers such as churches and libraries and we are hoping to be able to extend our project beyond Auckland as well. We have also planned a fundraiser in early May in order to raise funds to buy items that we haven't been able to receive enough of in donations such as pencils for primary schools.

*Sisters and Allies:*

We hope to further push students at our school to inform them of the situation. We will also be donating the products to around 5 low decile high schools in Auckland.



A huge thank you from Paper Pens Pencils + Sisters and Allies to all the individuals, businesses, organisations and others that have helped us with our project so far! We could not have achieved what we have without your help, generosity and advice!

Another huge thank you to our teacher, Libby Giles, for all the encouragement and support she has given us as well as the invaluable wisdom she has shared with us!