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UGANDA-UNITED STATES

The power of international student networking

Mary Beth Marklein 31 August 2019 Share

Like most of her female classmates growing up in Uganda, Ritah Arishaba's family couldn't afford to buy feminine hygiene pads month after month. But unlike many of them, her mother taught her to make reusable pads from old clothes.

Arishaba never missed a day of school because of her periods, and she thinks it made a difference. By the time she graduated high school and landed a scholarship for college, other classmates had dropped out. Some of them "ended up getting pregnant, as young as 12 years old", she says.

So when she came to Arizona State University as a freshman in 2015, Arishaba knew she wanted to use her education to help keep girls in school when they're menstruating. Now, four years later, what was once "just an idea" has become "a real thing", she says.