

Concerned about the growing problem of period poverty, non-profit **Neighborhood Feminists** and research agency **Opinium** conducted the first-ever quantitative research on period poverty in Amsterdam (15/09/2022-19/10/2022). 1.332 people who menstruate and live in Amsterdam took part, with conclusions analyzed from 870 respondents.

Period poverty is the lack of access to period products and information essential for maintaining good menstrual health

Key findings:

Period poverty is **widespread** across Amsterdam, with increased cost-of-living worsening the problem. Over the last year, **27%** of people who menstruate have been **unable to afford to pay for period products** at some point. 38% say they managed to pay but found it difficult to do so.

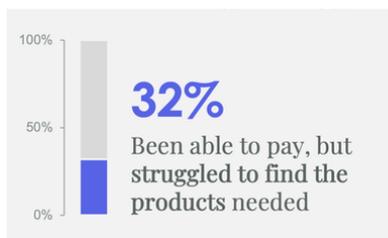
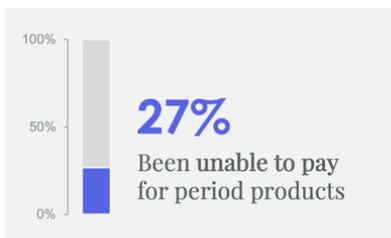
89% of people struggling to or unable to afford period products in the last 12 months had to take **alternative measures** to be able to buy essential menstrual products, of these: 38% had to cut back their spending on **groceries**, 27% cut back spending on **household products**, 22% cut back on **health products**, while 11% cut back on **school supplies**.

Difficulty affording and accessing period products negatively impacts day-to-day life for many: **7 in 10** of those struggling with this had to alter their day-to-day routines – having to stay home, **missing school or work**.

Regardless of income, products related to periods continue to carry a **social stigma**, with over two in five experiencing negative emotions when they try to get the products they need.

Over 3 in 5 (62%) of the people who could not afford, struggled to afford, or struggled to access period products have had to resort to alternatives to their usual period products. Of these, half (50%) resorted to using **toilet paper**. Among those aged 12-17, the rate jumps to **70%**.

Over a quarter have been unable to afford to pay for period products in the last 12 months



In the last 12 months have you experienced any of these issues?
Base: All who have menstruated in the last 12 months (870)

The outlook is concerning: two in five (41%) of all surveyed stated that they found it increasingly difficult to afford to buy period products compared to the previous 6 months. Among younger age groups, almost half (46%) of 18–24-year-olds say it has been more difficult for them, compared to 22% among 45–55 year olds.

Bottom line: the inability to access needed period products can impact all aspects of a person's daily life, from school to work, and both physical and mental health.

What is the solution?

Unfortunately, the support currently provided Neighborhood Feminists and others reaches only a fraction of those in need. Increased scale, continuity and accessibility are very much needed. Currently, **high inflation rates and the energy crisis** further impact people already at risk of or living in poverty, also making them more susceptible to period poverty.

Raising benefits and the minimum wage to more accurately reflect the actual, rising cost of living is the single most significant step the government can take against all forms of poverty, including period poverty. Effective support at the national level should also include **public awareness building** through a campaign developed in coordination with municipalities.

The issue of period poverty is urgent and is most effectively and sustainably addressed through **needs-based solutions led by municipalities**.

Period products remain an unmissable part of healthy menstruation, and **tampons and pads should be made freely available** in all suitable locations, including public buildings, public schools and universities.

Making use of **existing facilities**, whether schools, libraries, GGD locations, or other government-owned facilities, makes this type of policy change lower threshold, and lower in cost, while improving accessibility and visibility as people in need already frequent these locations.

Specifically allocated **public funding** is key. Fighting period poverty must not come at the expense of other inequality- and poverty-fighting measures. Closing more tax loopholes and enforcing existing regulations for large companies who benefit from being based in one of the world's primary tax havens is one way to access needed funds.

Comprehensive menstrual health education for all genders must be part of the solution, to reduce stigma, but also to enable awareness about practical menstrual health options and earlier detection of potentially serious health problems.



Nearly 1 in 3 (27%) menstruating people in Amsterdam are unable to afford period products

Over a lifetime, a person who menstruates in the Netherlands will use roughly 12.000 pads or tampons, spending between €480 and €5.520 on these products alone