13 Inventions and Innovations Creating a Better Future for Women - List Show (Ep. 238)

List Show
https://youtube.com/watch?v=k9_zr_uUSAk
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Hi! I'm Emily Graslie, and this is Mental Floss on YouTube.

1. And did you know that in 2010, a 19-year-old named Evans Wadongo invented a solar-powered lamp made out of 50% recycled material? Evans had vision and health issues from reading and studying by firelight and kerosene lamps as a kid. To make sure that others didn't suffer the same problems, Evans traveled across Kenya providing villagers with his free lamps. His hope is to reduce the health issues that result from trying to work and study by firelight: problems that disproportionately affect women.

Today, we're teaming up with the Gates Foundation to tell you about some innovations that are going to make the world infinitely better for women, because a world better for women is better for everyone! Let's get started.

(Intro)

2. It isn't just the lighting that causes problems. Women in developing countries have been experiencing respiratory problems caused by wood-burning stoves in poorly ventilated kitchens. But, The Infinity Oven hopes to change that! This solar-powered cooking device actually eliminates the need for fire. In fact, it bakes without smoke or fuel and is much cheaper than the other solar-powered alternatives. The device is currently being tested in a bakery in Burundi.

3. A sad reality is recognizing 45% of Rwandan children under the age of five experience malnutrition. But there's hope in people like Julie Carney! She works with Gardens for Health International, an organization that collaborates with Rwandan villages to provide mothers with a 14-week nutrition education program. While gardening may seem like a small way to create change, the impact is actually drastic. Carney realized that when mothers are empowered to grow and choose the foods they want to feed their children, malnutrition declines. GHI also helps villagers recognize malnutrition sooner, and the organization's goal is to create self-sufficient communities. After three years, the group leaves areas to grow and thrive on their own.

4. As of 2011, only 12% of women in India used sanitary pads partly because they're so expensive and partly because of a lingering stigma in Indian society. As the BBC reported, one of the terrible side effects is that 70% of the nation's reproductive diseases are caused by poor menstrual health. But, one man is on a mission to change that! Arunachalam Muruganantham has spent over four years creating an inexpensive machine that allows women to discreetly make their own sanitary pads. There are currently 1,300 machines in use in India, but he would like to start sending his invention to other countries battling similar issues, including Kenya, Nigeria, and Bangladesh. And for those of you at home who can't relate to this problem, imagine being stuck in the uncomfortable and awkward early stages of puberty... forever. That's what it's like to have a period and no resources.

5. In 2006, Argentine car mechanic Jorge Odón watched a life hack video for taking a cork out of a wine bottle. Later that night, he couldn't stop thinking about it. As a father of five, all of his children were delivered by C-section. He wondered if this suction trick could have other applications. His invention? The Odón device made out of a plastic bag, which can save the lives of babies who are stuck in the birth canal during childbirth, as well as mothers, who can often die in complicated deliveries. This inexpensive solution could help tremendously in the developing world, where people have typically used less successful contraptions, like suction cups and even large pliers. After all, it's a vagina, not a clogged toilet.

6. 40% of South African children under the age of five die from problems associated with AIDS, a number that could be specifically lessened if HIV positive mothers take the right medication on the right schedule. To address the problem, three professors from South Africa invented Cell-Life, a solution that will send mothers text messages with the schedule and reminders to guide them through a 10-week mother-to-child prevention program.

7. Another cell phone related innovation helping women is the app Hollaback!. The organization was started by Emily May when she was 24 years old. In 2010, May raised $15,000 on Kickstarter to create the app which allows people to contribute to and access maps where recent street harassment has occurred so folks can get a heads-up on dicey areas. In New York City, the app even allows you to report the incidents to the mayor's office to further spotlight the issue which is awesome because Bill de Blasio deserves to know when someone thinks I'm a sexy lady walking home with a six-pack of toilet paper and a family-sized tub of Nutella.

8. When Anne Githuku-Shongwe saw her teenagers playing civilization building games on their phones she became inspired to start Afroes Games, a company that produces mobile apps and games to inspire African youth. In 2011 she teamed up with the UN to create MORABA which takes a popular South African strategy game and adapts it to educate youth on issues of sexual violence and gender equality. The addictive game teaches them more about the issues and is shaping the way a new generation thinks about women's rights.

9. Ever since her stint in the Peace Corps, Amy Smith has obsessed over how to help people across the world with low-tech inventions and innovations. In fact, she found MIT's D-Lab with that specific mission in mind and she's invented a number of low-cost machines along the way. This includes an incubator for babies that needs no electricity, an easy-build cornsheller that reduces backbreaking work and a sustainable hammer mill for village flour production. Her latest projects involve collaborating on clean birth and healthy new born kits. According to the New York Times, 800 women die every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth-- including unclean conditions at birth. Smith's mission is to use her kits to reduce that number drastically. The tools and materials inside include a plastic drop sheet, hand wipes, a sharp tool for quick and clean snipping of the umbilical cord and much more. The kits are built to be culturally appropriate for use around the world including regions where women stand during childbirth. And the best part: all of these lives can be affected for less than $2 a kit.

10. The Hippo water roller, invented by Grant Gibbs from South Africa, is a 90 liter plastic barrel that can be rolled to a water source then rolled back home once it's filled. The invention reduces strain on the skeletal frame caused by bearing heavy loads of water and also saves precious hours each day when women and children usually make the long tedious trips to the water source. Now they have more time for education and economic activities. The Hippo water roller is currently being used in many countries including Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

11. I think we can all agree that mosquitoes aren't winning any popularity contests. The fact that they leave you all itchy is bad enough, the transmission of malaria puts them in another category all together. Malaria kills millions of people each year and it's particularly dangerous for pregnant women and children. Luckily Rice University's Rebecca Richards-Kortum has come up with an incredible invention to help counter the disease: a bloodless malaria test. Her device clips onto a finger, peaks through the skin at the blood below and gives you an instant diagnosis. The rapid detection will lead to faster treatment in remote areas and save the lives of men, women and children in the process.

12. Finally, I return to my salon to tell you that intrauterine devices,

also known as IUDs, are considered one of the safest and most effective forms of birth control. There are currently a multitude of organizations that are working on making them readily available in developing countries by lowering costs and simplifying the procedure. Jhpiego, an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University, invented a no touch technique for inserting an IUD which allows it to be inserted without anyone contaminating the device during the process.

13. On that note, the organization Bioceptive created a device that automates much of the process so that you don't have to be an expert to insert an IUD. And Marie Stopes International has provided many IUDs for women in Sub-Saharan Africa, even popularizing the device in that region.

Thanks for watching this episode of Mental Floss on YouTube which is made with all the help of these nice people and brought to you by our friends at the Gates Foundation. I'm Emily Graslie and you can check out my work at The Brain Scoop.