## PRESS KIT



# BLUEMIND FOUNDATION LAUNCHES THE INAUGURAL PROMOTION OF THE FIRST MOVEMENT OF HAIRDRESSER AMBASSADORS FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN AFRICA

Bluemind Foundation is organizing the first edition of the Heal by Hair training from April 4 to 6, 2022, at Azalaï Hotel Abidjan (Ivory Coast). After seven days of the call to an application, which resulted in nearly 250 applications from professionals and self-taught, 30 hairdressing professionals will be trained to become ambassadors of mental health of the signature program Heal by Hair.





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#### I- CONTEXT: ALARMING FIGURES



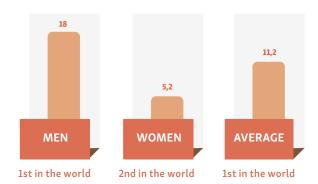
ental health remains taboo in Africa. Yet, according to WHO, 110 million people on the continent are affected by mental health disorders1.60% of them are under 25 young women. WHO also indicates that

Africa has the highest suicide average rate globally and holds second place in female suicides.

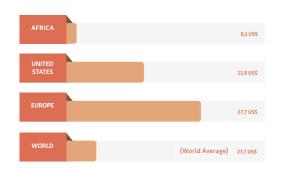
According to WHO, an alarming situation is worsened by the weak investment rate allocated to mental health: less than one dollar per capita<sup>2</sup>. This translates into a limited number of therapists. Indeed, some French-speaking African countries are far away from the recommendation of WHO, that is, one therapist for 5000 inhabitants.

For example, there are about 50 therapists for more that 25 million inhabitants in the Ivory Coast 3. In Togo, the ratio is about I therapist for 1,600,000 inhabitants, which means 5 therapists for 8 millions inhabitants. In Cameroon, there are 10 therapists for 26 millions inhabitants, that is one therapist for 2.600.000 millions inhabitants<sup>4</sup>.

## (suicide deaths per 100,000 population)



#### ESOURCES FOR MENTAL HFALTH IN AFRICA (per capita per year)



Source: WHO

<sup>1</sup>Ministerial Round-table Discussions 2001-54th World Health Assembly, World Health Organization

Deputy Directorate of mental health of Ministry of Public Health of Cameroon - 2021

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "Mental health budget represents less than 1% of the total health public expenses", Ministerial Round-table Discussions 2001-54th World Health Assembly, World Health Organization, P.16

<sup>3</sup> Le Monde Afrique, 2020 - Le Monde Afrique, 2020 - https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2020/01/28/les-

guerisseurs-traditionnels-nouveaux-allies-des-psychiatres-en-cote-d-ivoire\_6027545\_3212.html

#### II- ABOUT BLUEMIND FOUNDATION





ounded in July 2021 and chaired by Marie-Alix de Putter, Bluemind Foundation is a nonprofit international organization based on a strong conviction: mental health is health. Though mental health is still taboo, we firmly believe that it is not and should not be a luxury but a fundamental human right.

#### **OUR AMBITIONS**

- Make mental health a social, societal, cultural and political issue.
- Reach and accompany 10 millions of young people (aged 15 25) by 2025.

#### **OUR MISSIONS**

- <u>Sensitize</u> about mental health issues, promote well-being and prevent risk situations.
- Mobilize to allow young women and men to access mental health care in Africa.
- In addition to digital and on site actions, defend the patients' rights and arouse public authorities' interest on mental health issues.

#### **Our values**



**Inclusiveness** 



Caring



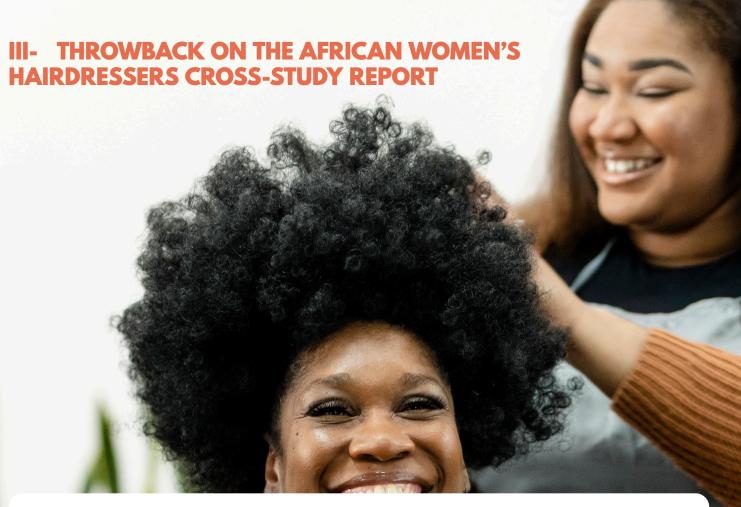
Listening



Trust

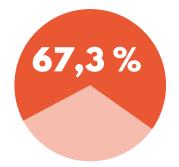


**Human dignity** 

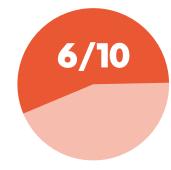


Research and reliable data from the field guide our actions and honor the communities where we work.

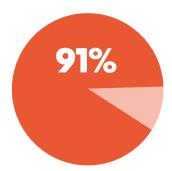
Therefore, we went on the field and interviewed 714 women and 148 hairdressers in seven (7) African countries, including Togo, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, and the diaspora (France). The plural voices of surveyed women had been summarized in the "African Women's Hairdressers Cross-study Report," published in November 2021. Their first results demonstrate that:



**67,3** % of surveyed women state that they confide in their hairdressers;



6/10 would trust a mental health hairdresser ambassador;



91% of the hairdressers are ready for training in mental health first aid.

This study served as a basis for the conception of the Heal by Hair signature program.

#### **NUMBER OF WOMEN REACHED BY:**

- 50 hairdressers: 18 000 women per year
- 100 hairdressers: 36 000 women per year
- 200 hairdressers : 72 000 women per year \_



#### IV- ABOUT HEAL BY HAIR





#### 1- About Heal by Hair

Heal by Hair is a short and innovative three (3) day training program that incorporates the basic principles of active listening and mental health, including the World Health Organization's Closing the Mental Health Gap Action Program (mhGAP-GI). The mhGAP-GI is used in over 90 countries.

In order to base our action on the cultural and social realities specific to the African context, the Heal by Hair program proposes an innovative approach to mental health, consisting of mobilizing a network of professional hairdressers.

Like somatic first aid training, the Heal by Hair training will allow hairdresser ambassadors in mental health to become the first link in the care chain and not health care professionals.

By learning to recognize the first signs of mental health disorders or the worsening of a pre-existing condition, they will be able to provide active and caring listening; they will be equipped to adopt an adapted attitude, behavior and language. And above all, they will be able to accompany and refer their clients in pain to therapists.

By 2035, the training of 1,000

hairdressers would achieve to sensitize and support of up to 5 million women in 20 cities. These are as much sensitized children, families and communities.

#### 2- Aims of the Heal by Hair program

**HEAL**: The ultimate goal of the Heal by Hair program is to improve the mental health and well-being of African women through the hairdressers' chair, one client at a time.

**EMPOWER**: Through the training of mental health hairdresser ambassadors, it is about stimulating mental health innovation, equipping hairdressers in mental health care, breaking the stigma and silence surrounding mental health disorders in Africa.

By making serious and adapted to local context information in mental health available and accessible, it is also about giving their power to act on their mental health back to women as well as to exert their choice to transform their lives and those of their communities.

**ELEVATE**: Train and increase the creation of social and economic value of these hairdressing entrepreneurs.

#### 3-Curriculum

The Heal by Hair training curriculum is declined in three (3) days:

> **DAY 1: BECOMING A MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID HAIRDRESSER:** INTRODUCTION & IMMERSION

**DAY 2: LEARN WITH PASSION,** PRACTICE WITH PURPOSE

**DAY 3: WOMEN LEADERSHIP:** TAKE THE LEAD. HEAL BY HAIR

The training ends with a final exam. A certificate will be delivered to the participants who achieve at least 80% of the points. Monthly follow-up and impact measuring will allow to assess and improve the results.

"The hairdressers will be trained by African, Pan-African, and international women psychiatrists and psychotherapists. As a result, they will acquire more listening capacities, more empathy, and the capacity to refer their clients to mental health professionals", claims Chrissy Kuoh, therapist and coordinator of the Bluemind Foundation Scientific Council.

"The program had been conceived



by taking the target population into account to allow them to have a better understanding of mental health and help women who confide in them more efficiently," says Dr. Porquet, psychiastrist and member of the Bluemind Foundation Scientific Council.

#### 4- Zoom on the training experts



Chrissy KUOH, therapist and doctorate student in psychiatry, the Bluemind Foundation Scientific Council coordinator. She currently exercises at North Middlesex University Hospital. After graduating in psychology and social behavior at the University of California in Irvine, she pursued intensive work as a behavioral therapist in New York. She accompanied children with special needs and developmental disorders. Through all her research and volunteering activities, she has demonstrated her passion for helping children suffering from mental health disorders and her strong desire to devote more to this cause in Africa.



**Dr. Olga PORQUET,** psychiatrist in Abidjan and member of the Scientific Council of Bluemind Foundation. Specializing in psycho-traumatology, she has been practicing for 10 years. Working in the national center to prevent and treat kidney failure, she is also vice president of Action psychology in the lvory Coast. In addition, she is a member of the African society of mental health.



**Dr. Sonia KANEKATOUA,** psychiatrist and member of the Scientific Council of Bluemind Foundation. She holds a specialized studies degree in adult psychiatry from the University of Abomey Calavi in Benin. She also has a diploma in psychology and psychiatry from the University of Clermont Auvergne. Psychiatrist at the psychiatric and medical psychology clinic of the University health center Campus and the center for comprehensive attention to addiction of Kodjoviakopé (Cepiak) in Lomé, Togo, she is a member of the African society of mental health.



**Dr. Madjara ANOUMATACKY,** psychiatrist and psychotherapist. She has been working for nearly 14 years at the National Mental Health Program in Côte d'Ivoire.



**Dr Anna Corinne BISSOUMA,** doctor of psychology, she specialized in child psychiatry and founding member of the Association Autismes Côte d'Ivoire (2Aci). She is also responsible for the Marguerite Té Bonlé center, specializing in autism care.



**Dina LAHLOU** is an expert in mental health and well-being, with more than 26 years of teaching experience. She accompanies organizations in self-care, mental health, and emotional intelligence. Through individualized support, she aims to contribute to creating enterprises aware of the importance of mental health, which is at the center of the individual quality of life.



**Nabou FALL,** managing director of Video since 2007, ICF certified coach, and Harvard Business School certified female leadership coach. She has a computer engineering degree with an option in systems and communication networks from the IT School of Paris. She also holds a master's degree in finances and enterprises organization from ISG Paris.



**Paule Marie ASSANDRE,** sociologist. She is the founder of the Body Acceptance movement, founded in 2012. Its goal is to encourage women's self-esteem through dancing and body expression workshops and discussions.

**Mrs. Alla**, a psychologist, will attend the full training. As a session psychologist, she will be dedicated to listening to the hairdresser ambassadors.



Mr CISSE Moussa, this edition of Heal by Hair is under the patronage of Mister Ciss St Moïse, a key figure of the Ivorian artistic creation. Excellence Price of the Best Craftsman of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, he started his career as a history and geography teacher. He had also taught at the female National Center of Cocody

### 5- Benefits for the hairdresser ambassadors

At the end of the training, the hairdressers will have acquired:

- tools and techniques for active listening and psychologic first aid
- more trust in their interaction with people living with mental health disorders
- tools to establish a better trust relationship with their clients and the

possibility to support them and refer them to therapists

- media exposure
- the strength of a network of hairdressing professionals
- social incentives package

The inaugural session of the Heal by Hair program will be held from April 4 to 6, 2022, in Azalaï Hôtel Abidjan.

#### 6- Throwback on the call to applications



As part of the inaugural session of the Heal by Hair program, Bluemind Foundation had launched a call to applications in Abidjan to select on the field and by phoning 30 professional hairdressers who will become its mental health ambassadors.

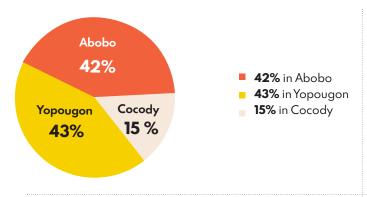
For this inaugural session, Bluemind Foundation chose the communes of Abobo, Yopougon and Cocody which are the most densely populated communes of Abidjan.

The call to applications had been open for seven (7) days. 250 applications have been registered.

69 % of the registered hairdressers had more than two years of experience, 20 % had less than two years of experience, and only 11 % had less than one year of experience.

95% of the hairdressers had declared being available to attend the three-day training.

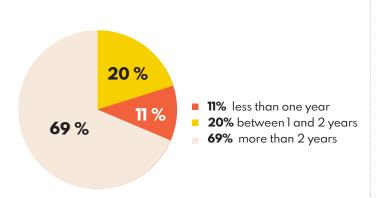
#### Percentage by municipality



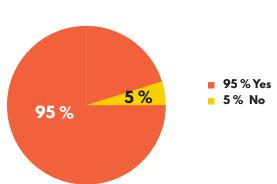
#### Responsibility by position held in the salon



#### Seniority in the saloon



#### Availability to participate in the 3-day training



#### 6.1- The jury

The jury who selected the first edition of the Heal by Hair program is composed of members of the Bluemind Foundation Scientific Council and members of the Stakeholders Committee.

- The Bluemind Foundation Scientific Council is composed by: Chrissy Kuoh (Therapist and Doctorate in psychiatry, coordinator of the Scientific Council), Dr. Olga Porquet (psychiatrist), Dr. Sonia Kanekatou (psychiatrist), Dr. Christian Eyoum (psychiatrist), and Dr. Jalil Benani (Psychiatrist).
- The Stakeholders Committee is composed by:

Mrs. Peace Vera Ahadji (economist, president of the Hands From Above Association - coordinator of the Stakeholders Committee); Dr. Parfait Akana (sociologist and anthropologist); Arnaud Gouillart (Director of the Bergeret Institute), Dr. Sedric Degbo (Doctor - CEO of Rema), Mrs. Djénéba Gory (social entrepreneur and Gender Expert - co-Founder of Suadela), Mrs. Eloine Barry (CEO African Media Agency), Sename Koffi (researcher in architecture and anthropology), Dina Lahlou (mental health and well-being expert).

The jury assessed the candidates based upon the following criteria:

- The candidate's interest in mental health.
- The area of living.
- Professional experience.
- The desire to help people suffering from mental health disorders.

After a serious assessment of the various applications, the jury selected 30 candidates for the first session of Heal by Hair in Abidjan.

#### 6.2- The selected candidates

N°	Name & surname	Commune	Area
1	AKE née Edith Christiane	Abobo	Abobo Samanké
2	ALEGRA Henriette	Abobo	Aboboté
3	ATTADE Geneviève	Cocody	Cocody, 2- Plateaux, Sococé
4	ATTOUNGBRE Aya Sidonie	Cocody	Abatta
5	BIEGNY Rolande Victoire	Cocody	Riviera Palmeraie, Rue mi- nister
6	BOFFOUE Affoua Agnès	Yopougon	Sicogi
7	DOUMBIA Fanta	Abobo	Abobo Belleville
8	ADAYE Julie	Cocody	2-Plateaux
9	GBEHI Goze Larissa	Yopougon	Ghandi
10	KAMAGATE Adjara	Cocody	Cocody 2-Plateaux, Bleu marine
11	KODJOE Carole	Yopougon	Complexe
12	KONE	Yopougon	Singa 1
13	KONE Fatou	Yopougon	Sicogi
14	KOUAKOU Aman Estelle épse DAGO	Yopougon	Millionaire, Cité 3 cocotiers
15	KOUAKOU Amenan Léontine	Cocody	Riviera 3
16	KOUAMA Amenan Adèle	Abobo	Plateau-Dokoui
17	KOUASSI Ahou	Cocody	Cocody, 2-Plateaux
18	MINATA Silué épouse SORHO	Yopougon	Niangon Sud à droite
19	N'DRI Jeanne	Yopougon	Complexe
20	N'DRI Ruth	Abobo	Abobo Samanké
21	N'GUESSAN Annicette	Yopougon	Assonvon
22	N'GUESSAN Pauline	Cocody	Riviera 3
23	N'GUESSAN Sabine	Yopougon	Sideci
24	ORO Stephanie	Cocody	Cocody, 2-PPlateaux, Bleu marine
25	OUEDRAOGO Ariatou	Abobo	Aboboté
26	PAHOU Leaticia épouse DAHO	Yopougon	Millionnaire, Cité GFCI
27	ROSINE Loubert	Yopougon	Ghandi
28	SOKOURY Ela	Abobo	Aboboté
29	SEMOU Esmel Natalie	Cocody	Cocody, 2-Plateaux
30	YAO Pélagie	Yopougon	Bel-Air

With an average age of 35 years and two (2) years of experience, the representation of the communes is as follows:

Cocody :10, or 30% **Yopougon: 12, or 43%** - 1 Abobo: 8, or 27%

## V- INTERVIEW WITH MARIE-ALIX DE PUTTER, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF BLUEMIND FOUNDATION



## Q1: WHY DID YOU CREATE BLUEMIND FOUNDATION?

R: Marie-Alix de PUTTER: The commitment to fight against the stigma surrounding mental health and to make care accessible to all in Africa was born in my heart ten years ago, at the time of the murder of my husband in Cameroon, when I was four (4) months pregnant. This dramatic event brought psychiatry into my life, and I intimately know it. I started writing and defining what Bluemind Foundation is today four (4) years ago. And it's been almost a year since we have been making a radical but straightforward statement with one voice: mental health is health.

## **Q2**: ON THAT NOTE, CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE HEAL BY HAIR PROGRAM?

MAdP: Heal by Hair is the first mental health ambassador hairdresser movement in Africa. Heal by Hair is a short and innovative three (3) day program based on cutting-edge research adapted to the local context. It is inspired by the principles used by basic mental health

training programs, now recognized and deployed in several countries. To base our action on the cultural and social realities of the African context, the Heal by Hair program proposes an innovative approach to mental health, consisting in mobilizing a network of professional hairdressers. Indeed, due to social and cultural assignments, African women generally go to the hairdresser regardless of their social status and age. With Heal by Hair, we will find women where they already are and where they already share an important part of their daily life: the hair salon.

# Q3: SO WE'RE TALKING ABOUT TRAINING MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO HELP THESE WOMEN?

**MAdP**: In order to improve the mental health and well-being of African women, the Heal by Hair program aims to equip hair professionals to become mental health ambassadors. Like somatic and physical first aid training, the Heal by Hair training will allow these hairdressers to become primary caregivers and not health professionals. Heal by Hair aims to enable the hairdresser ambassadors to be attentive and recognize the first manifestations of mental disorders or the aggravation of pre-existing conditions. In addition, to know how to behave appropriately, get in touch with the person and gain their trust, and know enough about professional and nonprofessional resources to refer them or help them to therapists when needed.

# Q4: WHERE DID THE IDEA COME FROM TO MAKE HAIRDRESSERS MENTAL HEALTH AMBASSADORS? AND WHY ONLY WOMEN?

**MAdP**: In the beginning, there was an emergency. That of allowing African women to have access to mental health

The WHO tells us that today, 66 million women in Africa suffer from depression, which is about the equivalent of the population of France, for example. Yet there is no budget, therapists are scarce, and 85% and these women are left to fend for themselves in social contexts where stigma is the norm. We thought of conceptualizing an innovative, highimpact approach in our desire to act. Hairdressers appeared as a solution because it is a fact: women go to their hairdressers and talk to them. I am concerned. I am a black African woman who does her Hair and talks to her hairdresser. So Heal by Hair is based on a social and cultural experience. But, of course, we could not base action on the ground on such a sensitive subject on a simple intuition. Indeed, the Bluemind Foundation believes in data, measurement, and impact research. And we believe that solid data from the field must back up good intentions and hunches. That's why we went into the field and interviewed 714 women and 148 hairdressers in seven (7) African countries, including Togo, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Diaspora

care and to claim their right to well-being.

(France). The plural voices of the women interviewed were synthesized in a cross-sectional report whose first results show that:

- more than 67.3% of the women surveyed said they confided in hairdressers.
- 6/10 would trust a hairdresser to be the first aid and provide initial mental health assistance,
- 91% of hairdressers are willing to train as first-aid mental health providers.

The facts are in. So is the data from the field. Now it's time to act collectively and sustainably.

Q5: WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE HEAL BY HAIR PROGRAM?

MAdP: We had an intuition. The data from the field confirmed it. The next logical step is implementation. From February 2 to 9, 2022, a call for applications was opened on our website www.bluemindfoundation.org and broadcasted on the field. At the end of the ring, a jury made up of our Scientific Council, and Stakeholder Committee members selected 30 candidates for the training. From April 4 to 6, 2022, this training will

take place at Azalaï Hotel Abidjan, with national, pan-African, and international experts and psychiatrists.

The objective, as mentioned above, is not to make these hairdressers professionals but rather ambassadors who can recognize the first signs of mental health problems, listen actively, and, if necessary, refer to mental health professionals.

## Q6: IS IT REALISTIC TO HAVE HAIRDRESSER MENTAL HEALTH AMBASSADORS?

MAdP: Training hairdresser as mental health ambassadors is not only possible but essential. One of the Heal by Hair program innovations is the visibility it gives to these women who, daily and instinctively, offer a listening ear and caring advice to women in need. Therefore, it is essential to recognize their contribution, better yet, to improve their skills to act sustainably and effectively. In this respect, hairdressers are the perfect candidates for this program. Furthermore, the training follows the publication of our report. The information in the report helped us understand the needs of hairdressers and those of clients. For example, 51% of respondents identified confidentiality as the main barrier to their interactions with hairdressers. In addition, while 83% of hairdressers admitted to being familiar with the terms depression and anxiety, they admitted to not being able to talk about them. On this basis, the Bluemind Foundation's Scientific Committee members, all mental health professionals, have built a training curriculum that includes modules adapted to these concerns.
This training curriculum includes
workshops on mental health disorders,
stigma, confidentiality, etc.

## **Q7**: CAN THREE (3) TRAINING DAYS EQUIP A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE EFFECTIVELY?

**MAdP**: There are nearly 300 psychological disorders listed in the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). Heal by Hair offers a three (3) day training course covering the most common topics to provide a basic understanding of the first signs of psychological distress. The three (3) day duration is based on studies done, including a study done in Nigeria, which concluded that a three (3) day training session «produces a positive and lasting change in knowledge and attitudes towards people with mental illness» (A. O. Oduguwa et al.). Therefore, the length of this program will be sufficient to train not health professionals but mental health ambassadors.

# **Q8**: WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF AN INDIVIDUAL, THROUGH THE AWARENESS MADE POSSIBLE, SUBSEQUENTLY SHOWS MORE SEVERE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION?

MAdP: Depression, clinically known as major depressive disorder, is characterized by, among other things, a loss of interest or pleasure and a depressed mood. According to the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), a minimum of five (5) out of nine (9) criteria are necessary to make the final diagnosis, and these criteria

cannot be consciously accentuated by the individual presenting them. The disorder diagnosis is made by a psychiatrist or psychologist and immediately followed by medication and/or therapy. Obtaining a diagnosis is the first step in establishing

a safe and effective treatment and allows the patient to make sense of confusing symptoms. There are no studies reporting deterioration of symptoms due to diagnosis.

Furthermore, as part of the deployment of Heal by Hair, Bluemind Foundation has gathered a network of local mental health institutions and professionals in the public health and private sectors to offer care accessible to all. Our Mental Health Ambassador hairdressers will refer their clients in need to this network. Furthermore, at the Bluemind Foundation, we strongly believe that updating resources is the best way to keep knowledge alive. Therefore, at the end of the (three) 3-day training, certified hairdressers will receive a manual designed by the Bluemind Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board, containing a summary of the modules and the important points to remember. The ambassadors will be able to refer to this manual at any time.

## Q9: WHAT DO HAIRDRESSERS GAIN BY PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM?

MAdP: You know, women are a pillar of the African economy. At nearly 26%, the African continent has the highest percentage of women entrepreneurs globally. By leveraging a community of women hairdressers running very small businesses, the Heal by Hair program will also create practical solutions to (I) support communities of women hairdressers in mental health, (2) improve their social impact, and (3) support the economic development of these microentrepreneurs.

Knowing that women reinvest up to 90% of their income back into their families and communities, compared to a maximum of 40% for men, the result is a win-win for clients, their hairdressers, and the communities.

#### VI- MEDIA CONTACTS

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## <u>Dalberg</u>





























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