



REPORT FOR THE PERIOD: Dec 2022 to March 2023

**SUBMITTED TO GLOBALGIVING ACCELERATOR BY REGINA
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“Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is defined by the United Nations as the use of clean menstrual management products to soak menstrual discharge by women that are changeable in privacy as required, with proper access to water, soap, and disposable methods. If hygienic practices are not followed during menstruation like changing pads after every 4 hours, washing and drying our re-usable sanitary towels properly in the sun, and washing hands after handling the used sanitary pads, then the chances of getting Urogenital Tract Infections increases many folds. Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is both a health and social issue that is increasingly gaining prominence on the global development agenda. Due to the increased recognition of poor Menstrual Hygiene Management in the country, and its negative socio-economic and health impacts to women and girls in reproductive age, the government of Uganda through the Ministry of Education and Sports, developed a National Menstrual Hygiene Management Strategic Plan. They also carried out a country-wide Situational Analysis where they sampled 14 districts on regional basis. These included; Wakiso, Gomba, Soroti, Kamuli, Moroto, Abim, Kyenjojo, Sheema, Bundibugyo, Kasese, Nwoya, Apac, Nebbi and Arua.” ([Situational-Analysis-Study-on-MHM-in-Uganda-2020-eng.pdf \(ungei.org\)](#))

INTRODUCTION

RAVENS FOUNDATION (RAF), is an indigenous non-government organization founded in 2018, with the aim of contributing to the process of transformational development in the lives of adolescent girls, teenage mothers, other vulnerable women and entire communities.

VISION: Fanning the Wisdom of Motherhood and Nobility of Womanhood.

MISSION: RAVENS FOUNDATION (RAF) exists to develop and impact women especially young mothers with the love of Christ through sharing the word of God, counseling, life skills training and social services provision, hence enabling them to become women of noble character who continually build their homes.

BACKGROUND

“Menstrual Hygiene Management is both a human rights and health issue; where women and girls are entitled to live a life of dignity.” (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights Instrument*)

According to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030), all nations should work towards ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages (SDG 3). There is need to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning (SDG4), achieve gender equality, and empower all women and girls (SDG 5); ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6), and ensure decent Work & Economic Growth (SDG 8). In an effort to ensure dignity for women and girls, the United Nations in (2014), declared May 28th of every year a Menstrual Hygiene Day that aims to create awareness and highlight the importance of MHM to different stakeholders.

Uganda is one of the countries that ratified many international legal instruments that aim to protect people’s fundamental rights and freedoms. The country considers MHM not only a global development issue, but also a human rights issue for women and girls. In spite of the various endorsements, programming especially for MHM is still low in the country. Menstruation and menstrual practices still face many social, cultural, and religious restrictions which are a big barrier in the path of menstrual hygiene management. In many parts of the country especially in rural areas girls are neither prepared nor aware about menstruation so they face many difficulties and challenges in handling and managing their menstrual cycle. Girls and women have very little or no knowledge about reproductive tract infections caused due to ignorance of proper personal hygiene during menstruation time. In rural areas, women have limited access to sanitary products, or they know very little about the types and methods of using them or are unable to afford such products due to high cost. So, they mostly rely on old pieces of cloth which they wash and use again. Needs and requirements of the adolescent girls and women are ignored despite the fact that there are major developments in the area of water and sanitation.

At Ravens Foundation, our goal is to grow the making of reusable pads into a sustainable social business. We are intentionally building this entity with our focus on impact, not on profit. Our plan is to see to it that 100% of any profits that will ever accrue from the sale of the reusable pads in future, will be reinvested in the work. Throughout our entire production process, we aim at creating employment and supporting the local economy.

All our products will continue to be produced locally in Bukomolo village in Budaka district, by local Ugandan women. We plan to expand the project and diversify so that we produce various reusable products including the following;

- Reusable menstrual pads (is what we are making currently).
- Reusable schoolgirl kits.
- Highly absorbable, reusable, easy to wash and durable after labour pads to support new mothers after giving birth.

Reusable washable, comfortable, affordable, easy to wash and durable baby diapers/nappies.

This report covers a period of four months, December 2021 to March 2023. As reported previously, one of the founders has allowed us to use her premises to set up a skills training centre. Ravens Foundation still has a limited financial base and so we depend heavily on the good will of our founders. Renovation of the building is still going on.

Team building meeting for between governing committee and founders: Through a community meeting the beneficiaries elected a local governing committee of seven members. This committee oversees the activities of skills training, mobilizing the girls and women for enrolment into the training and also supervising the training activities. In the pictures below, some of the founder members engaged with this committee in a team building meeting.



Making of reusable pads: The learning and making of reusable pads continues and the women/girls meet once every week. For now, the ones who learnt faster than the rest are the ones who are training others as volunteers.



On-going Training sessions for making reusable pads.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

- The materials for making the pads are limited due to financial constraints but the trainees innovatively improvise by using old pieces of cloth.

