



RAVENS FOUNDATION (RAF)

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD:

FEBRUARY TO MAY 2025

SUBMITTED TO GLOBALGIVING ACCELERATOR

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Menstrual Hygiene: A Critical Step toward Health, Dignity, and Education for Girls.

Menstrual hygiene is essential to the health, dignity, and empowerment of girls and women. Yet, millions around the world—especially in developing countries like Uganda—still lack access to safe menstrual hygiene facilities and affordable products. In rural and semi-urban areas, the impact is particularly severe.

For example, recent statistics show that 25.8% of teenage girls in Budaka district become pregnant before the age of 18, with Iki-Iki sub-county among the most affected—reporting over 156 teenage pregnancies. Tragically, some of these girls are coerced into transactional sex just to obtain a single packet of sanitary pads, leading to cycles of poverty, early motherhood, and school dropout.

Due to extreme poverty, many girls and young mothers rely on unsafe alternatives such as dirty rags, banana leaves, and other unhygienic materials to manage their periods. These practices pose serious health risks and contribute to low self-esteem and school absenteeism.

At **Ravens Foundation**, we are addressing these barriers head-on by training girls and women to make reusable sanitary pads. This initiative empowers them with practical skills, promotes safe menstrual hygiene, and helps restore dignity and confidence. More importantly, it enables girls to stay in school, focus on their education, and make informed decisions about their futures.

We believe that access to menstrual hygiene is not a luxury—it is a basic human right. Through local solutions and community-driven action, we are creating a ripple effect of change that reaches far beyond the individual.

About Ravens Foundation (RAF)

Ravens Foundation (RAF) is an indigenous, local entity established in 2018 with the goal of advancing transformational development in the lives of girls, women, and their communities. Based in Uganda, RAF is committed to empowering women and girls by addressing critical challenges related to menstrual hygiene, education, health, and economic empowerment.

Vision: *Fanning the Wisdom of Motherhood and the Nobility of Womanhood.*

This vision reflects our deep belief in the unique power, dignity, and influence of women especially mothers, as central pillars of family and community transformation.

Mission: *To empower women and girls to manage their personal hygiene with dignity, while promoting health, education, and economic opportunities through counseling, skills training, and advocacy.*

We strive to create sustainable change by equipping girls and women with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to lead healthier, more empowered lives. Whether through the provision of reusable menstrual products, vocational training, or community outreach, our work is rooted in dignity, respect, and long-term impact.

Background

Motherhood is one of the most noble and essential callings in the world. It is foundational to every society and deeply influences the development of individuals across all professions; be they politicians, bankers, clergy, or educators. Without strong, nurturing mothers, no one can effectively reach their full potential.

In many low-income communities across Uganda, Africa, and beyond, women bear the weight of their families' survival. They face the dual burden of domestic responsibilities and subsistence farming, often with little to no support. In Budaka District, our area of focus, more than 70% of women and girls are either semi-illiterate or completely illiterate. Most lack employable skills and economic opportunities, making it difficult to break the cycle of poverty.

At **Ravens Foundation**, we believe in empowering women and girls with practical skills that can transform their lives. By equipping them with knowledge and tools, we not only uplift individual households but also lay the foundation for healthier, more resilient communities.

Activities (February – May 2025)

During this reporting period, our focus was on preparing for training sessions aimed at improving skills in reusable sanitary pad making and other income-generating crafts. However, several challenges emerged:

- **Timing and School Schedules:** February to May marks the first term of Uganda's school calendar. Our targeted participants—school-going girls—were all actively engaged in formal education. We initially planned to hold training during school holidays, but this proved difficult as many girls continued attending holiday lessons organized by their schools. This reflects a growing national trend where students are kept in school year-round, leaving little room for extracurricular skills development.

Despite the challenges, **Ravens Foundation** remained committed and proactive:

- We prepared all the necessary tools and materials for the trainings, ensuring we are ready to proceed once an appropriate window opens. These include:

- **A sewing machine**, so girls can learn both hand stitching and machine sewing in the process of making reusable pads.
- **Knitting yarn**, as we plan to expand our skills training to include knitting doormats, sweaters, and scarves; offering more opportunities for creativity and income generation.

We continue to adapt and explore ways to reach our girls meaningfully, even within the constraints of financial resources and the current school system. Our commitment to building skills, confidence, and independence remains unwavering.

Challenges

Despite our progress and growing community engagement, **Ravens Foundation (RAF)** continues to face several significant challenges that hinder the full realization of our mission:

- **Limited Funding:** Financial constraints remain one of our biggest challenges. As a grassroots organization, we rely heavily on goodwill and volunteer efforts. However, sustaining volunteer engagement is becoming increasingly difficult as many of our dedicated team members must prioritize finding paid work to support their families. This affects the consistency and reach of our programs.
- **Lack of a Designated Training Center:** We currently do not have a permanent or officially designated space for conducting our skills training. As a result, activities are carried out in individual homes, which limits the number of participants we can accommodate and the frequency of sessions. It also makes it difficult to establish a stable learning environment and showcase the full potential of our programs.